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Towards Our Own Image

An Alternative Philippine Report on
Women and Media

PHILIPPINE
WOMEN'S
RESEARCH
COLLECTIVE

The Authors

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Graduating with an AB Journalism degree (magna cum laude) from the University of Santo Tomas in 1976, Ms. David first worked with *Cor Manila*, a church-based publication, then moved on to *Sunburst*, a tourist-oriented magazine where she was assistant editor, and *Woman's Home Companion*, where she was associate editor. She also briefly edited *She*, a woman-oriented weekly. She was also contributing editor of *Life Today* magazine, and editor-in-chief of the *Varsitarian*, UST's student organ.

She is married to artist Pie David with whom she has one son, Piepie.

Pennie Azarcon-de la Cruz is a journalist who takes special interest in women's issues. She has been freelancing for national publications since 1978 and has written extensively on women workers, unionism, sex tours, consumerism, the nuclear plant issue, women's rights and the law, breast-feeding, human rights and political detainees.

She is presently a *Veritas* newsmagazine correspondent, a contributing editor of *Women's Home Companion* magazine, and the project director of the media monitoring project of PILIPINA on the image of Filipino women in media.

After graduating magna cum laude in journalism from the University of Sto. Tomas, she plunged headlong into writing, first as a PR for a recording company, as associate editor for a music magazine, and a regular contributor to *WHO*, *Life Today* and *Sunburst* magazines. She likewise edited a short-lived feminist-oriented woman's magazine and was managing editor of *Woman's* for more than a year.

She is married to Atty. Edwin dela Cruz with whom she has a 2 1/2-year old daughter.

The Artist

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INTRODUCTION

They hailed from various fields and disciplines, these women who heeded the call of PILIPINA, a national women's organization, to discuss an issue that has been haunting them for sometime: what exactly is the woman's question and how did it affect, or was affected by, the UN Decade for Women?

The two-day workshop held at a Suburban university in late 1984 bristled with insights and analysis as the participants groped and waded through their own experiences and perspectives on the issue. Thus, while the main task was to prepare the Alternative Country Report for the Non-Governmental Organizations' Forum in Nairobi, the workshop likewise resulted in the growth of perception and clearing of doubts among the women present.

Among the points the women agreed upon early on was that (1) the report would document the experience of women from the grassroots as they comprise the majority and most disadvantaged, and would ultimately be the measure of the Decade's gains; (2) it would have a feminist framework; and (3) it would consider as fundamental and integral the three dimensions of women's oppression:

- a) national oppression since women comprise half of the Filipino people still victimized by imperialist powers in the economic, political and cultural spheres;
- b) class oppression, because women bear the brunt of an exploitative system dominated by foreign corporations and the local elite, as industrial and agricultural workers, as peasants, landless poor and other marginalized sectors; and
- c) gender oppression, because cutting across class-lines is inequality between the sexes which intensifies the sufferings of grassroots Filipino women.

A Collective Report

With the time constraint, the women decided to share available materials and to work within their sphere of specialization to be able to validate their findings more easily. This sharing and swapping of ideas informally gave birth to the Philippine Women's Research Collective (PWRC). The collective is composed of women coming from research and development, law, journalism, health, film-making, banking, community development, anthropology, and sociology. Each member tackled areas within her persuasion, with the whole group discussing and criticizing each sectoral report as it came in. Thus, the Alternative Country Report is probably the only collective report on women ever done in the country.

While collective analysis did not present a problem, the initial gathering of data did. The group was stumped by the dearth of women-specific research materials and had to do some primary research on women where time and budget constraints allowed. This was true with the reports on rural women and feminist consciousness; the other sectors mainly used blanket percentages and statistics that included men and children.

The economic upheavels of the past decade (which will be discussed in detail by each sector in relation to the individual reports) has trapped the Philippines in a development model dependent on foreign capital and oriented for foreign markets. This model has reduced the country to a producer of raw materials, components and labor-intensive manufactured goods needed by development market economies. It has also pushed the country deeper into foreign debt, amounting to \$26-billion as of 1984. Couples with this tight financial squeeze is the growing repression and militarization unleashed by the Martial Law regime of President Ferdinand Marcos since September 1972.

How the continuing ferment of the previous decade has affected Filipino women in the rural areas, in the factories

and industrial sector, and how it has pushed women to seek employment abroad as migrant workers or as prostitutes-- drafted into the trade by aggressive tourism policies, are probed in this Alternative Report. The influence of media's stereotypes of women, the inadequacy of government initiatives especially in the area of health services, and the lack of feminist consciousness even among organized women are other factors that mark the Decade as particularly harrowing for the Filipino women.

This report hopes that by tracing and exposing the roots of the Filipina's particular oppression and exploitation in the past ten years, solutions and strategies can be effectively shaped and mapped out.

For purposes of fuller treatment and accessibility, the entire report is being serialized into a pamphlet series that would tackle each section separately. The consolidated or complete version is also available at the PILIPINA Office at No. 12 Pasaje de la Paz, Project 4, Quezon City.

TOWARDS OUR OWN IMAGE

An Alternative Report on Women in Media

by

Rina Jimenez-David, Pennie Azarcon-dela Cruz

Certain characteristics of Philippine media could explain how certain images and stereotypes of women have come to be created, reinforced and perpetuated in the public mind.

Philippine newspapers, magazines, comic books, radio-TV combines, and movie production outfits could be summed up in a few key phrases: elitist in ownership and control; dominated by men; Western, specifically American, in orientation; motivated by profit; heavily dependent on advertising; and vulnerable to government intervention and suppression.

Ownership. The major media outfits have always been in the hands of the country's economic elite. Before Martial Law, communication combines -- publishing and broadcasting networks -- were owned by families with interests in such diverse fields as energy generation, real estate, shipping, manufacturing, agribusiness and trade. The declaration of Martial Law in 1972 changed the complexion of multi-media outfits, with close associates and family members of the Marcos family taking firm control of the major daily newspapers and national broadcast networks.

Film production is likewise in the hands of a few wealthy producers. Though the era of the big studios has declined, film production is today confined to a few families with allied interests in theaters, film distribution and recording.

The media have thus been used to serve ends other than that of information, education or entertainment. In the case of newspapers, though publishing was and is still a losing proposition in the Philippines, publishers went into newspapers not to make money, but to lend publicity and legitimacy to their vested interests.

Male domination. In local publishing and broadcasting, men far outnumber women not just in the editorial and production rooms, but most important, in boardrooms and publishers' suites. With the

exception of two women publishers, all the local dailies, tabloids and magazines are owned by men. Even women's magazines are published by men, who often dictate what "image" their publications are to project. In films, a major production outfit is headed by a woman, but many of the films she has produced have turned out to be among the most exploitative of women.

There are, of course, more women in the editorial and production staffs. But then again, the issue cannot be looked at simply in terms of numbers. The assignments, responsibilities and positions of women journalists and broadcasters are just as important in assessing the over-all influence of women in the process of shaping policy. While women are still assigned to such "soft" beats as health, education and socials, editorial positions are, for the most part, occupied by men.

Western Orientation. Philippine media have always looked to American models for emulation. Such a practice has resulted in such obvious aberrations as movies based on foreign film titles, plots and characters; radio disc jockeys with American hillbilly accents; even television sitcoms that are virtual xerox copies of successful American comedies.

This orientation has also resulted in a distinctly American bias in the selection of news, as well as in the unquestioning acceptance and use of American standards in reporting, editing and the exercise of judgement. Filipino editors, for one, are among the most enthusiastic believers in the "beauties, babies and beasts" school of front-page make-up.

What Filipinos know about the rest of the world frequently filters through an American screen, as most information media are dependent on the four major news agencies and American and British broadcasting networks. Local public opinion on foreign developments, then, is often simply an echo of Western journalists' views.

The effect has been not just the transference of Western information and opinion, but the almost complete colonization of native culture.

Profit Motive. The American orientation has also served to reinforce the conviction of publishers, producers and owners that their primary duty is to earn profits for the company.

In films, this has been used to justify the creation of commercial quickies, and the present-day tide of "sexploitation" films, some of which were produced by the government-owned Experimental Cinema of the Philippines, created to "uplift" the standards of local films.

Indeed, women have often been mustered in the service of making profits for media. Magazines and comic books reinforce saleable stereotypes, laying great stress on women's youth, beauty, and sex appeal. Women's bodies adorn front pages of tabloids and even respectable dailies, while scantily clad actresses cavort across TV screens. Even radio soap-operas, when not canonizing women as martyrs, bring rape, incest, and child molestation daily into Filipino homes.

Marketing constraints have also led to a strict segmentation of the audience. Stratifying readers and audiences into economic groupings, media owners tailor their products according to the perceived needs, interests and educational level of the target group. Newspapers and magazines aimed largely at an A-B market, for instance, strive to maintain high standards in writing, editing and presentation. Most often, these will be in English. Tabloids meant for a lower class of readers appeal to the lowest common denominator, and editors and writers feel free to throw journalistic cannons of objectivity, accuracy and even syntax to the winds.

It should be noted here that publishers, producers, writers, directors and editors are, by and large, left to judge for themselves what is to be printed, broadcast or filmed. The audience has no substantial voice in the choice of material, except as consumers, who can make their preferences felt only by buying, or not buying, by staying tuned in or by turning off. Two entities, though, have no trouble getting themselves heard by media. These are advertisers and government.

Advertising. When not using sex as a come-on, Philippine media appeal to women-as-consumers, burying even the best intentioned of editorial contents under an avalanche of advertisements.

Apart from the film industry and the komiks, all other media are heavily dependent on advertising. Philippine newspapers and magazines, for instance, enjoy only a limited readership and thus cannot count on circulation figures alone to survive. Publishers strive to keep newspaper contents 60 per cent

advertising and 40 per cent editorial matter. This also explains the great influence advertisers bear on even the editorial policies of publications and radio-TV shows. Writers and announcers have been fired because they wrote or said something offensive to a major advertiser.

Television shows are particularly vulnerable to the whims and caprices of advertisers, who are in turn almost totally dependent on ratings to decide if they should or should not support a show, however worthy.

The great influence of advertisers in the media industry is particularly onerous when one considers that the advertising industry is itself dominated by multinational agencies and corporations.

Government Control. With the coming of crony publishers, control of the news desk came directly from Malacañang, and yet even with a timid and subservient press (many journalists were detained in 1972), the government was not above harrasing, persecuting, and detaining more outspoken journalists and broadcasters. The surfacing of the so-called "alternative" or "independent" press has itself been a refreshing change in the media landscape, but even publishers of these newspapers and magazines know they exist only at the government's sufferance. While the print industry has been granted relative freedom, government remains in firm control of broadcasting, except for a few brave small radio stations in Manila and other parts of the country. Film and television shows' contents, too are firmly under the government's control, through the Board of Review, which has complete authority over movies' titles, scripts and master negatives. In recent months, the Board of Review has allowed for commercial exhibition a slew of crudely made movies with sexually explicit scenes, but politically sensitive material, even the singing of the song Bayan Ko, cannot be shown on screen.

Journalists' fears have a very real basis in law. In July 1983, President Marcos issued P.D. 1876, repealing the Public Order Act and National Security Code, which empowered the President to detain persons and close publications when they acted "in a manner prejudicial to national security," "cause or tend to cause panic, divisive effects, discredit or distrust for the duly constituted authorities," or "cause damage to the interest or discredit of the state."

The decrees were later replaced with PDs 1834 and 1835, escalating the penalties for rebellion, sedition and other crimes related to national security. Section 6 of P.D. 1834 holds that any person who uses or allows the use of communication facilities "for the purpose of mounting sustained propaganda assaults against the Government" can be meted punishment from life imprisonment to death.

In May 1985, these decrees were amended, and P.D. 1974 reduces the penalty for the "use of media facilities to mount sustained propaganda assaults against the Government" to a minimum of six years and one day to eight years and a fine not exceeding P8,000.00.

It has happened on several occasions, though, that persons bearing grievances against newsmen have not waited for the law to do the reprimanding. Several journalists and radio commentators, most of them in areas where the insurgency is gaining ground, have been killed or are missing. In most cases, their killers go unpunished.

This then, is the state of Philippine media today. The following report will analyze the contents of today's newspapers, tabloids, women's magazines, comic books, radio-TV shows and films to distill the images of women portrayed by the media in the past decade or so. It will then submit conclusions and recommendations that Filipino women may want to use for possible discussion and action in the future.

THE PRINT MEDIA

If the truth be told, Philippine newspapers, in fact, the entire Philippine publishing industry, have always had an inflated opinion of themselves.

Though almost as old as the republic, and reputedly a crucial factor in marshalling public opinion against colonizers, Philippine newspapers to this day reach only a limited audience.

Even in the years before Martial Law, when Manila newspapers enjoyed a reputation as "the freest press in Asia," the Manila Times, then the daily with the largest national circulation, barely reached the 500,000 circulation mark. Today the Bulletin Today, the premier Philippine daily, counts 300,000

readers. This, in a country of 52 million people, whose government makes much of the fact that it has one of the highest literacy rates in Asia.

Before 1972, magazines in both English and the vernacular had about three times the circulation of all daily newspapers, with a total readership of almost two million. The most widely circulated local magazine today, the Bulletin Today's Sunday supplement Panorama, has roughly the same circulation as the daily. The rest of the magazine field, however, has lost much of its readership, especially in these days of increased production costs and slashed advertising revenue.

Several reasons have been advanced to explain the limited readership of print media in the Philippines. First is the very real poverty that is the lot of the majority of Filipinos.

Rosalinda Pineda Ofreneo, in her book The Manipulated Press, writes that 'a common Filipino' in 1968 had to pay 20-22 days' wages for a year's subscription. The price of a Manila newspaper was said to cost four to six times higher than the price of a New York newspaper when compared with the income of their respective buyers."

Involved also are issues "rooted in deeper socio-economic realities. Research findings reveal that Filipinos in rural areas are "not too familiar with the print medium as a means of communication, being more used to interpersonal forms of communication, and the transistor radio more than any other of the mass media. Furthermore, many rural folk barely read and write in the 'functional' sense.

Says Ofreneo: "According to past studies, the educational level of the average reader of Philippine newspapers was Grade IV. This meant, especially in the provinces, a marginal understanding of the English language. Yet, according to a 1965 Silliman survey, more than half the community publications were in English and around two-fifths made use of an English-dialect combination."

With such a limited circulation, it is but expected that newspapers and magazines would turn to advertising as a major source of revenue. On the average, publishers try to reach a ratio of 60 per cent advertising, 40 percent editorial material in an issue. By the '70's however, print media began feeling the impact of television and radio, with

their share of advertising outlays falling from 50 per cent in 1961 to 23 per cent in 1970.

PUBLISHERS' MOTIVES

At present the only profitable outfit in print communications is the Bulletin Publishing Corporation. The double devaluation of the peso in 1983 resulted in increased production costs on one hand, and decreased advertising revenue on the other, forcing other dailies to retrench, cutting down on the number of pages, closing down a number of magazines and laying off personnel.

Even before Martial Law, though, newspaper publishing was not a profitable venture. Only one outfit, the Manila Times Publishing Company, was making money.

The circulation of the other daily newspapers combined could not match that of the Manila Times, which also cornered 60 per cent of advertising, yet the other newspapers continued publishing, with their owners often subsidizing operations with profits made from sister companies.

This was because newspapers served an entirely different function for their owners. A businessman with political ambitions often paved his way to public office by buying a newspaper to publicize himself and protect his interests. More commonly, families with businesses to promote and protect often went into media to create favorable publicity for themselves and exert influence among the country's power brokers, the Manila-based educated elite who composed the bulk of newspaper readers.

When the Manila Chronicle, a daily owned by the Lopez family which, at the height of their economic and political power owned or controlled 36 companies with assets totalling billions, began attacking Philippine Air Lines then owned by the Sorianos, the Soriano clan retaliated by buying the Philippines Herald. The purchase, they said, was "to equalize the fight," as well as to protect and promote their interests in over 30 corporations stretching across three continents.

Publishers were not above shifting editorial policies to suit their own ends. Ofreneo relates that in 1972, after encouraging staffers of the Manila Chronicle to launch assaults on the Marcos administration, the Lopezes reached a reconciliation of sorts with the President, in consideration of a

bid by the Lopez-owned Manila Electric Company to increase its rates. Since it was imperative that all anti-Marcos attacks be toned down while the rate increase was pending, the Lopezes began getting uncomfortable with the columns of nationalist writer Renato Constantino. Constantino was forced to resign, receiving nothing in terms of retirement benefits and the like, despite 20 years of service.

Journalists say that while the 'freedom of the press' enjoyed in pre Martial Law days was a 'brokered' freedom, at least there was a clear distinction between the government and media. Editors and writers felt free to attack the administration so long as they had the support of their publishers. It was, at best, an "illusion" of freedom. After Martial Law, though, Constantino says, "not even that illusion is allowed."

THE PRESS UNDER MARTIAL LAW

With the declaration of Martial Law in 1972, the complexion of newspaper ownership changed. Only newspapers whose owners were sympathetic to or controlled by the Marcoses were allowed to be published in the first months of Martial Law. These were: the Bulletin Today owned by Hans Menzi, a businessman with agribusiness and shipping interest who was aide-de-camp to the president; the Daily Express owned by Roberto Benedicto, a classmate and confidante of Marcos who took control of the Lopezes' broadcasting empire and maintained interests in the sugar industry; the Times Journal, whose publisher was Benjamin Romualdez, younger brother of the First Lady; and the Evening News, owned by Kerima Polotan Tuvera, wife of Presidential Executive Assistant Juan C. Tuvera.

With the take-over of these new publishers, control of the news desk extended as far as Malacañang, the president's address. It was common for desk men to receive phone calls relaying instructions from Malacañang to kill or tone down certain stories. When unfavorable stories slipped past the eagle eyes of editors and publishers, the erring writers would often be called in for a reprimand. If the First Couple was particularly peeved, the offending writer was simply fired. Malacañang pressure was evident, for instance, in the sudden retirement of Bulletin editor Ben Rodriguez. Tony Nieva, erswhile columnist of the same paper, was arrested and detained after he tried to organize local journalists into a labor federation. In 1982, the publisher and staff of the small opposition weekly We Forum were

detained on charges of subversion, although the charges were later overturned by the Supreme Court.

The military has also been known to use subtler forms of harassment. After the closure of the We Forum, the military issued "invitations" to eight women journalists for interrogation about their writing and political beliefs. The investigations, though, stopped when the women, together with other concerned journalists, filed a petition seeking a stop to the "invitations" before the Supreme Court. Shortly after, the military tried another tack, filing a ₱10 million libel suit against Panorama editor Domini Torrevillas-Suarez and writer Ceres Doyo for an article on alleged military abuses in Bataan.

Generating the most libel cases, however, has been the press coverage of the investigation of the Aquino murder. Last August, AFP Chief of Staff (on leave) Gen. Fabian C. Ver and businessman Eduardo Cojuanco filed a ₱220 million libel suit against Panorama magazine, contributor Mauro Avena and lawyer Lupino Lazaro for an article imputing their involvement in the assassination.

It is the largest sum ever claimed for libel in the history of Filipino jurisprudence. In 1983, Philippine Times publisher-editor Rommel Corro was held by the military for allegedly seditious articles. He also faces a ₱1 million libel suit filed by a close Marcos associate. Lawyers of a colonel named in the ongoing trial of the Aquino case also filed a case for contempt against Veritas editor Felix Bautista, writer Barbara Mae Dacanay and lawyer Lazaro, which was recently dismissed.

MIS-EDUCATION AND WESTERN BIAS

One of the causes of the professions's seeming isolation from Philippine realities could be the American orientation of journalism education. The first journalism teachers in the country were Americans, who trained the first batch of Filipino writers in English. These writers, in turn, trained succeeding generations of journalists.

Journalism and communications schools use American models for training and emulation. Most journalism professors, for instance, adhere to the "beauties, babies and beasts" formula of front page make-up. Great stress is also laid on achieving "objectivity" in the news reporting, and little

effort paid to strengthening the future journalist's powers of analysis and interpretation. The latest trends in American journalism -- the use of more white space, horizontal formats, the encroachment of "new journalism" -- are picked up with alacrity. Philippine newspapers, as a consequence often appear like Third World versions of the New York Times, Washington Post, and even Time and Newsweek.

The Western bias makes itself felt not only in the language used and the approach to the craft. Newspaper editors often employ a First World "news sense," selecting news items that appeal most to the Westernized, educated reader. Despite the presence of alternative news syndicates, the editors' sensibilities are still skewed towards the Western world. Thus the predominance of stories based on wire dispatches from the "Big Four" agencies. The Western bias is even more felt in magazines, where canned features from American, British and Australian publications are published without revisions. Even the comic strips are dominated by the big American syndicates. Journalistic training also hones the editor's preference for the sensational and fantastic. Politics, too is given great play on the front page, while stories on development, for instance, are buried in the inside sections.

THE PROBLEM OF CORRUPTION

Given the orientation, and the general attitude that a journalist lives a glamorous life, what with his proximity to people of pelf and power, the Filipino journalist is placed in a difficult bind. For the reality is that journalists are among the lowest paid professionals, and the least organized labor bloc. Salary differentials between those on editorial level and staff level are gaping, even scandalous, while freelancers are often paid a pittance and are expected to answer for their own transportation and other expenses.

Given the measly pay, newspaper staffers often turn to some sideline to augment their income. These can range from doing PR work on the side, ghost writing for news sources, teaching at nights, to out-and-out corruption. The sources of corruption are many -- "PR flacks, advertising executives, businessmen, civic charlatans, government officials and some embassies," all of them buying precious newspaper space. With the onset of Martial Law, a more pernicious form of graft has emerged. This is what has been called "institutionalized corruption," when the bribe-taking extends from the news desk to the publisher's office. In such a set-up, corruption is not merely tolerated

Given this bind, it is not surprising that Filipino newsmen should have evolved into the stereotype of a "fast living, hard drinking journalist." After years in the profession, a journalist learns to grow a cynical, crass shell, the better to protect him from the harsh reality that he is "underpaid by his publisher, but overglorified by the public," forced to live on his wits and whatever extra income he can muster, and consequently distained by those over whom he supposedly has power.

WOMEN IN JOURNALISM

Before we begin to look into the print media's treatment of women's issues, it would be appropriate to first examine women's presence, and by inference, their influence, in local newspapers and magazines.

In the local publishing field, men far outnumber women not only in the editorial and production sections, but especially in the boardrooms and publishers' office. The three major daily newspapers belonging to the "crony" or "establishment" press are controlled by men. Bulletin Today, which has the largest circulation of the three, was owned and managed by Brig. Gen. Hans Menzi, a former aide to the President, until his death last June 27. His successor as Chairman of the Board of the Bulletin Publishing Corporation is Emilio T. Yap, who has interests in a shipping company and a bank. The Bulletin also publishes two tabloids -- Tempo and Balita -- as well as the Sunday supplement Panorama. A sister company, the Liwayway Publishing Corporation, has under its wing the Pilipino magazine Liwayway, the weekly magazine Who, and the afternoon tabloid, P.M., recently "killed" as a result of a management shake-up.

Ambassador to the U.S. Benjamin Romualdez, brother of the First Lady, controls the Times Journal and its sister tabloids -- People's Journal, People's Tonight, and Taliba. Roberto S. Benedicto, a close personal friend of President Marcos, owns the Philippine Daily Express.

In the so-called "alternative press," or what its owners and editors prefer to call the "independent press," men are just as pervasive in the publisher's Office. Malaya, a daily newspaper

which claims to have the second-biggest circulation after Bulletin Today, is published and edited by Jose Burgos, Jr. He also publishes Tinig ng Masa, a Tagalog tabloid, a Sunday supplement, and the newly resurrected We Forum, now incarnate as an afternoon tabloid. Veritas, a weekly newsmagazine with reputedly "strong Church connections" is financed and managed by a board composed of six business executives, all men. Business Day likewise has a male publisher.

Even the magazine publishing industry is dominated by men. The situation is particularly amusing in the arena of women's magazines. Mod, which claims the largest circulation among the weekly women's magazines, is published by the Atlas Publishing Corporation, and managed by the grandson of its founder, Don Ramon Roces. Woman's Home Companion, published by Graphic Arts Services Inc., is owned by a daughter of Don Ramon Roces but managed by a male publisher. Women's Journal is published by the Times Journal group. Woman Today, the newest of these three magazines, is published by Benjamin Ramos, whose family owns National Bookstore.

Two women stand out in the publishing field, not just because they are the only two women with major publications in a male-dominated field, but also because they play prominent roles in both the establishment and independent press.

Kerima Polotan Tuvera, biographer of the First Lady, and married to Presidential Executive Assistant Juan Tuvera, publishes the Evening Post, Metro Manila Times, and Orient News. She is also current president of the Publishers Association of the Philippines, Inc.

Eugenia Duran Apostol was editor of the women's and life-style section of the pre-Martial Law daily Manila Chronicle. After Martial Law, she founded and edited Woman's Home Companion, and when this was purchased by the Roces-Guerrero family, she set up and became editor-publisher of the weekly magazine Mr. & Ms. After August 21, 1983, the magazine devoted a special issue to Ninoy Aquino, the murdered ex-senator. In the wake of the people's hunger for news on the tragedy, which the "crony press" had tried to ignore, and the rising disillusionment with controlled publications, the supplement touched off such a great demand it soon became an independent weekly magazine, the Mr & Ms. Justice and Reconciliation Edition. Today, apart from the magazine and the supplement, she publishes Philippine Inquirer, a weekly devoted to the Aquino trials.

There are, of course, more women in the editorial staff of newspapers and magazines. But then again, the issue cannot be looked at simply in terms of numbers. The assignments, and responsibilities of women journalists are just as important in assessing the over-all influence of women in the process of shaping editorial policy in a publication.

In the Daily Express, there are ten women staffers out of about roughly 40 regular editorial employees. Of these ten women, one is managing editor of Weekend, the Sunday supplement, another her associate editor. One is a reporter who handles the regular "People" section, which consists of short write-ups on prominent personalities here and abroad. Five women are reporters, relatively young college graduates, covering beats like Quezon City Manila City Halls, education, the Metro Manila Commission, and health and science. Another reporter covers the hotel and restaurant beat. There is only one female section editor, who, expectedly, handles the "Life and Leisure" section. She has one assistant.

At the Bulletin Today, there are considerably more women, but again their presence is stronger in the Lifestyle and Culture section, and the entertainment beat. At the Times Journal, the editorial staff used to include quite a number of women, but when it retrenched employees last year, many female staffers lost their jobs. There are today only about four women in the staff, one of whom sits on the editorial desk, while also holding on to a column.

The weekly magazine field is more firmly controlled by women. Obviously, the four magazines devoted almost exclusively to women's interests -- Mod, Women's, Woman's, and Woman Today -- are edited by women with largely female staffs. The Sunday supplements of the Bulletin and Express are edited by women.

Women writers likewise have a voice in the opinion editorial pages of both establishment and independent press. In 1982, Bulletin Today gave prominent space to four women writers who then touched off controversy with their outrageous, uninhibited views on politics, the arts, religion and even sexual mores. They were subsequently fired by the publisher. Three of the women have since found niches in the independent press, writing mostly on politics -- Melinda Qunitos-de Jesus in Veritas, Nines Cacho-Olivares in Business Day, and Sylvia Mayuga in Malaya.

Replacing the "Bulletin Four" is theater director Zeneida Amador, who has seen fit to restrict her column to sermonettes on human relationship and the Filipino psyche. The Daily Express also has a regular female columnist though her views often go ignored, due to many reasons, one of which is her uninspired writing. Julie Yap Daza's column still appears in the Times Journal.

Aside from their numbers on the staff, and their presence in opinion pages, women also make their presence felt in the industry with two groups of women writers. The first to be established, called Women in Media (WIM) began as a purely social concern, a loose grouping of women-friends who happened to be involved in communications. One of its members says the weekly dialogues they initiated with government officials, opposition figures, businessmen, and foreign diplomats, was one way of providing a structure to their gatherings. There is no attempt at all to address themselves to women's issues or to take a collective position on any issue. Women in Media Now (WOMEN) is more vocal when it comes to issuing statements on press freedom and taking up the cudgels for beleaguered journalists. The group is made up mostly of freelancers, although some have since joined newspaper and magazine staffs. Their regular meetings are either meant to polish the members' skills in writing (through panel discussions on interviewing techniques, political writing) or keep them up-to-date on political figures. As with WIM, they do not see themselves concerned primarily with feminist causes.

The so-called alternative or "independent" press seems more receptive to women. They are not only a dominant presence in the reportorial staff, but also hold editorial positions.

Mr. & Ms., of course, has the distinction of being owned and published by a woman, Ms. Apostol. The weekly Mr. & Ms. Supplement, as well as the new Philippine Inquirer, are both edited by a woman, Letty Jimenez Magsanoc, with the reportorial staff 50 per cent female. At Veritas, Melinda Quintos de Jesus is associate editor, with a majority of the staffers being women.

One of the more influential women in the independent press is Lourdes Molina-Fernandez, editor-in-chief of the daily Malaya. Before taking over Malaya's helm, she was a reporter at the Times Journal on the education and health beat, "writing a lot about women issues, often on problems of exploitation of women workers, prostitution, sexual harassment, especially at work and women's health problems."

She has not been able to apply this strong orientation towards women's issues at Malaya, however, as she says she is busy with desk work. Admitting that there is "not yet a deeply conscious effort to put priorities on what women issues to publish," Fernandez says that save for their education/health reporter, their other reporters rarely write about women's issues. Most of their newspaper's articles on women come from the wires/features services.

Fernandez admits she hasn't written much on women's liberation as she is more interested in what she calls "more solid topics like actual problems of women workers/health problems." As a whole, she admits that Malaya had tended to focus on the "political-economic involvement" of women.

As a whole though, the independent press has proven more receptive to articles on women's issues, using them more frequently and giving them greater prominence.

TREATMENT OF WOMEN'S ISSUES

How do local newspapers and magazines treat women's issues? Articles and press releases relating to childcare, food and home management, even consumer affairs, are sent to the "second section," what used to be called the Society Page, but which has been replaced by terms like "Home and Culture Page," "Lifestyle" and "Living" sections. There has been, of late, a disturbing, or maybe just annoying, trend to return to the Society Page format of old, entire pages filled with the names and faces of the Filipino elite and their partying ways.

Outside the second section, the woman reporter often finds herself assigned to the so-called "soft"beats. These include health, science, education, community affairs, and social services. At the workshop of media women during the first GABRIELA assembly, one of the loudest complaints of the participants was the editors' discrimination in the assignment of beats. Challenging and prestigious beats like police, Malacañang, the Batasan, business and sports are usually given to men, and even if a female reporter has been assigned to, say, the education beat, when things get rough, as in student demonstrations, a presumably more experienced male reporter is sent out to help her.

Why all the fuss regarding beat assignments? The value of a particular beat depends on several factors: the skills it forces the reporter to develop (which is why the police beat, with its constant demand for accuracy and detail, and the chance it provides to develop street contacts, is deemed an important training ground for most journalists); the prominence of the people to be covered and consequently, the story's prominence in the front page (which is obviously why Malacañang is such a coveted beat); and the skills or special knowledge demanded of anyone in it (like sports and business). An unacknowledged factor, of course, is also the possibility for making money ("envelopmental journalism") among the reporter's sources.

Because beats like health and science do not require physical risk, do not involve prominent personalities, and do not demand any sense of urgency, such beats are deemed second-rate, and is it just by accident that there are almost always given to women?

The solution, however, does not lie in simply putting a woman reporter to cover the WPD. We may ask, by griping about their assignment to "soft" beats, are not women buying the male establishment's view that women's issues are really less important than so-called men's interests like politics and business? Are we not using a gauge of news worthiness fashioned by men to serve their own priorities?

The problem surfaces even in the women's magazines, where presumably women's issues would get priority. Instead, they are swamped by articles on international celebrities, especially foreign royalty; pseudo-instructive guides to a better marriage, a sizzling sex life, a colorful love affair; tales of the occult, the bizarre, the supernatural; and pages of fashion, diet and exercise notes. Why the largely escapist fare? Editors of such magazines are constantly pressured by the advertising and circulation officers to come out with articles normally expected in a magazine of its kind. There is also what we may call the tyranny of the format, and one cannot make any drastic changes in content without touching off a warning bell from the publisher's office. Then, too, it is sad to note, readers' reactions and positive feedback is strongest on such articles as an occult adviser, or a torrid sex nove serialization.

But women's issues are not necessarily less interesting, less saleable than other kinds of news. This has been proven by the

Depthnews Women's News Service, whose features are regularly utilized by local papers. Depthnews, founded in 1969, is an Asia-wide news service devoted to development issues. Three years ago, in observance of the International Decade of Women, the UNESCO tapped development news offices in Asia, the Caribbean and Africa with the aim of developing women's news services in these regions. Depthnews was chosen for Asia. The results have been most encouraging. Romeo Abundo, editorial director of Depthnews Asia, says their women's features are among the most heavily used in their dispatches, although UNESCO has since halted its funding support. Among the topics the Depthnews Women's Bureau has touched on are sexual discrimination of women in Asian societies; and women's movements. Estrella Maniquis, who writes for the women's desk, amends though that even in their choice of features to use, local editors still exhibit a telling fondness for the sensational: most of the features used are those on prostitution and sex education.

SURVEY OF WOMEN'S ISSUES IN MEDIA

It is within this context that we conducted our survey on the treatment of women's issues in Philippine print media.

The Bulletin Today was chosen from among the daily newspapers mainly because it has the widest circulation, meaning it is read in most homes that buy a newspaper. By inference, it is the newspaper most read by Filipino women, and which bears the greatest influence in Filipina's attitudes, values and knowledge of the world.

The study was conducted not just to see what stories on women printed at the start and towards the end of the decade; but also to gain an insight into the attitudes of the Bulletin news desk towards stories involving women.

It is for this reason that we concentrated our analysis on the front page of the Bulletin, where presumably the most newsworthy stories see print. Though more stories on women and women's issues can be found in the so-called second section, we felt it would be more appropriate to study the front page where stories on women would have to compete with stories from all other areas of coverage.

Because of time and personnel constraints, it was decided to limit the scope of the survey to two years: 1975 -- the start of the Decade for Women; and 1984 --- towards the Decade's end. Within these two years, research was also

limited to the months of March, May, July, and December.

The research methodology involved studying daily issues of the Bulletin Today for every month designated. Stories on the front and other sections of the paper which involved women and women's issues were then tabulated.

The stories were classified under two headings: 1) stories in which women figure prominently; and 2) stories on women's issues, specifically, health, medicine and childcare; consumer affairs; divorce, annulment and marriage; family planning and abortion; women's rights and wifebeating; crimes against women, specifically rape; religion; and the International Women's Year and women's liberation.

Among the stories in which women figured prominently, several classifications emerged: 1) stories on Imelda Romualdez Marcos, wife of the Philippine President and her two daughters; 2) stories on beauties, models and moviestars; 3) stories on prominent personalities and women leaders of other countries; 4) stories of women in the arts and in sports; 5) stories on the women of the Aquino family and on women involved in the Aquino assassination case and 6) education and teachers, as a clear majority of public school teachers are women.

This is how the stories are broken down:

1975

Topics	March	May	July	December	TOTAL
Beauties, movie stars	10 ^{P+}	16 ^{P+}	10 ^P	4 ^{P+}	40
Consumer affairs	1+	19*	6*	7*	33
Imelda Marcos & family	6 ^{P+}	4	2	8 ^P	20
Personalities/ Women Leaders	4 ^C	3*	4*	9*	20
Health, med., childcare	4	4	7 ^P	-	15
Fam. planning/ abortion	3 ⁺	1	4*/5* ^C	-	13

Topics	March	May	July	December	TOTAL
Divorce, Marr., annul.	1	4	4	2* ^P	11
IWY/Women's Lib.	2+	5 ^{P+}	2 ^S	2	11
Education/ teachers	-	6*	-	2	8
Prostitutes	4*	1	1	1	7
Crime/Rape	-	1 ^C	1	4	6
Women's rights/ wifebeating	1	1 ⁺	2	-	4
Religion	-	1	3	-	4

Legend: P - with photos
 * - some were banner stories
 S - series
 + some stories not on FP
 C - with

1984

Topics	March	May	July	December	TOTAL
Imelda Marcos & Fam.	15	17 ^P	12 ^P	15	59
Consumer Affairs	3	18	10	8*	39
Education/teacher	9	6	4	5 ⁺ ^C	24
Personalities/ women leaders	6	3	5	4	18
Beauties, movie stars	2	4	7 ^P	4 ^P	17
Women in sports	-	1	1	14	16
Women in Aquino case	8	1	2	4	16
Health, med., & children	3	1	7	2	13
Women in culture	6	-	-	3	9
Crime/rape	-	6	2	1	9
Prostitutes	1	3	-	2 ⁺	6

Topics	March	May	July	December	TOTAL
Religion	-	-	1	5	6
Divorce, annulment, marriage	-	-	1 ⁺	2 ^{P*}	3
Fam. planning/ abortion	-	-	1	-	1

Legend: P - with photos
 * - inc. banner stories
 + - some stories not on FP
 C - with cartoons

When both years are taken together, the stories can be ranked as follows:

1. Imelda Marcos and Family	(79)
2. Consumer Affairs	(72)
3. Beauties, models and movie stars ..	(57)
4. Personalities/Women Leaders	(38)
5. Education/teachers	(32)
6. Health, medicine and childcare.....	(28)
7. Women in sports	(16)
8. Women in Aquino case	(15)
9. Crime/rape	(15)
10. Divorce/marriage/annulment	(14)
11. Family planning/abortion	(14)
12. Prostitutes/Prostitution	(13)
13. Int'l. Women's Year and Women's Lib.	(11)
14. Women in culture	(9)
15. Women's rights/wifubeating	(4)

Several conclusions can be gleaned from these findings:

1) There is a sharp drop (from 40 to 17) in the number of front page stories and photos on beauties, models and movie stars. This could indicate a shift in the news desk's attitude that sex helps sell a paper, although no immediate connection between this shift in attitude and the decade can be made. 1975 was also the year the Miss Universe contest was held in Manila. Also, by the late 70's, tabloids began playing up sex on their front pages.

which is why, perhaps, Bulletin Today decided to forego putting sexy women in the front page.

2) There is an equally sharp rise in the number of front page stories of Imelda R. Marcos and other members of the First Family except the President (from 20 to 59). This can be partly explained by the fact that 1984 was an election year, and the First Lady needed to keep a high profile as she had designated herself the campaign manager for Metro Manila for the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL), the administration party, in the last year's elections for the National Assembly.

Her continued presence in the dailies, however, indicate that the official family has no intention of reducing their presence in the media.

3) There were 11 stories on International Women's Year and the women's liberation movement in 1975, and none in 1984. Towards the decade's close, the issue of women's search for emancipation and equality had ceased to be news.

4) The high ranking of consumer affairs in the news can be attributed to the fact that both 1975 and 1984 were times of severe economic stress for the Philippines. In 1975, the world fuel crisis first made itself felt, triggering a spate of price increases. In 1984, the dollar shortage and loss of confidence of the business community once more led to a round of a new price increases and controls.

5) In 1975, news on education/teachers ranked ninth, hitting the front page only in the weeks just before the opening of a new school year. In 1984, education has jumped to third place, mainly because elementary and high school teachers went on strike to press their demands for higher salaries and allowances.

6) The high ranking of stories involving women personalities: Imelda Marcos (1) beauties, models, and actresses (3) and international newsmakers and foreign women leaders (4) indicates that in the decade just past, news on women remained essentially personality-oriented, with focus on women's looks, figure, wealth or family connections. Of the stories on foreign women leaders, a great number were on the late Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Britain's Margaret Thatcher.

A great deal of the stories on women personalities in 1975 dealt on Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, who had just been left a widow with the death of her second husband. The Bulletin, in fact, ran a front-page series on "Ari and Jackie."

7) In 1975, stories on women in sports did not appear in the front page. The 1984 score is significantly high only because of the Lydia de Vega - Michael Keon controversy.

8) Family planning/abortion made it to the front page in the 1975 mainly because the government and church were then locked in the so-called "condom controversy" when population officials wanted to sell condoms in neighborhood stores.

9) Women's rights, and women's aspirations were and are not deemed important enough for front page treatment. The high ranking of stories on consumer affairs, beauties, education, and health, medicine and childcare point to the traditional perceptions of a woman's role: consumer, sex object, nurturer, and mother.

One women's issue which is not relegated to the second section or assigned to a neophyte reporter is rape. On the contrary, rape stories are often found in the front pages of the dailies, and the more prominent personalities involved, the higher it is placed on the page. No print medium thrives or rape more than the tabloid, which relies on rape stories as a staple, splashed across the front page in huge headlines, with the victim's photo as added come-on.

Perhaps a look at three month's (1984) issues of Tempo, daily tabloid of the Bulletin Today, is instructive for those curious about how often a tabloid publishes rape stories, and its treatment of the issue.

Let us begin in June last year, In June, Tempo, published 13 stories on rape, one of them alleging the involvement of policemen; another which highlighted the location of the crime, a pig pen; and another in which the victim was a seven year - old girl. The two crime stories, which received fairly prominent play-ups, was a common theft in which two sisters were the victims; and another in which the robbery victim was pregnant.

In June, too, Tempo published a photograph of an a-go-go dancer who was, as the caption put it, "wearing just a smile, a bikini (panty) and high-heeled shoes". Her features were masked. In this same month, the tabloid also published a feature on a Filipino mail-order bride, Felina Lamosa, 21, of Tagum. In the article, her American husband, "multi-married" John Line, 43, is described as "a satisfied customer," even as it describes how Felina is completely under her husband's thumb, fully dependent on him, not allowed a driving lesson, or even wear make-up. The accompanying photograph shows Felina seated on her husband's knee.

A few days earlier, Tempo also published a story headlined: "Be More Ambitious, says Woman Leader," quoting Korean Dr. Sook Chong Lee when she spoke before the Federation of Asian Women's Association meet in Manila.

In July, Tempo published 12 stories on rape, four on sex murders, one on the break-up of a "sex den," and one on bigamy. One issue headlined that the suspect in a gory murder case had seven girlfriends.

In August, Tempo published 11 rape stories, in one, the victim is a three year-old baby, in another, a 13 year-old babysitter, in yet another, a 14 year-old. In one front page story, the lead mentions that while raping the mother, a soldier fell on her infant son, killing the baby in the process. In another rape story, the 17 year-old victim is described as a "good looker".

Aside from Tempo's obvious predilection for crime stories, especially on rapes, something it shares in common with all other local tabloids, what other observations can we obtain from this admittedly haphazard analysis?

For one thing, the involvement of a woman, either as victim or culprit gives a story added prominence. Often that is the only angle which seems to justify the story's appearance. If the rape victim is pretty, young and well-to-do, the story lands in the front page. In a more recent issue, there was a story about a prostitute who complained that she was robbed by a customer in a motel room. The writer did not fail to mention that "she also admitted that she had a good time" with the man.

While indirectly inferring outrage at the crime, especially if the rape victim is a minor, the tabloid makes no attempt to view rape as an issue. Neither is there any attempt in the majority of cases to follow the story through from the police blotter, to the courts, to the fate of the accused.

And, we may wonder, by giving the public a daily dose of rape stories, in which the only interesting details are those concerning the victim - is she young? pretty, well-to-do? --aren't tabloids somehow trivializing the issue, and worse, blunting public anger at the crime? If rape is so common, of little consequence, why should anyone, why would society, raise such a fuss about it? And why is the focus on the victim, not on the accused? Why are more details given on her, while the alleged assailant is identified only by name?

There is an interesting theory that tabloids like Tempo are geared towards a predominantly male readership, and that their contents are therefore tailored to suit the interests of the male working class. These interests, we might add, are those perceived by a largely male editorial desk.

Although this paper is limited to print, I would like to quote at length from a column by Nestor Torre in which he comments on the recent spate of "bold" films. Entitled "The Filipino as Exhibitionist" Torre remarks on the slew of aggressive, sexually uninhibited, and exhibitionistic women in recent sex films. His conclusion: that the male audience's fantasies feed upon and nurture the male director's own distorted notions of womanhood.

I quote:

Other films follow the same approach and the audience goes wild over them, even if it knows that most women would be hardly as careless about sex nudity in real life. Another form of unreality and escapism in Philippine films? You bet.

This trend may be unrealistic but it fulfills the male moviegoer's fantasy about meeting a woman who is not just extremely desirable but also very available. In real life, you can't even hold a strange girl's waist without getting slapped. In the movies the girl doesn't just not resent it, but even says pretty please. What a fantasy! It makes everything look so easy, at a time when nothing comes easy anymore. Of course, the menfolk are grateful, but some women are outraged over

this new portrayal of the Filipina -- and with reason.
(Daily Express, September 9, 1984)

WOMEN'S MAGAZINES

INTRODUCTION

She beckons from the newsstands, the pretty face bigger than life, the flawless skin, the preoccupied eyes. She is the average woman's ideal, the face they'd like to see in their own mirrors every morning.

As the recurring theme on the cover of every woman's magazine, the perfectly made-up face represents the entire concept of most women's magazines in the country. Little wonder then that a deprecatory shrug usually accompanies the mere mention of the genre.

The past decade has seen the rise of a lot of women's magazines, usually a weekly reasonably priced from P1.50 in 1975 to P6 in 1984. From the most popular Women's magazine that was identified with the defunct Manila Times of the pre-Martial Law period, a host of identically-conceived women's publications emerged.

The most feasible, judging from the sheer number of advertisers would seem to be Mod magazine, although its editor, Mrs. Ernie Evora-Sioco has chronically stressed that it is not a woman's magazine, but more of a family publication. Recognizable titles too are the Woman's Home Companion magazine, Women's Journal, Miscellaneous, Mr. & Ms. (although its more political nature makes it a typical), and Woman Today, of more recent vintage.

Because circulation figures and audience profile are tightly-guarded secrets of the trade, we can only surmise that the main target of most women's magazines would be the females in the household, aged 10-60 (because of the kiddie portion, games and puzzles), usually the housewives or home-makers (because of the ads), the middle class (the price is a clue), and mostly, the urbanites or educated rural women (because English is the primary language used).

A study of the magazine-reading habits of Filipino men and women conducted by the Philippine Survey and Research Company (PSRC) as part of its media monitoring services, however reveals that one or two women's magazines are constantly on the list of the top three magazines read in the average household nationwide. Needless to say, women constitute the majority of magazine readers on a ratio of 70:30.

Using the multiplier effect (meaning, reading materials are borrowed by other household members so that one copy is usually read by five people), it would be safe to assume that the average woman's magazine has a circulation of from 20,000 to 60,000, conservatively speaking.

How does a typical woman's magazine operate?

The editor usually prepares a list of articles (aside from the regular columns and sections) and features that would coincide with important dates or occasions in a woman's calendar. This is an important point because it explains why most of this type of magazines have a predictable quality to them, why features are similar or identical and how the concept of consumerism has been reduced to a constant harping on what to buy based on the occasion. The timely ads likewise confirm this seasonal buying spree, even fuelling it.

What are those occasions that necessitate related features?

New Year (yearly or monthly horoscopes), Valentine's Day (shopping and dining/dating guide, love and its many splendor, etc.), graduation day (shopping/dining guide), Easter and the Lenten season (the lives of saints, meatless dishes, Easter crafts, etc.), summer (vacation spots, hobbies and crafts), the June bride (wedding gifts, honeymoon spots, making marriages last, marriage customs and rites, etc.), back to school (1001 ways to prepare your child's baon, school uniforms, etc.), midyear (more horoscopes and predictions), All Souls' Day, Christmas (shopping, dining, decorating, holiday feasting and cooking, religious lore on Nativity, customs around the world, etc.), Mother's and Father's Day in May and June are also traditionally commemorated with forum/interviews or features on outstanding mothers/fathers or child-raising practices.

This usual melange of occasions to celebrate has also been (wittingly or unwittingly) mistaken for timeliness or relevance to the times, both by the readers and the editors of most women's magazines to the exclusion of the more pressing issues of the day. Of course

the soar in advertising revenues during the seasonal calendar can help explain the almost permanent blinders.

Another source of materials is the syndicated features company which, for fees ranging from \$2 to \$20 convertible to their peso equivalent, will allow the magazine the use of clippings from foreign magazines. The articles are most celebrity gossip and/or unusual happenings classified as human interest. They are mostly clipped from the National Enquirer or The Star, two of the most notorious scandal sheets abroad. The fees would presumably keep the magazine free from copyright hassles, although it is a common practice to lift off articles from other locally-available foreign magazines, with or without rewriting the text.

Press releases are of course another staple and include all the socials and promotions that hotels, corporations and private individuals frequently litter their life with. They easily compose from 10-30% of the typical magazine's contents, what with hotel and corporate PRs amply rewarding space privileges. Since the press releases usually come from the same sources and distributed to publications at about the same time-frame, most magazines are just about identical in some of their contents.

The logic in accommodating these press releases seems to be that anyway, the readers won't notice the duplication; they can only afford to buy one magazine at a time and of the same genre.

It is this "captive audience" who decides on the format and contents of the magazine, some editors habitually cite. That's what they want; "iyan and binibili, eh"; it's the formula and it has worked all these years, so why rock the boat? one editor shrugs dismissively. Risk-taking then by trying out new angles or adding more politics to the usual content has been minimized -- for economic reasons and that specre that hangs over every editor's head: "baka tayo ipatawan" being summoned by the Powers That Be. Or at the very least, being reprimanded by the publishers who are even more cautious than the editors.

Attempts to deviate from the usual beauty-homefront-fashion format have not been met with success. Female Forum which came out in 1983 aspired for a more political thrust and feminist-oriented columns; because of economic reasons and probably the male publisher's lukewarm politics, it has degenerated into a local gossip rag and

lately, to a movie mini-magazine exported to Saudi Arabia for Filipino consumption. Woman Today, purportedly "the intelligent woman's magazine" took on the liberated woman's cause and came out with a local version of Cosmopolitan magazine's sexual proclivities.

With the current economic crisis and the non-stop increase in the price of newsprint, some things seem to be inevitable: 1) the women's magazines would most likely stick to their time-tested formula; even the smallest risks might eat into their increasing profits; 2) talent fees are doomed to stay at present starvation levels -- from P100 to P200, so that the better writers would rather write for bigger publications where the meager pay is compensated by nationwide exposure, or peddle their talents to ad agencies and, 3) there would be more fantasy fluffs, escapist fare that would take the women's minds off the harsh realities of the present day.

Because women's magazines are a staple reading fare of 70% of our female population (PSRC surveys), and because of the relative permanence of the printed word, it is safe to assume that this type of magazine would have a strong effect on how women perceive themselves.

Most of the articles are geared toward helping women redefine their roles and concept of themselves: love and relationships confirm their stereotypical roles as wives, mothers/nurturers, etc. and so do the ads. The beauty and fashion columns and the cover girls would take care of stressing the importance of looking good, the homefront sections would help her in taking care of hearth and home, etc. All in all, the ideas espoused by a woman's magazine that zeroes in on a woman as target audience, seep in all aspects of her life. And ideas define values and priorities.

In this study, we'd like to show how over a 10-year period, women's magazines have (or haven't) changed in the roles and definition they ascribe to their women readers. Have the changing times, even the flag-waving declaration of the Woman's Decade made a dent on the consciousness of the woman's magazine? Because format follows sales, what have women been reading all these years? Has there been any difference? Using available data, we'll try to measure how much change has been affected -- if at all.

METHODOLOGY

We chose Woman's Home Companion magazine because it has been around for at least 12 years and has therefore found its own style and character, not to mention its set audience. Also, it has consistently been mentioned in the top five magazines over the past 10 years, as surveyed by the PSRC, along with Mod, Panorama, Woman's Journal and occasionally, Kislap.

Although both Mod and Woman's Journal are also of similar format, we hesitated using them: Mod's editor's claim that hers is not a woman's magazine and WJ's 90% lifted foreign articles and materials are prime considerations for WHC's choice.

Because making a 10-year study of even one weekly magazine is tedious and impossible under the given time frame (2 months' research period), we decided to concentrate on key months and years. March, May, July and December have been chosen because these are the months that have traditionally covered women and women's issues more extensively: March, because of the women's decade and international women's year, May because of the Marian processions and holidays, July because of the enrolment period which falls heavily on the mother, and December because of the usual fuss and frenzy about Christmas gift-giving, cooking, decorating, etc., again a traditional woman's domain as far as women's magazines are concerned.

We decided to divide the 10-year period into a space of 3 years each: 1975 or the start of the decade, 1978, 1981 and 1984.

Limitations

It would have been ideal had we taken at least two women's magazines for purposes of one-on-one comparison. Or done a page by page or article by article evaluation of the contents of even more magazine to ascertain which ideas are peddled in so many words.

But time and manpower constraints are the biggest limitations that hampered a more thorough study and so we concentrated on:

the cover girls - because they're up front, the main bait used to hook the readers; they also embody what the editor thinks it women readers would identify with, even from afar.

- b) the cover text - a list of inside articles which the editor believes are the most attractive to its readers and what they'd like to read most; also reflects the editor's concept of the women issues that should be prioritized and her own level of consciousness.
- c) the ads - how do advertisers perceive the readers of this particular magazine? In turn, what roles do the readers unconsciously imbibe through the images presented by the ads?

FINDINGS:

a) The Cover Girls

In the four years covered within the 10-year period, certain operative words emerge: "models, coeds, foreign-blood, studies abroad, exclusive schools, 16, 17 years old, wealthy parents ..

To summarize, the common qualities the cover girls had were:

- * pretty or fine features: most were commercial or ramp models, mestizas, runners-up in beauty contests
- * youth: from 12-23 years old; they were older in 1984
- * wealth: they are daughters of celebrities or prominent government officials or diplomats or had foreign blood
- * coeds in exclusive schools here (Ateneo, International School, Assumption, SPC, Maryknoll, etc.) or abroad
- * have travelled/lived or planned to live/work/study abroad
- * the usual courses mentioned were: Management, HRM, AB
- * most had very little philosophy or deep ideas about themselves as women or about their future: i.e., one of the cover girl's main ambition in life was "to please people", another's favorite hobby was "shopping sprees abroad".

b) Cover Text

The headlines used on the cover are limited to the following celebrities - 56 times

- . mostly gossip about their lives
- . mainly foreign and royalty
- human interest and features - 26 times
 - . inside view of the UL; Nude is good;
 - Nuns making waves, some popular holes in the walls, etc.
 - . usually locally-written
 - . mostly of current interest and issue
- love and relationships - 25
 - . mainly how to have a rosy lovelife
 - . usually lifted or syndicated features
- beauty and fashion - 24
 - . fashion shows, current fashion statements, press releases;
 - . how to apply make-up, keep muscles firm, brush hair properly, etc.
 - . local fashion looks, but lifted/syndicated beauty tips
- housekeeping - 20
 - . how to keep house spic and span
 - . cooking/kitchen/decorating tips
 - . budgetting for household, plants, etc.
- health/safety - 20
 - . pre-natal care, how to beat off attackers, contraception, etc.
- psychological tests - 18
 - . your choice of sports, way to hold your cigarette reveals who you are
 - . usually syndicated
 - . focused on personality types
- horoscopes, astrology, occult and ESP - 35
 - . predictions by foreign and local seers numerology, astrology and your beauty/budget/love guide
 - . monthly, daily, weekly, yearly horoscopes
 - . reincarnation, out of body experiences
 - . mostly syndicated materials except for the weekly horoscope in '84 by Fr. Arcadio Familiar

religion and faith-healing - 10

- . mostly the series on Amang Frank's healing
- . Leo Parungao's dwarves
- . seeing images of the Madonna in the sky, etc.
- . local experiences and features

fiction/stories - 11

- . includes ghost stories - teen fiction or true-confession types of dramas, novels
- . usually lifted or syndicated novels must have sex, love scenes, drama and action

money - 5

- . mainly how to budget, shopping guides, more varied topics in '84: investments for housewives, etc.

career - 10

- . more in '84
- . how to mix love and career, how to fend off your boss

legal stories - 9

- . mostly rape, seduction, adultery, and sex-related cases
- . locally-written

women's issues - 6

- . included here are the alternative lifestyles identified with the more socially-conscious woman like Lamaze, breastfeeding, bonding, etc.
- . also the more negative syndicated features in '75, the International Women's Year: "Why Filipinos Have No Need for the Women's Liberation Movement" (March 1975) and "Feminists of the World, How About the Men?" (March 1978).

By year, the breakdown would read:

	1975	1978	1981	1984
beauty/fashion	6	8	8	2
celebrity/gossip	8	21	20	18

	1975	1978	1981	1984
housekeeping	1	3	9	7
hor./astro/ESP	2	9	10	13
rel./faith healing	1	5	4	0
health/safety	3	9	5	4
pop psychology	2	13	0	3
fiction/stories	3	8	0	0
money	1	1	1	2
career	1	1	2	6
legal stories	5	0	4	0
women's issues	2	1	3	0
love/relationship	9	8	2	6

Or to summarize the top cover text topics for the Decade:

1975 - love/rel., celebrity/gossip, fashion-beauty

1978 - celebrity/gossip, pop psychology, horoscope/astrology

1981 - celebrity/gossip, hor./astrology, beauty-fashion

1984 - celebrity/gossip, hor./astrology, housekeeping

Clearly, sensational gossip about celebrities are a very hot topic to women readers to a point that women editors have consistently peppered their covers with this. Or to put it another way, the editors think that this would make the readers to buy.

In more recent years, there has also been a noticeable shift from love/relationships and psychology to more horoscope, astrology and ESP topics. There are now two columns in WHC that deal with the phenomenon: "ESP" by Mell Aganon and "Dheng and Listo", the latter, allegedly a dwarf who solves write-in problems sent by readers to the dwarf's friend, Dheng of Marist Village, Antipolo.

The shift may in part be attributed to the current editor's personal interest in astrology.

c) Advertisements

Because basically the same products and services are advertised in the magazine, we took to comparing only

two base years -- 1975 and 1984 -- to find out if the pattern of buying and picturing women's roles has changed at all.

We found out that in 1975, there were a total of 406 advertisements, broken down as follows:

* cosmetics, beauty aids, personal grooming	102	25%
* household appliances	70	17%
* food/vitamins/drinks	81	20%
* cooking/kitchen aids	37	9%
* education aids and schemes (fashion, correspondence, bookstores, subscription)	28	6.9%
* miscellaneous (ballpens, watches, etc.)	18	4.4%
* clothes/fashion	23	5.7%
* lingerie/napkins/intimate apparel	17	4.2%
* baby products (bottles, diapers, etc.)	10	2.5%
* leisure/restaurants/resorts	9	2.2%
* memorial parks	9	2.2%

In 1984, there were less ads at 233, broken down as such:

* food/vitamins	85	36%
* cosmetics/beauty aids	66	28%
* miscellaneous	19	8.15%
* household appliances	15	6.44%
* kitchen aids	11	4.7%
* educational schemes	11	4.7%
* baby products	11	4.7%
* lingerie/napkins	7	3%
* fashion	5	2%

There were much less ads in 1984, almost half of that in 1975. This can be partly attributed to the severe economic crisis that have hounded us in recent years, depleting the budget for promotions, or closing down a lot of companies.

This also explains partly the shift to food and medicines as prime sources of ad revenues, from the usual frothy stuff like clothes and cosmetics. The emphasis was on the basics because presumably, people (women especially) now have less money to spend on luxuries and will concentrate on the basic necessities.

Most of the advertisers too are multinational corporations like Cheseborough-Pond's, California Manufacturing Company (Lady's Choice, Knorr), Max Factor and Avon Cosmetics, Irmaflex, Nestle, etc.

ANALYSIS

Except for Mr. & Ms. which has broadened its coverage to include political realities, most of the women's magazines in the past decade have given little attention to women's issues. Even Mr. & Ms. for that matter, concentrated on politics as a whole and rarely on the politics of the women's movement.

The portrayal of women and their roles has changed little. The accent on the pretty face on the cover remains, giving women readers the impression that beauty resides in physical attributes and youth, the most dominant characteristics of the cover girls.

The ads too have stressed youth and beauty in their models, a one-dimensional approach to women, indeed. More, the advertisers have trained their guns on women as homemakers, mothers, wives and nurturers. Some ads have obligingly included some models posed as career or working women, but not so much as part of their jobs or office roles, but merely to give testimonials to products they use as women. The new roles and settings have only been incidental details, a ploy to capture yet another sector of the market rather than portray women in another context.

The ads likewise treat women as merely consumers, perpetuating the buyers' mentality and the boxed roles that they are the passive element, the end factor in the whole production process, instead of as active producers themselves. The buying impulse too has been bracketed as inherent to her identity as a woman and as ideal to her role: a Pillsbury ad say this succinctly: "What makes a woman a perfect homemaker" When she bakes them a Pillsbury cake/hotcake/waffle, etc."

Because most of the advertisers are multinational corporations, the stress on colonial consumer patterns and the affluent lifestyle are reinforced on middle and lower-middle class women. Materialistic values and priorities, the frustrating search for The Good Life are thus entrenched. How do you think crunchy junk foods replaced home-made and nutritious snacks on a woman's grocery list? Or why specialized gadgets and kitchen aids with their illusion of modernity and sophistication have hoodwinked women into a false sense of contentment, while barricading them more firmly in their kitchens?

Also, the stress on the attainment of these material comforts and convenience gadgets, like the magazine's Emphasis on movie stars and celebrity gossip, have distracted women from the more pressing issues that affect her as a Filipino woman and citizen. The protective shell of her home which shelters her from the ruthless realities outside her front step are given a double-wall panelling by the magazine's a political contents: home tips, fashion, beauty, and mundane concerns that likewise peg her into inaction instead of challenging her potentials for leadership.

The serialized novels of most magazines, in this case, "Sins," reflect this overall acceptance of women's passive role. When she is pictured as becoming a success, she becomes criminal, ruthless, manipulative. Is the image of manipulator, automatically attached to successful women a ploy to keep her content within the safe confines of her homes? Does she really have to turn criminal to run her own life?

Of course the typically foreign settings of most novels and fiction pieces likewise reinforce the hankering for things and places foreign, thus glamorous, sophisticated, cosmopolitan and to middle-class, very important to one's social standing.

Despite the majority of urban women going into careers of their own and handling their own finances, little of the welcome change is reflected on the cover, cover text or ads. A money/career section has recently been added, but it has not stirred up enough significant change to reflect on the entire character of the magazine. In fact, what appear to affect women readers more, based on the automatic double printing magazine require for every horoscope issue, are the astrology, occult and ESP columns and sections. Thus, women are indirectly to think that in the face of adversity, such as the current, economic crisis, the attitude to cultivate is to leave it

all up to fate, to the mysterious Force behind it all. It's all in our stars, Brutus, not in the banking system which collapses without warning, not in our hard work that had made little difference, not in our leaders who do not inspire us at all.

This will thus reinforce the already predominantly escapist character of most women's magazines, a pity since it is admittedly the most accessible medium to a majority of women.

Economics has a lot to do with the formula approach, the overcautious air, the fashionable fluff, the safe role models and the "everything for everyone" mentality. And so would the male publishers. Except for Mr. & Ms., the publishers are usually males -- which might account for the lack of insight or sympathy for the women's movement and issues, and their upholding of the patriarchal system.

Overall, there is very little significant change in the women's magazine format now and 10 years ago, based on the cover, the cover text and the ads. Occasionally there are some worthy features like the legal stories that orient women on their rights, sexual harassment on the job, alternative lifestyles and tips on handling money in more recent years, plus more political articles but they are more exceptions than the rule.

THE KOMIKS

1. INTRODUCTION

For 25 centavos a shot, cheaper than the shrinking pan de sal, your friendly neighborhood laundrywoman gets to meet the fantastic Zuma, that snakman whose favorite repast is a plateful of virgins' hearts; or Uica, a luscious naked creature who literally sets everything on fire. Vicariously, she can also share Jessa Escrito's transformation from a plain Jane to a beautiful woman by simply donning a mysterious black blouse. If you don't believe that money grows on trees, you only have to read The Family Tree to imagine the greed that complicates easy money. If she's nothing but a bag of bones due to malnourishment, your laundrywoman would surely empathize with the plight of Bonesa. Or Mamaw, Ada, Aling Maria, or E.Tic -- a host of funny, ridiculous, pathetic and uniformly, tragicomic

creatures that inhabit the 30 or so pages of the most popular medium of the decade, the komiks magazine.

According to a recent documentary on komiks prepared by the Communications Foundation for Asia (CFA), the postwar period spawned the first local comic book -- Pilipino Komiks. Since then, the number of komiks titles have soared to 48 a week, as of two; three years ago. It is safe to presume that they number at least 50 now; what with the bold komiks easily contributing a dozen titillating titles or so.

With a total readership of 18 million weekly (3-million audited circulation according to the CFA documentary times 6, the accepted multiplier effect in a household), the komiks magazine is definitely a favorite leisure package.

And why not? For an average of P2 a copy, the reader can feast his eyes and feed his imagination with a 7-8 stories or novel installments, interspersed with movie gossip, pen pal columns or even advice columns. If his budget is limited, he can even read eight komiks titles out of that P2, by simply frequenting the myriad renting stalls around campuses and public markets where komiks are rented out at P.15-.25 a read. If we add the limitless number of regular patrons of these stalls, the 18-million weekly circulation can easily swell to 20-25 million, half of the country's population, at that!

Who reads komiks magazines?

There are no readership profiles to paint a precise picture, but the cover price which is cheaper than a movie ticket can lead us to conclude that the CDE economic bracket is a captive market. This is unwittingly confirmed by the words of Joe Lad Santos, a komiks writer who is also a president of KOMOPEB (Komiks Operation Brotherhood), a sectoral association when has revealed that the main function of the medium is "to entertain the masses."

A 1970 thesis on the subject also disclosed that in a survey conducted among the female population of an urban poor district, 95.1% listed reading komiks as their favorite recreation, followed by listening to the radio, going to the movies, chatting with neighbors and others (gambling, outing, etc.)

The CFA docu interviewed regular komiks readers on why the habit is addictive and the respondents said that this slim publication helps

them "unwind and relax, forget their problems, occupies their idle time and assuages boredom." Their favorite themes are: "stories about life and people, love, kalokohan or cartoon, romances, and fantasies."

More empirically, the 1970 thesis quantified these preferences, as: (multiple responses so more than

love, courtship and marriage	30.4%
movie stars and gossip	36.3%
news	30.4%
everyday life	17.6%
sex	4.9%
advice	14.7%
others (war, religion, horror, suspense)	9.8%

*Benefits cited by the same female respondents include:

moral lessons	96%
source of news	91%
occupies idle time	91%
teaching potential	58%

Although both radio and television and even the movies give the same benefits, komiks have a decided advantage in that they are easier to read because of the pictures and simpler words used, and the predominant use of the vernacular.

Because of the rather limited education of their target audience, komiks magazine publishers and writers make no pretense of the medium's purely entertainment goals.

Says Graphic Arts Services general manager Fernando Pimentel in the CFA docu: "Our purpose is to entertain people to the best that we can do within our limited resources." Graphic Arts publishes about 15 komiks titles a week.

Writers, too have no illusions about their jobs. "Mang-entertain", snaps prolific komiks writer Carlo J. Caparas on his main goal in writing. Adds Mars Ravelo, another komiks institution who also dabbled in publishing komiks for a while: "kung gusto mo ng leksyon, magpunta ka sa simbahan o

sa eskuwelahan. Pag komiks, panglibang lang, so ba't mo lalagyan ng sermon? Everything must be in its proper place."

Justifies another writer and author of "Kenkoy", Tony Velasquez: "Entertainment lang naman talaga ang komiks. Alam ng tao iyan, na hindi naman realistic yung nababasa nila, na it's just a story, fantasy lang. So no harm done. Besides, it's a means of release for a lot of people, something to keep their sanity intact. Of course, may education potential din ang medium dahil mas mabilis isalin ang information sa komiks form. But to educate the masses, you have to start from the lower forms of art bago ka magtungo sa art appreciation. From pabulum, you go to steak."

For a lower form of entertainment, the pay is top rate. New writers may get from P10-17.50 a page or just over P50 for the usual 5-page story, but once you make it in the field, P100 per page is the normal rate. That adds up to P500 per short story, or per novel installment. No wonder some novels are stretched up to 400-plus installments!

Pablo Gomez, a popular name in the genre has about 15 novels running in different komiks and grosses from P300,000 to P350,000 yearly on the medium alone, a 1981 article quotes.

Another top komiks name, Jim Fernandez makes P30,000 a month, and so does Carlo J. Caparas.

Illustrators make about P20 a page if they're new, up to P60 or '66 if they're seeded veterans. Top illustrators can even demand up to P100 per page for their art.

Still, some writers and illustrators gripe that the working conditions are far from ideal, with no benefits or compensation for them unlike the more stable professions.

Writer/illustrator Rod Santiago says in the CFA docu: "Nung 25 centavos pa lang ang komiks, writers got P25 a story; it's now P1.00 pero P25 per story pa rin ang writer; napag-iwanan na." Of course, it's even worse now when the komiks magazine sells for P2.00 but rates are pegged at the usual levels.

One deciding factor, reveals most writers is the virtual monopoly of komiks publishers over the medium. Currently, there are two biggest komiks publishers in the country, Atlas and Graphic Arts, both of them owned by the Roces Family.

"Wala kasing competition so they can dictate their own rates and writers have no choice if they want to be published", laments one writer.

So far, according to the PSRC media survey for 1983, the most popular komiks titles are: Pilipino, Wakasan, Aliwan, Love Story, Lovelife, Tagalog Klasiks and Superstar.

We've picked out Aliwan and analyzed its stories because it is the most familiar to us, having been distributed to us as GASI employee for 15 months.

2. CONTENT ANALYSIS OF ALIWAN KOMIKS IN MID-1984:

a) Unica: written by Jim Fernandez, illustrated by Hal Santiago

Revolves around Unica, a mysterious naked woman whose initial motive seemed to wreak revenge for the death of a woman caught in adulterous pose and killed by her husband. She alternates forms between a fullroom maiden and helpless baby and is later consumed by so much passion for the pirate Limahong that she forgets her original mission and seems bent on resurrecting the dead pirate by looking for human parts to replace his damaged organs. Her astonishing power to set fire to anything she touches causes panic, countless deaths and complications in the simple life of the barrio folks.

b) Blusang Itim: written by Elena M. Patron, illustrated by Joey Celerio

Jessa Escrito is a plain Jane clerk who took a fancy to a black blouse sold at an auction in an old Spanish house. Once she dons the blouse, however, she is transformed into a breathtakingly beautiful woman. Her phone pal, Angelo, falls in love with her altered appearance and their times together ultimately lead to intimacies and marriage proposal from him. She is now in a dilemma knowing that he has fallen in love with the bloused beauty and that he will never give her so much as a glance in her original form. Another guy is in love with the real Jessa but she does not love him. Her whole life is now caught

up with the mysterious black blouse which she cannot discard or even dare not wear when she thinks Angelo might come and fetch her from the office. With a descendant of the original owners of the blouse hounding her and her boyfriend pressing her for a wedding date, Jessa's confusion and almost insane possessiveness over the blouse takes front seat in this novel's twice-weekly installment.

c) *Ada*: written by Pablo Gomez
illustrated by Louie Celerio

Ada is a female dwarf who, together with her dwarf brother, gives usual favors to maidens who have impressed them. Youth and beauty are temporarily granted to its proteges, with a fair warning that the grant is for a limited period only. Ada thus appears in a progressively younger appearance to warn of the rapidly lapsing time. One protegee is an aging actress, another the maid, and another a garbage scavenger. How these women beneficiaries re-styled their lives because of the blessings or curse of Ada makes for several mini-stories within the novel.

d) *Aling Maria (Tadtarin man ang buto mo't laman)*
written by Elena M. Patron,
illustrated by Nar Castro

Aling Maria is a kindly old woman who lost her sanity because of several tragedies that struck her family, foremost of which is her son's troublesome estrangement from his affluent wife. The wife's aristocratic family files several harassment suits against the poor husband and even bans and blocklists him from potential employers. The novel actually pits a son's loyalty to his mother as opposed to his love for his wife, and plays up the son's guilt over choosing his wife, whose shrewd nature includes kidnapping her mother-in-law and holding her captive in a musty basement.

e) *Mga Kwentong Barbero '84*: written by LP Calixto,
illustrated by Ben Maniclang

Vignettes exploring the comic possibilities among its permanent set of characters: Cranky, a robot; Bitoy, patterned after TV-movie comedian Bentot, almost a mental retardate who is always the butt of jokes and mischief; Mang Nano, a bald old man who is patterned after the late Tang tarang Tang star; Nene, a tomboyish girl; and old man with a big nose; a slick-looking man with

only one good eye, another old man whose eccentricities center around his wealth and other myriad characters, most of them physically imperfect. In fact, it is the physical disabilities or character quirks of the persons which are often the source of the comic plot.

f) *Anak ni Zuma*: written by Jim Fernandez,
illustrated by Ben Maniclang

After several spin-offs of the basic tale of Zuma, a man saddled by two snakes on his neck and who was dug out of a Mayan-Aztec temple, another snake tale emerges. Buwa is a daughter of the notorious virgins' nemesis who can turn herself from a desirable temptress into a vile python that swallows her victims whole. The whole town is of course up in arms against Zuma who decides to give the people wealth in gold and gems to pull them to his side. He succeeds and soon enough, they're kidnapping virgins to appease his appetite for their hearts. His daughter meanwhile manages to capture the heart of a staunch Zuma vigilante and it looks like he's ready to abandon his crusade for Buwa's sake. The novel, as of July 1984, is at its 492nd installment, and looks like it's headed for another hundred series, with new complications and twists extending the plot.

3) FINDINGS

Majority of the novels are based on some fantastic premise: a blouse that can change a plain-faced woman into a beautiful maiden, a dwarf who can give youth and beauty to its proteges, a snakeman and his daughter wreaking havoc with their sanguine ways, a naked inflammable woman lusting after pirates and priests.

When it comes to straight stories the conflicts are usually centered around the family, pitting the woman against her mother-in-law as in Aling Maria.

Most of the stories are also women-oriented in that all the titles pertain to the females in the plot, except for the Kwentong Barbero, usually vignettes riding on current fads for comic relief.

There seems to be undue emphasis on the need for youth and beauty, as seen in the novels in this komiks, since the Ada, the black blouse and even Unica's naked splendor cause all the havoc and conflicts in the story -- and all of them promise or grant these dual bonus as intrinsic

to the plots. In the case of Aling Maria, martyrdom seems to be tacitly approved, with the old woman putting up with every double dealing for the sake of her son.

Women either as temptress or virgin (the Madonna image) still figure prominently in the story. Unica and Buwa are scheming women who use their beauty and sex appeal to get their men, while Aling Maria's rich daughter-in-law likewise uses her conjugal ties with her husband to make him toe her line. The virgins, helpless women caught in life's complications are found in Jess Escrito and as the victims of Zuma's craving for virgin hearts.

Overall, although it is the woman who is the protagonist in the stories, one notes that her life, her motives and ambitions are inexorably linked to the men in her life -- Unica to Limahong and Don Augusto, Jessa to Angelo, Buwa to her father's notorious ways, Aling Maria to her naive son's misplaced loyalty, and the Ada's beneficiaries, to their boyfriend's idiosyncracies and obsessions for youth and beauty in their mates.

4. ANALYSIS

It is easy to see that escapism through fantastic storyline permeate a typical komiks magazine, in keeping with its purely entertainment dictum. Rarely are there stories tailored along political lines, or even socio-economic realities with the aim to get the readers thinking. Poverty as reality occasionally seeps in, but only as a mire to escape from, usually through the intervention of Fate in the guise of a benevolent dwarf, a mysterious blouse, a snakeman, etc. Success via one's own ambitions and willful determination and human means is rarely portrayed. A fatalistic attitude then, the reliance on luck or Destiny, is easily fostered on the readers.

Women as adjuncts of men whose lives and destinies are tied up with and directed by them is another message implicit in the storylines. On her own, the stories will tell us; a woman does not amount to much, and so the heroine's preoccupations with love and relationships hinged on youth, wealth and beauty, rather than on defining her own self and career. In fact, when a woman is portrayed as a career girl, she is pictured as overly ambitious, cold, ruthless and calculating, who would like nothing better than to run (and ruin)

her husband's life (as in Aling Maria's daughter-in-law).

Women in traditional roles - as mothers, wives, daughters- mostly homemakers or full-time housewives are the main grist for the mills. In fact, women are very rarely identified with any profession except for vague illusions of "empleyada". What are stressed are their physical attributes. Her ideal qualities, the komiks would pontificate, are kindness, meekness, understanding (of her husband's foibles and occasional infidelity), and of course, beauty. Women thus are meant for pleasure, the stories seem to tell us.

But in trying to sound moral in keeping with the guidelines imposed by the government's media council, the komiks turn schizoid. Women are foisted on men to give them pleasure, but too much of it brands or typecasts her as a seductress, a home wrecker, the other woman, the number 2. In fact, the girl who obliges the man too much and loses her virginity before marriage is alas, doomed to a life of perfidy and deception throughout the novel.

All in all, it is easy to see how the escapist fare offered by the komiks magazine has perpetuated outdated values detrimental to the upliftment of the Filipino woman's image, moral posturings notwithstanding. The recent decade, probably because of its harsher economic realities and political upheavals, prompts an even deeper burrowing into fantastic landscapes found in the lush pages of the too accessible komiks magazine. A more disturbing development is the trend for grisly horror/murder stories with gory spilled-guts illustrations, very popular among readers, komiks marketing surveys tell us.

It is too bad that even our women novelists found it more convenient to concoct escape routes for the reader, instead of putting up a mirror to the pressing realities where the readers, mostly women according to PSRC surveys, can face up and identify themselves. Thus a woman can better situate her role in the entire problem and approach it from realistic perspectives. Alas, the komiks magazines of the previous decade has none of these to offer.

III. HOW THE BROADCAST INDUSTRY PORTRAYED WOMEN DURING THE PAST DECADE

A. INTRODUCTION

Should Inday Badiday decide to run for president, it is a safe bet that she would give the other candidates very stiff competition.

Inday Badiday is the broadcast nom de guerre of Ludy Carvajal, whose career in the business typifies that most women in the industry: a music personality radio show where she patters on about movie star gossip, spins a few current discs, makes casual comments on the weather, the state of the economy, fashion, etc. But always the chatter would revolve around her forte: the latest on local screen idols. Her television show, the highly-controversial See True has been a consistent toprater these past years, again because of the steamy gossip beamed live to 40-60% of TV-watching homes every Thursday evening, as of 1985.

Because of the increase in the cover price of newspapers and magazines owing to the skyrocketing price of newsprint, radio and television continue to be the most popular media especially in far-flung areas all over the country.

According to a 1982 survey by the Philippine Survey and Research Company (PSRC), a media research group commissioned exclusively to monitor radio-TV ownership and patronage, TV homes total 62% in the urban areas and 38% in the rural areas.

By geography, Metro Manila tops the percentage of TV-watchers, scoring 94% overall; Northern and Central Luzon totals 70%; Southern Luzon and Bicol, 56%; the Visayas, 65% and Mindanao, 54%. Overall, Filipinos watch television on an average 4.3 days a week, or 13.6 hours a week. Being in the center of information, Metro Manilans chalk up a total 6 days a week TV viewership. The toprater, however, when it comes to the average numbers of hours a week, is the Northern and Central Luzon area, with 13.8% hours average. Not a very significant deviation from the national average, cites Ms. Carmencita Esteban, PSRC president, but something which reflects the lack of other recreational facilities in these areas compared to more urbanized places.

Radio, a cheaper and much-more encompassing medium (when it comes to transmitter power, that is) could expectedly be a more popular medium. Television, after all, only became a nationwide phenomenon as late as 1979, judging from the first PSRC nationwide survey on this medium.

Why do Filipinos watch television?

Again, the PSRC Attitudinal Survey reveals the following information: 94% national average watch it for entertainment, 34% for information and only 3% for other reasons (lack of other recreation/leisure outlets, idle time, check the time, etc.). Suprisingly, Mindanao topped both entertainment and information categories with a 99% and 46% rating on both, respectively.

Ms. Esteban explains, "this can be attributed to the fact that Mindanao is a trouble spot and thus, people are turned in to the latest news bulletin, anxious about opinions and events that might influence their immediate security."

That of course, would also add to the broadcast industry's edge over the print media: news are more immediate, thanks to the marvel of telecommunications.

For the busy housewife, the one-dimensional approach of radio (audio only, as contrasted to TV's audio-visual images), is another advantage. How easy it is to tune in and listen to music, drama, news or Biblical injunctions while one goes about her daily chores. Because it is portable, the transistor radio can even be brought to the fields and provide light entertainment while one goes about her unpaid rural chores.

Television, on the other hand, is compatible with babysitting, eating, cooking, doing paperwork during commercials, while tending a small sari-sari store, and as most housewives' hired labanderas insist on, with ironing and washing clothes -- often with drastic consequences.

Undeniably then, both radio and television permeate the housewife's daily routine in majority of Philippine homes. The working woman's almost total reliance on these media for evening entertainment or early morning news also say something about the consistency of the media presence in a woman's life.

Would it be too forward to say then that with the relentless assault of the two media on all fronts of a woman's daily business, they do influence the values of these women -- either by the programs and shows they beam in, and/or ads and commercials that hardsell their messages?

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

Our thesis for this study is that being ubiquitous, both radio and television's portrayal of women can affect the way the predominantly female viewers (except in non-TV households in the rural areas) look at and see themselves, and set their priorities. Even unconsciously, if we go by Marshal McLuhan's "The Medium in the Message", female viewers imbibe a lot of attitudes, behaviors and values by watching television and listening to the radio.

By studying and comparing the top-rating radio and TV shows in 1976-1977 and in 1983-1984, we hope to analyze the most prevalent values being imbibed by women based on the shows they patronize most often.

Thanks to the complete files of the PSRC, we were able to gather the raw data on the ratings of top radio and TV programs during those two base years. Because of the highly-specialized research method of the firm (incidentally headed by a woman), we were able to isolate the findings of the housewives, definitely the majority listener/viewer from the data on Household Head, usually the males.

The PSRC survey results are gleaned from about 30 key cities all over the country. Because of time constraints, we had to slash the number down to a manageable 15, scientifically chosen as per a PSRC official's (Maybelle Medina) suggestion.

For television, the number of cities chosen was not as restricted since common TV transmitters beamed almost the same programs to a bigger swath of geographical audience.

To make the job even more precise, we only considered programs rating at least 5% in the listing, to sort out the really popular shows from thousands of others in the same wavelength.

The top shows were taken from the morning tally, the afternoon and evening shows, on the weekly-multiweekly basis, depending on how often the programs were broadcasted.

Both radio and television shows may be classified according to formats: news /public affairs (commentary is sometimes added, too); drama or drama series; musical variety (or music/personality); action-thriller (truer for television); religious; children's shows (including cartoons, amateur programs, puppet shows); situation comedy (truer for television); sports, or game shows.

For purposes of easier reading, we have divided the broadcast media into either radio or television and listed our findings as per medium. Government action is also listed under Findings, as well as interviews with some private practitioners in the broadcast industry, in an attempt to get a fuller picture.

FINDINGS

1. THE TOP-RATING RADIO SHOWS IN 1975-1978 and 1983-1984

These years have been used as base years depending on the availability of survey, as conducted by the PSRC. Some areas have only been recently included because only then have significant references been noted.

As mentioned in the introduction, several key cities have been used, but a balance the rural and urban profiles has been maintained.

The cities used in Luzon are Vigan; Santiago and Ilagan, Isabela; Dagupan, Manila, Lucena and Daet. In Visayas, Cebu, Iloilo, Roxas City, Tacloban and Dumaguete are included. In Mindanao, Davao City, Cagayan de Oro, Zamboanga City, Ozamis and Cotabato.

Our findings can be summarized into the following points:

a) Housewives form the bulk of radio listeners, from 70-80%, both in 75-77 and in '83-'84. Other female members form the next 10-20%. This is an overall tally of all cities nationwide. In Metro Manila, however, the female members are presumably the younger women, probably students, as gleaned from the overwhelming popularity of FM stations and music shows.

This might be because most Metro Manila housewives are already drafted into the paid work force, leaving the radio hours to other females in the house.

b) In '75-'77, drama lorded it over the airlines, comprising about 70% of the top shows, followed by news/info or public affairs, music and personality shows, and then religious shows.

In '83-'84 drama still form the bulk of the shows produced for radio, although news and public affairs already slip into the top ten programs with heartening regularity. Also, drama shows have been confined to the afternoon, while news and commentaries are mainly broadcasted in the morning. Music/personality shows and more news form the bulk of evening programs.

The comparative data is given below:

1975-1977

Vigan: top 5 are dramas; out of top top 18, 14 are dramas, 3 are news and one religious show

Isabela: top 5 are dramas, followed by public affairs, news, religion, and music/variety

Dagupan City: top 15 are dramas; of top 21, 15 are dramas, 5 are music/variety, 1 news

Daet, Cam.Sur: news is tops, but drama outnumbers it; of top 33, 11 are dramas, 13 music/personality 3 news/public affairs, 3 religious

Lucena: top 5 are dramas; of top 13, 10 are dramas, 2 are music, 1 news

1983-1984

top 3 are news and commentary; of top 19, 8 are dramas, 7 are news/public affairs and 2 are music

news and music are tops in a.m., drama in the afternoon, mix of all 3 in the evening

news and public affairs in the a.m. with music/personality of top 18, 10 are news, 3 are music, 3 religious

all news in the morning; in the afternoon, drama, public affairs in the lead; of top 24, 8 are news/public affairs, 8 dramas, 6 music/personality, 2 religious

news in the a.m., drama in the afternoon, more music and news in the evening; of top 27, 12 are news/public affairs, 7 dramas, 7 music personality, 1 religious

Cebu: top 10 are dramas; of top 36, 20 are dramas, 3 are religious, 4 news/public affairs, 9 music/personality

Iloilo: top 15 are dramas; of top 19, 16 are dramas, 1 religious, 1 news, 1 music

Roxas City: top 15 are dramas, of top 40, 38 are dramas, one public affairs, one musical

Tacloban: top 5 are dramas; of top 16, 9 are dramas, 3 are music/personality, 1 religious

Dumaguete: top 4 are news; of top 14, 10 are dramas, 4 are news, 1 public, affairs, 1 music

Cotabato City: top 8 are news and church news, but 17 dramas in the day time alone; of top 40, 14 personalities, 9 dramas, 7 news/public affairs, 5 music/variety, 2 religious

Davao City: top 10 are dramas; of top 29, 24 are dramas, 3 are persona-

news and personality in the a.m. 20 dramas in the afternoon, but with minimal rating; of top 36, 7 are news/public affairs, 5 are personality, 11 music, 12 dramas and 7 religious.

top 6 are news and public affairs; of top 23, 13 are dramas, 6 are news/public affairs, 3 are music/personality.

news in the a.m., drama in the afternoon and music/personality; of top 21, 13 are dramas are, 5 news/public affairs, 2 music

news/public affairs in the a.m., drama in the afternoon;

top 10 in the a.m. are news and music; in the afternoon, 3 are are news, 3 music, 11 dramas; of top 34, 16 are news-information, 1 public affairs, 11 dramas, (with low ratings), 7 music/personality

news and personality at the top, but drama overwhelms; of top 38 24 are dramas, 9 news/public affairs, 4 news/personalities

news and music occupy top but still, drama leads overall; of top 36, 20

lity, 1 religious

Ozamis City: top 7 are dramas; of top 13, 11 are dramas, 1 news, one variety

Cagayan de Oro: top 10 are dramas; of top 17, 12 are dramas, 4 news/public affairs, 1 music

Zamboanga City: top shows are news/public affairs, but drama in the top 5; of top 14, 9 dramas, 4 news/public affairs, 1 music

are dramas, 9 news/public affairs
5 music/personality, 1 religious

drama tops the chart, but almost with news/public affairs, and music; of top 26, 10 dramas, 7 news, 4 music/personality

dramas at the top but news and religious shows figure prominently, too; of top 42, 21 are dramas, 9 news/public affairs, 7 music/personality, 2 religious news in the a.m., drama and music in the afternoon and evening; of top 30, 16 are dramas, 7 news/public affairs, 3 music.

c) Only in Metro Manila has there been a big difference in listenership. In '75-'77, 39.6% watch dramas, 25% go for the FM band programming of music/personality. In '83-'84, only one drama show rated well ("Dahlia"), because FM band leads with music/personality shows. Music and news do well in the morning.

d) Radio ownership remains a private affairs, with 278 radio stations privately-owned in '83-'84, and 35 government-owned. Commercial stations and programming, affirms PSRC's Ms. Esteban is still the most profitable way of running the business, rather than the religious broadcasts. This partly explains why in the past two years, the number of church stations operating in Cotabato City has dwindled to zero: in '75-'76, they overwhelmed the commercial stations. The fact that they rated very well in '75-'76 however and did not deserve disclosure for financial reasons in '83-'84, easily points to politics and government intervention as the more probable reasons for their demise.

e) Otherwise, the government exercises minimum meddling in the radio industry, to the point that business (advertising and time-buying) has taken over. The defunct Broadcast Media Council 1 (MBC) set up on November 9, 1974 to super-

vise the radio networks (and which was abolished as a concession to the supposed lifting of Martial Law in '81) has in fact passed insignificant resolutions, most of them pertaining to salaries of broadcast personnel, the number of ads per program hour and other revenue-related themes.

The only resolutions distantly relating to women may be summed up as follows:

- * no liquor or cigarette ads before or after children's programs
- * mandatory 30-minute newscasts from 6:30-7:00 effective June 16, 1975; news and public affairs programs mandatory on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. These shows can only pre-empted by other educational, children's sports or programs of national interest.
- * to perfect development broadcasting, the station must limit to 9 hours the drama presentations per broadcast day. Later appeals from the network increased the number to 10.
- * The Philippine Board of Advertisers must screen all the radio ads to elevate advertising standards.
- * no dramas should be broadcast earlier than 8:00 a.m.
- * there must only be a 13-minute commercial load per one-program
- * the following "offensive" songs shall be banned: "Can't Say No" by the SSO; "Could It Be Magic" by Donna Summer; "Funky People" by the SSO; "Gihidlaw na Intawon" (or something like miss na miss kita) by Max Surban, and "Nasasabik sa Iyo" by Fred Panopio.

f) A brief summary of the storyline of Dahlia, the top soap opera in Metro Manila and other parts of Luzon; broadcasted over DWWW at 11:00-11:30 a.m., Mondays to Fridays, could indicate the type of story lines radio listeners prefer.

Dahlia's widower father remarried a woman who has a daughter, named Sara, from a previous marriage. Since Sara wants to get hold of her stepfather's money that would rightfully go to Dahlia, she and her mother concoct elaborate plots to destroy Dahlia's reputation and even to kill her, given the chance.

Dahlia's boyfriend Dennis was forced to wed Sara, whose mother then forced Dahlia to marry Jeffrey to make sure that Dennis and Dahlia won't ever get together again. Later, Dahlia was raped and Sara insinuates to Jeffrey that Dennis was res-

possible to make him think that the former lovers are having an illicit affair. Jeffrey thus doesn't believe his wife was raped. Dahlia goes into hiding when she learns that she is pregnant. Jeffrey tries to trace her to punish her for the supposed adultery.

2. THE TELEVISION BROADCAST INDUSTRY

Because television is a relative newcomer in the broadcast industry as compared to radio, the PSRC survey of the medium started in the mid-70's on a staggered basis. Certain areas that had television access were initially tapped, with the areas grouped according to transmitter reach. It wasn't until 1979 that PSRC had a nationwide base for a comprehensive television survey.

Thus 1979 would be our initial base year, quite a leap in milieu and value perception when compared to the '75-'76 findings on radio, but it is all we have so we would just have to make allowances for that time difference between the two media. As with radio, 1983 and some latest findings in 1984 have been used because this study was made in January-February 1985, the PSRC was still in the process of assimilating and summarizing 1984 findings. Because of the dollar fluctuation in '83-'84, the television producers had to shell out even bigger sums for the canned shows -- from \$1000 an episode to about \$3500 to \$4500, according to a TV producer quoted in Nestor Torre's "Letter from Lilibut" column in the Daily Express in January 1985.

Thus, producers had to resort to locally-produced shows, the most convenient being dramas and/or music/variety shows. The game shows decline significantly, again because of economic constraints: it became harder to tap sponsors for prizes. Because of the glut of the drama and variety shows, these two rated significantly better in recent years. The action/adventure series were mostly canned after all. The decline of the kiddie animation shows in '83-'84 follows this trend for local shows. Most cartoons are canned, too.

Another factor for the big difference in '79 and '83-'84: in 1979, Voltes V and other Japanese robot animation were introduced and made a big splash among local viewers especially children. They were however banned from the local screens a year later because of too much violence.

If one goes for more detailed differences in 1979 and '83-'84 ratings, he'd find out that the genre and plot have not changed much; only the titles and the actors have.

To wit:

Top Dramas

<u>for 1979</u>	<u>for 1983-'84</u>
Kahapon Lamang	Kahapon Lamang
Flor de Luna	Yagit
Mga Kuwento ng Paq-ibig	Flor de Luna
Gulong ng Palad	Heredero
Maku'ay na Daigdig ni Nora	Anna Liza
Dallas	Lovingly Yours, Helen
Taalog Movies	Coney Reyes-Mumar Drama Studio
	Hiyas

Top Action/Adventure

<u>for 1979</u>	<u>for 1983-'84</u>
Charlie's Angels	Knight Rider
Starsky & Hutch	The A-Team
CHiPs	Wonder Woman
Combat	Blue Thunder
Incredible Hulk	Remington Steele
Robot Animation	He-Man
Streets of San Francisco	Fall Guy

Top Music/Variety

<u>for 1979</u>	<u>for 1983-'84</u>
Student Canteen	See True
Eat Bulana	Superstar
Dance Fever	GMA Supershow
Superstar	Eat Bulaga
Pitwede	TODAS
	Ano Bagong Kampeon

Top Sitcoms

for 1975

for 1983-'84

John & Marsha
Eight is Enough
Iskul Bukol
Pasensaya Ka
Love Boat
Son of My Son
Mommy ko si Mayor

John & Marsha
Chicks to Chicks
2 + 2
Champoy
UFO

OTHER FINDINGS:

Based on the Attitudinal Survey on Television conducted by the Philippine Survey and Research Company in 1982 and released September 1983:

a) Viewers watch Daytime TV for the following:

Variety programs	50%
Tagalog movies	5%
Sports	2%
News	1%
Others	2%

b) They watch Evening TV for the following:

Soap operas	29%
Sports	19%
Tagalog comedy	7%
Tagalog movies	5%
Crimes/action	5%
Musical/Variety	4%
News/public affairs	2%
Others	5%

- c) By regions, most viewers agree that TV shows have information and education value. 71.6%
- There is a wide range of shows to choose from 76.6%

The quality of shows has improved the last four years	77.2%
Kids suffer ill effects because of TV violence	50.6%
There are too many commercials on TV	89.6%
But commercials pay for TV so necessary	85.8%
TV commercials are entertaining	78 %
TV commercials are informative	83.8%

d) By economic class

- * AB view more TV: 6.2 days, 4.4 hours/day, 27 hrs./week
(“Because they have more leisure time, and since this is a nationwide survey, more AB own TV in the rural areas; the rest can only watch when they're free to go to neighbors' houses” according to Ms. Esteban of the PSRC).
- * DE view TV mainly for entertainment, they even stay to watch the commercials 95%
- * AB watch TV mainly for information 43%
- * C levels watch more noontime variety shows and daytime shows
(“AB not at home except in the evening, DE won't have TV sets; C level mostly fulltime housewives” --Ms. Esteban).
- * The higher the income, the more likely to watch newscasts (“Increase in intelligence level; also business may be affected anytime so always on the lookout for events and political/economic changes” --Ms. Esteban).
- * AB: more for after 6 viewing

e) By sexes

More M than F watch TV, especially among non-TV households in rural areas. (“They can come and go at will, watch in other neighbors' houses”): 70% against 63%.
95% females and 92% males watch TV for entertainment
50% females and 41% males watch variety shows
41% females and 16% males watch Tagalog soap operas

But both agree that: TV programs have information and educational value
wide range of shows to choose from
improved quality these past years
kids suffer from TV violence
too many commercials on TV

- f) Perpetuo Librando's thesis on how TV producers perceive their audience consists of a questionnaire given to 25 TV executives and producers of Channels 2,4,7,9 and 13. There were a total of 28 multiple choice items, open-ended questions and statements. The subjects were 20 females and five males.

Results:

- 1) Producers think that majority of TV audiences are:
 - * from the middle- and lower-income group
 - * educated up to the high school level
 - * mostly housewives
 - * from 21-30 years old
 - * viewing preferences are: movies/films, musical/variety, teleplays (comedy and drama)
 - * favorite themes are: "love conquers all", "family values", "rags to riches", "song and dance", etc.
 - * they prefer US or foreign production over local shows
 - * watch TV to entertain themselves
 - * watch TV 4-6 hours a day on the average
 - * favorite time is from 7-9 p.m.
- 2) The positive qualities of the audience are: being able to criticize; their clamor for good programs, and their ability to select which programs are worth watching.
- 3) The negative qualities are: idol worship of the stars and persistence in watching certain non-quality programs.
- 4) These producers admitted finding out about their audience

image via

- * research and rating survey
 - * usual target audience types
 - * through production consultations
- 5) the producers defined their main goal in the business as: to entertain and to inform the audience.
 - 6) they reach out to the viewers through empathy and story conferences (lasting from 6-15 minutes) where the audience factor is considered and prioritized over the producer's interest.
 - 7) The producers' recommendations include
 - * The use of other feedback sources beyond audience ratings to come up with something for all types of audience, not just the taste according to income level as it is.
 - * The adoption of uniform advertising rates for prime time shows regardless of ratings to minimize its importance.
 - * There is a need to adapt programming schemes like Renaissance TV with certain days devoted to particular minority audiences.
 - * There is a need to cater to even viewing minorities and to balance entertainment programs with public service
 - * There is a need for the minority audience to voice out their viewing rights through the active use of feedback channels available.
 - * There is a need to conduct more research in the structure and organization of TV production to further identify and determine the factors involved in the creation of a TV program.
- g) The Broadcast Media Council passed certain resolutions since its creation in 1974, and so far, the only significant ones with regard to viewership are:
- 1) at least one newcast daily from 7:00-7:30 p.m. except Saturday and Sunday; from 7:30-8:00 Monday to Friday there must be educational, cultural and public affairs TV programs (passed April 20, 1976).
 - 2) Renaissance Television must be presented every Wednesday.

9:00 p.m. to pave the way for a deeper cultural orientation among the audience (passed April 20, 1976).

- 3) There must not be more than 2 airings or one replay per station per year on primetime. (Primetime conceded to be responsible for almost 90% of total TV revenues).
 - 4) Developmental Communication (DevCom) must be incorporated into domestic drama programs (April 20, 1976).
 - 5) Trailers of movies must be edited or censored for TV channels and limited to Censors-approved movies.
 - 6) Good taste in the coverage of beauty contests and sound judgement and discretion in supporting them must be exercised (April 13, 1977, following an expose on some dubious beauty contests).
 - 7) The maximum load is 11 minutes for ads in Metro Manila and 13 minutes for provincial television (September 1977).
- h) An interview with Ms. Agnes Caballa, the DevCom Division Director on RPN-9 in January 1985, reveals that:
- 1) "DevCom is actually a plug for the government aimed mostly at women in lower income but several factors worked against it:
 - * the star syndrome: shows work around celebrities rather than themes
 - * outside or current happenings: shows must reflect what's in or trendy and government propaganda was certainly out of sync
 - * economics: because of the hard times, producers must come up with shows that sell -- commercial themes
 - 2) "Also, there was no clear-cut distinction or definition on what the term meant. It's hard to distinguish between DevCom and educational TV."
 - 3) "The stars also presented a lot of problems. Take Nora Aunor's Superstar show. We wanted her to project the ideal Filipino woman, and asked her to discuss certain issues on her show like the Balik-Probinsiya or Family Planning. But like most other actors and producers, she resisted the idea because she said, "papangit ang shows, korni."

- 4) "Mainly, the problem was that DevCom as a government plug was not realistic. There's no food on the table, so how can you tell the people to eat well-balanced meals? There was a general disenchantment with the administration, so everything was perceived to be propaganda. Therefore, we resorted to casual pluggings like "Do not smoke in public". Thankfully, NMPC and Channel 4 started producing and distributing film clips of similar plugs to other stations and we started using them. Right now, our DevCom department has outlived its usefulness and we're just waiting to be dissolved."

3. ANALYSIS

There seems to be very little change in the way that women today and ten years ago perceive both radio and television. Both males and females view the two media as mainly entertainment outlets, judging from the heavy patronage of drama, action/adventure series and music variety shows compared to news/commentary and public affairs programs. Despite the two media's immediacy factor, a very strong edge as far as transmitting urgent information is concerned, viewers, mainly women, have not taken full advantage of this. Or so it would appear from the ratings as monitored by the Philippine Survey and Research Company.

Of course, as one PSRC executive (a woman) puts it, rating may not be an accurate gauge of women's shifting values, nor her socio-political awareness. For all we know, the really substantial or liberated women may not even have the time to watch television or listen to the radio. Nor have the inclination to do so, given the prevailing content of both media.

The broadcast industry then seems to take a large share of the blame, mainly because there seems to be no conscious effort to produce shows tailored to women as individual viewers -- aside from the rather outdated profile of the housewife that broadcast executives cling to. Women are lumped together with other viewers on an economic point of view, by income levels instead of by interest or profession.

The heavy emphasis on economics is in fact behind the survey or ratings study, the only study on women viewers so far, and an incidental one at that. Advertising revenue is still the deciding factor.

There is clearly a need to institute deeper research into attitudes, not just frequency of viewership, to ascertain the real effects of radio-TV on women. An interview with PSRC's female president reveals the company's plans to go into just that, given the budget and the opportunity.

It may provide us some comfort to find out that news and public affairs at least monopolize morning radio and that drama and soaps have been confined to the afternoon. But again, this is due to the advertisers' studies that pointed out the most receptive frame of mind -- when they are most relaxed after the hustle and bustle of morning and noontime chores.

It wouldn't have been so bad if conflicts portrayed in the dramas at least consider the bigger problems that grip society as a whole. At a glance at the titles, even a content study of a popular drama in such a sophisticated area as Metro Mania, reveals that the plots still revolve around family strife -- where woman is typically martyr, victim and superwoman keeping her disintegrating family together against all odds.

Despite the growing political awareness of housewives even among the urban poor (as seen by their organizing attempts and action against demolition and concerns), the radio programs popular among them have consistently shunned political issues as potential themes.

Another dark spot is how males have virtually monopolized the respectable slots in announcing news or hosting commentary shows, with women broadcasters confined to disc jockeying in pop or rock radio, emceeing music/personality shows like Inday Badiday -- spliced with juicy tidbits of gossip on movie stars -- or pattering about home or cooking tips and advise to the lovelorn like Helen Vela's Helen of Joy.

On television, the scenario is much the same. Although the recent dollar crisis has spurred producers to come up with more local shows to save up on exorbitant canned productions, the shows produced are far from satisfactory. A lot of them are musical/variety shows where stars, singers and assorted actors sing or dance or plug their latest shows and movies, for free, of course. Not surprisingly, there is hardly any commitment to entertain the viewers decently.

That See-True, a movie magazine format show should take up 40-60% of viewership at the ratings sadly reflects the present Filipino woman's morbid preoccupation with gossip and salacious fantasies regarding the artificial world of showbiz. Could the definitely harsher realities of 1984 have driven them to such desperate straits that they'd rather burrow under sensational movie headlines than confront political issues that newspapers blame out with alarming regularity?

And then again, it might also be the total lack of alternative shows to watch and the chicken or egg issue starts anew: which comes first -- good shows or intelligent viewers? Supply or demand?

The other popular shows are just as distressing: Chicks to chicks, so popular it has been extended to a 2-hour weekly series in mainly a jiggle show where a lot of shapely girls, most of them models or beauty queens, guest as dumb blondes who add to the supposedly comic confusion of this sitcom.

Also, top-raters, TV soaps usually feature prepubescent heroines and heroes in both Flor de Luna and Yagit. The conflicts are predictably parochial and family-oriented and the attitudes taken just as limited: weep and bear it. We shudder for the school-age girls who'll grow up thinking they can face the world with a snivelling outlook and the unshakable faith that the meek will indeed inherit the earth.

Women-oriented shows, from Ms. Ellaneous to She and even Cooking with Nora have been scrapped in recent years, a negative development because it set the female audience a few years back, in that it gave producers the idea that as exclusive viewers, women cannot support shows.

The recent rash of TV talk shows mainly centering on current economic and political issues is a welcome respite, although they did not register, not one, among the top 25 or top 50 shows in the latest ratings. Still, we can take it as a positive development, as an enlightened move to provide shows even for a minority viewership, and to reflect the current moods and issues of the day.

Tell the People's recognition for a Catholic Mass Media Award last year is particularly heartening, especially since its host is a female journalist who has a no-nonsense approach to issues.

Another bright spot is Tina Monzon-Palma's regular stint at News at Seven, where she has minimal make-up, in her glasses and in quite conservative clothes -- a direct contrast to the giggly and girlish women newscasters of other news shows who are limited to reading the news. In the film footages of the news, Ms. Palma is shown as a reporter herself, interviewing the newsmakers and in the credits, producing the show itself.

Sesame, styled along the lines of the Children's Television Workshop abroad (since replaced with the similarly-formatted Batibot), provided educational entertainment to children. But what set it apart from other shows was its conscious effort to deviate from stereotyped concepts of home and neighborhood. Sylvia, played by Susan Africa, portrayed the housewife who was also an artist and who devoted enough time to her career. Her husband Mario (played by Junix Inocian) was supportive of her talent and took pains to make the other characters of the show recognize how important it is for women and housewives to have their own career.

Because of financial problems however, the show was recently scrapped and replaced by Batibot, with its greater concern for pre-school skills and learning.

Most recent additions to potentially-powerful women shows are Woman's World, hosted by Naty Crame-Rogers, a melange of helpful tips on management, household, cooking and other domestic arts, and Career Girl, as portrayed by Gloria Diaz, a former beauty queen. Also, "Charo" whose women are molded after more contemporary types.

We have yet to watch Woman's World extensively to pass judgment on its approach to women, but Career Girl is definitely the other extreme of domestic bliss and thus succeeds only in caricaturing the working woman today. The male execs are male predators, one of them the kept man of a rather shrewd business woman who also owns the firm; the other male assistant has nothing better on his mind but to make passes at the girls in the office.

The girls on the other hand, are either giggly secretaries, pouty vamps or snotty-nosed and spinterish executives. The actors/actresses all overact, as if to emphasize that they're just caricatures of work types. It does not work; you feel insulted by the cardboard characterizations and the gross lack of insight into the real problems of real working women. This show has all the earmarks of turning into another jiggle event.

Is there a way to fuse entertainment with values as far as women viewers are concerned?

Ms. Carmencita Esteban, PSRC president, has a suggestion: how about a drama series on crimes or legal conflicts involving women where, after the teleplay, the women's rights are discussed and explained?

According to a writer-friend, Lovingly yours, Helen has a similar format where write-in problems are dramatized and experts on that problem are invited to discuss solutions after the teleplay. She wonders though whether the thunder-and-brimstone approach to the problem in the teleplay offsets whatever benefits the discussion brings afterwards. The experts too are not that well-chosen, she opines. In one particular show where extramarital affairs caused a women's dilemma, one of the panelists invited was a well-known mistress of a suburban mayor, who of course, had a typical go-for-it attitude about the subject. More judicious choices are thus in order if the show is to gain credibility and really benefit its target audience.

The government too would have to be supportive and go beyond their limited view of women being mainly concerned with hygiene, sanitation, cleanliness, health and other family-and-home related matters. Or, on the other extreme, portray women as sorely pre-occupied with their figure and beauty tips as "Good Morning Manila," its women-oriented show on the government channel, concentrates on.

The industry's policy-making organization, the KBP or the Kapisanan ng Mga Brodkasters sa Pilipinas which replaced the BMC but adopted most of its resolutions must also make special efforts to go beyond revenue-raising or governing policies and dwell on formats for a change. That television has no separate standars for review and censorship and uses just about the same obscure movie standards is an indication of neglect on their part.

They must also conduct studies and surveys on why government-initiated projects like Devcom and Renaissance Television fail despite their good intentions. Presentation is definitely one cause. Politics, too, that phantom most producers keep avoiding, definitely share top billing in the problem.

A FEW NOTES ON PORNOGRAPHIC KOMIKS AND MAGAZINES

At every busy intersection where traffic stalls, bored passangers crane their necks on the lookout for the ubiquitous newsboys. No, they're not anxious about today's headlines; even the half-naked nymphet on the tabloid's front page has ceased to intrigue them. These days, what they keenly await for are those young boys who advertise their wares "Apat-piso, lahat tapusan!"

It's not the economics that attract a lot of heads; it's the titles of the komiks being sold and the various poses, salacious and suggestive, graphically illustrated on the cover.

Boobs, Erotic, Wet, Nympho, You & Me, Titina me Titina, Bold and similar vernacular equivalents of "promiscuous" or "sexually-endowed" are competing side by side with the more respectable and sober publications on the sidewalk and newsstands.

Not to be outdone, just as bold magazines occupy even larger shelf space: Pilipino Playboy, Tikatik, Sakdal, Bulaklak (at Paruparo), Hot na Hot.

During the past two years, coincidentally when the country's economy and politics took a turn for the worst, pornographic and bold komiks and magazines have competed for the moralists' ire with the just-as-explicit movies produced locally. It didn't matter that just over a year previously, a movie gossip magazine was shut down because of its sensational movie headlines, the raw quotes from liberated movie stars and the generally unsavory characters of showbiz given full space in its pages.

This time, more than just bold headlines and libelous language, there are graphic nude poses, detailed coitus freely illustrated, double-meanings in story titles and sex-crime stories vividly narrated.

Although there are no figures available -- most of the publishers and the addresses used are mere fronts -- it is safe bet that this kind of publications makes a lot of money. Not only are they openly sold and not only have the titles multiplied to gross proportions, even respectable establishments like National Book Store stock them -- by the door!

What is even more distressing is the common knowledge among

journalists and writers' circles that a few names or awarded, even committed, writers contribute to these publications-- mainly because of the good pay that good sales make possible.

The publishers may be unknown entrepreneurs who know how to ride on the bold trends, but the whisper going around is that the publisher of most of them, Amado Sagalongos, actually the lawyer of presidential spokesman Adrian Cristobal, is elledgedly just a dummy. That in effect, it is the office of the president that authorizes the rash of these porno readings. The fact that the censors have proven blind to these publications and that no regulations committee has ever stepped in despite the past two years' flourishing business somehow lends to credence to the speculations.

But what is really inside these publications and how can they be used as a government tool?

The contents of one issue of Pinoy Playboy, dubbed as "Entertainment for Men & Women," should tell us. Priced at P6 like most bold magazines, the cover of this particular issue is Farida Yulo, a bold starlet whose most explicit movie, Take Home Girls is obviously a sex quickie. This magazine lists down Leo Pita, Dominador Mirasol, and Eugene Asis plus other movie writers on its staff box, with publishing address at LVP Publishing House, 1240 Balthazar St., Sta. Cruz.

The cover text reads: **Fantastic Sex-Drama Stories
Sizzling Photos!**

The stories and brief summary of each:

1. Hindi na Sila Musmos (No Longer Innocent Children) - illustrated with a drawing of a young woman, one breast exposed, being ravished by a man; she is biting her lips and closing her eyes in pain and agony. The usual hometown girl gone to the U.S. and coming home liberated enough to seduce her childhood sweetheart. Features masturbation, connilingus and coitus vividly described in the prose.
2. Sa Mabangong Kandungan ni Myrna - illustration is a girl in the throes of passion, her skirt rolled up to her neck, breasts and buttocks exposed, the man removing her panties. About a married boss who raped his secretary and got her pregnant. She has to submit because it

might mean her job.

3. Karapatang Lumigaya - illustration is man and woman in their undies, kneeling on the bed and kissing each other passionately while doubt and pleasure register on the girl's face. He is a married man and the girl hesitates to submit, but her eventual seduction makes her feel liberated at last, and she justifies what she did as her own right to be happy, too. A lot of obscene obscenities uttered in the text.
4. Izang Oras ng Ligaya - a young girl is shown with an old man in bed, with girl in ecstasy, one breast exposed. The old man lent her money in her dire need and asked her one hour of sex as payment. She enjoys it so much she agrees to marry him after.
5. Ang Katulong na Kumain ng Apoy - man and woman are shown making love, the breasts of the girl exposed; ecstasy on their faces. The maid is seduced by the master of the house and was obliged to do fellatio on him. Afterwards, she blackmails him.
6. Ginto Mula sa Putik - a man is shown getting aroused by the sight of a young girl sleeping in a seductive position. The girl's adopted father got so incensed by her revealing pose in her sleep that he seduces and abuses her, afterwards blaming her as much for the crime.
7. Una t Huli - he's married but he couldn't resist a girl so he beds her for the first and last time -- in concession to his status as a married man.
8. Mahal ang Kabayaran - a man and a woman, both of them naked, are making passionate love in bed; the story is about a man who takes advantage of a moron/mentally retarded 14 year old girl and seduces her. She finally gets pregnant, and the police comes to arrest the man.
9. Donselya: a novel. Couple, both naked, with girl on top and in the throes of ecstasy. This particular chapter is about a fight between two rivals over a woman. The fight is averted with the girl's father's arrival, but it is significant to note that the mother blamed the girl's fiance for not bringing her home safely. The girl

then blames herself -- he didn't bring her home because they had a fight because she would not submit to his proddings to prove herself a virgin -- a donselya before their wedding. She felt: "may dahilan si Mario (her fiance) para bumigat ang kalooban sa kanya."

Next follows eight pages of movie news: What's Hot? By Eugene E. Asis, Pintig by Gil Villasan, Paningit by Leo P. and Nonqba-ket!

And then, Usapang Lalaki by Greg Florencio which is a compendium of quotes (this issue, from Confucious) adapted into the vernacular, plus a list of persons who have had relations or affairs with other celebrities. Some of the gems in that column: "let your sense of humor dominate; it's not good to take ourselves too seriously all the time; don't let money problems beat you -- for us who are not used to luxurious lifestyle, just the thought that we've saved for an expensive item is positive enough," etc.

Oh yes, Paningit, although ostensibly a movie column (Vivian Velez, Myrna Castillo, Rowena Ruiz, etc.) also have a few political comments, mainly on the Batasan candidates from Cavite, and support for governor Lino Rocolan and Eddie Muto Cuenca as jeepney operators' president.

Binhi, Punla, Bunga by Anselmo Roque is mainly a plug for the Marcos government's agrarian reform program, based on the experience of Mr. Justiniano S. Bitiu of San Antonio, Bacolor, Pampanga. Mr. Bitiu was named one of the most outstanding farmers on 1984, the column says, and was given a presidential citation for this.

For Chicks Only by Kuya Arman is a column listing down possible boyfriends or male pen pals whose identity will only be made available if you send a coupon printed on the same page, asking for a particular number's real name and address. Sample entries: "Saudi boy pa rin itong third sender. He is Rico F.J. He is only 26 years old, presentable, mabait, simple lang ang trip sa buhay, responsible, loving and thoughtful."

For Cats Only by Sister Caroline is published on the second half of the page, with basically the same format except that the entries are women. Sample: "First on the long list is a domestic helper from Hongkong. She is Lolita Valerio, 27 years old, 5'2½, weighs 105 lbs. and fair complexioned".. The same coupon is found at the bottom of the page, asking for the real name/address of entry no. _ and "enclosing one's photo, bio-data and self-

stamped envelope."

Dear Kabise has a playboy logo and is a collection of green jokes in the vernacular, written to simulate the speech patterns of a Chinese (kabise) who is supposed to be hosting the column.

Babae... Lalaki by Yda. O. Ylagan is ostensibly a column on sex education, with the issue's installment dealing with "Sexual Energy," Part I. Most of the information are quoted from psychiatrists and psychotherapists abroad. Mainly clinical treatment of the issue.

My Dearest God by Jun Ricafrente, Rod Victorino and Cristian Belda, supposedly a write-in problem solver hosted by El MediaCom (municators), "which will send your problems to those concerned while a small prayer troupe of the Bible Temple of God at the YMCA Ecumenical Chapel, Concepcion St., Malate will pray for you, every Monday from 7:30 p.m. So send your letters at Prayer P.O. Box 2390, Manila."

This issue's head is: Teodoro C. Rey, Jr., Laguna Lake Savior.

Tackles the problem of the Laguna Lake, but more on politicking: attacks multi-corporations which own the biggest fishpens but thinks the issue is just the small versus the big fishermen. The conflict is made worse, it says, by shrewd militant students, subversive religious groups and other foreign countries that send what it calls 'livelihood technicians'.

More on these technicians: they allegedly study the weakness of our country. then give underground seminars in the wilds of Binangonan and Tanay -- anti-government seminars, at that. They use the problems of the fishermen to embarrass the government by publishing photos on the weakness of the fishing industry'.

'In those seminars, they are taught to sing revolutionary songs with Latin-American flavor.' More bars on the NPA says, are sending their children as scholars of the LLDA to infiltrate the organization and send the issue to the university belt.

Then enter FM who saved the industry via Teodoro C. Rey and the fishpen reform. Lauds funding from the Asian Development Bank (\$9-M), OPEC (\$4.-5-M) or a total of \$ 13.5-M for the whole project. Launching of "Proyektong

Palaisdaan ng Unlad."

Stresses how Unlad project brings peace instead of subversion to the issue and ends with a quote from Matthew 5:9 -- "Blessed are the peacemakers because they will be called children of God."

Next follows five write-in letters on problems by readers -- from tonsillitis to homesickness of a DH in Hongkong, to sibling rivalry, to quest for jobs, (3 of them). The answer-solutions are mainly Biblical quotes: Philip 4:6, Matthew 18:21-35, Hebrew 12:5-11, and ends with "We will pray for you."

The last feature is a comic-strip "Dormitory", an illustrated novel by Rico Bello Omagap. This issue, four out of 13 frames featured a woman with breasts exposed, in her bathrobe about to receive a visitor.

Sexy starlets with breasts and part of the pubis exposed are featured on the Inside Front Cover (Cindy Cortex), Inside Back (Barbara Luna) and Outside Back Cover (Karla Kahlua).

Hot na Hot, on the other hand, is published by Winner Publications with editorial office at 92-B 7th Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City -- an office that turned out to be a beauty parlor, according to a Veritas reporter assigned to do an article on the subject. The person in the parlor has been instructed to receive all the letters and correspondence which are then picked up later in the week by the company's messenger.

The particular issue we saw (Vol. 1, No. 3) has Tanya Gomez in the nude, hiding half of her body behind a curtain plus an inset of Ricky Davao in brief trunks. There are 13 stories on bold stars like Anna Marie Gutierrez, Sarsi Emmanuel, Glenda Araneta, etc. with such titles as: "Nang Kinain ni Cristina (Crisol) si Josephine (Manuel), a lesbian-like pictorial; movie columns on macho dancers, a nude pictorial of Irma Alegre, Gino Antonio, (Deliciously and Revealingly Yours), "Kating-kati na si Irma!", "Makakita lang ako ng guwapo, nag-iinit na agad ang buong katawan ko!", etc.

Also, a sex education column by Dr. Benilda Buenviaje, mainly replies to write-in sexual problems. Plus 9 bold-dramas on seduction, rape and other sexual peccadilloes, with titles like:

"Tinabihan Lang, Ibinigay Na!", "Huwag Mong Alisin!", "Iba ang Kata-lik, Iba ang Inibig", "Nawala ang Takot!", "Naghuhukay sa Saudi, Nagpapahukay Naman sa Bahay!", etc. Plus a komiks-serial, "Lunata" about a nymphomaniac. Drawings are mainly couples in copulation.

The back cover shows Stella Suarez Jr.'s private parts covered by the hands of an equally-naked Jestoni. The poster features a nude Coca Nicolas covering her pubis with her hand while straddling a chair.

There are of course other movie columns on the sex scandals and secrets of the stars with accompanying bold photos.

Sakdal, billed as a sex and crime magazine ("Sexy, bold at Erotik") is published by Atty. Amador Sagalongos and has in the staff box such respectable literary names as Efren Abueg (Editorial Consultant), and D.G. Dumaraos (Editor). Plus stories by Greg Igna de Dios and Abueg himself inside.

Issue No. 37 (Vol. 1) has a sketch of 'Tetcha' on the cover and features her eight Playboy photos inside, with a brief commentary on the Polly-Tetchie issue by Atty. Sagalongos himself, mainly the Q-A exchange between Polly Cayetano who sued starlet Tetchie Agbayani for posing nude in the German edition of Playboy, and the author, Atty. Sagalongos.

It has an editorial, this issue an attack on Sen. Salvador Laurel's planted gun incident where he got off lightly and castigates the elites for being above the law.

Amor Seco is a versed political comment, this issue on the death of justice in the courts. No author mentioned. Then an open letter to Deputy Justice Minister Jesus Borromeo on the "Threats to Press Freedom" by Atty. Amador Sagalongos; defending obscenity, of course and questioning legal action on the porno magazines Tiktik and Sakdal.

The Story of O is featured in the vernacular, plus historical spy stories, most of them involving sexy and ravaged spies, tantrics for good sex, sex-drama stories on seduction and rape, crossword puzzles, how to fight drug addiction, Andres Cristobal Cruz's political commentary on Filipino ideology ("Gunita ng mga Pagpapakasakit"), an article on the roots of the Women's Liberation Movement

abroad, Sakdalscope (a horoscope) plus a komiks-serial on a playboy and his sexcapades.

Illustrations are generally not that bold, though the text is graphic enough when it describes coitus and genitals.

Tik at Tik is published by Atty. Emilio Santos, but no editorial address is mentioned. No. 35 or August 12, 1983 has a nude Maria Montes playing with plastic balloons (in phallic shapes) on the cover.

There are seven drama-sex stories ("Nasa Saudi si Mister, si Misis, May Ibang Lover") and novel ("Jukid Niya, Ginapas mo! Bukid mo, Gagapasin ko!"), 15 columns/stories on movie stars and happenings, a sex education column, two komiks-serials on action-oriented stories, a question on the virginity of Hitler, Mediators (by Media-com - municators), again political commentaries mainly on Joaquin Chipeco's political career in Laguna, Balitang Barangay, Camp Crame Reports, Bantay-Bayan by Vic Felipe -- more on Laguna's politics and Letters from Saudi, outlining the anguish of jealous wives and husbands re: the Saudi phenomenon. Also, a sports column by Lily O. Ramos, and a back page editorial on the three students who sued bold magazines for indecency -- typically castigating them, of course, as spies of other publications, mere fronts of competing magazines.

Babae, published by Entertainment Publications (91 Scouter Ojeda, Quezon City) has Levi Gen. Pabalan as editor.

Issue dated October 6, 1984 has Pia Moran in feathers and beads and little else on the cover. There are 18 movie stories inside, eight sex-drama stories with graphic illustrations and titles ("Nakatiyempo!", "Lumayang Init", "Pangungulila") a komiks-serial on pirates, toughies and smugglers ("Agilang Dagat" by RR Marcelino) and Alexandra, and a Readers' Digest type of story ("Ang Nightmare ni Igor"), featuring daring escapes from communist climes, a full-page bio and praise release on "Pambihirang Alagad ng Batas", P/Major Reynaldo Medina for this particular issue, and lots of bold photos of starlets and movie stars.

The bulk komiks have titles like: For Adults Only, Climax, You & Me (billed as Experimental Comics), Game, Tiktik Komiks, Sekspesyal, Titina me Titina, Playmate, Hot, Erotic, Wet, Boobs, Unisex, etc.

Typical cover blurb: "Mga Susong Celebrity" (Playmate No.26), "Sa Ilog Lumigaya," "Ang Babaing Mainit," etc. replete with graphic illustrations of coupling in various poses/contortions and settings.

There are dirty jokes or one-page cartoons, about 7-8 sex stories, with 9:7 ratio on the typical number of frames, devoted to a step-by-step, moan-by-groan depiction of coitus and its varied techniques. There are occasional features on human interest topics like lightning and thunderstorms, songhits portions (Game komiks), and four-letter tagalog words uttered in ecstasy (You & Me komiks). Illustrations very very graphic and artless.

Is pornography part of government policy?

Such misgivings easily come to mind when one views the prevailing trend in two of today's most accessible modes of entertainment: the local movies and the komiks and magazines in the vernacular.

If one does not have the P25 needed to gain entrance to the ECP's regular fare of steamy movies, then he can surely shell out from P2-P6, the usual cost of komiks and magazines, and feast his eyes on photos and graphic illustrations of scantily-clad nymphets and let his imagination roam past the purple prose detailing rapes, seductions, and various excuses for fornication.

The corollary questions that spring to mind are: why is the government allowing such wanton abuse of the Filipino woman's image? How can those unscrupulous publishers get away with it in this predominantly-Catholic country, despite periodic "decency rallies" and porno-magazine burnings? What is the government doing to stop such abuse?

The answers may be found conveniently in the staff box, where dummies and fronts have reportedly been used by government officials, another reason to suspect that the current plethora of lewd publications is in fact part of government propaganda, the other reason being the column on government projects and personalities.

Why does the government need this type of hype?

Because the people have to be distracted from the swelling protest movement, their natural reaction when faced with the country's worst economic crisis during the past two years. By giving them

other outlets for pent-up tension and emotions, the government would have saved its own skin. These porno publications are thus a convenient escape valve, an exit route that distracts the people's minds from the harsher realities they face, and serve to relieve the tension ordinary men feel after grappling with galloping inflation.

In another context, having foisted these issues on the people, the government might also be consciously derailing and deviating the citizens' efforts to form a united front against more abstract issues. Trying to solve this peripheral but highly-visible issue of pornography will definitely exhaust some of the energy and time that would have gone into the pursuit of justice, freedom and democracy.

Another obvious link is the government's connection with sex tourism, pornography with a price tag and a dollar account to its name.

By constantly exposing us to photos of naked nymphets and couples locked in lusty embrace, is it possible that our senses are being desensitized so that we can come to accept this aberration as a natural part of our sexuality? Again, our objections would be quelled if it would mean incriminating ourselves as not being sophisticated enough to appreciate the beauty of the human form.

As one feminist writer says, "Pornography is often upheld in the name of press freedom or freedom of expression ... it has unfortunately, also been used as a political weapon in critical moments of world history..."

"Drained of human sentiments, pornography intends to make it easier for people to get used to violence, be it state violence or otherwise. It sustains the battle of the sexes so that a divided citizenry can be ruled and subjugated. It is an opiate that makes one over-concerned about loveless sex so that she or he would not rebel. And then it's easier to dissociate personal matters from public problems, from social, political, and economic issues."

Adds a psychiatrist in a film on sexual violence, "Not a Love Story": "Desensitization takes place when humiliation and brutality toward women are portrayed as acceptable behavior. The aggressive appetite seeks satisfaction and soon violence done to women is also accepted."

In the face of the state's sexual violence on our women -- tortures and sexual abuses on most women detainees perpetuated by the military, plus the extreme violence of the system in the factory, the countryside's poverty, the marketplace and society where she is considered prime commodity -- should it surprise us that the culprit would try to cover up its tracks by pinning the guilt on us, the audience?

Remember how the First Lady justified the rash of smut films at a film festival two years ago with a sweeping announcement, "Pornography is in the eyes of the beholder?" The same principle is being applied, only subtler in that no author steps forward to admit the quore.

The sins of the times such as child prostitution, pederasty, sex tourism and pornography are doubly visited on us on the pages of these komiks and magazines. Despite the moralist tone at the end of the story, what remains like a sour taste in our mouth are the details of the story -- which harps on how easily children and women are victimized, (poor helpless creatures), how easy and how tempting to do them further violence, how satisfying to prove one's domination over them. Because like rape, pornography is also about power, with sex as its weapon.

As feminist novelist Lualhati Bautista deploras on an essay on pornography, "In a capitalist society where there are wide gaps between classes, where there are victims and predators, it is important to boost the morale of the male slaves to the system. This has been done by giving them the illusion that they are masters too of their own slaves -- and these are the women and the children.

"Pornography flourishes in times of crisis because it feeds desperate men the illusion that he is not weak at all -- that he is in fact strong enough to assert authority over his women. Thus, instead of fighting the system, he decides to prove his own sovereignty over his family turf. We have been conditioned to believe that being feminine means being docile and submissive, and that masculinity resides in brawns and muscles. Pornography reinforces this -- women are portrayed as weak victims, men as strong victors.

"Pornography allows a man to express his anger and disgust over a

repressive system that robs him of his dignity and self-respect. With the blessings of the system, such frustrations are allowed outlets in the women."

Bautista likewise laments the fact that pornography is a capitalist creation in that even the women are priced like goods and used again to maintain a basically patriarchal and female-exploitative system.

Confirms Marra Lanot, another feminist writer: "Pornography not only counters liberation movements; it also strengthens the evils of patriarchy, feudalism, profiteering, fascism and imperialism. Pornography conditions men to be violent and aggressive, and unattuned to family needs because family has been relegated to the background as insignificant, unimportant, trivial and totally unrelated to socio-economic concerns." It also conditions women and children to accept their fates as victims.

Lanot adds: "The stories are not written from the point of view of women or in obvious consideration of her feelings. They are penned for macho men, insecure as they are and conditioned by wrong attitudes and double-standard values ... Pornographic materials teach and reinforce miseducation and unnecessary pressures from society on men. Aside from propagating lies about women, pornography also upholds false images of men. Men too become victims of those false images, which are celebrated and exaggerated in pop media ... Lies are used to escape poverty, promote inequality between the sexes by celebrating the power of the strong over the weak, and hinders social change."

Thus, by closing its eyes on the evils perpetuated by pornographic publications, the government can be held liable for all the sexual violence perpetuated against our women and for all the lies and abuses that have held Filipinos' socio-cultural progress in abeyance.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Philippine media are clearly dominated by men, especially in crucial policy-making positions. Yet women themselves compose a formidable presence in the industry. Some of them are owners of broadcast facilities, publishers, producers. Others are very influential, either as columnists and commentators, newscasters, or performers.

A great many shows on radio and TV are clearly aimed at a female audience, as are a host of magazines, komiks, and films.

And yet, the presence of women in the industry has done very little towards altering the deceptive and even exploitative image of women. One factor is that women in media do not themselves feel there is anything wrong with media's treatment of women, or even with women's condition in general. Many women who have made it to the top in the industry often feel they have done it only because they worked hard and were more talented. Other women, in whatever field they say, need only exert themselves more and they too, will climb the ladder.

Aside from the fact that journalists are notoriously difficult to organize, the existing groups of women in media have not addressed themselves to feminist issues, preferring instead to tackle politics. There is need then to exert more effort at reaching out to concerned, perhaps sympathetic women in the industry, as well as to continue using available outlets to create interest in feminist concerns.

Women's organizations should study the means by which they could use the existing media outlets more effectively and frequently. For starters, women's groups should try identifying women journalists, broadcasters, scriptwriters, filmmakers who already exhibit a feminist consciousness and thrust in their work, and who are only waiting to be tapped to help further the woman's cause.

Women's groups should also explore alternative cinema, in which young committed filmmakers are producing short films and documentaries that have been exhibited abroad to wide acclaim. This is a particularly exciting field for feminist communication. To date, a few women filmmakers have produced short films tackling women-specific issues. Could this be but a short step away from the commercial film circuit?

Proposals to create a "theater of gender" and a feminist scriptwriting pool are laudable. Radio, komiks, and film, being the sure mass media in the Philippines, should be given special attention, and the women already established in these media should be identified, contacted and encouraged, first perhaps by giving them material on which they could base works sympathetic to and respectful of poor Filipino women.

But going beyond the effort to re-orient the woman media professional, there is a need to transform certain givens in the profession. The definition of news, for instance, harbors a distinctive male bias. Politics, war, crime, disaster and sex -- these are ingredients deemed worthy of prominence. "Soft" news on childcare, health, and nutrition, education are destined for the inside pages. And yet are these perceptions borne out by the numbers? If women compose half of the population, and if most women are or will be mothers, shouldn't an article on childcare be entitled to at least equal billing with the Middle East war?

There is also need to explore new and different avenues of research aimed at assessing women's attitudes towards media's contents, and not just frequency of patronage. Also, there is need to shift from the standard method of classifying audiences by economic brackets, and explore the possibility of classifying audiences and readership by interests or concerns.

One suspects that whoever molds policies in mass media institutions have depended all through the years on certain stereotyped profiles of women, on which they base the kinds of shows and films to be produced, the articles to be written, the komiks scripts to buy or commission. There has been minimal effort to acknowledge the tremendous changes that have occurred in Filipino women's lives in the decade past. For instance, despite the fact that many women have been forced by economic difficulties to work outside the home, and to even function as primary breadwinners, the image of the Filipino wife and mother remains that of a docile, long-suffering creature, tolerant of her husband's weaknesses and foibles devoted to service to her children and totally dependent on the men in her life.

Finally, women's groups should explore ways of using women's power as consumers to influence the content of mass media. This calls for consciousness-raising on a mass scale; perhaps, in the beginning, the issues of women's exploitation in media could be used to arouse women's consciousness about what they read, see, and hear.

After all, it cannot be possible that Filipino women enjoy having their images distorted and reflected back at them daily in the media. The images of women in media exist only because they have been allowed to. We have to read, listen, and look consciously at the messages of media, reflecting on the impact that women on screen, in newsprint, and over the airplanes, has on our all-too-real lives.

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