Rapping and Mapping Women's (Dis)Empowerment in the Songs of Pinoy Hip-Hop Artist Andrew E.

CHRISTINE JOY A. MAGPAYO
University of the Philippines Diliman

ABSTRACT

The rise of rap in mainstream media can be attributed to the appeal of its authenticity in terms of plot lines and language. Hip-hop music communities have always considered rap as real life in lyrical form because the lyrics of this music genre are anchored in culturally bound communicative practices. Nonetheless, its eventual commercialization has led to its submission to the demands of popular culture, which tend to preserve existing power structures. The brand of rap of Pinoy hip-hop artist Andrew E. (Andrew Ford Valentino Espiritu) is characterized by implied sexual references and comedic verses embedded in the lyrics' narratives. Using Dell Hymes' (1964) conception of the ethnography of communication and Norman Fairclough's (2001) approach to Critical Discourse Analysis as the main theoretical and methodological frameworks, this study explored and examined how women are portrayed, empowered, and disempowered in the narrative rap songs of Andrew E. from 1990 to 2013. Having analyzed the narrative arcs and speech units, the findings reveal that sexual agency, social status, physical appearance, and objectification are prominent sources of (dis)empowerment for the women in the songs' narratives, and that the lyrics perpetuate hegemonic masculinity and misogyny.

Keywords: Andrew E., hip-hop music, Philippine popular culture, Pinoy rap music, popular music

POWER POLITICS IN POPULAR CULTURE

The power politics behind popular culture is governed by capitalist structures that control what is and what can be popular, be it forms of media, linguistic conventions, or ideologies. Simplistically, popular culture refers to what many people find favorable, which emphasizes its quantitative dimension (Storey 2018) and further implies that the shared taste of the vernacular predominates the aesthetic standards often imposed by the elite. However, if mass media and commercial propaganda drive and steer popular culture, what emerges as popular is less of an interest from the general public, but is rather a dictate from dominant groups who have the means to monopolize media that stimulate or subvert ideas.

Concomitant with the commodity culture that puts a premium on the economic value of objects, ideas, and people (Jackson 1999), popular culture concerns itself with being a commercial enterprise that standardizes goods in a way that will make them appealing to a presumed heterogeneous mass audience (Gans 1974). Popularity has become such an imperative for profitability that mass deception and manipulation have become commonplace to ensure that contemporary capitalism, a system characterized by "generalized and globalized monopolies" (Amin 2013, 15), can persist despite opposition. Through "standardization, stereotype, conservatism, mendacity, [and] manipulated consumer goods" (Lowenthal 1961, 11), popular culture helps the powers of control in enforcing certain beliefs and values that maintain their public status.

According to Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, who were among the most prominent figures of the first generation of critical theorists of the Frankfurt School from the 1940s to the 1960s, the culture industry "produces culture as a commodity" (Bowie 2022, 53) by molding, if not corrupting, the consciousness of the masses (Strinati 2005). In the case of popular music, Adorno believed that the industry only churns out songs designed to sell, making them inferior to the function and aesthetic of genuine art. However, some scholars challenged the critique of Adorno by arguing that popular music fulfills the function of genuine art which is to stimulate the mind (Paddison 1982). The history of popular music in America has served as an arena for social and political ideas. This can be observed in the blues tunes in the mid to late 19th century that tackled the struggles of people of color, folk songs in the early 20th century that expressed pro-union and anti-monopoly sentiments, and rap in the 1970s that told stories about violence and drug abuse (Cooper 1988).

Emerging from mass culture, popular music is often critiqued for its "banal uniformity" that could be "the locus of large-scale social change" (Hall and Blau 1987, 31). Beliefs and value systems preserved or challenged by popular songs inevitably shape the status quo. Given that the success of popular music can be largely attributed to the palate and ingrained dispositions of its target consumers, the music

scene in local industries can reveal the identity of the popular music market and the collective narrative of a community (Brandellero et al. 2013).

Under the lens of literary anthropology, which permits treating literary texts as ethnographic source material (Wiles 2020), song lyrics can be evaluated as social scripts using critical discourse analysis that "stems from a critical theory of language which sees the use of language as a form of social practice. All social practices are tied to specific historical contexts and are the means by which existing social relations are reproduced or contested and different interests are served" (Janks 1997, 329). Since lyrics are sung and performed, they are embodied by the musician, and the listeners' appreciation of music is tied to their corporeality (Peters 2020, 6). This is particularly true in the case of rap music, which first emerged as an American cultural movement against racial strife before the mainstream media transformed it into a global multi-billion-dollar industry that tends to perpetuate misogyny.

RAP MUSIC AS A MALE-DOMINATED COMMUNITY NARRATIVE

Rap music originated from the marginalized youth communities in the South Bronx of New York City in the 1970s that used hip-hop culture to expose issues surrounding the economic and social hardships of locals and immigrants in the boroughs which were infested with criminal activities involving gang wars, drug addiction, and arson (Naison 2019). Rap was a form of protest – an artistic expression of rage and a response to institutional discrimination. It articulated the lived experiences of its creators and primary audience. Through rap, the black community, whose voices were once repressed, gained a platform to showcase their cultural identity and express their collective consciousness through the narratives embedded in the lyrics.

Rap music was and still is considered authentic urban language as the lyrics consist of culturally bound communicative practices reminiscent of where hip-hop culture was created and first disseminated: the streets (Stæhr and Madsen 2015). Street codes, rap music, and social identity have a reflexive relationship as "the street code projects a compelling normative order, and rap lyrics would be viewed as reproductions of the code offered up to describe black urban street life" (Kubrin 2005, 365). This implies that if a culture of violence and misogyny is a compelling normative order in the street codes and rules of the hip-hop community, then rap lyrics containing such problematic themes will continue to be reproduced while the normative street codes persist.

Furthermore, if gender discrimination and hegemonic masculinity remain prevalent in the male-dominated rap industry (Adams 2006), then it only preserves, if not aggravates, gender power asymmetry. The tragic irony here is that the art of rap, which was initially intended to be an instrument to fight racial oppression, eventually became a tool to perpetuate gender discrimination.

Rap music began as a counternarrative to mainstream media; however, the commercialization of the genre has "caused many of its cultural representatives to fall prey to materialism, becoming less-representative of/for the community" (Hart 2012, 6). Under the pressure of the culture industry, where the rapper is both an artist and an economic agent, "[r]ather than upholding the barrier between organization/economy on one hand and entertainment/culture on the other, the performing of the rap persona often conflates these two spheres. The economic is retold in the narrations, whereas the narrations are sold as commodities" (Sköld and Rehn 2007, 67). It was also inevitable for the male-dominated rap scene to prioritize producing and promoting music with highly sexualized portrayals of men and women in narratives controlled by a patriarchal system, given that popular media have always exploited the profitability of sex and sexuality (Grossman 2020).

A cross-disciplinary approach to empowerment theory and narrative studies frames narratives as resources that shape identity development and community membership. This perspective leads to important questions:

> Who controls these resources? Which stories are considered to be true? Which stories are legitimated, and by whom? Why are some stories rejected and others valued? Who has the right to tell another person's story? If narratives are understood as resources, we are able to see that who controls that resource, that is, who gives stories social value, is at the heart of a tension between freedom and social control, oppression and liberation, and empowerment versus disenfranchisement. (Rappaport 1995, 805)

Studies focusing on gender issues in rap music recognize the ubiquity of misogynistic lyrics in the genre. In the study of Campbell (2011) that investigated the themes of violence and gender in the Billboard Top Ten rap singles from 1997 to 2007, it was found that emotional violence – verbal assaults meant to discriminate against and debase another person – is gender-specific. This male-on-female emotional violence involves name-calling using derogatory terms such as bitch, ho, and slut, and exists in contexts wherein "women are viewed as replaceable or invaluable objects, intended for male consumption" (Campbell 2011, 46).

In a similar study where Weitzer and Kubrin (2009) examined portrayals of women in 403 rap songs in rap albums that attained platinum status (sold at least 1 million copies) from 1992 to 2000, it was found that 22%, or 90 out of the 403 sampled songs, contained lyrics depicting misogyny, and in those 90 songs, five were by female artists while 85 were by male artists. Furthermore, five themes emerged from the content analysis: sexual objectification (67%), naming and shaming (49%), distrust of women (47%), prostitution and pimping (20%), and legitimating violence (18%). Songs with themes related to sexual objectification involve peer pressure being a factor that leads to male sexual aggression, women of stature being reduced to sexual objects, and the dramatization of sexual objectification as

gangbanging where a group of men engage in consensual or nonconsensual sex with a woman who is intoxicated or sometimes underaged.

Songs with themes related to naming and shaming involve the use of derogatory labels such as bitch, ho, and pussy directed at women in general. Songs with themes related to distrust of women involve narrative arcs where women seduce men for money, make false rape accusations to receive a financial settlement, or lie to men to get pregnant. Songs with themes related to prostitution and pimping involve women being viewed as economic pursuits. Finally, songs with themes related to legitimizing violence involve men priding themselves on sexual acts that harm women, justifying acts of violence, warning women who challenge the patriarchy that they will be assaulted, and condoning male violence against women.

In another study, the textual analysis of 38 philogynist (depicting women as admired, adored, or loved) rap songs released from 2000 to 2010 revealed the following:

> First, rappers were most often connected to women they viewed as independent, strong, coveted, supportive "ride or die" equal partners in life and love who were deemed different than the average woman. Second, in stark contrast, adored women were also described as abused and degraded by other men and needing to be "saved" by the rapper. Third, the relationships of the rappers and the adored women were sources of contention with their friends. Finally, rappers often verbally, physically, and emotionally discussed adored women in the same misogynistic way they discussed other women. (Tyree and Jones 2015, 68)

While philogynist rap music attempts to temper, if not counter, misogynistic rap, the lyrics still encourage hegemonic masculinity and preserve the patriarchy. Williams (2018) argues that since the early years of rap music, the genre "has engaged in the ideological contempt for and subjugation of women that structures patriarchal US society" (297). Even the gender politics involved in female rappers' (e.g., Lil' Kim and Nicki Minaj) attempt to reclaim their voice by depicting themselves as sexually liberated women "walk a thin line between staking a feminist claim to sexual freedom and conforming to the objectifying male gaze" (Williams 2018, 299).

It is crucial to stress that "rap artists are not solely responsible for the content of their work. The entertainment industry plays an essential role, cultivating sexist lyrics and rewarding artists who produce them with huge sums of money" (Weitzer & Kubrin 2009, 25). The culture industry and mass media have always banked on profitable stereotypes, but still, the extent to which their impact could be mitigated depends on what consumers would choose to demand.

THE BEGINNINGS OF PINOY RAP

The Philippines saw major changes when the United States colonized it from 1898 to 1946, as American culture had shaped the country's social institutions and even the people's musical tastes (Schons 2010). Even after the Philippines gained independence from the United States in 1946, American military bases have remained in the country, and service troops stationed play significant roles in exporting American popular music, such as funk, soul, and rap to local radio stations. Filipino immigrants living in the United States and who exchanged tapes and CDs with their family and friends in the Philippines also became instrumental in popularizing rap music in the Philippines faster than in other Southeast Asian countries (Schons 2010).

A few months after the commercial release of Sugarhill Gang's "Rapper's Delight" in 1979 – the first rap record in history – it became the first hip-hop single that reached the Billboard Top 40 (Lynch 2014). The song became so popular worldwide that in 1980 Manila-based singer and comedian Dyords Javier (George Javier) recorded a spoof titled "Na Onseng Delight" (Duped Delight) (Hip Hop Around the World: An Encyclopedia 2019). Quickly following was the release of singer-songwriter and comedian Vincent Daffalong's (Vincent Quilet) rap song "Nunal" (Mole) which was well received by Filipino listeners.

These songs led to novelty rap – a subgenre of rap that uses rhymes and injects humor in its presentation of folk beliefs, traditions, and customs – to become one of the most popular and commercially successful musical genres in the Philippines (Pineda and Cayabyab 2021). However, when Javier and Daffalong stopped producing records, Pinoy rap declined and was considered as mere fad. In an interview, Javier said, "[t]he reason for rap's popularity is colonial mentality. What is a fad in the States is instantly a fad to the market here, and it becomes popular" (Alcasid 1992, 20-21). Citing Marissa Bernardino's work *The History of Philippine Music (1970-1977)*, Alcasid (1992) argues that although Pinoy rap is an offshoot of Philippine music that has always been heavily influenced by Western chord patterns, it has managed to evoke a sense of Filipinoness where the experiences and sentiments of its primary audiences are captured.

It was Francis M. (Francis Magalona), dubbed as "Master Rapper," who brought Pinoy rap in the mainstream music scene by "[r]iding on the post-EDSA wave of nationalism" when he released the album *Yo!* which included the big hit "Mga Kababayan Ko" (My Fellow Filipinos) in 1990 (Pineda and Cayabyab 2021). His sartorial signature also complemented his music's brand of patriotism. According to Pineda and Cayabyab (2021):

> Aside from his patriotic lyrics and ethnic-inspired beats and mixes, he [Francis M.] also donned ethnic inspired costumes and accessories, like the putong, sarong, and batik vests, in his television appearances and concerts. His local rap style was influenced by

> global pop genres like world beat or ethnic fusion, which was fashionable during that time. Shortly after his success in the mainstream music industry, rappers and rapping became the new trend.

The appeal of Pinoy rap could be attributed to the rapper's ability to write and perform songs that resonate with the public and appeal to their sensibilities. As a derivative of Western hip-hop that flourished because of how it aestheticized the lived experiences of both the artist and the audience, Pinoy rap is also an expression of culture and a performance of everyday life.

In the 90s, the golden age of Pinoy hip-hop, Andrew E. (Andrew Ford Valentino Espiritu) revived novelty rap that capitalized on sexual themes and that used slang with sexual connotations. Although his music was critiqued by many for being taboo, vulgar, and scandalous, his debut album titled *Humanap Ka ng Panget* (Look For Someone Ugly) attained triple platinum status (Alcasid 1992). In 1995, Andrew E. founded his own record company, Dongalo Records, to discover new Filipino rap talents. One popular group that started through this independent label was Salbakuta, whose debut single "Stupid Luv" became a hit and spawned a movie, inspiring more artists to venture into the rap music scene (Dizon 2020).

ANDREW E. AS A PINOY RAP ICON

Andrew E. started his career as a DJ in California before he worked as a DJ at Euphoria, a discotheque in Makati City. He became widely known for the song "Humanap Ka ng Panget" which was included in his debut album of the same title. A year after its release, Andrew E. starred in a comedy film of the same title with veteran actors Eddie Gutierrez and Jimmy Santos. Thereafter, he worked on numerous projects for film, TV series, concerts, and albums.

As of July 2023, he has 44 acting projects and 22 soundtracks listed in IMDb (IMDb 2023). In 2010, his album *Clubzilla* was awarded Rap Album of the Year by Philippine Movie Press Club's Star Awards for Music (Dizon 2020). He has also served as a judge in singing competitions such as *Born To Be A Star*, produced by TV 5 and Viva Entertainment in 2016, and *HypeBest*, a rap competition in *It's Showtime* in 2018 (Dizon 2020).

Three decades after making a name for himself in show business, Andrew E. remains a prominent figure in the Philippine rap scene. His listenership on Spotify continues to increase despite him not having recorded a new song since his most recent album released in 2013. Table 1 shows the statistics of Andrew E.'s listenership on Spotify.

Time	Followers	Average Monthly Listeners
January 2021 pre-research implementation	131,805	159,421
October 2021 post-research implementation	158,133	224,319
April 2023 first draft of this article	249,666	412,235
July 2023 (first week) second draft of this article	259,662	518,199
July 2023 (last week) third draft of this article	266,025	604,695

Table 1: Andrew E.'s listenership on Spotify. Source: author.

It is worth noting that most of his streamed songs on the platform are from his most successful albums in the 1990s and early 2000s. Further, his recordings during this time reflect similar misogynistic attributes observed in American rap in the same period, as revealed in the studies of Weitzer & Kubrin (2009) and Campbell (2011) who also examined the lyrics of best-selling and chart-topping rap singles in the 1990s and 2000s.

Andrew E.'s success in the music industry not only proves that his contribution remains relevant to this day, but also provides an adequate period to examine possible changes in the themes and trends in mainstream Pinoy rap. The songs that served as artifacts of this study were shortlisted from the 118 songs included in the eleven official and commercially released albums featuring Andrew E. as the main artist from 1990 to 2013. Although he composed and performed on singles and original film soundtracks, these mediums are not included in this research as they are not within a similar mode of production.

Album	Song Title
Humanap Ka Ng Panget (1990) 4/9 songs	Humanap Ka Ng Panget
	Andrew Ford Medina
	Mas Gusto Mo Sya
	Binibi Rocha
	Ang Aming Pasko
	Kagat ng Aso
	Walang Santa Claus

Ang Dalawang Pasko ni Andrew E. (1991) 4/10 songs	Teng-Q
Ekstranghero (1997) 2/9 songs	Kapangyarihan
	Taga Bukid
Wholesome (1999) 4/12 songs	Maggy
	Banyo Queen
	Fax Me
	Mahal Kita
Much More Wholesome (2000) 5/12 songs	Honey
	Shanana
	Baño Queen II
	Baby You're D' Shet
	O.U.812
Porno Daw (2001) 5/11 songs	M.I.K. (May I Kwento)
	Sinabmarin
	Body Language
	Tina Moran
	Twinkle
Alabanger (2002) 3/14 songs	Gina Call Medina 1997
	Binnie Berenguer Rocha 1997
	Alabanger Song
Krispy na Kreamy Pa (2004) 3/12 songs	Krispy Na Kreamy Pa
	Pink Palaka
	Pretty Girl
Clean (2007) 2/12 songs	Lahian Mo Ako
	Girl
Clubzilla/Bass Mix (201) 0/8 songs	(none)
Andrew E Does Ballads Vol. 1 (2013) 3/7 songs	I Wish I Can
	Basta Sakin Ang Heart
	Dahil Mahal Kita

Table 2: Artifacts of the study. Source: author.

The 35 rap songs of Andrew E. all take the form of a narrative. The lyrics were analyzed as speech units (speech situations, speech events, speech acts). Thereafter, the constraints of discourse (contents, relations, and subject positions) binding the male and female characters in the songs were explicated

to see the emerging themes. The analysis of the rhetorical artifacts did not investigate the sound, rhythm, and structural effects of the music as it focused on treating the lyrics as social scripts that can reveal the linguistic and cultural identity of the Pinoy hip-hop community.

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF RAP AS ETHNOGRAPHIC INQUIRY

Kenneth Burke's *A Grammar of Motives* was the first installation of a trilogy that seeks to "uncover human motivations through an analysis of their linguistic expressions" (Morris 1951, 439). Here, Burke argues that man's literary products mirror human nature and motivation. In *A Rhetoric of Motives*, he "seeks the underlying motives for which words are strategies," and in *A Symbolic of Motives,* he probes into the "value-orientations that lie behind the motives" (Morris 1951, 439). The trilogy holds that man's use of language is inherently rhetorical, and Burke argues that "persuasion can be achieved only through identification" (Day 1960, 271).

In its simplest sense, identification is persuasion involving the use of language fashioned to establish the commonalities between the speaker and the audience (Day 1960). As Burke explains, "[y]ou persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your ways with his" (Burke 1969, 55). It is built on the premise that individuals seek to identify or relate with others and build social cohesion to overcome separation and division (Burke 1969). Essentially, the epistemological and ontological underpinnings of Burke's concept of identification as new rhetoric suggest that language and culture are interdependent.

Ethnography of communication – an approach which involves "combining ethnography, the description and analysis of culture, with linguistics, the description and analysis of language" – was a response if not a counterproposal to Chomskian linguistics that conceived language as independent of culture (Keating 2001, 285). The ethnography of communication is a theory and method that "explored language not just as a formal system of grammar, but as something culturally shaped in the contexts of social life" (Carbaugh and Boromisza-Habashi 2015, 2). For Dell Hymes, one of its primary proponents,

> it is not linguistics, but ethnography – not language, but communication – which must provide the frame of reference within which the place of language in culture and society is to be described. The boundaries of the community within which communication is possible; the boundaries of the situations within which communication occurs; the means and purposes and patterns of selection, their structure and hierarchy, that constitute the communicative economy of a group, but are not controlled by them. (Hymes 1964, 3)

To describe and explain the interdependence of language and culture, Hymes formulated a system of concepts to organize ethnographic inquiry. In the conceptual vocabulary, a speech community (a social group with shared rules for the use and interpretation of communication practice or language variety) can be studied and understood by looking into speech units that govern their interactions. These speech units include speech situations (settings where communication is expected or prohibited), speech events (sequence of speech acts the speech community recognize as routine), and speech acts (performative utterances).

Studying a speech community's use of language reveals its speech repertoire (communicative competencies participants possess) and speech economy (social valuing of communicative competencies) (Carbaugh 2015). Ethnographies of communication have been used in conducting field-specific activities that involve community immersion. The framework has also been used as a lens to examine texts in mass media, political processes, and various interpersonal and organizational settings (Carbaugh 2015).

Discourse analysis in music can be patterned after the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) since it is an interdisciplinary study open to "multidimensional analysis combining social, linguistic, psychological, visual, gestural, ritual, technical, historical, and musicological aspects;" by examining the textual features of song lyrics, one can gain an understanding of their respective social frames (Aleshinskaya 2013, 423). More specifically, Norman Fairclough's dialectical-relational approach to CDA posits that "sociolinguistic conventions have a dual relation to power: on the one hand, they incorporate differences of power, on the other, they arise out of – and give rise to – particular relations of power" (Fairclough 2001, 1).

This approach further asserts that power is closely linked to ideology and language since ideology is what legitimizes power relations, and language is "the commonest form of social behavior" that shapes ideologies (Fairclough 2001, 2). Fairclough's approach to CDA consists of three analytical categories and concepts for textual analysis: dimensions of meaning, values of features, and structural effects. The concepts under the first category, dimensions of meaning, centers on the constraints of discourse, which pivot on power in discourse, particularly, "powerful participants controlling and constraining the contributions of non-powerful participants" (Fairclough 2001, 38-39). The three types of constraints that served as the analysis points of the study are: contents (what is said or done), relations (relationship of people involved), and subjects/subject positions (role in relation to the power possessed).

The rhetoricity of the lyrics of rap, which are essentially lived experiences and community narratives of hip-hop subcultures, are founded on the concept of identification. In this qualitative research anchored in the rhetorical and critical communication traditions, the inquiry commenced with the exploration of

available sources of information and proceeded with the critical examination of specific details pertinent to the units of analysis until a well-substantiated synthesis was achieved. The study examined situated knowledge in song lyrics by looking into the language, symbolisms, and meaning used in the text to examine the ways in which women were (mis)represented and (dis)empowered in the rap songs of Andrew E.

The data analysis procedure involved four levels of analysis, each corresponding to specific research objectives. The first level of analysis focused on describing the main characters in the rap songs in terms of their motives as well as dominant masculine and feminine traits, which may be positive or negative since an important element of dis/empowerment lies in the correspondence between goals and outcomes (Mechanic 1991, as cited in Zimmerman 2000, 45); the identification and classification of gendered traits were guided by Valledor-Lukey's (2012) Filipino gender-trait inventory. The second level of analysis focused on describing the speech units (speech situation, speech event, and speech act) used to depict the dis/empowerment of female characters; the speech acts were further classified and analyzed for the function they served as representative, expressive, commissive, directive, and declarative since these speech units were considered processes that contributed to the development of sites of (dis)empowerment. The third level of analysis focused on explicating the constraints on discourse to reveal the values and rhetoric embedded in and espoused by the narratives in the song lyrics. Finally, the fourth level of analysis focused on evaluating the sources and/or forms of dis/empowerment used in the narrative rap songs of Andrew E.

WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN ANDREW E.'S MUSIC

Andrew E.'s narrative rap songs are – as he claims in the lyrics – typically grounded in his personal experiences and particularly about his career and personal relationships. These narratives are delivered as first-person accounts wherein the highly sexualized female characters are assumed to be real-life women Andrew E. knows. The descriptions of the female characters and their sexual encounters are detailed, thus inviting listeners to picture them like a fantasy that caters to the male gaze. In the 35 songs that served as artifacts of the study, two dominant representations of women emerged. The first frames women as sexually empowered individuals, while the second frames them as sexual conquest and status symbol for men.

Women as sexually empowered individuals

Unlike in popular gangsta rap in the United States in the 1990s and 2000s where physical and emotional violence against women seemed to be a constitutive element of hip-hop music, Andrew E.'s

songs possess no such content. Sex was always consensual, and often initiated by women. Although the female characters in the narrative rap songs of Andrew E. are portrayed as sexually liberated and at times can be aggressive, one could argue that they are still objectified by Andrew E., the male character-narrator-performer who controls the narrative to assert male bravado. Notably, the formulaic structure of Andrew E.'s kiss-and-tell stories projects himself as a sex symbol by showing attractive and affluent women chase after him. He challenges conventional structures of power through his work as an artist by presenting narratives in which he is the target of elites' sexual desire and servitude.

Song Title	**Lyrics showing social status**	**Lyrics showing sexual agency**
Andrew Ford Medina (1990)	Lahat sila ay may Mercedez Benz. […] Lahat sila nakatira sa San Lorenzo Ville *(They all owe a Mercedes Benz […]* *They all live in San Lorenzo Ville)*	Sabi n'ya sa akin, "Hey Andrew, can you give me a massage?" Hinilot ko ang front, pati ang kanyang back. Then, Ana squeezed me tight and then she gave me a smack. *(She said, "Hey, Andrew,* *can you give me a massage?"* *I rubbed her front, as well as her back.* *Then, Ana squeezed me tight* *and then she gave me a smack.)*
Sinabmarin (2001)	Ti-nour niya ako sa bahay at sa loob may swimming pool. Ang tindi talaga ng bahay kasi may elevator. *(She gave me a tour in their house with a swimming pool. The house was impressive as it even had an elevator.)*	So sa kwarto pinakita collection ng Andrew E. songs Pinakita rin collection ng mga (thong to-thong thong thongs) *(In the room she showed her* *collection of Andrew E. songs.* *She also showed her collection of thongs.)*
Gina Call Medina 1997 (2002)	At ang sabi niya sa akin, "Bakit? Magkano ka ba? Just tell me Andrew kung magkano'ng halaga!" *(And then she told me, "Why?* *How much are you? Just tell me your price, Andrew.")*	So tinaggal niya ang butones, hinubad ang polo shirt, tinanggal ang kanyang shoes, hinubad ang mini skirt. Oh shet, sa pwet, gusto niyang ikabit. Hindi ako pumayag but then siya ay nagalit *(She unbuttoned her top, took off her polo shirt, removed her shoes, took off her mini*

		skirt. Oh shit, she wants to connect it to her butt. I did not agree, which made her mad.)
Binnie Berenguer Rocha 1997 (2002)	Nakakita 'ko ng Porsche Hey Binnie! Is that yours? Sumagot siya, "Yes, of course." *(I saw a Porsche.* *Hey Binnie! Is that yours?* *She answered, "Yes, of course.")*	Ang 'di ko lang alam siya ay already horny Nang may biglang gumapang, kamay niyang full of sweat. *(What I did not know was she was already horny. I just felt her sweaty hand moving over me.)*
Pink Palaka (2004)	Sa Forbes ang bahay, mayroon siyang basement. *(Her house is in Forbes,* *and it has a basement.)*	So sa sahig siya'y biglang dumapa Pinakita niya sa akin ang kanyang palaka. *(She lied on the floor.* *She showed me her frog.)*
Pretty Girl (2004)	Ang girl na waldi-waldi taga-Faith Academy. *(This free-spirited girl studies in Faith Academy.)*	Nilagay niya ang kamay niya at inihimas sa puwit. Umupo siya sa table, kinuha niya ang phone. Tinanong niya ako kung ako raw ba ay all alone. *(She touched her butt and stroked it. She sat on the table, took her phone. She asked me whether I was all alone.)*

Table 3: Songs depicting sexual agency of elite women.
Source: Selected Andrew E. songs. All translations by the author.

As outlined in Table 3, the social status of women who make sexual advances is established by mentioning the luxury cars they own, the exclusive subdivisions they reside in, or the private schools they attend. Women are depicted as sexually suggestive by detailing how they initiate touching or how they undress themselves in the presence of a man they wish to seduce. But aside from these plotlines that demonstrate masculine pride, machismo is further legitimized by Andrew E. when he shares sexual encounters with women who expressed their concern about their image and privacy.

The songs presented in Table 4 suggest the social stigma surrounding female sexuality. While the women are empowered to initiate sex, it does not mean that they are sexually liberated. Their inhibitions stemming from family morals and rules are apparent. The lyrics suggest willingness to engage in sexual relations that are restricted by social norms.

Song Title	**Lyrics showing stigma against women's sexuality**
Shanana (2000)	Pero sabi ni Shanana-nana, "Drew, I'll just do it for you, ha?" […] Pero ang sabi ni Shanana-nana, "Drew, don't tell anybody ha?" *(But Shanana-nana said,* *''Drew, I'll just do it for you, okay?" […]* *But Shanana-nana said,* *''Drew, don't tell anybody, okay?")*
M.I.K. (May I Kwento) (2001)	At sa bahay nila buo ang moral, Pero sa phone ika'y io-oral. *(In their house, she acts all moral,* *but on the phone she is up for oral.)*
Alabanger Song (2002)	Sa kanyang house, every day, ako ina-arouse. Inaabot ako ng umaga, okay lang I feel so great. Strict ang kanyang parents pero parehong nasa States. *(In their house, every day, she makes me feel aroused. I stay until morning, and feel so great. Her parents are strict, but they are both in the States.)*
Pink Palaka (2004)	Kaya ako'y binatak at niyayaya Linggo, day-off ng kanyang yaya. *(So she pulled me, and invited me* *on Sunday, her maid's day-off.)*

Table 4: Songs depicting stigma against women's sexuality.
Source: Selected Andrew E. songs. All translations by the author.

Conservative and religious beliefs and practices in the Philippines have always negatively impacted Filipino women (Santos 2021) who are expected to subscribe to Marianismo, the counterpart of machismo which encourages chastity among women as rooted in values prescribed by Roman Catholicism (Morales and Pérez 2021).

On the other hand, Lizada (2017) notes that the macho culture has been situated and celebrated in various media (e.g., billboards, films, etc.), which makes contemporary Filipino male masculinity and sexuality a commodity. This is true in the case of Andrew E.s songs where his virility is established through narratives that purport to recognize women's sexual needs and sexual empowerment.

Women as men's sexual conquests and status symbols

Arguably, Andrew E.'s kiss-and-tell narrative rap songs where women are hypersexualized promote voyeurism inasmuch as they frame women as sexual conquest and status symbol for men. The male character – who is often the same as the performer who presents the events as anecdotes – is portrayed as thinking and acting in a way that makes the female character seem like a challenge and reward. Aside from women's social status, Andrew E. also intentionally provides in some songs descriptions of women's physical features – mostly facial features and body figure – that make them attractive and worth pursuing.

Song Title	**Lyrics showing descriptions of the female character's physical appearance**	**Lyrics showing the male character's effort to gain the woman's attention**
Binibi Rocha (1990)	Mata niya ay kulay brown, meron syang brace sa ngipin. Kamukha siya ni Rita Avila kung iisipin. Katawan niya'y 36-24-34. Sa panong paraan kaya ako makaka-score. *Her eyes are brown, and she wears braces. She looks like Rita Avila, if you think about it. Her body's 36-24-34. I wonder how can I score.)*	Kaya't ako'y biglang nagsabi, "Hey, girl, I like your style!" *(I blurted, 'Hey, girl, I like your style!')*
Maggy (1999)	When I saw this girl and she was sizzling hot. X marks the spot. Damn! Bigla akong nagulat. At that time, hindi ako makahinga sa tinde ng aking nakikita. Close up smile, looking like a child. *(When I saw this girl and she was sizzling hot. X marks the spot. Damn! I*	And so I approached her, nagpakilala ako, "Andrew E. baby! What's up? Anong name mo?" *(And so I approached her, and introduced myself, "Andrew E. baby! What's up? What's your name?")*

	was shocked. At that time, I could not breathe because of what I was seeing. Close up smile, looking like a child.)	
Banyo Queen (1999)	Nakilala ko tuloy itong magandang babae na nakabibighani sa aking mga mata […] Naglalaway sa palda niyang hapit na hapit. *(I met this beautiful girl who captured my eyes […] I was salivating at the sight of her tight-fitted skirt.)*	Nang ako'y makalinga, 'di ko siya matagpuan. Ubos ang aking money, di ko pa nahalikan. *(When I looked elsewhere for a while, I couldn't find her anymore. I spent all my money [on her], and was not even able to kiss her.)*
Mahal Kita (1999)	Oh, talagang mahal kita, pretty baby. *(Oh, I really love you, pretty baby.)*	Simula nang ika'y makilala, Gusto na agad kita mai-kama. Kaya bigla-bigla kitang niligawan Baka ako sa'yo maunahan. *(Ever since we met,* *I wanted us to get in bed.* *I courted you right away* *So you I will not be beaten to it by someone else.)*
Shanana (2000)	Sa isang tabi, umupo ang magandang young lady. *(The pretty young lady sat in the corner.)*	I gave the waitress two hundred bucks Para ating alamin ang pangalan […] Shook the girl's hand. *(I gave the waitress two hundred bucks* *To find out the girl's name […]* *Shook the girl's hand.)*
Twinkle (2001)	Beatriz Lucero look-a-like. Siya'y mestiza, Assumptionista na at that time ay bakasyonista. Rosy cheek, pink na pink, pulang pula. *(She looked like Beatriz Lucero.* *Fair-skinned, studies in Assumption,* *and at that time was on vacation.* *She had rosy cheek, very pink, very red.)*	Tinanong ko, "Meron ka bang boyfriend?" "Bawal ang boys, puro lang friends". So tanghaling tapat ko rin siya pinuslit. At para hindi maingay ang dog, Australian beef aking hinulog. Hala sige, kagat-kagat mga aso Habang ako kagat-kagat amo

		(I asked, "Do you have a boyfriend?" "Boys are not allowed, I only have friends" […]. It was noon when I saw her in secret. To stop the dogs from barking, I gave them Australian beef. While the dogs were biting the meat, I was biting their owner.)
Alabanger Song (2002)	And so ako'y na-intriga sa nakita kong mestiza. I freeze. Siya'y Vietnamese. *(I was intrigued with the mestiza I saw. I froze in disbelief. She was Vietnamese.)*	Kinausap ko at ang sabi ko, "One question, one answer." *(I talked to her and said, "One question, one answer.")*

Table 5: Songs depicting attractive women as sexual conquest.
Source: Selected Andrew E. songs. All translations by the author.

In contrast with the songs presented in Table 3 where women whose main descriptors denote their social status immediately initiate sexual encounter upon meeting Andrew E., the songs in Table 5 show that Andrew E. needs minimal effort to win sexual favors from women he finds attractive, which further boosts his ego. It is worth noting that Andrew E. finds no need to prove his worth since most of the women recognize him as a famous and financially stable rap artist. The songs "Banyo Queen," "Shanana," and "Twinkle" show Andrew E. willingness to spend money to gain sexual favors from women. While the lyrics demonstrate that both genders desire the same thing, legitimizing the "she wants what he wants" rhetoric reduces women to a one-dimensional character whose only function is to satisfy the male gaze.

WOMEN'S (DIS)EMPOWERMENT IN ANDREW E.'S RAP SONGS

Gender power asymmetry in the Pinoy rap music industry feeds the narcissism of the male persona, which advertently or inadvertently perpetuate misogyny; "[t]his type of Pinoy rap music has depended so much on active and passive voyeuristic mechanisms to such an extent that the humanity of a woman is completely ignored because of hypersexualized stereotypes" (Galang 2021). These were observed in the narrative rap music of Andrew E. where four main sources and sites of women's (dis)empowerment were found: sexual agency, social status, physical attractiveness, and objectification.

Sexual Agency and Social Status

The rap songs where the sexual agency and social status of women (see Table 3) are prominent in the narrative suggest that women from higher social class possess sexual empowerment. In these songs, female characters issue directives to the male character to achieve their goal and gain sexual satisfaction. These directives involve inviting Andrew E. to their mansions or inside their luxury cars where the sexual encounters transpire. While this type of characterization projects sexual agency and social status as sources of empowerment, the fact that the male controls the narrative makes it a voyeuristic device that defines women only based on their sexual pleasures. Some songs (see Table 4) also acknowledge the mores surrounding women's sexuality and sexual liberation, which disempowers women regardless of their social status. The binding customs and traditions that maintain the moral significance of chastity prompt female characters to request, if not beg, Andrew E. to not disclose their sexual encounter as they are concerned with the social stigma surrounding sex. In the rap songs which take the form of anecdotal accounts, this request was disregarded by Andrew E. who narrates these supposedly true events, proving the existence of gender power asymmetry in his work as an artist.

Physical Attractiveness

Several of Andrew E.'s sexual pursuits commence with descriptions of women's physical appearance where their facial features, body figure, and clothing were deemed seductive (see Table 5). Conventionally attractive female characters are complimented and pursued by the male character, which may appear as a source of empowerment on the surface, but may be considered as a disempowering attribute since they are only given attention and effort to earn sexual favors later.

It can be argued that mentioning the details surrounding the female characters' physical appearance only functions as a device to showcase Andrew E.'s charisma and to stroke his self-pride as he manages to prove that he could get anyone he wants, thus empowering himself in front of his audience. And like sexualized portrayals of women in television scripts where sexual fantasies of male audiences are fulfilled through distanced visual pleasure (Castro 2009), the hypersexualized stereotypes of physically attractive female characters in Andrew E.'s rap songs reduce women to objects of male fantasy.

Objectification

Unlike American rap that degrades women by casually referring to them as 'bitches,' 'hoes,' and 'pussies,' Andrew E.'s degrades and objectifies female characters in his rap songs by diluting their

identity. He unapologetically asserts ownership of the narrative by sharing his sexual encounters with women whose names were deliberately hypersexualized to toy with the imagination of his listeners who enjoy his brand of novelty music.

Song Title	Description
Binibi Rocha (1990) / Binnie Berenguer Rocha 1997 (2002)	The female character is named after a sexual act: "binobrocha" is Pinoy slang for oral sex.
Shanana (2000)	The female character is named after a horse which the male character enjoys riding.
Body Language (2001)	The female character is named Body.
Tina Moran (2001)	The female character is named after a sexual act: "tinamoran" is the Filipino translation for 'ejaculated'.
Gina Call Medina 1997 (2002)	The female character is named Gina to complete the double entendre "Gina Call" which is a sexual act: "jinakol" is the Filipino translation for 'masturbated'.
Krispy Na Kreamy Pa (2004)	The female character is named Kristina Krimipa, a pun that compares her to the popular donut brand Krispy Kreme.

Table 6: Songs that hypersexualize the female character's names. Source: author.

There are also songs where Andrew E. does not mention the names of the female characters. In "Banyo Queen" (1999), "Fax Me" (1999), "Mahal Kita" (1999), "Baño Queen II" (2000), "Honey" (2000), "M.I.K. (May I Kwento)" (2001), and "Alabanger Song" (2002), he only details the women's physical features and sexual prowess. The women in these narratives served no purpose other than to be the object of the male gaze. Most of these songs involve one-night-stands, but the same kind of identity dilution is used in the female character in the song "Mahal Kita" (1999), where Andrew E.'s long-time girlfriend is described only in terms of her being a sexually adventurous and sexually aggressive partner.

In these songs where women are objectified through dilution of identity, they are treated as accessories that reinforce machismo. The stories humans tell are central to identity formation and the maintenance of a community; names and labels affect the quality and direction of a narrative (King

2009). Thus, the namelessness of female characters is a strong statement suggesting that a woman's identity is not as valuable as her ability to satisfy a man's sexual needs and fantasies.

CONCLUSION: THE PLACE OF WOMEN IN PHILIPPINE POPULAR CULTURE

The stereotyping and sexualizing of women have been commonplace acts in Philippine popular culture and media. The visual prostitution of women had been customary in sitcoms especially in the 1990s, as this was strategic and profitable for "an industry that heavily relies on mass-based programming where 'gory if not sexy video' had to go on air to nail high television ratings" (Castro 2009, 41). The sexualization of women can also be observed in game shows and noon time shows where a group of women wearing skimpy clothing dance in the background for entertainment – a trend prompted by the phenomenal success of Sexbomb Girls, which Mendoza (2019/2020) describes as "a ploy that used sex to up the numbers in the ratings game" that "desensitized the audiences into accepting their images [sexualized women] as a natural part of our Philippine culture" (294-295).

The 1990s and early 2000s were periods wherein the age-old adage 'sex sells' became widely practiced in the Philippine entertainment industry (Mendoza 2019/2020). Thus, it is not surprising that the rap music that flourished during those years used sex and sexuality as central themes. The marketability of sex-themed stories served as the driving force of artists – who are also economic agents – to write lyrics where power is gained, lost, shared, and negotiated using performative language that not only aims to sell ideas through music, but also to establish a Pinoy hip-hop identity.

Alcasid (1992) points out the stark contrast between the opinions of Pinoy rap pioneer George Javier and rap icon Andrew E. whom he interviewed to learn about their insights in the trajectories and future of Pinoy rap. He writes that for Javier, "the fate of Pinoy rap music will depend largely on the rap artists themselves and how they treat the music;" but for Andrew E., "the audience will dictate the fate of rap" (34-35).

Andrew E.'s gendered and sexual narrative rap music that uses the same patterns in terms of characterization and plotlines proves that Pinoy rap is just another product of the culture industry that promotes conformity and false needs to help maintain structures of power. The gender imagery painted by the narrative rap songs of Andrew E. – one that celebrates hegemonic masculinity and misogyny – offers insight into the values of Philippine society as the power politics involved in the production and consumption of this music genre is also an invitation to understand the culture that gave rise to it. Nevertheless, hip-hop should not be monopolized and restrained to the experiences of men. It is high time to bring empowering narratives of women by women to the mainstream.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CHRISTINE JOY A. MAGPAYO is an assistant professor at the Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts, University of the Philippines Diliman where she earned her BA and MA degrees in Speech Communication. Currently, she teaches rhetoric, performance, and research and serves as the Department Coordinator for Research and Creative Work. She has published articles in Philippine Communication Society Review and Young Blood Inquirer, and has written primary level textbooks distributed by Ephesians Publishing Inc. She has presented her work at academic conferences hosted by Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan; National Research and Innovation Agency, Jakarta, Indonesia; and Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok Thailand. Her research interests include popular culture, children's literature, gender studies, and critical discourse analysis.

✉: camagpayo@up.edu.ph