THE STRUGGLE OF THE OPPRESSED: LINO BROCKA AND THE NEW CINEMA OF THE PHILIPPINES

THESIS

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Arminda V. Santiago, B.A., M.A.

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This study is an examination of Lino Brocka's development as a filmmaker of the New Cinema of the Philippines. It provides a close textual analysis of two recent Brocka films, Macho Dancer (1988) and Fight for Us (1989) using a sociocultural approach to the study of the representation of aspects of social reality and their relationship to contemporary Philippine society. The study is divided into six chapters: Chapter I contains the introduction to the study, Chapter II traces the development of Philippine cinema in relation to Philippine socio-political history, Chapter III describes the New Cinema film movement in the Philippines, Chapter IV provides a biographical sketch of Lino Brocka in which the development of his critical attitude, notions of social reality, and significant works are discussed, Chapter V contains the film analyses, and Chapter VI contains the conclusions to the study.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Film is said to be a documentation of real life. The invention of the photographic process made possible the recording of real-life images on celluloid and photographic paper by way of the photo-chemical process. At the time of their invention, photographs were the most faithful reproductions of the real world yet devised. The subsequent devising of the mechanical apparatus that aided in the creation of an illusion of movement is perhaps the ultimate that man has achieved in recording life images. Speaking from a perspective that specifically privileged the mimetic capabilities of the movie camera, film theorist Andre Bazin proclaimed, "cinema attains its fullness in being the art of the real"[1] and that it is a re-creation of the world in its own image.[2] Still, as early formalist theorists such as Rudolf Arnheim and Sergei Eisenstein argued, film may also be seen as a transformative medium which "re-presents" the world rather than records it.

Man as a social being lives in a group known as society. He exists with other individuals and endeavors to understand his existence by tying together the realities that exist between him and others; a social reality that is constituted in terms of individually and socially accepted categories of meaning.[3] The reality that he makes

sense of involves not only his relationship with nature but also his place in the order of kinship and hierarchy in the society he belongs to.

The cinema has the unique quality of capturing representations of reality on the screen. It presents both visual and spatial reality through photography; presenting an image the way the human eye sees it. This is in consonance with the nature of Realism as a movement in the visual arts with its aim of providing a truthful, objective, and impartial representation of the real world based on meticulous observation of contemporary life.[4] Keeping in mind the photographic process and the mechanism of creating the illusion of movement, the filmmaker then has the task of a creative interpretation of reality and provides a total environment through which people see aspects of their own world. Social reality then comes alive in larger-than-life images through film. It confronts the individual with images of his/her world and initiates thinking as well as giving a reflection of the needs and conflicts within his/her own society. As Irving Thalberg stated, "the motion pictures present our customs and our daily life more distinctly than any other medium."[5]

The filmmaker is an individual who lives in a society. He is not detached nor isolated from it. He interacts with his society, hence, sharing a common experience with other individuals. He, like everyone else, finds meaning in his social reality. Through film, the filmmaker has the ability to manipulate several formal aspects of the image in order to give to the image of reality the shape he desires.[6] With this in mind, the filmmaker has the option to merely depict images as symbols or to bring us closer to events filmed by seeking the significance of a scene.[7] Cinema then

functions as the threshold of learning described by Bazin, "a sesame to universes unknown...giving us knowledge of empirical reality otherwise unavailable."[8]

Along this line, a Filipino filmmaker known both locally and internationally has managed to create films that are consistently relevant to the social needs of Philippine society. Lino Brocka, a leading artist of the New Cinema in the Philippines and the most prolific filmmaker among those whose works chronicle the underprivileged and oppressed in Filipino society, observes that Filipino films are wanting in realism. He contends that "art is an imitation of life so an artist must try to imitate life...but art is not just imitating, it is also trying to confront people with certain realities...the screen becomes not just a mirror that reflects but a mirror that confronts."[9] Thus Lino Brocka has been a proponent of films depicting social realities in Philippine society; presenting the Filipino with images within the contemporary milieu of the social, political, economic, and cultural spheres of his country. His films show a clear grasp of the lives of ordinary people and in turn translates this vision into filmic images to share truths about life and inspire thinking and action. However, in his two decade career in filmmaking, Brocka has also been known to make compromises when he accepts jobs directing melodramas branded by critics as commercial. Brocka himself in fact has, described the commercial melodramas that he has made as just that: compromise movies.

> Compromise movies are movies that you compromise because you want it to make money in every possible way.[10]

The phrase "every possible way" has many meanings here, including the inclusion of

titillating sex scenes; building up a cast composed of matinee idols or actors/actresses that have box-office appeal; and incorporating into the film every conceivable thematic motif with appeal to the mass audience (e.g. song and dance numbers, fight scenes, crying scenes, etc.).

> ...you know these are concessions already that as far as I am concerned won't hurt the movie...you do this because you know fully well that it is one way of attracting the movie crowd.[11]

The compromise films that Brocka describes falls in the category of commercial or formula films shown in the mainstream commercial circuit in the country. In the context of the Filipino film industry, the use of the words "commercial" and "formula" to label a film would mean that the main objective of the film is to earn as much money as possible. Both terms are used interchangeably in the industry. Philippine film producers and film production companies have through the years experimented with marketing techniques in selling their films to the Filipino mass audience and have come up with a formula that they find successful. In this way, the Filipino movie audience is treated as a mindless and passive mass. Mozart A.T. Pastrano wrote a very interesting article, "Pinoy (Films) Forever", which is about a panel discussion held during the Writer's Workshop at the University of the Philippines that focused on the conditions prevailing in the Filipino film industry of the 1990s. Pastrano discussed what screenwriter Rene Villanueva meant in saying that "to understand Filipino movies, one has to understand how such movies are made."[12] The article centers on the viewpoint of a screenwriter in describing the characteristics

of commercial films in the Philippines. The following are the ingredients of the formula that Villanueva discussed in the workshop:

1. The script is not the screenwriter's work but is the movie producer's.

2. The actors and actresses also have a say in the script.

3. No story, no character and no theme.

To elaborate, the first point means that a story idea does not come from the writer himself. A producer thinks of a film project by coming up with a title and if it sounds good, summons a writer to conjure a storyline around it and compels the writer to incorporate highlights into the story that are perceived to either click with the audience or provide dramatic effect. On the second point through which actors and actresses involve themselves with the writing of the script, this practice is a manifestation of the star system which is still very much entrenched in the film industry. This practice emerged in the mid-1960s, when producers came to depend on the known box-office appeal of an actor or actress to sell a film. The appeal of matinee idols or popular stars has more to do with either good looks, acting abilities, or their personal histories [an example of which is the cinderella rags-to-riches story of Nora Aunor who played the lead role in Miracle/Himala (1982) and is considered as the superstar; she has a very large following and almost all of her films are box-office successes]. To maintain their box-office appeal, stars will insist that the roles they portray must be in keeping with the image they project.[13] Hence, if in real life for instance, an actress is rumored or known to be an illegitimate child, as Pastrano cites in his article, she cannot take on roles alluding to this fact because it will emphasize her history more

than the positive image of legitimacy that she wants to project to the audience (Filipino traditional society frowns upon illegitimacy). Pastrano argues that acting ability is measured by how well-projected the performer's image is.[14] The third point about having no story, no character and no theme has more to do with the inclusion of scenes or motifs that are perceived to be a guarantee to "keep the audience glued to their seat." Scenes like women slapping each other, female characters in a confrontational scene over a man, characters uttering vulgar or profane language, fist fights, and chase scenes have time and again been injected into a film in ways that do not contribute to the story but are insisted upon by the producer. The producer also usually insists on adding to the dialogue a line in which the title of the movie is uttered by either the lead actor or actress, thus supposedly tying the film together into a neat bundle.[15]

The characteristics discussed by Pastrano are not only true of today's commercial Filipino film practice; they have been prevalent since the 1970s. Pio de Castro III talks about the "stench of commercialism"[16] that pervaded the film industry in 1976-1978. This means that in order to surpass the financial problems that film producers encountered (e.g., high government taxes, expensive raw stock, salaries of movie stars), a producer resorted to "hiring sex stars as an insurance for box-office appeal with built-in publicity, quickie directors with a taste for the vulgar and the gross to titillate the audience, and a quickie writer who can concoct sensational if not absurdly illogical plots."[17] And since the same demands and same problems continued to exist, this tendency has become cyclical and continues today due to the

primary nature of film as a business. Filipino film scholar Emmanuel Reyes in his book Notes on Philippine Cinema describes the mainstream commercial film form as having;

> ...a form which differs significantly from the classical narrative. For one thing, mainstream Filipino films have thinner plots. They are weak on logic and motivation. They are predictable. Their narrative structure is loose and prone to digressions. They are also very escapist in concerns. Films that observe this form are generally ignored by critics for they go against the "rules" of classical narrative.[18]

However, Reyes argues that these characteristics have been ingrained in Filipino films for decades, and though they may appear to be intellectually appalling, they have thrived and survived the upheavals in the industry as well as the criticisms lodged against them from scholars and critics.[19] Reyes believes that, in terms of form, mainstream commercial cinema manifests four traits: a scene-oriented narrative, a tendency for overt representation, circumlocutory dialogue, and a narrative that emphasizes the centrality of the star.[20]

It is often said that the characteristics of commercial/formula films are absent in the serious films or social commentary films of the filmmakers of the New Cinema, like those of Lino Brocka's. Brocka refers to his serious films as "ambitious movies" and describes them as;

> Ambitious in terms of concept...it goes against the grain...The casting is ambitious in the sense that you're working with actors who are known for their talent more than jumping or doing stunts or doing all those gimmicks.[21]

De Castro, in his discussion of social commentary films, describes these films as having scripts that stand out from the mediocrities of local scripts because they deal with the social fabric which serve as background for the character's search for

meaning and fulfillment.[22] Moreover, the characters in social commentary films are fully rounded in their development within a social milieu, and they experience change and find insights in their attempt to understand their situations, thus making audiences empathize with their problems and reach their own insights.[23] Hence, a primary characteristic of a serious/social commentary film is a screenplay with depth and intelligence. New Cinema filmmakers use symbolic visual imagery[24] in the way they relate a story on film. The films have a well-thought out mise-en-scene in which there are more artistic explorations in terms of camera angles, lighting, and use of tones (e.g., black and white, color). Actors and actresses are hired more for their talent than on their box-office appeal, which makes these films a training ground and a vehicle for the discovery of new faces. And most importantly, the themes and subject matter that these films deal with are often sensitive, thought provoking, and represent realities in the social environment of the Filipino audience that commercial/formula film producers would rarely think about; this explains in part the struggle of New Cinema artists within the commercial system.

Of the almost 70 films that Brocka has made in his 20-year career, about 30% are recognized to be social commentary films by Filipino audiences, film critics and scholars. However, even though a large percentage of his works are compromise films, Brocka has maintained his artistic standards and the so-called commercial films that he has been known to create are also of considerable merit, bearing qualities different from the formula quickies churned out by commercial film companies. Filipino art historian Rafael Maria Guerrero describes this as;

> ...in effect, a position of tactical significance; he had become one with the industry, but he had also risen above its limitations.[25]

This is so because Brocka can compromise only up to a certain point, and when the compromising becomes hard to take, he does not do it.[26] What makes a Brocka compromise film stand apart from other commercial/formula films? For one, Brocka's compromise films have a linear, dramatic story with a building of tension leading to a cathartic climax.[27] This characteristic alone provides for an emotionally satisfying experience for the viewer - the entertainment quotient. However, in a broader perspective, Lino Brocka has earned the reputation of being a director par-excellence dating from his initial body of works in the 1970s. De Castro points out the qualities that are in any Lino Brocka film:

1. It has excellent acting performances not only from the lead actors but also from the least significant extra.
2. There is smooth continuity from one scene to the next.
3. It has dramatic build-up in tension.
4. It has memorable characters.
5. It is a technically-polished production.
6. It has a clear theme and visual imagery reflecting this theme which continues throughout the movie.
7. New acting talents may be discovered from the film.
8. The film may be a come back vehicle for older movie stars.
9. The script is substantially better than average.

These nine qualities are not only confined to Brocka's serious/social commentary films but are also manifested in his compromise movies. Brocka has never been known to

disavow his compromise films, nor does he think that all his films are perfect. As a very humble filmmaker, he says that;

> I think all of the movies I have done...you wish you would have done it a little better...the feeling I have is always that I wish I could have done it better.[28]

Brocka is not only known for his beliefs as an artist and his artistic explorations of the film medium; he is also known as a political activist who is a staunch critic of the social conditions and political oppression under the Marcos regime (1972-1986) and heavily involved with the Free the Artist Movement which campaigned against Marcos's censorship laws.[29] However, after the Marcos regime was overthrown by the People's Revolution in 1986 that installed Corazon Aquino's democratic government, Brocka maintained his critical stance upon discovering the continuance of social injustice, oppression, and the abuse of military authority even in Aquino's democratic governance of the nation. Brocka continued to create films with a social statement until his tragic death on May 22, 1991. To a nation addicted to movies, Brocka's death was a jolt almost personal in its impact and those who admire his work rue his passing as they would that of someone who had been an immediate part of their lives.[30] Brocka has indeed become a part of Filipino life because, though his films deal with socio-political themes and are on a more cerebral level compared with the traditional run-of-the-mill formulaic action and melodramas of the prevailing commercial cinema system in the Philippines, Brocka's films are shown within the mainstream commercial circuit, thereby making it possible for every Filipino from any economic class to see his work.

> The esteem in which he is held is...best ascribed not to an acknowledged superiority as a film artist, but rather to the sum of his efforts, artistic and otherwise, toward that oft-implored and much-abused objective - the upliftment of Philippine cinema.[31]

In 1988, Brocka made Macho Dancer which deals with the topic of male prostitution, a particular reality and social problem in Philippine society. The film depicts how young people, when pushed into the mire, try to get out of it or cope with it.[32] It was a controversial film that raised the ire of the censors for its depiction of sexual relationships between males as well as its connection of police corruption usually tied up with the business of prostitution, a practice that was prevalent during the Marcos regime and continued during the Aquino government. Though the film was not banned from screening in the country, it suffered such severe censorship that it lost its essence as well as its most explicit moments.

In 1989, Brocka made Fight for Us/Les Insoumis/Orapronobis which tells the composite truth of the state of human rights in the Philippines and presents a measure of the parameters of democratic space under the Aquino government.[33] The film was totally banned from screening in the country and was allowed to be shown only as part of a retrospective and tribute after the director's death (made possible under the auspices of the Cultural Center of the Philippines for a couple of nights during which scores of students, educators, activists, film buffs, and Brocka admirers finally saw the film). The researcher was fortunate to attend the first night and witnessed the jampacked standing-room-only atmosphere inside the main theater of the Cultural Center.

Brocka's films have always been a subject of praise and criticism. His first film Wanted: Perfect Mother (1970), though not bearing the qualities that his films have in later years, was considered to show promise at the time it was released. Filipino film critic Justino Dormiendo wrote later that it was "probably the first attempt to inject credibility into a scenario,"[34] because Brocka himself wrote the screenplay, which somewhat paradoxically was an adaptation of a comic book serial. Adaptations of comic books are common in the context of Filipino film, and they generally present stereotype characters and superficial plots. However, Brocka's film did not manifest these traits to the same extent; the story was more believable compared to the other comic book adaptations of the time. Among the new talents who broke into the closely-knit film industry in the 1970s, Brocka was able to establish himself immediately because of the commercial success of the aforementioned film as well as its success at the Manila Film Festival where it won, the Best Screenplay Award. Thus, Brocka earned the confidence of his producer, LEA Productions. A second film, Santiago (1970), immediately followed (released by the same company) and it was here that the "conscious if subdued attempt to ameliorate areas of filmmaking within his disposition"[35] emerged. In this film, Brocka introduced what Guerrero describes as "laudable realism"[36] when he introduced unknown actors from the stage to assume supporting roles that nonetheless suggested that it was possible to incorporate new talents in a film that has a big star in the lead role (in this case, Fernando Poe, Jr.) without diverting the story from the main character. It was believed at the time that hiring talents with no box-office record was

a risky proposition. However, the success of Santiago disproved this notion and marked Brocka's emergence as a filmmaker interested in nurturing new talent.[37]

Brocka's first exploration of sensitive subject matter came with Dipped in Gold/Tubog sa Ginto (1970), which was recognized by film critics as a pioneering attempt to treat the subject of homosexual life with honesty and compassion.[38] Dipped in Gold was the first among Brocka's works to deal with a social topic that was (and is still is) considered a taboo in Philippine society. However, the film that caught the attention of critics and audiences was You are Weighed in the Balance but Found Lacking (1974), which dealt with the theme of ostracism and hypocrisy in society against a backdrop of rural small-town life. The film presents the "other" in Filipino society, such as the leper and the village idiot, representations of members of the society that Filipino movies at the time never portrayed. You are Weighed in the Balance was perceived to have documentary qualities in its realistic portrayals of the characters, the meticulous detail that Brocka shows in each scene, and the way the whole film was viewed as a non-commercial endeavor. The cast was composed of actors with no box-office appeal and a complete unknown in the lead role, and the film shocked audiences with graphic images of urination, vomit, and an aborted fetus.[39] The film crystallized Brocka's examination of marginalized members of the society and their struggle to survive and rise from their oppressed state, a theme that is recurrent in his later films.

1975 was a landmark year with the release of Manila in the Claws of Neon/Maynila sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag, arguably Brocka's finest work in terms of

theme and technical polish. It is described as uncompromisingly bleak in its outlook[40] with the narrative focusing on the theme of the individual's disintegration in an urban setting. Manila also has a documentary quality; Brocka opens the story with black and white imagery of a section of Manila known for prostitution and crime which is gradually transformed into a full colored scene. Closely related to Manila in both theme and setting is Insiang (1976), which depicts the harshness of slum life in the congested city of Manila through the painful metamorphosis from naivete to worldliness of an innocent rural girl named Insiang. Images of the claustrophobic atmosphere of the slum area where Insiang lives suggests Brocka's view of the disintegrating effect that urban life has on the individual; poverty becomes a malevolent character refusing to give up its grip on any of its inhabitants.[41]

Other socially conscious films followed. The central character of Jaguar (1980) is the bodyguard of a rich businessman who blindly follows each command of his employer to the point of killing for him to earn the illusion of friendship and equality. Jaguar explores the ways the privileged classes exploit those beneath them and the powerlessness of the lower classes to resist exploitation. In the same light, *BONA* (1980) also explores the theme of exploitation with colonialist undertones of Spanish Catholicism and American capitalism.[42] It also critiques traditional gender roles in Filipino patriarchal society; the female (Bona) assumes the subservient role to the man who takes advantage of her devotion. Against a backdrop of slum life, both Jaguar and Bona presents the individual as victim of society, a theme that Manila and Insiang also dealt with.

Since 1975, themes of the oppressed and class struggle have been the focus of Brocka's films. However, his 1985 film My Country: In Desperation/Bayan Ko: Kapit sa Patalim, was considered by critics at the time to be his most politically-charged film. In My Country, Brocka raised his level of critique from the social to the specifically political, a shift seen by many as the result of the assassination of Marcos's political opponent, Benigno Aquino, Jr. in 1983. Before 1983, Brocka's critical stance in his films and in interviews was limited to the film industry and to the general social problems of Philippine society. Aquino's assassination was a turning point not only for Brocka but generally for Filipinos. Brocka spoke at rallies, participated in demonstrations, and became more vocally opposed to the government in general and film censorship in particular. He wove into the narrative of My Country his experiences in the "parliament of the streets", especially through "Bayan Ko", a popular song of the 1930s protesting American domination of the Philippines. Brocka used "Bayan Ko" not only as the title song of the film but also in a scene that alludes to the protest march that took place after the assassination of Benigno Aquino Jr.. The song became a symbol of protest and resistance against the Marcos regime even before the film was released.

The development and maturing of Brocka's consciousness as a filmmaker can be traced in his films from 1970 to 1991, even though within this same time frame, he also has worked on his compromise films. When the Marcos dictatorship was toppled by the People's Revolution in 1986 that installed Corazon Aquino as president, the Filipino people in general and the film community in particular expected changes in

the structure of the government, in policies and priorities, and procedures in decision-making for the betterment of the nation. However, two years into the Aquino administration, a general disappointment toward the leadership was felt. Many of the repressive structures of the Marcos regime were still intact and their impact felt by all sectors of society. In the film industry, for instance, the censorship policies of the Marcos regime were still enforced; this obviously was a great disappointment to many New Cinema filmmakers and had a chilling effect on the production of issue-oriented films. Many New Cinema filmmakers either directed television programs (e.g., Marilou Diaz-Abaya) or taught in universities (e.g., Ishmael Bernal). The exception was Lino Brocka, who in 1988 made Macho Dancer, which was considered the only "serious" film produced at that time. Macho Dancer returned to a theme explored in some of Brocka's earlier works, examining the still little-recognized social problem of male prostitution in the Philippines. The story was enriched by representations of aspects of society that are political in nature, such as the role and power of the police force in Filipino society, a motif that probably stems directly from Brocka's politicization in 1983. The direct presentation of political messages re-emerged in Brocka's 1989 film Fight for Us/Les Insoumis/Orapronobis. In this film, Brocka's documentary prowess resurfaced through his journalistic style of representing events in the social and political history of the Philippines. Fight for Us is believed to be an overt criticism of the Aquino government and a personal expression of Brocka's disappointment with the leadership of Aquino.

Lino Brocka has become an institution in Philippine cinema. He is in a class by himself among the best directors in the industry. His beliefs and convictions have fueled his determination in confronting the Filipino audience with the realities of his milieu. His films have given inspiration to other contemporary Filipino filmmakers and writers; they stand as object lessons in the value of artistic control and a critical and questioning mind. These factors have led the researcher to examine the development of Brocka's critical consciousness and to study the images of social reality depicted by the films Macho Dancer and Fight for Us. Through an analysis of the films, the present study aims to find out how they relate to conditions in contemporary Philippine society by examining the representations of gender and sexuality, class struggle, religion and religious practices, and government and authority. The two films were singled out for close analysis from the large body of works by Brocka because they are essentially good late examples of the social commentary for which the director has been known. They represent the peak of the maturation of Brocka's political consciousness; thematically and stylistically they do not radically stand apart from his earlier works. Moreover, among Brocka's films, Macho Dancer and Fight for Us have been especially controversial; they were met with negative reactions among Filipino conservatives and the government, which banned Fight for Us and censored Macho Dancer. This in turn generated support for Brocka in the form of widespread protests graphically confirming that "media representations are not simply passively accepted by the audience."[43]

The study is divided into four main sections: first, a discussion on the development of Philippine cinema and the social conditions that nurtured it; second, a description of the New Cinema of the Philippines; third, a biographical discussion of Lino Brocka with a description of his significant early and recent works; fourth, the analyses of the films Macho Dancer and Fight for Us. Film titles mentioned in this study will be written with the accepted English title cited first and the Filipino title following it. In instances where a Filipino title does not have an English translation, the Filipino title will be cited first with the researcher's translations of the titles in English contained in parentheses immediately following the cited Filipino title.

Objectives of the Study

The focus of the research is the development of an artist of the New Cinema of the Philippines, namely, Lino Brocka. It provides a description of the New Cinema and discuss aspects of the Filipino film industry, government, and society that may or may have not affected Brocka's career and thinking. It also provides a description of Lino Brocka's life, the development of his critical attitude, his early works and later films and his ideas of social reality that encompass the two films singled out for close analysis.

The study traces the development of Philippine cinema and provides a description of its relationship with Philippine society by identifying the social conditions that nurtured its growth.

Lastly, this study examines the representations of gender and sexuality, class struggle, religion, and authority and government in the films Macho Dancer and Fight for Us and how they relate to contemporary Philippine society.

Significance of the Study

The realm of Southeast Asian filmmaking is still virtually unknown to the West. Perhaps this is due to the geographical location of the region and some cultural and political constraints that hamper the flow and exchange of information between the two worlds. However, it should not be overlooked that there have been attempts by Western scholars to examine the cinema of the Asian region, mostly concentrating on India, Japan and China; and a handful have provided probes into some Southeast Asian national cinemas. Though their description of the cinemas are sketchy at times, the efforts of these scholars are laudable. Moreover, it should not be ignored that there have been efforts of Southeast Asian scholars to reach out to the West by way of various articles and essays that they have written about their respective cinemas as well as cinemas of other countries in the Southeast Asian region.

This study integrates the various ideas, perceptions and knowledge on the cinema of the Philippines that have been written as chapters in books, and as essays and articles in journals and periodicals both from the West and from the Philippines. It also provides a comprehensive picture of Lino Brocka and his films, in particular, Macho Dancer and Fight for Us. Lino Brocka has created such an effect in the Philippine cultural landscape because of his artistic and personal beliefs as well as his

political orientation. Among the filmmakers in the Filipino film industry, Brocka has had the most media coverage in the West, Southeast Asia, and the Philippines. His films have been shown in many local and international film festivals earning critical acclaim and recognition. Brocka's status as a social critic, especially during the Marcos regime, helped Filipino scholars and the Filipino audience to examine the social conditions of the country. Brocka's entry into the political arena during the Aquino government as a member of the Constitutional Commission to draft a new and democratic constitution for the country was a landmark for the film industry. Lastly, the films Macho Dancer and Fight for Us are considered as firsts in the history of Philippine cinema because of the sensitive nature of the topics that they deal with.

To the knowledge of the researcher, this study is the first to attempt at an analysis of Lino Brocka's Macho Dancer and Fight for Us using a socio-cultural approach to an investigation of the circumstances and conditions in which the films were produced and how the images of social reality that the films convey relate to contemporary Philippine society.

Moreover, this study will provide a baseline for further research into the analysis of other national cinemas, Third World films, and works of other filmmakers who have created an impact in their country's cinema.

All these factors renders this study a significant contribution to the body of knowledge relating to the cinema of Southeast Asia in particular and to the broad area of film studies in general.

Review of Literature

Though there is not an abundance of materials about Philippine cinema, several film scholars and historians have written about it with emphasis on the New Cinema period (1970 to the present). This period is most significant to Philippine cultural history because it was during these years that the Philippines underwent a very difficult political transformation when Ferdinand Marcos, the country's eighth president, imposed Martial Law and a highly autocratic rule. It is said that Philippine cinema during this time progressed from a purely entertainment-oriented medium to a more socially enlightened and critical medium. The following are summaries of the most relevant books, studies, and articles from periodicals that deal with Philippine cinema, Philippine society, film censorship, Philippine commercial filmmaking, Lino Brocka and the films Macho Dancer and Fight for Us.

Filipino film historian Nicanor Tiongson, in his essay "The Filipino Film Industry" published in the July 1992 volume of the East-West Film Journal states that film is undoubtedly the most popular mass medium in the Philippines citing that about 1.6 million Filipinos watched movies according to a survey conducted in 1983.[44] This figure may have increased today considering the economic reforms after the Marcos regime and more opportunities for Filipinos to seek employment overseas which have changed their economic situation for the better. Tiongson gives a comprehensive discussion of the Filipino film industry by dealing with aspects of its history and providing the reader with a profile of Filipino film production and pointing out the various film genres typical in the Philippines that are different from Western

film genres. Tiongson also discusses contemporary Filipino filmmaking and the problems that plague the industry. Towards the end of his essay, Tiongson offers some solutions and avenues for reform and the continued development of the Philippine film industry. The essay is a good starting point for any researcher on national cinema because Tiongson discusses several aspects of the Filipino film industry, with emphasis on the complexities brought about by the inter-relationships of government, society, and culture that are enmeshed in the intricate web of Philippine cinema.

John Lent's studies of the Asian mass media landscape are relevant to this study. In Philippine Mass Communications Before 1811,After 1966, Lent devotes a chapter to Philippine movies in which he focuses on the emergence of film as a business from 1920 to the mid-1960s. His interviews with Filipino film proponents Jose Nepomuceno and Lamberto Avellana give insights into Filipino film production from the 1920s to the 1950s. Lent also discusses some early censorship laws and regulations that affected the growth of the industry in its early years. Though the time frame covered by this work is limited, it provides information about the early mechanisms of the industry. In The Asian Film Industry, Lent provides an updated description of the Philippine movie industry with a discussion of contemporary film production; distribution and exhibition; directing, acting and scriptwriting; film genres; relationship of government to the film industry; and professionalism in the industry with a brief discussion on film education in the Philippines. The Asian Film Industry

is especially useful because it spans the periods of the pre-Martial Law years, Martial Law, and post Martial Law (the Aquino government).

Rafael Maria Guerrero's Readings in Philippine Cinema is a compilation of essays on various aspects of Philippine cinema written by film scholars, historians, critics, journalists, and filmmakers. Guerrero states that "it is not so much the fact that the characteristics of a country's cinema reflect the peculiarities of its society...but rather the larger and less obvious fact that the artistic and moral worth of movies as a popular medium ultimately corresponds to a society's collective mentality."[45] Guerrero points out the "duality of patronage" in the Philippine movie audience because of the co-existence of foreign films and Filipino films in the commercial film circuit. Moreover, he emphasizes the maturing of Filipino film production, the best examples of which are identifiably Filipino and less and less beholden to the standards of foreign cinema. The topics covered by Guerrero's work are: Philippine film history, themes and interpretations found in Filipino films, the stars and their public, and Filipino film directors and the industry.

Roy Armes' book on Third World Film Making and the West gives a brief description of Philippine cinema by tracing its colonial and neo-colonial roots. Armes points out that Philippine cinema is the most important cinema in Southeast Asia and a discussion of it offers a full reflection of the country's troubled past and serves as a striking example of the difficulties of establishing a national cinema under colonialism or neocolonial dominance.[46]

Film and Politics in the Third World by John Downing is a collection of 23 essays on a range of aspects of Third World filmmaking. Included in this valuable work is an essay written by Luis Francia, a Filipino writer and critic based in New York. Francia's essay centers on Philippine cinema as "a struggle against repression"[47]; he describes the beginnings of cinema in the Philippines in 1897, emphasizing that the technology is not indigenous to the country. Francia argues that with the flood of imported films, Filipino movie-goers developed a taste for foreign films and a measure of screen beauty that was decidedly caucasian in origin.[48] He places emphasis on the emergence of the New Cinema in the 1970s as a response to neocolonialism, stating that "Philippine movie-making emerged out of the doldrums in the mid-1970s when a new wave of directors...started creating works that broke with traditional escapist fare and tearjerkers by dealing with the contemporary milieu."[49] Francia then discusses Lino Brocka who he declares "has emerged as one of the principal figures in contemporary Filipino culture."[50] This is followed by an analysis of Brocka's films that have earned international recognition both in the Southeast Asian region and the West. The ideological level of Francia's discussion brings relevance to this study because he correlates the development of Philippine cinema with the development of a national consciousness. His arguments on film as a colonial instrument are significant to an understanding of how the preference of Filipinos for foreign films have affected their standards of screen beauty in particular and the aesthetic dimensions of the visual arts and mass media in general. Francia's line of thought parallels Armes' discussion of Philippine cinema's colonial and

neocolonial roots. Despite the sketchiness of Armes's presentation of the industry's history, he is able to draw a line from its development as a colonizer's tool to its later evolution into an independent people's medium.

Gina Marchetti's essay "Four Hundred Years in a Convent, Fifty in Hollywood: Sexual Identity and Dissent in Contemporary Philippine Cinema" explores the subject of the representation of women in Filipino films. Marchetti argues that the cinema of the Philippines offers some possibilities for understanding the nature of cultural change and political resistance in the country even if it remains obscure and remote to many from the West. Three Brocka films are examined by Marchetti: Manila in the Claws of Neon/Maynila sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag (1975), Jaguar (1979), and Bona (1980). She also analyzes films by other New Cinema directors like Moral (1982) by Marilou Diaz-Abaya, Moments in a Stolen Dream/Kung Mangarap Ka't Magising (1977) by Mike de Leon, and Once a Moth/Minsa'y Isang Gamo-gamo (1976) by Lupita Concio. Bonded by the common thread of being produced during the Martial Law years, these films are brilliant examples of films with a social statement.

Robert Silberman's essay on the Filipino family as portrayed in Philippine cinema is a discourse on how the family as a topic in film has thrived in the genre of the melodrama. The essay "Was Tolstoy Right?: Family Life and Philippine Cinema" focuses on the high regard in Philippine society for the family as a social unit and foundation of the nation. Central to Silberman's discussion however, is the work of alternative filmmaker Kidlat Tahimik and his film Turumba (1983) where the family plays a focal role and the story is woven through the opposition between traditional

life and the siren call of the First World.[51] Silberman also discusses Lino Brocka's use of the motif of the disintegration of impoverished families to indicate the forces at play in the society as a whole and to indict a social and political system that wreaks its vengeance upon the family[52] (e.g., Brocka's 1984 film My Country: In Desperation/Bayan Ko: Kapit sa Patalim).

"Cinema, Nation, and Culture in Southeast Asia" by Wimal Dissanayake argues that any reading of a film should be an act of cultural resistance through which one must probe deeper into the structure of the society where a film came from. He presents a theoretical framework for the study of Southeast Asian films based on their unique cultural characteristics not found in Western films. His essay contains a brief analysis of Filipino New Cinema artist Ishmael Bernal's Miracle/Himala (1982) that lends insights into the process of analyzing Southeast Asian films.

Censorship in the Philippines has been the subject of protest and debate on the constitutional level of the democratic ideal of freedom of speech and communication. Guillermo de Vega's seminal work Film and Freedom: Movie Censorship in the Philippines provides a historical perspective of film censorship in the Philippines and discusses various issues such as pornography, the boundaries between art and pornography, the visual reflection of society, and crime and violence in films. De Vega was appointed Chairman of the Board of Censors for Motion Pictures (BCMP) in 1969 under the Marcos administration prior to Martial Law; Film and Freedom represents de Vega's experience in film censorship. The book lists early censorship laws, BCMP rules, regulations and circulars; names of movie censors from 1930 to

1974; Filipino film personalities and film producers; studios and laboratories; foreign film distributors; and movie theaters in the Philippines. It also includes some court decisions applying Republic Act 3060 (An Act creating the BCMP). Lastly, it contains four film reviews and the factors behind their censorship: two are Filipino films [Brocka's Dipped in Gold/Tubog sa Ginto and Celso Ad. Castillo's Kung Bakit Dugo ang Kulay ng Gabi (Why Blood is the Color of the Night)] and two are foreign films [Jesus Christ Superstar and Gone with the Wind]. The censorship body in the Philippines has gone through several metamorphoses as political transformations have rocked the country. Many of the laws discussed by de Vega have either been repealed or amended. New laws and acts have been passed in keeping with the various changes in government, society, technology and international politics.

"A Critical Analysis of Movie Censorship in the Philippines" by Manuelito Mangaser argues that Philippine film censorship has been operating without any reasonable framework as manifested by the inconsistencies of rulings handed down by the Board of Censors from time to time. Mangaser's study confirms the arbitrary nature of decision and policy making by the censors. He provides an insightful discussion on the effects of Marcos's censorship laws on the New Cinema artists and how they worked within and outside these restrictions.

Ibarra Crisostomo Mateo's exploratory study on "The Perceived Implications of Executive Order No. 868 for the Philippine Cinema Industry" presents how directors, actors, actresses, and screenwriters perceive the implications of Executive Order 868 which vested encompassing police powers to the Board of Review for Motion Pictures

and Television (BRMPT), renamed in the order as the Board of Review for Motion Pictures, Television, and Live Entertainments (BRMPTLE). The order was protested by cinema personalities and filmmakers on February 11, 1983 because it limits if not outright curtails their artistic freedom and creative expression.

Filmmaking in the Philippines started out first as a business. The very nature of business stresses the importance of gaining a huge profit from a low capital input. Pio de Castro III, in his essay "Philippine Cinema (1976-1978)", describes the rampant commercialism practiced in the Filipino film industry during the period he covers. He points out that an average of 156 movies were produced per year in Manila to fill its 81 first class theaters, which means that approximately 13 movies were produced every month and that three new movies were shown every week.[53] As of 1989, the number of Filipino films released had increased to 364 and the number of first class movie theaters in Manila had increased to 188, with average screenings per day varying from five to seven times for roadshow features and three to four times for double features.[54] De Castro gives a detailed discussion of the budgeting of film projects and how producers cut on production costs by turning to formula stories and hiring directors, writers and stars that are sure-fire money earners. He laments local commercial filmmaker's disregard and ignorance of the technical aspects of filmmaking. De Castro includes in his essay a discussion of the best technical film personnel in the industry and discusses the problem of achieving high technical quality in Filipino films. Toward the end of the essay, de Castro discusses the intricacies of

film distribution and exhibition and states that in order to survive, the Filipino film producer opts to play the game of commercialism and becomes trapped.[55]

The URIAN Anthology 1970-1979 edited by Nicanor G. Tiongson, contains selected essays on traditions and innovations in the Filipino cinema of the 1970s written by members of the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino (Philippine Film Critics Circle). The section on the history of the *Manunuri* provides an insightful look into commercial filmmaking in the Philippines which the group constantly fights against in order to uplift and improve the quality of Filipino films. Fifty three films produced within the period are reviewed and various essays on film personalities are included in this valuable study.

"Brocka Makes Compromise Flicks - But They're OK" is an interview with Lino Brocka published in PROMO magazine. The director talks about what he means by compromise films and describes how the commercial mainstream film circuit prevents him and other artists of the New Cinema from making serious films or films with a social statement. The article also deals with Brocka's experiment with working as a film producer and his ultimate failure because his company, called CineManila went bankrupt.

To understand the socio-political and socio-economic developments in Philippine society, the researcher found three authors who provide enlightening discussions of the Filipino consciousness, the relationship of the Philippines with her Southeast Asian neighbors, and the dictatorial rule of the Marcos government and its impact on the social conditions of the country.

Filipino social historian Renato Constantino's Identity and Consciousness: The Philippine Experience expounds on the evolution of Filipino ideology by way of a discussion of the historical forces that shaped and continues to shape the national consciousness (e.g. pre-conquest times, the arrival of Spanish colonizers, and the impact of Christianity and its influence over other indigenous Asian religions existing in the Philippines before colonization). Constantino argues that there exists a Filipino nation but the notion of a national consciousness, though it also exists, is taken for granted. What matters to the Filipino is the idea of nationality that involves the mere identification with having a country and not the sense of oneness which comes from a community of aspirations, response and action. This disparity between identity and consciousness explains the ambiguity of Filipino behavior, the Filipino's ambivalence towards East-West influences and his marginal participation in the historic struggles of other colonial peoples.[56] He explains how the dual consciousness of a colonial mentality came to dominate a truly Filipino way of thinking by describing how the colonial traits inculcated by the Spaniards - the legacy of ignorance, superstition, and hierarchical values[57] and the deepening of these traits under American hegemony hampered the emergence of an independent Filipino consciousness.

The Philippines and its relation with other Southeast Asian countries is tackled by D.R. SarDesai in his book on Southeast Asia: Past and Present. SarDesai presents an Asiacentric viewpoint and attempts a broad survey of trends and currents in the region's historical landscape. His chapter on "Independent Philippines" describes the

imposition of Martial Law by Marcos and briefly touches on the new dispensation of Aquino.

Marcos and Martial Law in the Philippines, edited by David Rosenberg, examines the decline of constitutional democracy and the rise of authoritarian government in the Philippines under the Martial Law administration of Marcos.[58] The book explains the imposition of Martial Law and presents a record of the political transformation of the country. Through case studies written by both Filipino and American political analysts, it inquires into the problems that such a government can create in a developing country like the Philippines.

There is a wealth of materials published in newspapers and magazines about Lino Brocka in the form of reviews and critiques of his films and news items on the controversies he was embroiled in. Most of the materials published in the United States that the researcher found were film reviews and news articles on the filmmaker's incarceration during the Marcos regime. However, hundreds of articles have been written about Brocka by the Philippine press. The researcher was fortunate to be able to get a representative sample of articles written locally that are relevant to this study.

In 1974, Lino Brocka himself wrote an article about the problems and prospects of Philippine movies. He presents the duality of Philippine movie-making, namely, on the one hand, the financial problems encountered by producers in the form of government taxes or foreign competition; and on the other, the real or imagined problems which beset filmmakers in relation to the Filipino mass audience.[59]

Brocka, through the eyes of a filmmaker, paints a picture of the Filipino audience and describes it as a perceptive audience, not the ignorant mass envisioned by a few elitist critics. He argues that the only way one can elevate local cinema from its present state in which it is perceived as a mindless mass entertainment medium, to an artistically acceptable level is to introduce gradual changes until one succeeds in creating one's desired audience. This article presents a point of view on Filipino film culture from a filmmaker who provides a perspective which may or may not be identical with that of a historian or film reviewer.

Melanie Manlogon's interview with Brocka focused on the controversial film Macho Dancer (1988). The director explained how he showed through the film the conditions attendant to the merchandising of sex as a manifestation of the country's economic state. Manlogon also provides a brief discussion of Brocka's professional development and some of the director's beliefs, such as his view on movies as agents of social change. The article also touches on Brocka's idea of social reality which confirms the director's unwavering determination to make social commentary films.

Multi-awarded screenwriter and journalist Jose F. Lacaba, who wrote the screenplay of Fight for Us (1989), published an open letter to Philippine Daily Inquirer columnist Belinda Olivares-Cunanan to answer certain allegations made by the columnist about the film and to point out aspects of the film that were grossly misinterpreted and misrepresented by Ms. Cunanan. This article is very relevant and important to the study because it deals with the proximal representations of scenes about a vigilante group and the military emphasizing a distinction between what is real

and what is fiction. Moreover, it is written by the screenwriter himself which makes it a valuable reference for this study. The open letter was published in the November 15,1989 edition of Midweek.

An undergraduate thesis about Lino Brocka was written by a mass communication student from the University of the Philippines. Felix R. Zaldua's "Exposure to Lino Brocka's Award-Winning Films and the Attitude of College Students of Manila's University Belt Toward his Movies as Instruments to Depict Social Realities in Contemporary Philippine Society" looks at the relationship between exposure to Lino Brocka's films and attitude levels toward them. Zaldua based his study on 18 films by Brocka made between 1974 and 1980. His research confirms that the wide appeal of Brocka's films extend to college students. Zaldua presents brief analyses of six Brocka films: You are Weighed in the Balance but Found Lacking/Tinimbang Ka ngunit Kulang (1974), Manila in the Claws of Neon/Maynila sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag (1975), Nakaw na Pag-Ibig (Stolen Moments of Love, 1980), Mananayaw (Bar Room Dancer, 1978), Insiang (1976), and Bona (1980).

Lino Brocka was honored as Ramon Magsaysay Foundation awardee in the field of Journalism, Literature, and Creative Communication Arts in 1985. A section from the awards compendium contains the citation to Brocka essaying the director's life and his career as a filmmaker and theater figure. It underscores the director's sensitive and artistic treatment of often tragic topics that have won converts for Philippine-language productions among sophisticated audiences; and his leading role in inspiring Filipino writers and directors to demand artistic control of their output, as

well as showing dramatic insights that foster the awareness that makes for effective citizenship.[60] The foundation recognized Brocka's efforts to make cinema a vital avenue of social commentary and his role in awakening public consciousness to the disturbing realities of life among the Filipino poor.[61] Brocka's response is also included in the section where he expounds on his notion of social reality and the role of the artist in investigating the truth under all circumstances. An extensive biography of Brocka caps the section.

Method

The power of the media has always been a subject of contention, debate, and research over the years. This concern most probably grew out from the perceived effects of media messages on audiences. Several factors have contributed to this concern including the tremendous growth of the media due to rapid urbanization and industrialization in countries like the United States, where the media has developed as an institution in itself and has taken the role of linking society with other social institutions. As a social institution, the mass media are a power resource which may act as a means of control, management, and innovation in society as well as providing a venue where public life is played out.[62] However, most importantly, the media have become a dominant source of definitions and images of social reality for individuals and social groups.[63] This last factor is of great interest especially in the analysis of the meaning of media messages and the processes of meaning production.

Investigations of media messages and their meanings evolved from early studies that were concerned with the ideological role of the mass media in society, linking the media with Marxist theories of culture based on the premise that cultural artifacts produce particular knowledges and positions for the audience.[64] Cultural artifacts are the products of culture - this includes, for instance, literature, television, and film. In this light, culture is seen as dynamic and not static. As Allan O'Connor states in his essay "Culture and Communication", culture is an active process of communication and understanding that involves the study of activities and interaction and not just cultural products.[65] As an active process, meanings and the production of meaning are indivisibly linked to the social structure of a society and can only be explained in terms of that structure and its history.[66]

> Because of this social and historical specificity, artifacts express and promote values, beliefs and ideas that are pertinent to the contexts in which they are produced, distributed, and received.[67]

This link produces a hierarchical notion of social experience and the formation of social identity, producing a set or sets of cultural artifacts within each subdivision of the social structure. This leads one to conclude that the social realities represented by cultural artifacts vary among individual members of the society and among social classes. To transcend this, one should look at how meanings are generated and circulated in a society; this is the aim of a relatively new approach to the study of meaning production called cultural studies. This study will utilize modes of analysis associated with cultural studies in examining the representations of gender and

sexuality, class struggle, religion, and government and authorit y in the films Macho Dancer and Fight for Us and how they relate to contemporary Philippine society.

The cultural studies approach is said to explicitly cut across diverse social and political interests and to locate a new politics of difference[68] (racial, sexual, cultural, transnational) in the communication of messages and the production of meanings in the media. The approach argues for the study of all forms of cultural production in relation to other cultural practices and to social and historical structures. Cultural studies draws extensively from the Marxist ideas of Louis Althusser and Antonio Gramsci. Althusser presents what is described as a reformulated theory of ideology in which he sees ideology as representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals with the real conditions of their existence.[69] This viewpoint veers away from the orthodox Marxist notion of ideology as "false consciousness" in that Althusser stresses the idea that ideology expresses the themes and representations through which human beings relate to the real world.[70] From this, one can surmise that the media operate through ideology and constitute an example of what Althusser calls ideological state apparatuses (e.g. family, educational system, media, political system, etc.), societal institutions that influence people to "behave and think in socially acceptable ways".[71] This is different from orthodox Marxism, which espouses the concept of state apparatuses that are repressive and coercive rather than encouraging to behave according to established social norms. Gramsci on the other hand talks about the concept of hegemony which attempts to explain the processes through which the ruling classes of a society maintain their dominance. With dominance comes subordination,

which means that there is a process of struggle that takes place between the dominant class and the other classes beneath it.

> Hegemony...posits a constant contradiction between ideology and the social experience of the subordinate...ideology is constantly up against forces of resistance...engaged in a constant struggle not just to extend its power but to hold onto the territory it has already colonized.[72]

Combining the ideas of both Althusser and Gramsci leads to the notion that culture is a site of dynamic struggle between the dominant class and the subordinate classes. This interrelationship of ideas is integrated in the cultural studies approach which among other things, has investigated the ways the mass media work within the ideological framework of societies. John Fiske, in "Cultural Studies and the Culture of Everyday Life", argues that, though people follow what to them are their most ordinary practices of daily life (e.g. arranging their homes, shopping, eating), the social order constrains and oppresses them but at the same time offers them resources to fight against those constraints.[73] Therefore, there is a dual meaning in the concept of culture. On the one hand, it encompasses ideas, attitudes, languages, practices, institutions, and structures of power; on the other, it has to do with a whole range of cultural practices such as artistic forms, texts, canons, architecture, and mass-produced commodities.[74]

These ideas about cultural studies lead to the object of this study, which is an examination of the representation of aspects of social reality (gender and sexuality, class struggle, religion, and government and authority) in the films Macho Dancer and Fight for Us. A film is the result of an intricate but exact process of producing re-presentations of human actions and/or products of human action. It is, in this light, a

cultural artifact. It is the fruit of a collaborative effort on the part of the director, screenwriter, cinematographer, editor, and others whose work pertains to film production despite the fact that a creation typically is credited to one individual alone- the director. As Wimal Dissanayake states in his essay "Cinema, Nation, and Culture in Southeast Asia", a film is the product of a process of social production that situates men and women in specific positions in relation with film industries, social relationships, and cultural discourse.[75] The production of the film text therefore is a dynamic process and lends itself to a process of encoding on the part of the producers of the film text and decoding on the part of the audience. This idea draws upon Stuart Hall's essay "Encoding/Decoding" which John Fiske discusses in his essay on British Cultural Studies. Central to Hall's argument is the notion that the media text has no single meaning but is relatively open or capable of being read in different ways by different people.[76] Therefore, the reading of any text is an active and dialectical process in which the viewer may be comfortable with the position in which the text places him/her, may be uneasy with aspects of that position, or may consciously oppose this position outright.[77]

Having these ideas in mind, and taking into consideration Mimi White's notion of historical specificity cited earlier, this textual analysis of Macho Dancer and Fight for Us will entail an examination of events in the social history of the Philippines and the development of Philippine cinema. The goal is to describe the social conditions and circumstances that have contributed to the creation of the films. Cultural studies provides methodological tools which are appropriate to the goals of this study because

this analytical model is not especially judgmental, nor does it create oppositional and artificial dichotomies such as positive/negative or good/bad. The baseline value that this approach gives to the present study involves the idea of looking at media texts as being historically grounded, be subject to a variety of changing interpretations; cultural studies examines a gamut of cultural practices and institutions in relation with how media texts are taken by its audience to mean something. It looks at the cultural product, in this case, the films singled out for close analysis, as having an active role as a mediating force, as active generators of cultural meaning,[78] and that a careful examination of them will uncover how and why they came into being.

Macho Dancer, while not banned from screening in the Philippine mainstream cinema circuit, was received with mixed feelings. The conservative traditional sector of the society abhorred the film for its explicit depiction of male homosexual relationships and behavior while liberalists and film critics praised it for its success at focusing the viewer's attention on the themes of exploitation. Fight for Us on the other hand, was banned from screening in the country and has fuelled bitter debate over what its critics call representations of Philippine society as inaccurate, exaggerated, and insulting. It is worthwhile to mention at this point Gina Marchetti's essay on ethnicity and cultural studies which focuses on Michael Cimino's Year of the Dragon, which was widely protested by a coalition of Asian-American associations and media groups for the film's negative representation of Asian-Americans. Marchetti uses the cultural studies approach in investigating the relationship of the

film text of Year of the Dragon with what she describes as the complex ideological positionings and possible readings of the film.

> Thus, the Asian-American community can protest Year of the Dragon not only because lived experience has highlighted the contradiction between this film and the life experiences of Asians in the United States, but also because other media representations exist, have helped to create the community as it sees itself, and have provided an alternative visual and narrative definition of race and ethnicity.[79]

While the present study on the films Macho Dancer and Fight for Us does not have as its main concern the representation of race and ethnicity, it also draws on the idea of the contradictions between lived experiences and re-presented life experiences in films. Through a close analysis of these two films, the study hopes to provide a description of the interrelationship of cinematic representations and contemporary Philippine society.

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CHAPTER II

PHILIPPINE CINEMA AND FILIPINO SOCIETY

The cinema has long been known to transfix and hold the spectator spellbound to its unique ability of "re-enacting life." Such was the case when the first film was shown in the Philippines on January 1, 1897, where curious onlookers in their fashionable clothes stared at the screen, eyes wide with awe.[1] Though the films shown on that date were imported from Europe, the mere spectacle of flickering images was enough to fascinate any Filipino who went to the movie house. Since then, the Filipino has been confronted with images of two worlds: the West and his own. However, drawing meaning and identity from the films wasn't easy since the first cinematic offerings - these short films from Europe - depicted a totally different race and way of life. The cinema came to the Philippines at the turn of the century toward the end of Spain's 400-year rule and at the dawn of the American occupation that was to last for more than fifty years. For the Filipino, there was no respite from colonization. Nonetheless, from then on, the cinema has worked its magic on the Philippine audience, making it "the undisputed queen of all cultural media in contemporary Philippine society."[2] Going to the movies became a national pastime, and even today movie theaters enjoy brisk business screening films round-the-clock.

Philippine cinema has an interesting nine-decade history making it the oldest cinema in Southeast Asia (in comparison with other countries in the region like Burma, whose cinema can be traced from the 1920s, Malaysia from 1926, Thailand from 1936, and Indonesia from 1910).[3] Philippine cinema's development is closely linked with the events in its social history. As a product of a cultural process, films like other media embody the totality of a society's experiences, expectations, and a people's understanding of itself. This link is best described by Marchetti as the cinema becoming a venue for the expression of cultural change and political resistance in the Philippines.[4] The cinema was bequeathed by a European power as a way to bring the world to the Filipino in the late 1800s but was employed as an instrument of colonization and cultural oppression in later years under another foreign power. Through the years, it has earned its place in the Filipino consciousness (being adopted into the native language) as cine, a generic name for movies.[5]

A Legacy of Colonization

Bienvenido Lumbera's essay on the problems of Philippine film historiography laments the loss of most of the films made in the country prior to 1935. This is due to many factors, such as the country's tropical climate and archipelagic layout that promotes the deterioration of the celluloid, and the general lack of knowledge of techniques for storing early nitrate-based film. Those who have inquired on the subject agree that the screening of films as a business began in August 1897, when two Swiss businessmen named Leibman and Perritz showed the Lumiere brothers' The Czar's Carriage Crossing Place dela Concorde, An Arabian Cortege, and Snow

Games.[6] The films were screened at a movie house in the plush district of Old Manila frequented by Spaniards and the Filipino elite. The cinema in Spanish times provided "vistas of a wider world"[7] that privileged and flattered the local elite, who already had the advantage of education and Hispanic acculturation.

Ironic though it seems, films were first shown in the country during the alarming days of the Filipino revolution against the Spaniards that began in 1896.[8] However, the armed struggles were concentrated in the provinces far from Manila making it detached from the early stages of the revolution. The theaters in Manila were full and film exhibition became a viable business in those tense days. The cinema provided a refuge and escape from reality that the elite class took advantage of. In the early 1600s, colonial Manila had an essentially homogeneous population composed of persons of Malay descent; in the space of thirty years, it grew into a multiracial city brought about by the growth of commerce and trade. Robert Reed's study on hispanic urbanism and morphogenesis further reveals that,

> ...the galleon trade attracted hundreds of independent merchants who hailed from dozens of nations and usually stayed in the Philippines only during the period of intense commercial activity...Manila functioned as a city of heterogenetic transformation...[9]

Manila as an indigenous port made possible local, regional, and international trade that accounts for film's arrival into the country approximately a year after the first public exhibition of the Lumiere brothers' cinematographe in Paris on December 28, 1895.[10]

The cinema's incipient days were a picture of public acceptance; films were screened every hour on the hour from six to ten o'clock in the evening.[11] Another indication of acceptance was the subsequent establishment of other movie viewing

halls that caught the attention of stage audiences. However, the revolution eventually reached Manila making the delivery of films difficult and resulting in the replaying of films. Consequently, this diminished the novelty of the medium and the ensuing decrease in viewership led to the closing down of many movie houses.

The period between 1896 to 1899 was characterized by political enlightenment and armed struggle during the Filipino-Spanish revolution, and the transfer of colonial rule from Spain to the United States. It was at this inopportune time that the cinema came to the Philippines, and the turmoil of the period did not contribute much to its growth. The American occupation was not welcomed by the Filipinos because their desire for freedom from colonial rule still burned in their hearts. This led to the Filipino-American war in 1899. To counteract this, American policies for pacification were implemented, among these, the educational policy that had a profound effect on the Filipino consciousness. Constantino points out that;

> Three aspects of educational policy were particularly efficacious in advancing the process of Americanizing the Filipino consciousness; the institution of a nationwide public school system, the use of English as a medium of instruction, and the distortion of the history of the early American occupation in conjunction with the glorification of the American way of life...Religion which had been the main instrument of Spanish control of consciousness gave way to education as the means by which the American remolded the Filipino mind.[12]

Concurrent with such policies was the use of the cinema as a propaganda instrument; documentaries like Advance of Kansas Volunteers at Caloocan and Filipino Retreat from Trenches (both produced in 1899) were geared toward soliciting public opinion among Americans in favor of the new role of colonizer that the United States had

assumed. The same propagandizing was extended to the Philippines by showing similar documentaries that depicted the Americans as friends.

The early 1900s were marked by the opening in 1903 of the Cinematografo Rizal, the first Filipino-owned movie theater, and its success led to the opening of another Filipino-owned movie house (Cervantes Cinematografo) in the same year. Film exhibition became a profitable venture for Filipino businesspeople. The economic and social policies implemented by the Americans contributed to this development. More films came into the country as trade and commerce were re-established; those imports included The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, The Career of Napoleon, and The Siren.

> Even the theaters that used to show only sarsuela [a musical stage comedy that was popular during the Filipino-Spanish Revolution] and vaudeville were showing movies. As a result, the gradual collapse of the sarsuela began. The public had found a new pastime and films were much cheaper than stage performances.[13]

American films eventually drove European films out of the market. The Filipinos were inundated by images of American culture, which was in harmony with the new educational system and the mandatory use of English in schools and in the practice of business and government. This was a measure to eradicate the hispanic acculturation of 400 years and to "unite" the nation with what was described as "a common medium of communication." However, it also killed the emergence of an indigenous Filipino national language that was an essential factor in the formation of a people's identity and consciousness.

> ...the Filipino was bombarded with stories and pictures from the West...The first silent movies...became an effective agent of Western culture and colonial thinking.[14]

Through the years, the Filipino moviegoer has been conditioned to see a foreign image and relate to that image by adopting the alien way of life, desires, and physical attributes. This has placed a competitive burden on films made by Filipinos in later years.

1912 saw the release of the first "Filipino film." Such a phrase should be qualified because on the one hand, first, it refers to the first film produced locally; second, it used Philippine life as subject matter; and third, it used local theater performers and local costumes and sets. On the other hand, the film, Vida de Rizal (Life of Rizal) was made by an American, Edward Meyer Gross, although it depicted the life of national hero Dr. Jose Rizal. This augured well with the Americans' promotion of Rizal as a national hero because he was "a safe hero...shot by the Spaniards...therefore had nothing to do with the Americans."[15] Immediately, another American (Albert Yearsley) made Fusilamineto del Dr. Jose Rizal (The Death of Dr. Jose Rizal). A controversy ensued over each film's portrayal of the life of Rizal; this, of course, helped to sell the films. Despite the economic reforms carried out by the American colonial government, Filipino businesspeople did not go into film production and instead concentrated on the enterprise of film exhibition. The reason for this is that Americans were privileged with the knowledge of filmmaking techniques (the technology came partly from them), and they also had the financial power to pump huge amounts of capital into filmmaking. American film producers capitalized on the

Filipino's familiarity and fondness for the sarsuela and other literary forms like the historical epic, metrical romances, and novels; examples of all these were either made into films or drawn upon with considerable commercial success. However, because of the great number of American films imported into the country, local film production ceased. It was not able to compete with the technical polish that the U.S. Films had, and the domination of Hollywood films became a primary hindrance to the emergence of an indigenous Filipino film.

A Filipino Point-of-View Emerges

There was no purely Filipino-produced film to speak of until 1919 when Jose Nepomuceno through his company, Malayan Movies, produced The Country Maiden/Ang Dalagang Bukid. This film was considered a challenge to a growing Hollywood-style aesthetic and an assertion of what is Filipino: a film reflecting the country's conditions as well as highlighting indigenous tastes.[16] The Country Maiden like its American-produced predecessors drew upon the sarsuela and became a highly prestigious project because it featured the stars of the original stage play by Hermogenes Ilagan. Nepomuceno's goal was to counteract the widespread influence that American films had on the elite and the middle class.

He wanted, among other things, to promote Filipino products and culture. Nepomuceno was given the recognition as "Father of Philippine Movies" in later years by historians because of his efforts at experimentation and innovation in filmmaking and his incorporation of Tagalog (the widely spoken regional language) in his film's subtitles.

Another Filipino followed suit; Vicente Salumbides, who came from the United States after eleven years of studying law and working as a production assistant in Hollywood, introduced what historians described as "the Hollywood touch" to Filipino films. His Miracles of Love (1925) exhibited techniques in parallel cutting and use of the close-up shot that "aroused feelings of mounting suspense" among the audience.[17] Salumbides's contribution to early Filipino film practice is very significant on three counts: first, he improved the technical quality of locally-produced films; second, he brought an air of sophistication to "native films" that encouraged those who favored Hollywood films to appreciate the locally-produced counterpart; third, he discovered acting talents in places other than the stage.

Political and nationalist themes emerged in 1929 through Julian Manansala's Patria et Amore (Fatherland and Love). This film caused a controversy among the Spanish community who, through court action, called for its banning because it dealt with the Philippine rebellion against Spain.[18] Much to their disappointment, the American colonial administration allowed its exhibition. Constantino described this as the Americans' shrewdness for allowing the expression of anti-Spanish feelings focusing on Spanish abuses and errors, which in turn strengthened the Americans' "good" image.[19]

The emergence of a Filipino point-of-view in films may have been the result of the more general process of Filipinization that began in 1916. This meant the opening of some government executive positions to Filipinos (key positions were still occupied by Americans) because, after twenty years of American hegemony, the Filipinos were

already well-indoctrinated by the culture of the United States, and lingering aspirations for independence had been successfully diffused by U.S. pacification policies.[20]

Any development from Hollywood eventually reached the Philippines. The "talkies" came to the country in 1929 with the showing of the film Syncopation. The presence of sound that did not come from an orchestra pit or live actors behind the screen was looked upon with great favor. The first talking picture produced in the Philippines (though crudely- made) was the American George Musser's Ang Aswang (The Vampire) in 1932. A film of better quality was made by Nepomuceno in 1933; Punyal na Ginto (Golden Dagger) was immediately followed by the same filmmaker's Makata at Paraluman (The Poet and the Beauty) and Ang Kuba (The Hunchback). Nepomuceno used Tagalog in his films, and the arrival of sound films marked a new era in the country's struggle over language. On the one hand, Hollywood films hastened the dissemination of English throughout the country, while on the other, Filipino-produced films were helping shape a national language.[21] Tiongson credits the cine for making Filipino the lingua franca and de facto national language of a country made up of several ethnolinguistic groups.[22]

Film: A Big Business

The early years of the cinema proved to be a powerful tool for acculturation. However, it was the coming of the sound film in 1932 that elevated filmmaking to a lucrative endeavor, especially after the box-office success of Nepomuceno's Punyal na Ginto. The establishment of other film companies such as Filippine Films in 1934, Parlatone Hispano-Filipino Corporation in 1935, Excelsior and Sampaguita Pictures in

1937, LVN Pictures in 1938, X'otic Films and Salumbides Film Company in 1939, established the film industry in the country. Despite the emergence of a Filipino perspective in the films produced from 1919 to 1932, Filipino filmmakers still had to compete with Hollywood. Filipino producers sought ways to attract the local audience, among these the adoption of Hollywood methods in the management of their companies and in film production practice. Tiongson points out that, because Hollywood had built up stars as the principal attraction in its movies, Filipino producers likewise contracted, trained, and promoted local movie personalities, many of them resembling American actors and actresses.[23] Local studios churned out imitations of Hollywood musicals, dramas, and action films. Their films also drew much from the sarsuela and other literary art forms. The result did not help the Filipino in terms of the development of a national identity because the Hollywood imitations only served to widen the audience for American culture.

The 1930s was characterized by the entry of "non-traditional" entrepreneurs into the filmmaking business, including legislators, military officers and doctors; as entertainment writer Jose Quirino recounts;

> ...several prominent persons including Senator and Mrs. Jose Vera, Representative and Mrs. Pedro Vera, Dr. and Mrs. Catalino Gavino, Dr. and Mrs. Pedro Avecilla, Colonel and Mrs. Antonio Torres and Donya Apolonia viuda de Vera organized Sampaguita Pictures Incorporated.[24]

Several implications arose as filmmaking became more and more viable. Tiongson argues that the rise of the star system was the most important development in the 1930s. The competition with Hollywood films was so fierce that local producers contracted stars who had caucasian features and honed them into "good" screen

performers: they also marketed them in accordance with personas that would be accepted by the audience. The influx of filmmaking equipment from Hollywood made possible the production of films with better technical quality and enabled experimentation with camera and editing techniques. The audience's positive reception of better-produced films made the industry financially stronger, enabling it to support the technology and know-how that came from Hollywood.

The 1930s also gave rise to innovative filmmakers like Lamberto Avellana, Gerardo de Leon, and Manuel Conde. Avellana's Sakay (1936) used elements of the stage that were different from the sarsuela. De Leon's introduced an ideological slant through the use of socially relevant historically rooted scenarios in his films like Bahay Kubo (Nipa Hut, 1937), Ama't Anak (Father and Son 1938), and Ang Maestra (The Teacher, 1941).

The outbreak of World War II put a damper on Philippine filmmaking. Film production equipment was confiscated by Japanese military forces for their own use in producing propaganda materials. John Lent relates that,

> The Japanese found Philippine movies too attached to America...Philippine movies were mesmerized by the skillful manipulation of United States movie men.[25]

The Japanese established a central film exchange called Eiga Haikusa which enforced rigid censorship rules and prohibited the big studios from producing films (they were forced to close down). The Eiga Haikusa was the only entity allowed to make films, and it "engaged" local film directors to make films under its supervision. Among them was de Leon, who was coerced to make Tatlong Maria (Three Marias) in 1941;

this film dealt with the theme of "return to the farm" and interestingly was not considered propaganda because of the lyricism and artistic detail that was typical of a de Leon movie.[26] Throughout the four-year Japanese occupation of the country, Filipinos saw two kinds of films: old movies that passed strict Japanese censorship and those produced by the Eiga Haikusa. This was the Japanese method of erasing the American influence on the Filipinos and strengthened their "greater Asia co-prosperity sphere" scheme.[27] The Japanese occupation was short-lived, however, with the liberation of the country in 1945 by the Americans reinforcing the ties between the two nations.

The Golden Age of Filipino Film

Manila took the brunt of the battle for the liberation of the country. Massive reconstruction took place immediately. Among the industries to recover at the first opportunity was the film industry. Quirino suggests that the abuses and atrocities suffered by the Filipinos benefitted Philippine movies because it provided filmmakers with good material.[28] The first post-war film was produced by LVN studios: Manuel Conde's Orasang Ginto (Golden Clock, 1945). Other films that capitalized on war experiences followed, including Garrison 13 (1946), Sekretang Hongkong (Hong Kong Secret Agent, 1948), Capas (1949), and Camp O'Donnell (1950).

By the 1950s, pre-war directors like Nepomuceno, Avellana, de Leon, and Conde had attained their artistic and ideological maturity. Their films used the native language, manifested an appreciation for indigenous institutions (e.g., family), and built national pride by using Filipino actors and actresses and local costumes and sets.

These filmmakers were exceptional in the manner they dealt with the social issues of the time. However, the effects of the war still prevailed and film producers also gave the public light-hearted fanciful films that provided an escape from their wartime nightmares. The works of the pre-war directors were but a minority compared with the dozens of Hollywood-like escapist films of the time. As one Filipino journalist put it, "after living for several years under the shadow of Japanese atrocities, local moviemakers may have been letting off steam...using the film medium as an escape hatch for their creative faculties that were suppressed during Japanese domination."[29]

Filipino art historians are at odds about the definition of Philippine cinema's "golden age." Some refer to the years 1934 to 1941 because it was a period of innovations in cinematic techniques and it marked the establishment of filmmaking as an industry. Others point to the 1950s as the golden age on account of the achievement of a "higher level of technological expertise and artistry in filmmaking"[30] and the establishment of award-giving bodies such as the Maria Clara Awards, the Filipino Academy of Movie Arts and Sciences (FAMAS), and the Asian Film Festival (set up by the Southeast Asian Federation of Film Producers in 1954[31]). However, to many Filipinos, the 1950s was a "golden decade" in more general terms as well, a time when industries developed and technologies came to the country (in particular television, which had created an effect on the film industry in subsequent years). It was generally a peaceful time. Added to this, several significant events took place in the film industry, such as the rise of new directors like Eddie Romero, Cesar Gallardo, Efren Reyes, and Cirio Santiago; an increased awareness of artistic

and technically-polished films as a result of the recognitions garnered from the different award-giving bodies; and most importantly, the emergence of a new literary form known as the *komiks* novel, that was like the traditional serial novel but consisted of more pictures than words - this form was very popular among the lower classes.[32] In later years, Filipino film producers drew much of its material from the *komiks* that supported the emergence of the 1990s formula film.

The awards contributed immensely toward the maturation of the film narrative. The mid-to-late 1950s saw the production of more films with socially-relevant themes, such as Avellana's Anak Dalita (Child of Sorrow, 1956); Manuel Silos' Biyaya ng Lupa (The Good Earth, 1958); Eddie Romero's Buhay Alamang (Life of the Poor, 1952) and Hanggang sa Dulo ng Daigdig (To the Ends of the Earth, 1958), and Manuel Conde's satirical series on Juan Tamad (Lazy Juan). The awards gave an incentive for producers to finance worthy film projects and inspired filmmakers to aim for artistic quality and technical competence. Filipino films reaped awards and recognition in the Asian Film Festivals such as Best Screenplay for de Leon's Ang Asawa kong Amerikana (My American Wife) in Tokyo in 1954,[33] Best Actor, Director and Screenplay for Ifugao (also by de Leon) in Singapore in 1955,[34] and Best Picture for Avellana's Anak Dalita in Hong Kong in 1956.[35] The Philippines' participation in the Asian Film Festival placed the country on the regional film map, putting it in touch with other Asian film industries, opening possibilities for co-production ventures, and building a foreign audience for Filipino films.[36]

Events took a turn by the close of the decade as a result of the rising financial pressure placed on producers. This put a damper on the making of socially-relevant and artistic films because of their high budgets and their less certain box-office prospects. Consequently, producers invested less and less in these films and reverted to making entertainment-oriented films that did not require heavy financing and were considered more commercially "safe." Moreover, a new medium entered the mass media landscape at this time; it was not yet present a grand scale, but was enough to pose a threat to the movie industry. Television came to the country in 1953 to help in the re-election bid of then President Elpidio Quirino[37]; it was slowly gaining acceptance and building an audience that mostly came from moviegoers and stage enthusiasts. To make matters worse, there was a labor movement that

> was subjecting the studio system to a great deal of stress. Demands for higher wages and better working conditions were made by unions that had been formed within the big studios. The first studio to close down was Premiere. Then LVN also closed down.[38]

Independent film production companies emerged; they worked quite differently from the studios by investing on a per-picture basis and monitoring the market performance of each released film. The golden decade of the 1950s lost its shine toward its close to be taken over by manic commercialism in the 1960s.

A Commercialism Gone Haywire

By the early 1960s, television had grown by leaps and bounds especially with the advent of videotape technology which made television program production economically viable. Within the society, the television set had become a status

symbol and TV watching became a worthwhile pastime. This was not the only nemesis of the film industry - it still had to compete with Hollywood films. To deal with these threats, independent film companies resorted to the production of Hollywood imitations, rehashed any film that succeeded at the box-office (the predecessor of the 1990s formula film), and made softcore sex films known as bomba[39] movies. Philippine cinema entered its era of artistic decline brought about by the obsessive pursuit of commercial gain.

The 1960s was a difficult decade for the Filipino; it was characterized by massive graft and corruption by public officials, bureaucratic inefficiency, a general discontent in the society, an increased crime rate brought about by an economic crisis resulting from the domination of multi-national corporations, labor unrest, and student activism.[40] These social conditions were capitalized on by film producers through the escapist films that gave moviegoers a tranquilizing experience away from the realities of the time. From this emerged the so-called bakya crowd: a phrase coined by Avellana in angry retort at an audience who failed or refused to appreciate his award-winning movies.[41] Screenwriter Jose Lacaba sheds light on its meaning:

> ...it literally means the wooden slippers worn in lieu of shoes by the poor...The meaning of the word has expanded that "bakya" is now also a description of a style and sensibility- the style of popular culture..."bakya" now means anything that is cheap, gauche, naive, provincial and terribly popular.[42]

In this sense, the term is not only derogatory but also discriminatory. This prejudice has its roots in the massive and intense efforts of the Americans in the first thirty years of their rule to guide the Filipino's acculturation toward the American way of life. In this context, anything exhibiting or resembling "Filipino-ness" (e.g., in attire,

way of thinking, and even manner of speaking English) is looked down upon by the elite and those who have embraced a similar way of thinking. In the context of economic and social position, the term refers to those in the lower classes who were (and still are) perceived to be a mindless mass having no ability to discern a good film from one that is bad. The elite and the elitists of the 1960s preferred Hollywood films over Filipino films while those from the lower classes chose to see Filipino films. Though often frowned upon for its preference for native things, in a positive light, the bakya crowd brings forth the value of favoring something which is one's own and being closer to one's own experiences.

The bomba film was a manifestation of moral decline in the society. Tiongson describes it as "a sex film that had no other purpose but sexual titillation."[43] The bomba was the result of the influx of sexually explicit Hollywood films that gave the censors difficulty because of the rapid emergence of the international film as a serious art form; this led to a relaxation of the rules, making it possible for moviegoers to see exposed breasts and naked bodies.[44] Films of this genre had either explicit or sexually suggestive titles such as Saging ni Pacing (Pacing's Banana), Gutom (Hunger), Hayok (Lustful), and Laman sa Laman (Flesh to Flesh).

Despite the proliferation of escapist films and bomba films, there were still films of notable quality produced, such as de Leon's Daigdig ng mga Api (The World of the Oppressed, 1965), Tatlong Kasaysayan ng Pag-Ibig (Three Stories About Love, 1966) and Room 69. Avellana's films included Portrait of the Artist as Filipino (1966), Kumander Dimas (Commander Dimas, 1968), and Destination:Vietnam (1969).

Romero also came out with films like Manila: Open City (1967) and Beast of Blood (1969).

The Cinema and Marcos

Ferdinand Marcos's political career reached its peak when he was elected as the eighth president of the country in 1965. His platform was one of land reform and economic development. His first administration was marked by some improvement in the economy of the country.[45] The Philippine movie industry had its first brush with politics during Marcos's presidential campaign. The desire for myth building led to a film called Marked by Destiny/Iginuhit ng Tadhana (1965), produced by an independent company called "777", owned by the family of Ernesto Maceda, one of Marcos's chief political operators.[46] Marcos was shrewd at using film as a propaganda tool. A controversy developed upon the film's exhibition; it was supposedly approved for screening by the censors but on its premiere, it was suspended from screening, which led to a court battle between Marcos's Nationalista party and then-President Macapagal's cabinet. This event favored Marcos greatly because the people perceived him to be the underdog, which consequently won him the presidency. This clearly illustrates the intricate entanglement of the cinema with the social and political life of the Filipinos.

The movies were used again by Marcos in 1969 during his re-election bid. The film Maharlika (Royalty), was a "full-scale jungle epic along the lines of Bridge on the River Kwai"[47] But a complicated sex scandal ensued between the American actress Dovie Beams and first lady Imelda Marcos that resulted in the banning of the

film. A wholesome film called Joined by the Heavens/Pinagbuklod ng Langit (1969) immediately followed, which dealt with the "simple" family life of the Marcoses, starring screen idols Luis Gonzales and Gloria Romero as the first couple. Marcos knew the power of the movies and used it to the hilt to endear himself and Imelda to the Filipino people.

The economic reforms of the early Marcos years meant an open economy to attract foreign investors as well as his government's dealings with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank that put the country in debt. The massive infrastructure development program that made possible more roads and bridges came from foreign loans subjecting the economy to instability. The seat of government in Manila was the only developed area of the country; the provinces were neglected. The result of this pattern of development was a rise in the urban poor population because of transmigration from the rural periphery into the highly congested urban interior in seek of a better economic situation. Congestion gave rise to an increased crime rate and violence. Though the deteriorating social conditions were clearly visible, public officials turned a blind eye towards their constituents and instead devoted their time and energies to political skirmishes, bickering, and intrigue. Sad to say, the film industry played a safe role during this period; it remained detached from the realities of the times and simply continued to churn out its escapist films.

Martial Law and Philippine Cinema

Towards the end of 1969, the Philippines experienced the worst in economic, political, and social deterioration. The country was being threatened by the rise in crime and violence, the spread of communist rebellion, and the movement for secession among its Muslim population (in the country's southernmost island of Mindanao). These factors, together with the compounding problems of a rapidly growing population and an uneven distribution of wealth, were slowly eroding the people's confidence in Marcos's leadership. A rash of political violence ensued from 1971 to mid-1972. Filipinos got the surprise of their life when on the morning of September 21, 1972 they awoke to the silence of the radio, the blankness of the TV screen and the unusual absence of the newspaper. It was on this fateful day that martial law was proclaimed throughout the country, the argument being that "the security of the nation was under threat from a growing leftist movement determined to overthrow the government"[48] The mass media was the first to experience its wrath. Among martial law's significant effects on the film industry were the disappearance of the bomba films, the enforcement of strict censorship rules, and the emergence of the New Cinema.

The early years of martial law saw feature filmmaking for propaganda purposes. However, this was not unique to the film industry alone; all mass media were carriers of messages promoting Marcos's New Society. On television, for instance, New Society slogans were aired such as "sa ika-uunlad ng bayan, disiplina ang kailangan" ("discipline is needed for the progress of the country"). Films were

supposed to depict the goals of the New Society, for instance the green revolution campaign (a movement for self-sufficiency through urban gardening). When martial law was securely entrenched by the mid-1970s, propagandizing ceased and "normal" programming on all media resumed. At this point, the film industry came up with a handful of films that touched on political corruption, criminality, agrarian unrest, unemployment, and other social themes; though many were severely censored, others passed censorship as long as they implied that the scenes portrayed were about the past and not the present (this mentality resurfaced in the late 1980s in criticism lodged against Lino Brocka's Fight for Us). On a positive note, the autocratic rule of Marcos provided fertile ground for innovation and artistic creativity of filmmakers by 1976. Marcos created a political crony system within his cabinet that affected all sectors of the society. These far-from-ideal conditions prompted artists (particularly filmmakers) to involve themselves in creating social awareness through their films.[49] Martial law consequently and ironically gave rise to a new era and a second golden age of Filipino films : the New Cinema.

The emergence of the New Cinema of the Philippines paved the way for academic and non-academic institutions and organizations to take more concrete steps towards the development of a program of film education in the country. In 1976, the University of the Philippines (which offered film theory and appreciation courses in its Humanities program) established the U.P. Film Center, which was given the task of instruction, research, and community extension work in film as an art.[50] By 1984, the same university established a full bachelor degree program in Film and

Audiovisual Communication under the Institute of Mass Communication (now known as the College of Mass Communication). This is recognized as the only program in the country that provides a comprehensive and intensive training in film as a communication and artistic medium based on a broad general education program (social-humanist oriented), offering courses in Film Theory and Criticism, Directing, Cinematography, Editing, and many other areas.[51] The De La Salle University (DLSU), which offered various courses in theater, advertising, and cinema in its Language and Literature Department beginning in 1974, established a program in Communication Arts in 1982 and has offered courses in Radio-Television Program Production, Film Theory and Criticism, and Advertising, to mention a few. Other big universities set up their own Communication Arts programs including Ateneo de Manila University, University of the East, and Far Eastern University.

Non-academic institutions like the MOWELFUND[52] Film Institute (MFI), created in 1982, organized short courses and workshops designed for amateur and professional filmmakers and industry workers. The MFI was instrumental to the emergence of the Alternative Cinema (discussed in Chapter 3). In the same year, Executive Order Number 770 established a government corporation called the Experimental Cinema of the Philippines (ECP) headed by Marcos's eldest daughter Imee. The objectives of the ECP were to promote film appreciation among the youth, to expand the audience for commercial and non-commercial films, to develop an alternative venue for the exhibition of non-mainstream films, to assist young filmmakers and encourage those working in the local film industry to acquire film

production expertise, and to promote incentives such as a film fund, to extend financial assistance to producers of artistic films.[53] However, the ECP was short-lived due to overspending, biased awarding of incentives, and criticisms from all sectors of society for passing as art films and exhibiting what were considered pornographic films. It was renamed Film Development Foundation of the Philippines in 1985.[54] Other organizations involved in similar endeavors are: the Film School Board of the Philippines, composed of film educators from various colleges and universities in the country; the Communication Foundation for Asia; the Goethe Institut (German Cultural Center); the Film Academy of the Philippines; the Film Archives of the Philippines; and the Film Heritage Institute. Because of the combined work of these universities, institutions, government agencies, and foundations, the Filipino people's appreciation for the cinema and other visual arts has become more developed and there has been an increased awareness and concern for the preservation of this cultural artifact for future generations.

Despite the efforts of these organizations and the support to filmmaking extended by the government, censorship has been the primary hindrance to the development of the local film industry. The Marcos censorship apparatus, known as the Board of Review for Motion Pictures and Television (BRMPT) and later renamed the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB), screened, reviewed, and examined all local and foreign television programs and films (including publicity materials such as advertisements, trailers, and stills). Its work was also concerned with the approval and disapproval for importation, exportation, production,

copying, distribution, sale, lease, exhibition, and/or television broadcast of films, television programs and their accompanying publicity materials. It was also empowered to delete objectionable portions from any film and television program which the Board deemed immoral, indecent, contrary to the law and/or the good customs of the country, and injurious to the prestige of the Republic of the Philippines.[55] The Board was also empowered to grant, deny, or cancel permits for the importation, exportation, production, distribution, and exhibition of films and television programs. Functioning simultaneously as a classification board, it was given the task of classifying films and television programs into categories: "G" for "General Patronage," "PG" for "Parental Guidance," "R" for "Restricted," "X" for "Not for Public Viewing," and other categories set by the Board. Included in its police powers was the capability to close down moviehouses and other establishments engaged in the public exhibition of films and television programs which violated censorship rules and regulations.

Before any film could be exhibited, the producer was required to file an application for a permit to exhibit (MTRCB Form 02-86 for local films and MTRCB Form 01-86 for foreign-made films). In the case of locally produced films, the MTRCB Form 02-86 was to be supported by the following documents:

1. A certification from the processing studio or laboratory declaring the total number of prints made.
2. A synopsis of the film.

3. The Title Registration Receipt from the Screenwriter's Guild of the Philippines.
4. The MTRCB Form 24-86 (receipt of print).
5. A Clearance certificate from the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) for films which make use of military equipment and/or facilities.
6. The MTRCB official receipt of payment.
7. A valid MTRCB registration.

Upon submission of the aforementioned documents (usually five days before the film's projected release date), a review session was called by the Board's Chairman who designated a sub-committee composed of at least three board members. They screened the film in the presence of two representatives from the film's distributor and/or the film's producer. The sub-committee (which acted on behalf of the Board) had the power to approve/disapprove a film or recommend the deletion of portions of a film deemed contrary to censorship rules so that the film could be classified into the Board's rating categories. A producer whose film was disapproved either filed an appeal for a second review or agreed with the Board's recommendations for deletion even if it meant the loss of the essence or message of the film.

In the case of foreign-made films, MTRCB Form 01-86 was to be supported by the following documents:

1. A certification from the processing studio or laboratory declaring the number of prints made.
2. A synopsis of the film.

3. The MTRCB Form 24-86 (receipt of print)

4. A clearance certificate from the AFP.

5. The MTRCB official receipt of payment.

6. A valid MTRCB registration.

7. A release permit and a confirmation of CBP Agreement Validity from the Central Bank of the Philippines (CBP).

8. A clearance certification from the Manila International Airport.

9. An Authority to Release Imported Goods from the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR).

10. The receipt for payment of duties and taxes from the Customs Bureau.

Foreign films went through the same review session as local films, but there were no set criteria directing the deletion of material from these films because the Marcos government did not want to displease other countries and discourage them from investing in the Philippines. In effect, the censorship rules imposed on foreign-made films were lax compared with those imposed on local films.

The MTRCB also controlled commercial and non-commercial film co-production ventures between Filipino and foreign companies. Before any filming could take place within such an arrangement, the producers were required to submit the following documents:

1. An MTRCB Form 2-88 (application for co-production filmmaking).

2. A certification from the foreign producer's embassy or consulate of his/her credentials.

3. The storyline, script, and title of the film.

4. An equipment list (including film stock).

5. A production time table (with the exact location in the Philippines and the duration of stay in each site).

6. A declaration under oath that all film equipment and raw materials used in the filming will be re-exported upon completion of the production.

As soon as film production was completed, the producers were required to notify the Board in writing about the completion of the project and secure from the same office a certification that post production will be done outside the Philippines (in this case, a clearance to export film negatives for processing abroad must be secured from the MTRCB and the Customs Bureau). However, if the negatives were to be processed in the Philippines, the producers needed to submit the processed film for review and obtain a permit to exhibit (even if it will not be exhibited publicly in the Philippines) and a clearance to export the film's prints and negatives.

The Censor's Board was headed by Maria Kalaw Katigbak, a former senator at the time of the Marcos regime and daughter of a prominent Filipino government official. She was appointed by Marcos in 1982 (when the Board was known as BRMPT) and shortly after her appointment, she banned Schoolgirls (1982) arguing that it contained "offensively raw" love scenes and Boy Kondenado (Condemned Boy, 1982) for its depiction of "abnormal lawlessness."[56] The works of New Cinema filmmakers also suffered severe censorship, which Katigbak acknowledged were more for political reasons than moral: scenes of rallies and student assemblies were deleted

from Marilou Diaz-Abaya's Moral (1982) and in Mike de Leon's Batch '81, a scene in which the fraternity master asks one of the neophytes if martial law was beneficial to the country was snipped off the film.[57]

These scenes were deemed to incite rebellion and undermine the faith and confidence of the Filipino people in their government. John Lent writes that during Katigbak's administration,

> charges of arbitrary censorship were levelled at the Board. Films which were not true, good, and beautiful were subject to censorship on subversion charges.[58]

In 1985, Katigbak and the Board charged Lino Brocka with smuggling out of the country his film My Country: In Desperation/Bayan Ko: Kapit sa Patalim for a screening at the Cannes Film Festival. The film was not given permission to be exhibited in the Philippines and in other countries unless Brocka deleted rally and demonstration scenes (perceived by the Board as irrelevant to the story) and the song "Bayan Ko" from the closing credits, arguing that this material "urged oppressed peoples to rise against the authorities."[59]

Philippine Cinema After Marcos

The peak in the Filipino people's social and political history came with the February 1986 People's Revolution. This resurgence against an oppressor was ninety years overdue but it nonetheless forged a newfound consciousness and pride in attaining change through relatively peaceful means. Corazon Aquino was sworn in as the country's ninth president and immediately worked towards the writing of a new and democratic constitution. As SarDesai put it, Aquino "breathed new life into

Filipino politics" through the abolition of the national assembly, the prime minister's post, and the deletion of the emergency powers of the president.[60] The restitution of freedom of the press was welcomed by the mass media. However, twenty years of repression has resulted in such phenomena as a split political ideology manifested by party alliances (the ruling Marcos KBL party, the traditional right, and the radical left opposition). Since the mass media were restructured and realigned through the transfer of their ownership to Marcos's political cronies, this split in loyalties surfaced upon Aquino's move to dismantle the centralized Marcos media structure. For instance, the Maharlika Broadcasting System (Marcos's government broadcast network) was reorganized and restructured as the People's Television, which resulted in an apparent "witch-hunting" of "Marcos loyalists." Aquino's first year was characterized by successive reorganizations of many government offices that resulted in the retrenchment of thousands of government workers. This produced a feeling of uncertainty and resentment towards the new dispensation.

The split in party alliances did not spare the film industry. Because of the ties between film and politics, directors and stars took sides; to the surprise of many, this created neither a rift nor a division within the industry. This could be explained in part by the fact that film production companies were owned by apolitical businesspeople, and by the unified stance of the film community for the right to artistic expression that transcended political barriers. The expectation that Aquino could change the country for the better was too high among Filipinos in general and

most especially within the film community. Film scholar and critic Emmanuel Reyes describes this as

> the hope that everything, including the movies would change for the better. What followed however was a dry spell in film creativity. The good films that were being produced despite the paranoid policies of Mr. Marcos on cinema, disappeared altogether. What survived the four day revolution was the same flawed and trite Filipino film which continued to tread on escapist ideas.[61]

The first few months of the Aquino government focused on addressing national concerns such as the economic rehabilitation of the country, the restructuring of government procedures, the insurgency problem, the renewal and continuance of foreign relations, the Muslim crisis, military reforms, and the recovery of the ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses and their cronies. The arts (which include film) were not among the priorities of the government and this led to a general disappointment in the film industry. As a New Cinema filmmaker put it, "Cory has snubbed local film, which is of no importance to her, and cabinet members are not letting her know that it could be a priority."[62] However, such was not really the case when a task force was formed to "oversee all film-related government agencies", headed by Cirio Santiago and including Lino Brocka and Jose Lacaba among its members.[63] The result was the proposal for a National Film Commission whose primary role was to formulate policies and coordinating activities for the improvement of film as art.[64]

In the midst of these discussions, the industry continued to churn out films that were characteristic of the 1960s and it still operated within a capitalistic ideology. The appointment of Lino Brocka to the Constitutional Commission brought a renewed hope to the industry; his presence was perceived as an opportunity for progressive voices

within the film industry to be heard, appreciated and be recognized as a mediating force toward national development. However, Brocka's brush with politics and bureaucratic procedures ended in disillusionment, resulting in his resignation and his film Fight for Us.

On July 3, 1986, President Aquino appointed Manuel Morato as Chairman of the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB).[65] "Manoling" as he was fondly called by the press, comes from a traditionally rich family, is the president of two family-owned corporations, a bachelor, an art collector, and known as a very religious person (this last characteristic has been the focus of criticism of his alleged arbitrariness in the approval and disapproval of films for exhibition). His first two months on the job were looked upon favorably by the industry; he gave local commercial film producers some leeway (by not imposing restrictions on their "bold" or sexually explicit films), which was a strategy on Morato's part of winning them over, as revealed in a 1986 interview:

> We wanted to be friends with them, to be conciliatory with them, so we gave them a grace period.[66]

However, in 1988, he earned the ire of the film industry, the press, television, advertising, and the Concerned Artists of the Philippines (CAP) when he asked Aquino to certify as urgent a draft bill proposing the amendment of Presidential Decree 1986 (the act creating the MTRCB) and its implementing rules and regulations.[67] The goal was to put teeth in the MTRCB's regulatory apparatus. How did this come about? Morato felt that the MTRCB operated on a limited basis by merely reviewing and classifying films; as he put it, "it lacks the enforcing arm and real censorship

power that is needed to strengthen law enforcement against immorality and indecency."[68] This move was opposed by the CAP and members of the senate who believed in democracy such as Senator Wigberto Tanada, who said that, "sana'y naging malawak ang konsultasyon na ginawa ng board tungkol sa kanilang panukalang amendments sa PD 1986...lumilitaw tuloy na gustong ipagpatuloy at lalo pang gawing mahigpit at malupit ng Board ang mga tuntunin ng rehimeng Marcos" ("the board should have conducted extensive consultations about the proposed amendments to PD 1986...what becomes obvious is the board's desire to continue and make more restrictive and oppressive the [censorship] rules set up by the Marcos regime").[69] The senate bill called for the expansion of

> the board's powers to include the censorship of videotapes for home viewing, the control of all film laboratories, and the management of the Film Archives of the Philippines, the appropriation of funds to regional censor's offices and to reward informers [who furnish reports on illegal insertions in films and other violations committed by film producers, distributors, and theater owners].[70]

This incident fuelled new criticisms of Morato and debates over censorship, especially regarding a perceived arbitrariness and subjective interpretation of the law that was seen as akin to the former regime's enforcement of censorship. Lino Brocka, together with the CAP, key local film industry people (e.g., Eddie Romero, Attorney Espiridion Laxa, Armida Siguion-Reyna), print and broadcast media representatives, movie theater owners, film producers, and advertising executives, held a consultative meeting to oppose Morato's proposal; the participants signed a statement that the proposal was a violation of constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression and the growth of Filipino culture.[71] The Senate Committee on Public Information and Mass Media

headed by Senator Butz Aquino organized a public hearing on the proposed "Morato Bill." Because of the controversies that the bill elicited and the criticisms hurled at Morato (which extended to the Aquino administration), the bill was not passed.

Since then, Morato had been embroiled in issues and controversies with regard to his arbitrary censorship and the alleged banning of films such as Martin Scorsese's Last Temptation of Christ (which Morato claimed in an interview that he did not ban it personally, arguing that the film was in violation of Article 201 of the Revised Penal Code of the Philippines, a law against insulting any race, creed, or religion[72]); a television documentary Dear Sam...Sumasaiyo, Juan (Dear Sam...Yours Truly, Juan), which was disapproved and allegedly banned from broadcast due to the perceived libeling and defaming of national heroes and the showing of "objectionable," sexually explicit images[73]; and Lino Brocka's Fight for Us/Les Insoumis/Orapronobis, which, according to Morato was submitted for review and was passed with a rating of R-21 (restricted for viewers 21 years old and above).[74] However, Morato claimed that the producers committed an act of misrepresentation because the version submitted for review was not the original French version but the one intended for its American release;[75] he insisted that the original version must be submitted for review. Complicating the case was the producer's alleged misrepresentation of the film as one that was foreign-made, to which Morato responded that because it was filmed in the Philippines it was not foreign-made, and if it was, the producers should have submitted the required documents to support their application for a permit to exhibit a foreign film (e.g., Central Bank of the Philippines release permit and agreement

validity, Manila International Airport clearance, Customs Bureau clearance, and Bureau of Internal Revenue Authority to Release Imported Goods).[76] The producers then filed an application for a permit to exhibit a locally-produced film; the arbitrariness of Morato comes into play here when he argued anew that since the producers were foreigners, this must be a foreign film.[77] To date, Fight for Us has never been screened in Philippine moviehouses. The American version was allowed to be screened on only one occasion, as part of a retrospective and tribute (after Lino Brocka's death) at the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

1992 saw the end of Aquino's term and Fidel Ramos succeeded her as the tenth president of the country. Ramos met with local film industry leaders during his campaign and reportedly won the admiration of producers, directors, and actors for being the only presidential candidate at that time to cite the importance of film and the potentials of the country's film industry. Among his campaign promises was the implementation of government programs to help the industry in promoting the export of Philippine movies to other countries.[78] His leadership's prime achievement to date has been the appointment of a new censor's chief, who after six months in office had earned praises for accomplishments such as making producers attentive to the value of story and technical quality, with the international market as a goal. Another encouraging development under the Ramos leadership is the increase in well-conceived films, though these productions have not yet achieved the thematic and stylistic quality of the 1970s films. This movement is due partly to the fact that the late 1970s and early 1980s New Cinema filmmakers are once again making films (like Ishmael

Bernal, Marilou Diaz-Abaya and Laurice Guillen). Other breakthroughs include the maturing in style and content of the films of Maryo J. de los Reyes and the arrival of conscientious young filmmakers like Chito Rono and Carlitos Siguion-Reyna. For close to a hundred years now, Philippine cinema has ridden the roller coaster of the Filipino people's social and political life. Indeed, the social conditions of the country have nurtured the cinema.

ENDNOTES

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6. Luis Francia, "Philippine Cinema: A Struggle Against Repression," in Film and Politics in the Third World, ed. John Downing (New York: Praeger, 1987), 209.

7. Renato Constantino, Identity and Consciousness: The Philippine Experience (Quezon City: Malaya Books, 1974), 24.

8. Pilar, 8.

9. Robert Reed, Colonial Manila, The Context of Hispanic Urbanism and Process of Morphogenesis (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 33.

10. Nick Deocampo, Short Film: The Emergence of a New Philippine Cinema (Quezon City: Communication Foundation for Asia, 1985), 7-8.

11. Pilar, 8.

12. Constantino, Identity and Consciousness, 38.

13. P.T. Martin, "The Silent Pictures Era in the Philippines," in Readings in Philippine Cinema, ed. Rafael Ma. Guerrero (Quezon City: Experimental Cinema of the Philippines, 1983), 20; see also John Lent, Philippine Mass Communication Before 1811, After 1966 (Manila: Philippine Press Institute, no date) and Nicanor G. Tiongson, "From Stage to Screen: Philippine Dramatic Traditions and the Filipino Film," International Popular Culture (Fall 1980).

14. Ibid., 21.

15. Constantino, Identity and Consciousness, 41.

16. Francia, 210.

17. Pilar, 16.

18. Lent, Philippine Mass Communication, 110.

19. Constantino, Identity and Consciousness, 41.

20. Renato Constantino, A History of the Philippines: From the Spanish Colonization to the Second World War (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), 316.

21. Martin, 26.

22. There are 87 languages and dialects spoken all-over the Philippines. However, the two dominant languages are Pilipino and English. There are eight principal regional languages: Tagalog (upon which Pilipino is based), Cebuano, Ilocano, Ilongo-Hiligaynon, Bicol, Waray, Pampango, and Pangasinense. Only 3% of the entire population speak Spanish.

23.Tiongson, 28.

24. Jose Quirino, Don Jose and the Early Philippine Cinema (Quezon City: Phoenix Publishing House, 1985), 10.

25. Lent, Philippine Mass Communications, 113.

26. Celso Al. Carunungan, "Early Years of Philippine Movies," in Film Directory of the Philippines, ed. Ricardo Fernandez (Manila: The Film Heritage Foundation, 1978).

27. David J. Steinberg, The Philippines, A Singular and a Plural Place (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982), 54.

28.Quirino, 11.

29. Jessie Garcia, "The Golden Decade of Filipino Movies," Weekly Graphic, 26 April to 10 May 1972, 47-49.

30. Tiongson, 29.

31. Bienvenido Lumbera, "Problems in Philippine Film History," in Philippine Mass Media: A Book of Readings, ed. Clodualdo del Mundo, Jr. (Manila: Communication Foundation for Asia, 1986), 41.

32.Ibid.

33. Garcia, 52.

34. Lent, Philippine Mass Communication, 118.

35. Ibid.

36. Lumbera, "Problems in Philippine Film History", 41.

37. Arminda Santiago, "Video Technology in the Philippines: Its Status, Problems, and Prospects" (M.A. Thesis, University of the Philippines, 1991), 5.

38. Lumbera, "Problems in Philippine Film History", 42.

39. The "bomba" referred to sex films where starlets stripped to their skin and showed lascivious acts. "Bomba" is a Filipino word for bomb and connotes the explosive nature of the images of these types of films. See John Lent, The Asian Film Industry (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990) and Bienvenido Lumbera, "Problems in Philippine Film History."

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41. Jose F. Lacaba, "Notes on Bakya," Philippines Free Press, 31 January 1970, 17.

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43. Tiongson, 29-30.

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45. D.R. SarDesai, Southeast Asia: Past and Present (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), 200.

46. Sterling Seagrave, The Marcos Dynasty (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 176.

47. Ibid., 213.

48. Hawes, 13.

49. Tiongson, 30.

50. Grace J. Alfonso, "Perceptions and Attitudes of Filipino Filmmakers on Film as Art, Science, Development Medium, Entertainment and Business from 1950 to 1988: An Oral History of the Shaping of a Communication Medium", (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of the Philippines, 1990), 184.

51. Ibid; see also Bienvenido Lumbera, Pelikula: An Essay on the Philippine Film: 1961-1992 (Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1992); Tiongson, "The Filipino Film Industry."

52. The acronym stands for Movie Worker's Welfare Foundation. For a detailed discussion of the MOWELFUND's organization and operation see Manito de Dios, "MOWELFUND: Moviedom's Social Monolith," Philippine Cinema (March 1991): 5-6; and Emmanuel Reyes, Notes on Philippine Cinema (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1989).

53. Alfonso, 180; see also Tiongson, 32.

54. Bienvenido Lumbera, Essay on the Philippine Film: 1961-1992, 31.

55. Primer on the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board, (Manila: National Media Production Center, 1985), 5; see also Tiongson, 42; Alfonso, 181.

56. Melissa Contreras, "Saved by the Law," The Manila Chronicle, 13 October 1990, 19.

57. Ibid.; see also Lent, The Asian Film Industry, 178.

58. Lent, Asian Film, 178.

59. Contreras, 19.

60. SarDesai, 207; see also Hernando Gonzales, "Mass Media and the Spiral of Silence: The Philippines from Marcos to Aquino," Journal of Communication 38 (Autumn 1988); R.J. May and Franscisco Nemenzo, eds., The Philippines After Marcos (New York: Saint Martin's Press, 1985).

61. Reyes, preface.

62. Peque Gallaga, interview by John Lent, The Asian Film Industry, 179.

63. Tiongson, 33.

64. Lent, The Asian Film Industry, 179; The proposal was disapproved, see Tiongson, "The Filipino Film Industry", 33.

65. The MTRCB is one of the very few Marcos-created agencies that was not restructured by Aquino. It enforced the same censorship rules and regulations of the Marcos regime.

66. Lou Samareno, "Manoling Morato: Uncensored," Weekend Magazine, 12 October 1986, 10.

67. "Censorship's Place in a Democracy," Ang Pahayagang Malaya, 28 August 1988, 4.

68. "Morato Guns for Real Censorship Board," Philippine Cinema, September 1991, 3.

69. "Congresswatch: Tanada Hits Censorship," Manila Standard, 13 September 1988, 13.

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71. Leah Salterio, "Brocka et. al. Up in Arms vs. Morato Power Play," Philippine Daily Inquirer, 28 August 1988, 26.

72. Dana Batnag, "Struggling with the Scissors," Philippine Graphic, 29 October 1990, 42.

73. Ibid.; see also Tiongson, "Filipino Film Industry" , 49.

74. Ibid.

75. Carina Sumilong, "A Case Study on the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board and the 1990 Controversies on Censorship" (A.B. Thesis, University of the Philippines, 1991), 37.

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CHAPTER III

THE NEW CINEMA OF THE PHILIPPINES

Among the events in the social history of the Filipino peoples, the declaration of martial law has had the most profound and insidious effect. Having enjoyed the "freedom" of self-government for twenty-seven years after the 1945 liberation of the country from the colonial rule of the United States, the imposition of martial law in 1972 destroyed even the illusion of democracy. Martial law was perceived by the Marcos regime as a necessary step towards political stability and economic growth while sacrificing other liberties, such as freedom of speech and the press. The transformation was extensive, from the rapid dismantling of the superstructure of constitutional government[1] to the encroachment on the economic, social, and cultural life of a people (e.g., the establishment of a highly centralized, propagandistic media structure, the imposition of curfew hours, and the sequestration of businesses and industries). To a society that followed a patriarchal ideology, the autocratic rule of Marcos may have been acceptable in the context of a traditional family structure in which the father instilled discipline, provided for the material needs of the family, and steered the family toward economic growth. As much as this situation was the basis for its imposition, martial rule was far from ideal despite its professed goal of building a "new society" that emphasized discipline and austerity. Instead, it produced a

marked division of society into the advantaged (a relatively small and powerful sector composed of government officials, business leaders, and affluent people) and the disadvantaged (a large percentage of the population coming from rural areas and the low income working class of the urban centers).[2] The curtailment of civil liberties invoked a repressive atmosphere felt by all sectors of the society that resulted in protest movements that called for the restoration of democracy on one hand while on the other, a call to embrace communism (the response of a number of radical left opposition groups to the uneven distribution of power and wealth during the regime). Concurrent with these events was the development of a heightened degree of social consciousness within the arts, in particular filmmaking, that resulted in a creative resurgence dormant since the 1950s. Thus emerged the New Cinema of the Philippines; the product of a combination of social, political, economic, and cultural conditions both internal and external to the country.

A Reaction to the State of the Nation (1972-1985)

The arts are perhaps the most sensitive to change among the sectors of a society. As forms of expression, the arts play a role in the dissemination of ideas and visions about the society within which it functions. Film as an art form assumed its position as a barometer and, under certain conditions, an instrument of social change soon after its introduction in the late 1800s due to the medium's unique ability to converge groups of individuals across boundaries of social class and other demographic divisions. As Ian C. Jarvie put it, "movies are sensitive to the national mood", a product of the collective consciousness of a society.[3] Political repression is

said to produce good art in many circumstances. Film critic Emmanuel Reyes argues that authoritarian rule in post World War II Poland appears to have encouraged the creativity and social consciousness of Polish filmmakers.[4] Repression seems to provide an inspiration to explore the film medium as a venue for the expression of ideas about society. In much the same way, the martial rule of Marcos "stimulated the creative minds of film artists to produce great works in an effort to spite the tyrant."[5]

Martial law in the Philippines was characterized by a highly centralized form of government, with political and economic power in the hands of Marcos and his wife, their cronies, and the military. To complement this, a centralized media structure was engineered through the takeover (by the military) of all national and international communication facilities in the Philippines and the transfer of ownership of all media operations to Marcos's political allies. As David Rosenberg describes;

> Marcos tightened the chains of command in the hands of his most loyal supporters...All these Marcos supporters were bound together in a governing coalition based on traditional kinship and ethnic loyalties, regional alliances, patronage, graft and corruption, and coercive force.[6]

The penetration of the ruling political elite (especially the military) was pervasive in every aspect of government and society, from housing to postal service to transportation; it was a seizure of power unprecedented in the country's history.[7] This concentration of power benefitted the country in the early years of the dictatorship by providing a degree of stability, but in later years it caused the economic and social decline of the Philippines. Rosenberg says that

> The new society of Ferdinand Marcos was not producing its promised benefits of political stability, economic growth, or social reform. Instead, there was increasing instability, persistent poverty, and more violence than there had been

> before Marcos. Increasingly, Filipinos were looking for, and demanding, alternatives to it.[8]

As the social life of a people provides a rich source for artistic expression, the socio-political events during martial law resulted in a creative revolution through which artistic forms such as literature, painting, the theater, and film could no longer remain isolated from the existing oppression. The seed for this artistic revolt was sowed prior to martial law with the surge in nationalist sentiment in the late 1960s that emanated from the academy. This paved the way for the recognition of Filipino films as an important cultural product and a mass medium in support of the nationalist movement. As Bienvenido Lumbera described;

> ...isinulong ng bagong kilusang makabayan ang mataas na pagpapahalaga sa masang Pilipino, at ang pelikula ay anyong pangkulturang lubusang tinatangkilik ng masa. Upang maunawaan nila ang masa at ang niloloob nito, sinikap ng mga kabataan at intelektuwal sa kolehiyo at unibersidad na basahin at panoorin ang mga babasahin at panooring kinagigiliwan ng masa.[9]
>
> [...the new movement towards nationalism promoted the value of the Filipino mass and films as a cultural form are patronized by the masses. In order to understand the masses and how they think, students and intellectuals from colleges and universities read the literature and watched the films that the masses patronized.]

A new film consciousness emerged that was supported by universities (through courses on film theory and filmmaking movements such as Italian Neo-Realism, French New Wave Cinema, Surrealist Filmmaking, and the Japanese and Indian Art Film Movement) and strengthened by more self-consciously politicized ideological orientations. Historians refer to this as the New Cinema of the Philippines because of its radical manner of re-presenting images of the social milieu in new ways, as evidenced by the "creative sensibilities in the choice of subject matter and the use of

film language."[10] The period of the new cinema was the same period of the Marcos dictatorial regime (from the early 1970s through the 1980s[11]).

The New Cinema Artists

The New Cinema artists included both directors and scriptwriters. Having broken into the industry in 1970, Lino Brocka directed the film that ushered in the movement: You are Weighed in the Balance but Found Lacking/Tinimbang Ka ngunit Kulang (1974), followed by Manila in the Claws of Neon/Maynila sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag (1975). As film critic Joel David states;

> Maynila [Manila in the Claws of Neon] could properly serve as the marker for the second Golden Age of Philippine cinema. It was a more precious and accomplished work than the same director's Tinimbang [You are Weighed in the Balance], and ushered in a tendency toward new talents and novel projects that was to intensify in the coming year.[12]

After two years of study at the Film Institute of India and one year of writing film reviews, Ishmael Bernal entered the realm of filmmaking in 1971 and came up with Pagdating sa Dulo (Upon Reaching the End), which was a financial failure at the box-office but was an artistic success. Then in 1976, Bernal made Ligaw na Bulaklak (Wild Flower) and Nunal sa Tubig (Mole in the Water); both were significant achievements within the new movement, which was gradually earning a critical audience. This early phase owed much to the nationalist movement of the late 1960s as it prepared the mass audience for the refinements in cinematic representation that became characteristic of the new cinema. Both Brocka and Bernal were grounded in the academics, theater, and film theory, and they used their training and knowledge to present a new and startingly direct understanding of the social milieu of the times.

Their innovative use of film language gave to Filipino cinema a degree of respectability and sophistication that the existing commercial films did not have. The movement hit its stride in the mid-1970s, and by the close of the decade there was a significant collection of films that combined social commentary and artistic control, the key markers of New Cinema: Lupita Concio's Alkitrang Dugo (Asphalt Blood, 1975); Jun Raquiza's Katawang Lupa (Sinful Flesh, 1975), Mario O'Hara's Mortal (1976); Behn Cervantes's Sakada (Sugar Plantation Worker, 1976); Eddie Romero's Ganito Kami Noon...Paano Kayo Ngayon? (This We Were Then...How About You Now?, 1976); Mike de Leon's Itim (Black, 1977) and Moments in a Stolen Dream/Kung Mangarap Ka't Magising (1977); Gil Portes's Sa Piling ng mga Sugapa (In the Company of Greed/In the Company of Drug Addicts, 1977); Joey Gosiengfiao's Babae...Ngayon at Kailanman (Woman...Now and Forever, 1977); Elwood Perez's Masikip, Maluwang, Paraisong Parisukat (Tight, Spacious, A Square Paradise, 1977); Celso Ad. Castillo's Pagputi ng Uwak, Pag-itim ng Tagak (When Crow Becomes White, When the Heron Becomes Black, 1978); and Maryo J. de los Reyes's Annie Batungbakal (1979). These thirteen filmmakers comprised the first wave of New Cinema filmmakers in the 1970s.

A second wave of New Cinema artists emerged in the 1980s, including two women directors, Marilou Diaz-Abaya and Laurice Guillen, who explored women's issues. Abaya's Brutal (1980) dealt with the harsh treatment of women in Filipino patriarchal society and her Moral (1982) chronicled the search of four modern-day Filipinas for the meaning of life and their role in modern Filipino society. Laurice

Guillen's Salome (1982) was an adaptation of the Japanese tale Rashomon, and reverberates with the theme of woman's low position in the male-dominated Filipino social hierarchy. The establishment of the government-controlled Experimental Cinema of the Philippines (ECP) in 1982 gave opportunities to a new breed of filmmakers: Peque Gallaga with his Oro, Plata, Mata (Gold, Silver, Death, 1982); Pio de Castro III's Soltero (Bachelor, 1983); and Abbo de la Cruz's Misteryo sa Tuwa (Joyful Mystery, 1983). In 1984, Tikoy Aguiluz made Boatman which dealt with the story of an ambitious rural boatman who goes to Manila in search of a better life but ends up in a sex den and becomes the lead stud in sex shows.

After the fall of Marcos in 1986, a third wave of New Cinema artists emerged; like their predecessors, they were also grounded in academic study and derived inspiration from the first wave new cinema filmmakers, specifically Brocka and Bernal. William Pascual in 1986 made Takaw Tukso (Prone to Temptation) and Chito Rono with his Itanong mo sa Buwan (Ask the Moon, 1988). The most recent filmmaker whose works have been included in the third wave is Carlitos Siguion-Reyna who has directed Misis Mo, Misis Ko (Your Wife, My Wife, 1988) and Hihintayin kita sa Langit (I'll Wait for you in Heaven, 1990).

All three waves of New Cinema filmmakers worked within the framework of the commercial film industry. They had the sincere goal of ridding the industry of what Pio de Castro III described as the "stench of commercialism".[13] Their struggle was three-fold: they suffered the "maddeningly arbitrariness"[14] of the Marcos censorship board (1972-1985) and Aquino's censors (1986-1992); they competed with

formulaic Filipino films; and they had to rise above Hollywood films that were (and still are) imported into the country.

Among the scriptwriters, Clodualdo del Mundo, Jr. and Edgardo Reyes were the first to explore the theme of the disintegration of the individual in urban society via the celebrated Manila in the Claws of Neon/Maynila sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag. Roy Iglesias, Robert Ylagan and Teloy Cosme became known for their interpretations of aspects of Filipino social and political history through their work on Ganito Kami Noon...(This We Were Then...) and Hubad na Bayani (Naked Hero, 1977). Ricardo Lee examined female exploitation and gender roles in Brutal and Moral. Other innovative screenwriters followed, like Jose F. Lacaba who was behind the success of Brocka's Jaguar (1980), My Country: In Desperation/Bayan Ko: Kapit sa Patalim (1985), and Fight for Us/Les Insoumis/Orapronobis (1989), as well as Mike de Leon's Sister Stella L (1984). Racquel Villavicencio's investigations into fraternities in Mike de Leon's Batch '81 (1982) and Armando Lao's work on Takaw Tukso (Prone to Temptation) and Itanong mo sa Buwan (Ask the Moon) also received recognition from the industry. These scriptwriters worked with directors in questioning and defying the repression of the Marcos regime.

The 1980s also saw the emergence of another kind of cinema in the Philippines; known as the Alternative Cinema, this was composed of younger filmmakers who worked in Super 8mm and 16mm to produce short films. The Alternative Cinema used venues such as universities, art galleries, and cultural centers to screen their works. Some of these films have earned international recognition

among them, Kidlat Tahimik's (a.k.a. Eric de Guia) Perfumed Nightmare/Mababangong Bangungot (1977) and Turumba (1983). Other artists of the Alternative Cinema include Nick Deocampo, Raymond Red and Lito Tiongson.[15] The filmmakers of the Alternative Cinema have sought to question certain mainstream Filipino film practices and have explored film as a medium of communication and artistic expression. Moreover, they have critiqued social conditions by coming up with films that deal with the effects of foreign influence on the Filipino and exploring the notion of Filipino identity. The Alternative Cinema and its accomplishments have been considered as part of the New Cinema; however, these filmmakers worked outside the mainstream of the film industry and therefore have been less burdened with the commercial demands that New Cinema artists have had to contend with. Their works have contributed to the dissemination of a "more realistic and critical worldview"[16] within Filipino society.

Themes and Messages

Two thematic paths characterized the films of the New cinema: the first dealt with topics relevant to a changing society and used traditional Filipino narrative; the second centered on philosophical analysis and used more Westernized storytelling and filmmaking techniques. These two paths may converge, as Lumbera relates:

> ...ang dalawang landasin ng pelikula sa kasalukuyan ay hindi magkahiwalay, manapa'y nagdaratig ang dalawa at kung minsa'y nagsasanib...Hinawan para sa mga direktor na Pilipino ang dalawang landasin, ng kilusang makabayan sa Pilipinas at ng rebolusyong pampelikula sa Kanluran.[17]

> [...the two paths for today's film do not stand apart, instead they exist beside each other or sometimes converge...These paths were formed by the nationalist movement in the Philippines and the film revolution in the West.]

Brocka's examination of social ills fall within the first thematic path as evidenced by You are Weighed in the Balance and Manila in the Claws of Neon which showed the different kinds of oppression experienced by marginalized protagonists. The former is a study of rural small-town life, while the latter is an essay on how an urban economic system can destroy the individual. Bernal on the other hand uses philosophical analysis to put his message across. In Ligaw na Bulaklak (Wild Flower), he juxtaposes ideas of innocence with those of worldliness, purity with decay, and youth with old age through visual montage.[18] Bernal concentrates more on generalized explorations of everyday life, which strikingly differs from Brocka's issue-oriented stance.

Using films as a vehicle for social commentary was a primary goal of the New Cinema. They did not depend on other literary art forms such as the komiks as sources for their stories, but drew much upon the direct observation of real-life situations and research into the contexts of historical events. This explains the depth of characterization and the nature of the plot development in their films. One of the recurrent messages in the New Cinema films involves dealing with oppression - rising from it to be able to lead a life of dignity. Another message put across by these artists is the value of the Filipina in the society (female-humanist theme) as manifested by the works of scriptwriter Ricky Lee and filmmakers Abaya and Guillen. Other films deal with the origin of "Filipino" and the pursuit of Filipino identity.[19]

Concio's depiction of American abuses in the country in Once a Moth/Minsa'y Isang Gamo-gamo (1976) questions the validity of American military bases in the Philippines. Mike de Leon's Batch '81 communicates the disintegration of an individual in a fascist society through metaphorical displacement - a fraternity is used to symbolize Filipino society under dictatorship. The films of the New Cinema never idealized nor fantasized about the society; instead they criticized it for remaining passive and submissive to the dictatorial rule of Marcos. The efforts of these filmmakers in turn have been criticized by some members of their audience; many times they have been accused of distorting the "good image" of the Filipino. The filmmakers themselves tend to view these reactions positively: their effort to create a heightened level of social awareness has been achieved.

Film Censorship and the New Cinema

The Filipino is familiar with the word "censorship" and its accompanying notions of repression. As a subjugated people, freedom of expression was a luxury and a privilege available only to the elite because "basic freedoms were repressed, and Filipino intellectuals had to publish abroad to escape censorship in the Philippines"[20] during the Spanish colonial rule. When the Americans came, they too had their own censorship measures, in particular, the outlawing of expressions of native nationalism. When motion pictures came to the Philippines in 1897, there was no film censorship because the films were imported from Europe (at the time of Spanish rule) and the United States (during American colonial rule), a situation which meshed well with the policies of both colonial powers.

De Vega writes that the first film censor's board was created in 1929 to examine all films, spoken or silent, imported or produced in the Philippines, and prohibit the introduction and exhibition of films found to be immoral or contrary to law and good customs or injurious to the prestige of the government or people of the Philippines.[21] This move was precipitated by the release of Julian Manansala's Patria et Amore which was protested by the Spanish community. At this early stage, the film censors had no bureaucratic framework to operate within, and most importantly, there were no set criteria or standards for judging films. These were formulated on an ad hoc basis and from the perspective of the morality of the ruling establishment. This is the unfortunate legacy that was handed down to the Marcos regime within which the New Cinema had to function and struggle against the state censorship apparatus, which after more than six decades still functions in an arbitrary manner. When Marcos ascended to presidency in 1965, he retained the Board of Censors for Motion Pictures that had been set up in 1961. In the years prior to martial law, the censors not only approved or disapproved films for exhibition but also classified films into two categories: "For Adults Only" and "General Patronage."[22] With the imposition of martial law in 1972, Marcos issued Letter of Instruction # 13, which added more restrictions with the so-called intent of safeguarding the morality of the society against negative influences. Among the restrictions was an ambiguously-stated rule that banned films deemed contrary to the letter and spirit of Proclamation 1081 (declaring Martial Law and a State of Emergency).[23] The censor's board also had the prerogative to cut negatives and master prints of films. Through the Board of

Censors for Motion Pictures, Marcos maintained a facade of freedom of expression while in fact he curtailed this democratic liberty through a string of these vaguely phrased regulations. Throughout his regime, the censor's body was renamed and restructured over and over again in an attempt to demonstrate Marcos's "concern" for the arts; in reality, he always used the Board as an instrument of control. Tiongson explains that;

> This board effectively censored movies that in its interpretation showed "too much sex", "too much violence" and most of all had "subversive messages". In censoring films, Marcos censors were accused - and with reason - of using very subjective standards, especially in the definition of subversion (e.g. the portrayal of poverty in any form was considered subversive) and in the judging of a film in terms of scenes and not as a whole.[24]

The first and second wave of New Cinema artists fought the arbitrary nature of censorship laws and sought ways to skirt the rules. To cite an example, the incest angle in Mike de Leon's Kisapmata (In the Wink of an Eye, 1981) is handled through suggestion and indirection; the act,

> is suggested by the father's entrance into his daughter's bedroom, with a little help from an earlier confrontation between the mother and daughter confirming the practice within the family. This is a discreet manner of presentation of a social taboo, which no doubt facilitated the movie's passage through the eye of our rusty censorship needle.[25]

Overt resistance to censorship came about in 1983 when directors, actors, and other members of the film industry protested the signing and enforcement of Executive Order # 868.[26] The organization of film industry people that spearheaded this protest was the Concerned Artists of the Philippines, headed by Lino Brocka. There was a brief though ultimately illusory respite from censorship through the official establishment of the Experimental Cinema of the Philippines (ECP), which was, as

Tiongson described, "an attempt to give his (Marcos's) regime a wash of liberality."[27] However, not all filmmakers could break into the ECP.

On a broad perspective, the censorship rules of the Marcos regime were in keeping its autocratic nature. However, after the fall of Marcos and the ascendancy of Corazon Aquino, the same structures were retained and the same procedures were imposed despite the fact that they were contrary to the provision in the new constitution stipulating that "the State shall foster the preservation, enrichment, and dynamic evolution of a Filipino national culture based on the principle of unity in diversity in a climate of free artistic and intellectual expression."[28] Consequently, first and second wave New Cinema filmmakers (together with the third wave) endured the same struggles with the same censorship structure (though with a different name)[29] under the new dispensation. Instead of working to overcome the continuing repressive atmosphere, many directors regressed to the production of formula films in order to survive financially; some agreed to direct several commercial films in exchange for one or two artistic/serious movies; others turned to television, such as Marilou Diaz-Abaya, who directed "Sic O'Clock News" (a television political/news satire) on IBC Channel 13; and a handful devoted their energies to higher education, such as Ishmael Bernal, who taught film courses at the University of the Philippines. This disenchantment fuelled the ongoing commercialization of the industry, but it also gave more opportunities for the third wave of New Cinema artists to test their filmmaking skills and establish themselves within the industry and with the audiences.

Commercial Filmmaking and the New Cinema

The rampant commercialism of the 1960s had a profound effect on the Filipino film industry. It propagated a capitalistic philosophy that gave a low priority to the production values of a film, much less to narrative and thematic complexity. It resulted in an audience-dependent system which regarded stars as the key to box-office success. The commodity concept was such that it came to be taken for granted in the industry; as one Filipino film professor says, "very few commented or gave notice to the practice...it was part of commercialism...it was part of business."[30] This ideology was carried over to the seventies and was one of the monoliths that the New Cinema artists had to contend with.

The New Cinema had to compete with other industry-produced films that dealt exploitatively with sexually-oriented themes; those that featured young singing idols whom the masses adored; and films that carried box-office stars of any genre (e.g., Dolphy for slapstick comedy, Fernando Poe Jr. for action/adventure films, and Tony Ferrer for films akin to James Bond). New Cinema filmmakers also had to prove their talent as directors and assure the few adventurous producers who hired them of their box-office value. Tiongson points out that in this period only independent producers dared to give New Cinema filmmakers directorial assignments.[31] Such was the case with Brocka, who in 1970 was given a chance by LEA Productions to direct Wanted: Perfect Mother; Bernal, among others, broke into the industry by seeking the help of friends to finance his first film Pagdating sa Dulo (Upon Reaching the End, 1971); and

a few like Marilou Diaz-Abaya, who never had the luck of the aforementioned two directors, had to finance her first film, Tanikala (Chain, 1979), by herself.

Breaking into the highly commercial system was difficult; once they had a foot in the door, New Cinema artists had to try to make sure that their films were technically and narratively better than the formulaic films. Expectations were high on the part of producers and some audiences because of the filmmakers' educational backgrounds. In the mid-1980s, New Cinema artists faced an even more powerful nemesis: the formation of Regal Films, Viva Productions, and Seiko Films (mostly backed by wealthy Chinese) further linked the capitalistic ideology to Filipino film practice. These companies produced approximately 70% of the country's annual film output, and their films drew much from komiks novels and radio soap operas that had been in vogue since the 1960s. These big companies propagated (and continue to promote) the star system and formula filmmaking.

Compounding the struggle of the New Cinema in the mid-to-late 1980s was the continued proliferation of imported Hollywood and Hong Kong films that depicted violence and sex more graphically than permitted in Filipino films. The censor's board did not exert as much control on these imported films as on local films, which provided a market advantage to the imports. Several bills were presented to the Philippine legislative body to restrict the number of imported films in order to give the Filipino film industry the opportunity to grow and improve. The proposed bills (e.g., The Lumauig Bill) called for the establishment of a Film Commission to oversee the industry and implement a number of steps designed to encourage its growth.[32]

However, the bills did not pass because the measures to restrict film importation were opposed by the foreign film exchange monopoly.

The big boost for the New Cinema came through local award-giving bodies such as the FAMAS, the Manila Film Festival Awards, The Film Academy of the Philippines Awards, and most importantly the Gawad URIAN of the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino (awards given by the Philippine Film Critics Circle). Without their support, the New Cinema would not have thrived. Beginning in the late 1970s, these groups called attention to the artistic achievements of the New Cinema, which in turn encouraged the industry to accept and respect them. In addition to this, the awards encouraged the moviegoing audience to look at these films closely, as it was being argued that they offered a "deeper kind of entertainment."[33] The Manunuri helped to publicize the New Cinema through critiques and reviews published in the country's leading English and Filipino newspapers and magazines. Organized in 1976, the Manunuri's aim was to act as a consumer advocate for Filipino moviegoers, and through their film reviews eventually attain the goal of upgrading the Philippine film industry by helping to develop a more critical audience. The Gawad URIAN was (and still is) considered the most prestigious award that any filmmaker and industry worker can earn. Other award-giving bodies were organized in the 1980s such as the Catholic Mass Media Awards, and the Star Awards.

The New Cinema of the Philippines amounted to a revolution within the Filipino cinema, a revolution that today continues to struggle for its rightful place within the industry. It has been lauded for being able to stand its ground despite the

hurdles it faced during the Marcos regime and the Aquino administration. It maintains its positive outlook toward the new leadership of Fidel Ramos.

ENDNOTES

1. For a detailed discussion on martial law, see David A. Rosenberg, "Introduction: Creating a New Society," chap. in Marcos and Martial Law in the Philippines (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), 13.

2. Wilfredo F. Arce and Ricardo G. Abad, "The Social Situation," in Crisis in the Philippines, The Marcos Era and Beyond, ed. John Bresnan (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986), 57; see also Robert A. and Beverly Hackenberg, "The Urban Working Class in the Philippines: A Casualty of the New Society, 1972-1985," in Rebuilding A Nation, ed. Carl H. Lande (Washington D.C.: The Washington Institute for Values in Public Policy, 1987), 219.

3. Ian C. Jarvie, Movies as Social Criticism (New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press Incorporated, 1978), 104.

4. Emmanuel Reyes, Notes on Philippine Cinema (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1989), 80.

5. Ibid., 82.

6.David A. Rosenberg, "The Changing Structure of Philippine Government from Marcos to Aquino," in Rebuilding A Nation, ed. Carl H. Lande (Washington D.C.: The Washington Institute for Values in Public Policy, 1987), 333.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., 342.

9. Bienvenido Lumbera, "Kasaysayan at Tunguhin ng Pelikulang Pilipino," [History and Directions of Filipino Film] in The URIAN Anthology 1970-1979, ed. Nicanor G. Tiongson (Manila: Manuel Morato, 1983), 42.

10. Pio de Castro III, "Philippine Cinema (1976-1978)," in Philippine Mass Media: A Book of Readings, ed. Clodualdo del Mundo, Jr., (Manila: Communication Foundation for Asia, 1986), 188.

11. Nicanor G. Tiongson, "The Filipino Film Industry," East-West Film Journal (July 1992): 30.

12. Joel S. David, The National Pastime: Contemporary Philippine Cinema (Pasig: Anvil Publishing,1990), 5.

13. De Castro, 188.

14. Ibid.

15. Tiongson, 31; for a detailed discussion about the Alternative Cinema see Nick Deocampo, Short Film: The Emergence of a New Philippine Cinema (Manila: Communication Foundation for Asia, 1985).

16. Ibid.

17. Lumbera, "Kasaysayan at Tunguhin ng Pelikulang Pilipino", 46.

18. Ibid., 48.

19. David, 8.

20. Guillermo C. de Vega, Film and Freedom: Movie Censorship in the Philippines (Manila: Guillermo C. de Vega, 1975), 6.

21. Ibid., 7.

22. Manuelito Mangaser, "A Critical Analysis of Movie Censorship in the Philippines" (A.B. Thesis, University of the Philippines, 1979), 42.

23. De Vega, 42.

24. Tiongson, 31.

25. David, 30.

26. EO 868 reorganized the Board of Review for Motion Pictures and Television and expanded its functions, powers and duties to include the regulation and supervision of the production of motion pictures, television programs, live entertainment and similar shows.

27. Tiongson, 30.

28. Article IV section 14 of the 1986 constitution cited in Melissa Contreras, "Saved by the Law," Manila Chronicle, 13 October 1990, 22.

29. From Board of Censors for Motion Pictures (1961-1982), Board of Review for Motion Pictures and Television (1982-1985), to Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (1985 to the present).

30. Grace J. Alfonso, "Perceptions and Attitudes of Filipino Filmmakers on Film as Art, Science, Development Medium, Entertainment, and Business from 1950-1988: An Oral History of the Shaping of a Communication Medium" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of the Philippines, 1990), 144.

31. Tiongson, 30.

32. Mario Hernando, "Against All Odds: The Story of the Filipino Film Industry (1978-1982)," in Philippine Mass Media: A Book of Readings, ed. Clodualdo del Mundo, Jr., (Manila Philippines: Communication Foundation of Asia, 1986), 202.

33.Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

LINO BROCKA

> The filmmaker is becoming a citizen of his country, a Filipino who will fight for the Philippines...He no longer isolates himself from society. Instead of working in his ivory tower, he is a citizen of the slums, of the streets, of the battlefields if need be...For it is the supreme duty of the artist to investigate the truth no matter what forces attempt to hide it, and report this truth to the people, to confront them with it. Like a whiplash it will cause wounds but will free the mind from the various fantasies and escapist fares with which "the establishment" pollutes our minds.
>
> -Lino Brocka[1]

To see a Brocka film is to see life in all its bare-to-the-bone splendor. There are no rose-colored spectacles for this filmmaker in the way he interprets the tales of struggle, sorrow, hatred, and love that any of his characters experience. The world that he sees through the camera is tangible and real; a representation of the reality that Filipinos see every day or shun out of ignorance, apathy, or shame. His characters are drawn from the common tao (everyday people) of Filipino society. Filipino writer Domingo Landicho described Brocka's movies as having the characteristic of viewing the material world from within, a world perceived through the emotional experience of his cinematic characters.[2] This is definitely true of the works of this filmmaker. No one has been more consistent in style, theme, and content than Brocka; no Filipino

director has ever been more sincerely motivated (in both words and deeds) to uplift Filipino cinema and to encourage the critical capacities of its audience.

Humble Roots

The world of Lino Brocka is the world of the Filipino. He shares a history that is the same as that of his compatriots. His ability to feel the pulse of his audience by representing their ambitions, heartaches, hopes, and despair in his films testify to this shared history. Brocka's works heralded the emergence of the New Cinema in the early 1970s and though he may have earned the ire of the censors in many of his films, he has earned the admiration and respect of the film industry and the Filipino audience.

Those who have written about Brocka's humble beginnings often trace his roots from San Jose, a small town in the Northern Luzon province of Nueva Ecija. However, he was born in Sorsogon (a province in Southern Luzon) on April 3, 1939. San Jose was where he spent the rest of his childhood after the death of his biological father, Regino Brocka. This was a blow in the life of the young Brocka because his father was said to be a dominant force and influence throughout his childhood:

> ...Regino was an important man. He was fairly affluent, the only man with a complete set of shipbuilding tools and one of the few people with a knowledge of the world beyond Sorsogon.[3]

His mother Pilar remarried but the union did not last long and she raised Brocka and his younger brother Danilo on her own.

Brocka's childhood life in San Jose was a difficult one; he was sent to live with an aunt, his brother to a grandmother, while their mother worked in another town.

Undaunted by this harsh and uncertain experience, the young Brocka was "always full of life."[4] His fascination with the cinema began during his childhood, as he sought refuge from the reality of life in San Jose through the movies (and finding ways to sneak into theaters when he no longer could be admitted free of charge).[5] The movies were a "fantasy world which he did not realize at the time and he loved it."[6] These early cinematic experiences were imprinted in his mind and resurfaced later in his career, as revealed in a 1989 interview:

> When I was young, I used to cry too inside the theater, watching films by Rene Clement and Fellini. I felt vindicated, an integral part of humanity. Films became such an obsession that I had to make them...I wanted to touch strangers I had never seen and would never meet. I wanted to fill them with humanity. Films captured the spontaneous, pure, no-nonsense relationship I had had with the world as a child.[7]

School life was equally difficult. Success in school was important because it was the only way Brocka saw to repay the hard work and sacrifices of his mother.[8] Brocka's belief was typical of Filipino society's high regard for education (a social value and societal norm). His hard work and diligence paid off; he was awarded six academic medals and a scholarship to the country's premiere university (University of the Philippines) upon graduating from the Nueva Ecija High School in 1956. College life was characterized by a shifting emphasis from pre-law to Speech and Drama, in addition to joining the U.P. Dramatic Club. The movement from country life to city life was both traumatic and exciting for Brocka; he recalled that "all the most interesting people were there...[for a country boy] it was just like going to New York!"[9] His training in theater began with membership in the university's Dramatic Club, where he learned basic stagecraft such as acting, set design, stage lighting, and

improvisation. The theater also introduced him to the works of Bertolt Brecht, whose influence later would be evident in his life and work. The drama club taught him to listen to actors, gave him the opportunity to watch directors at work, and afforded him the chance to experiment on his own. The theater nurtured Brocka and it was logical that his career would begin with the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA), a move that was instrumental for his transition to the film industry.

Brocka, who was born into the Catholic faith, was not satisfied with his life. Constantly searching for the meaning of life, he responded to the Mormon concept of God after being introduced to a team of young Mormon missionaries in 1961. As the team's first Filipino convert, he was sent to Hawaii on a two-year mission. He was not a successful missionary, but this journey taught him many things about himself.[10] His experience at the Kalaupapa leper colony in Molokai island enlightened him to the contradictions of life, as he pondered the complaints of his able-bodied friends and compared them with the positive attitude of the lepers. His stay at the leper colony also provided him with a kind of respite from the family tragedies, harsh childhood, and uphill struggles he had endured before becoming a missionary. During this period, both Brocka and others around him discovered in him an inherent assertiveness that was perceived negatively by the missionary leaders:

> ...he was a bad influence on other missionaries because he raised questions about orders, did not unwaveringly obey superiors, and seemed to get sidetracked from the main task of gaining converts.[11]

This was the nascense of Brocka's critical consciousness and his resistance to authority. He left the Mormon faith and from Molokai went to San Francisco to work

at odd jobs, in his spare time watching as many American and foreign films as possible. It has been said that he was offered citizenship in the United States but he turned it down, returning to Manila because of homesickness for the motherland. In Manila, he met Cecile Guidote, founder of the PETA, and Brocka found his first creative outlet through the theater. His success with the group led him to a directorial stint on television for a series called "Balintataw" ("Realm of the Imagination and the Unknown") , which eventually led to an opportunity in film.

Brocka's Social Reality

Brocka's life experiences greatly contributed to the ways he viewed the world on the stage and on film. His early inability to determine which direction he wanted his life to go led him to discover spiritual and emotional strengths and to an awareness of the disparities between the sick and the able-bodied, the impoverished and the wealthy, the helpless and the powerful, and, most importantly, between the masses and the political and social elite.[12] Brocka described the evolution of his critical thinking:

> I was in a dilemma after college whether what kind of work I should do. The lepers at the Molokai island gave me the proper insights in life. That is why almost all of my films have some kind of social comments on principles I believe are not only good for me, not only good for my actors and staff, but more so could be good for my viewers...[13]

Landicho suggests that Brocka's wealth of human experience and pathos of the past are imbedded in the way he represents the transient quality of contemporary reality.[14] In many of his films, the struggles of his characters are on a personal and individual level some examples of this motif include: Julio's search for Ligaya and his

futile fight against a system that later devours him in Manila in the Claws of Neon/Maynila sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag (1975); Rubia avenges herself by murdering her abductor and rapist in Rubia Servios (1978); and Bona's act of revenge in pouring boiling water over the macho physique of the man who treated her as a slave in Bona (1980). In this respect, his representation of individual struggle is narrow and limited and may be viewed as an artistic digression from the larger social framework. Brocka's concentration on representing marginalized individuals in a great majority of his films stems more from his personal experiences than from an objective examination of Filipino society. Though they may contain astute psychological and ideological insight through, for instance, images of slums to depict urban poverty Brocka's characters may not be typical of the social condition or milieu he is dealing with. To cite an example, the "home" where Insiang lives in the film Insiang (1976) is not typical of all slum areas in Manila; Brocka does not mention other older slums that are not as congested as those depicted in the film. However, Brocka magnifies the situation in order to establish a more general point about the destructive effects of such conditions. Brocka examines his characters in the context of their restricted social milieu, emphasizing their individual experiences within that milieu and how they react to them. His depiction of what many of his critics describe as "raw social realism" is the result of his borrowing from the Italian Neo-Realist's narrative and stylistic motifs such as an emphasis on socially-aware stories of ordinary people and attempting a realistic presentation of events by utilizing authentic locations.[15]

"Film as an instrument of social change" was the tenet that guided Brocka throughout his twenty-year career in filmmaking. Journalist Tezza Parel points out that Lino Brocka arrived on the wave of the nationalist movement of the late 1960s, which saw film as a social art and that it has a meaningful message for the majority of Filipinos suffering from economic and political crises.[16] This belief in the power of the film medium is manifested in his films, as, for instance, in the meticulous detailing rural small-town life replete with a mentally-deranged woman, a leper, and an impressionable young man in the film You are Weighed in the Balance but Found Lacking/Tinimbang Ka ngunit Kulang (1974); fellow New Cinema director Ishmael Bernal described this as "local color" and that Brocka is "good at rural, provincial settings and at bringing out the atmosphere of squatter settings."[17] In a speech to an audience of educators, media practitioners, and artists, Brocka brought home his perspective on the cinema's power by saying that;

> The filmmaker can...present even just a tiny slice of reality. The screen will magnify that little reality. Millions will see that little reality.[18]

The social reality that Brocka sees is that of the lower classes and the marginalized individuals who are oppressed and discriminated against by the larger society. Alternative filmmaker Lito Tiongson described Brocka's sense of social realism as the portrayal of "...mga maliliit na tao na nakatatanggap ng anumang pahirap, pero pag sumobra na, e, gumaganti rin"[19] (the little people who can take on any amount of suffering but when it becomes too much to bear, strike back). Such a stance goes back to Brocka's life experiences in the small town of San Jose, experiences that he carried with him in his struggle to strike out on his own in Manila. In this sense, his

realism is based on his conception of reality as he experiences it, a sensitivity to his environment. It is an individual response, and, at the same time, a personal discovery that his films engender that help focus the audience's attention to the reality that he has seen and personally experienced. Brocka re-creates situations and milieus from existing realities such as struggles between the social classes, prostitution, and poverty; an interpretive process of converging the concept of his world with the audience's world leading to a realization and in the end, affect social change. His films not only mirror reality but confronts the individual with it which is how Brocka believed art to be and what art should do.

Brocka's involvement in the theater brought him close to the ideas of the German playwright and modernist theorist Bertolt Brecht, who developed a Marxist-grounded theory of drama that is said to have revolutionized the theater. This brief digression into a discussion of Brecht is essential in examining Brocka's cinema, which is often described in the context of Filipino film practice as revolutionary, radical, and leftist in orientation. Many of Brocka's films manifest some of Brecht's aesthetics (modified and applied within traditional Filipino film practice), as well as the philosophies of other Marxist theorists (e.g., George Lukacs).

Brecht's theory centered on the notion of spectator intervention known as the verfremdunseffekt or the V-effect (modernist and postmodernist critics have translated this as "alienation effect", estrangement, or distanciation), which is described as

> a method of "defamiliarization", "a forcing us to notice"...Rather than promote emotional and aesthetic identification, this attitude allows for the recognition of historical processes and makes possible both "the curious role distance of the beholder and the playful identification with what he ought or would like to be"

> and provides an exemplary frame of reference in which the spectator has an opportunity to adopt roles not only in "naive imitation but also in freely elected emulation."[20]

To achieve the alienation effect, the spectator was made to distance her/himself from the object or situation being viewed (initially through disrupting formal aspects of theatrical presentation, but later in Brecht's career, he used conventional "dramatic" structures that led to a climax or catharsis[21]), so that, paradoxically, it can be studied more closely. Alienation proposes resistance to the dominant view of the world (bourgeois ideology) that elitist art forms propagated. This concept is rooted in Marxist discourse, which argues that the ruling class promulgates ideas and beliefs to promote its own interests; these ideas are mistakenly adopted by oppressed classes as their own (false consciousness), resulting in more oppression.[22] This in effect is saying that there is an untruth that veils what is "real" in society. Brecht's dramaturgy worked toward unveiling this false ideology; he called for an art that would free socially conditioned phenomena from the "stamp of familiarity" and reveal them as striking, as calling for explanation.[23] The devices of alienation or distanciation called for self-reflexivity, through which the audience is expected to be sufficiently familiar with the "invisible" codes of dramaturgy to recognize an interruptive, fragmented narrative structure. It is a process akin to a deconstruction of the methods of traditional theater.

> Thus, rather than the linear development found in naturalistic drama [traditional drama], Brecht proposes that each scene stand for itself, the unity emerging from montage rather than from the linear development of plot.[24]

This method serves to strengthen the illusory nature of the world that the theater represented. It constantly jolts the audience's perception in order to prevent him/her from becoming emotionally entwined in the situation presented. The appeal of the alienation effect is especially to an audience with knowledge of the theoretical and aesthetic principles of traditional theater, knowledge which allows the viewer to understand the formal disruptions and other artistic devices of Brecht's "epic theater" that were supposed to produce meaning. In Bernard Guillemin's "Conversation with Brecht", Brecht perhaps assumed and expected too much of his audience. He states that his audience must be

> a good enough psychologist to make its own sense of the material I put before it. All I can guarantee is the absolute correctness and authenticity of what happens in my plays; I'm prepared to bank on my knowledge of human beings. But I leave the maximum freedom of interpretation. The sense of my plays is immanent. You have to fish it out for yourself.[25]

The gaps produced by the fragmentations in the narrative structure invite the audience to intervene and participate in the development of the narrative through internal means - they themselves analyze, form criticisms, and arrive at a judgment or an ideological position from the situation played out.

Like Brecht, Brocka believed that art should not be elitist and isolated from the people but should be a reflexive vehicle in that while it imitates, represents, symbolizes, or refracts reality, it induces the audience to reexamine themselves, their position within the reality represented by the art form, and their place in the actual society they belong to. As a filmmaker, he aimed to create a link with his audience,

connect the audience to the film, and unite them with their social reality. This concept of art takes on a Marxist perspective, wherein the understanding of the world must be

> conceived as reflecting process and change. These occur dialectically, as a result of conflict or struggle. Man is a part of this world; he is a part of the social structure of the existing society; His consciousness too is a reflection of the society in which he lives, and he is a determinant factor in playing an effective role in changing both the world around him and himself.[26]

The confrontational mirror advocated by Brocka that art holds up to the audience to make them see certain realities (as mentioned in Chapter I) is akin to the Marxist and Brechtian notion of art's liberating role. Applying this to the Philippine situation, Brocka describes this reflexivity by stating that

> people should be informed and made conscious of where they are. Why at the age of five their child is picking garbage. And why is that? Because there is an imbalance in justice. People should know why they are hungry...People must open their eyes to the why of things, so they can do something about their situation.[27]

Brocka felt that the film medium was best suited to achieving these goals; to him, it is the task of the filmmaker to "force" its audience to "notice" realities of their social situation, realities that are conventionally veiled by false artistic and social values that do not encourage people to think and do not give them an opportunity to develop a critical way of looking at their society.

Brocka's films focus the viewer's attention on the reality he is representing, where an emphasis is placed on the individual struggles of his characters; situations and locales familiar to the viewer are magnified, with the objective of helping the viewer to arrive at a new ideological position through the careful obeservation of Brocka's characters in their socioeconomic environments. To cite an example, in

Macho Dancer (1988), Brocka presents the direct and often destructive effect of prostitution on an individual (the loss of innocence, the development of a jaded outlook, and psychological and spiritual weakness), but expands this individualized perspective by also examining the mechanisms at work in society that cause the perpetuation of this social problem (e.g., police corruption). In this way, the film achieves the double goal of representing a social problem (a reality) and audience identification (the spectator's attitudes and knowledge interact with the reality represented onscreen). This process of signification brings to mind the reaction of Brecht's spectator, who under ideal circumstances "says,"

> I'd never have thought it, that's not the way; that's extraordinary, hardly believable - it's got to stop - the sufferings of this man appal me because they are unnecessary.[28]

However, in many of Brocka's early films, his method of focusing viewer attention is not through Brechtian distanciation or alienation but through more traditional means, through which the viewer is invited to empathize with the character. He often injected social commentary into, for instance, melodrama, as a concession to popular taste for the goal of comprehension (which is a priority for Brocka). While Brecht assumed that the audience had an existing theoretical and aesthetic knowledge of drama and the theater, Brocka's cinema assumes its audience to be perceptive, but does not presume knowledge of the theories and aesthetics of the cinema as a prerequisite to an understanding and appreciation of a film and the encouragement of critical thinking.

> One must build his audience by gathering experience that is not alien to the majority of Filipinos at a particular time; by compressing and systematizing

> this experience for them; and by giving back a crystallized experience in films they would enjoy and be moved by to action and take as their own.[29]

In this sense, Brocka is a classical realist. The realistic experience he represents allows the audience to see underlying abstract connections. Ultimately, his inspiration from Brecht is much more attitudinal than formal. Like Brecht, he wanted to create works that were both politicized and popular; unlike Brecht, Brocka never renounced the popular forms that are most familiar to non-specialist viewers. Thus, Brocka is careful to avoid alienating his audience by using a non-radical cinematic form. As he points out, "the Filipino filmmaker must avoid the tendency of impetuousity in bringing about cinematic art"[30] (experimenting with technique for the sake of experimentation). Hence, Brocka works within traditional narrative formulas, but instead of providing purely "komiks melodrama," he sets the struggles of his characters against the backdrop of contemporary sociopolitical events. For example, in My Country: In Desperation/Bayan Ko: Kapit sa Patalim (1985), anti-Marcos rallies and worsening social conditions under the Marcos regime are used as the setting in which the central character finds a solution to his oppression. It is argued that Brocka essentially proposes an alternative means of achieving a "radical cinema" where the raising of consciousness occurs while working within a traditional style, rather than combining radical content with radical form that may be largely incomprehensible to non-specialist viewers.

Experimentation with form is discernible, however, in Brocka's later films, most specifically Macho Dancer (1988), Fight for Us/Les Insoumis/Orapronobis (1989), and Dirty Affair/Gumapang Ka sa Lusak (1990). In Macho Dancer, there is a

scene in which the title character, Pol, and his gay lover Larry discuss Larry's return to the United States. As they talk, a song is heard on the radio which takes on the character of what Brecht called "gestic music."[31] Pol's position as Larry's lover takes on a social significance. The song's lyric's in the Tagalog language reads;

> Bakit ba ganyan? Sa dinami-dami ng babae ako pa ang iyong natipuhan. Sa porma mong iyan, isang dosenang magaganda ang iyong mapagpipilian...
>
> [How is it possible that among the many girls that you could choose from, you were attracted to me? With your looks, you can attract dozens of more beautiful girls.]

The juxtaposition of the song's lyrics with the film's "feminized" image of Pol produces a contradiction (in Brecht's terms a "shaking of the perception") and the audience is encouraged to think about how human beings behave, and to consider the nature of what society deems "normal" behavior. In Dirty Affair, Brocka arrived at a form through which he combined the genres of the melodrama, film noir, and the political thriller. However, it may be argued that the application of Brechtian aesthetics is manifested most forcefully in Fight for Us. Here, the use of the disjunctive technique of cut to black that separates the pre-credit sequence from the credit sequence temporally isolates the action we have just witnessed and emphasizes its relationship to the events that follow. Moreover, the development of the film's narrative often is achieved through the montage and the use of jump cuts to compress time; each scene becomes episodic (they can stand by themselves as narrative and thematic statements when extracted from the film) which constitutes one of the disruptive formal elements in drama and in the cinema that Brecht advocated. Brocka's use of Filipino social protest songs such as Joey Ayala's "Wala Nang Tao sa

Sta. Filomena" ("There Are No More People in Sta. Filomena") is akin to another aspect of Brecht's gestic music in which the lyrics speak eloquently about the life of a people. Compared with Brocka's earlier films, Fight for Us is arguably a minimalist film in terms of action, production design, and dialogue. This was perhaps due to the nature of the film's production process - it is described in the pre-credit sequence as "filmed clandestinely." In content and form, Fight for Us stands apart from other Brocka films and in some ways is unique in Philippine cinema.

Brocka's Marxist orientation is clearly manifested by the socially critical content of his films, although at one phase in his career he is known to have denied this. Philippine Senator Butz Aquino, who had worked with Brocka in the film Villa Miranda (Miranda Mansion, 1972) and in the stage play Larawan (Portrait) says that

> it can not be denied that Lino was a controversial figure; but that is to be expected from a person with strong convictions and passionate obsessions. Some people thought of him as an extreme leftist or even a communist. But he once confessed to me that he does not understand ideological labellings. All of his activist posturings stemmed from genuine pro-people sentiments.[32]

Brocka's grasp of the lives of ordinary people comes from his reflections on his own background. In his films such as You are Weighed in the Balance but Found Lacking (1974), Tatlo, Dalawa, Isa (Three, Two, One, 1974), Lunes, Martes, Miyerkules, Huwebes, Biyernes, Sabado, Linggo (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, 1976), and Macho Dancer (1988), one can see Brocka's roots in the rural setting, the teenager lured by the promises of the big city, and victimization and disillusionment of the oppressed individual. Landicho elucidates on the discernible pattern of personal experience embodied in many of Brocka's films:

> In Lino Brocka's movies, the realism of life seem to be suspended in the realm of realism of childhood memories. The mother image is always heroic, if sometimes over-protective and almost feudal, as in Inay [Mother]...the traditional Filipina mother hovering like an unwelcome spirit over the independent lives of the children...there is a discernible pattern of childhood deprivation...Nino Muhlach was fatherless in Tahan na Empoy, Tahan [Cry No More Empoy]...In Ang Tatay Kong Nanay [My Father Who's Also a Mother] and Tubog sa Ginto [Dipped in Gold], the child characters were also deprived of fatherly love.[33]

Brocka argues that "the supreme duty of the artist is to investigate the truth no matter what forces attempt to hide it...then report this truth to the people to confront them with it."[34] Fight for Us/Les Insoumis/Orapronobis (1989) is just that: the result of his investigations on escalating human rights violations in the Aquino administration. Prior to making the film, Brocka worked with Aquino's Constitutional Commission in 1986, through which he was assigned to preside over a public hearing on a massacre incident in the southern province of Misamis Oriental in Mindanao, perpetrated by a fanatical religious group called the "Tadtad" (a Filipino word meaning "to chop to pieces"). Brocka was horrified that such an incident could still happen in Aquino's administration. His concern over the issue was met with non-action on the part of the Philippine government, which resulted in a feeling of disillusionment for Brocka towards Aquino and her government and led to the making of the aforementioned film. The creative interpretation of reality by the movies provides a total environment through which people see their own world and identify themselves. Brocka used this concept in making his social commentary films in the hope that as a film reflects Filipino society in its own image, it can also cause that society to re-create itself in light of the image on the screen. This may be perceived as a revolutionary act

whereby the audience is prodded into action and is inspired to do something to improve their present condition.

Significant Early and Recent Works

Boasting an impressive filmography of 70 films in twenty years, Brocka's first break in the Filipino film industry came in 1970 when LEA Productions, an "adventurous" independent company, saw one of the television shows that he directed for PETA. Ms. Toreng Santos, the sister of Mrs. Emilia Blas (owner of LEA) recalled how she discovered Brocka:

> Pinanonood ko kasi ang mga gawa niya sa "Balintataw" at hangang-hanga ako sa pamamaraan niya ng pagdidirek...at that time, LEA was preparing to do Wanted: Perfect Mother, a komiks strip written by the late Mars Ravelo. May mga stars na kami sa pelikula...nabanggit ko kay Mrs. Blas that I wanted a young progressive director for the movie. At binanggit ko ang pangalan ni Lino. Hindi naman siya nag-object.[35]
>
> [I had been watching his works for "Balintataw" and I was impressed by his methods of directing...at that time, LEA was preparing to do Wanted: Perfect Mother, a komiks strip written by the late Mars Ravelo. We already had the stars for the movie...I told Mrs. Blas that I wanted a young progressive director for the movie. Then I mentioned Lino's name. She did not pose any objections.]

The film Wanted: Perfect Mother was a portrayal of the problems of a governess to a brood of motherless children. After its commercial success, it was immediately followed by Santiago in the same year, produced through the same company. This was a war epic that starred box-office action/adventure superstar Fernando Poe, Jr., who as critics say "is not known for his interest in the psychological progression of his roles."[36] Brocka's third film and his first experiment with controversial subject

matter came with Dipped in Gold/Tubog sa Ginto (1970), which concerns a wealthy married man who is homosexual, and how his sexual orientation affects his family life. At the time, homosexuality was (and is still is) a social taboo in Filipino society. Critics and young intellectuals lauded Brocka for his sensitive and sympathetic approach to the subject. These first three films established Brocka in the film industry as a writer and director of commercially-viable product and they also brought him critical recognition from award-giving bodies such as the Manila Film Festival Awards (where Wanted: Perfect Mother won Best Screenplay), the FAMAS (Best Director for Dipped in Gold), and the Citizen's Council for Mass Media Award (Best Director for Santiago).

A series of films described as "tailor-made to the specifications of his producer"[37] followed (all produced through LEA): Now! (1971), Lumuluha Pati Mga Anghel (Even Angels are Crying, 1971), Cadena de Amor (Chain of Love, 1971), Stardoom (1971), Cherry Blossoms (1972), and Villa Miranda (Miranda Mansion, 1972). Brocka's artistic temperament coupled with his tendency to resist taking orders produced a feeling of disgust in him over the purely capitalistic mentality that dominated the industry after his last project with LEA in 1972. After a two-year hiatus, he went back to making films under the umbrella of CineManila, a production company he set up with friends and businessmen. You are Weighed in the Balance but Found Lacking/Tinimbang Ka Ngunit Kulang (1974) was the first result of Brocka's experimentation as producer and director. In this film, he successfully

merged art and commerce; it was a social commentary film that performed very well at the box-office. In addition to this, the film won nine FAMAS awards.

Brocka's maturity as a filmmaker continued in 1975 with the film Manila in the Claws of Neon/Maynila sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag, regarded by critics as more significant than You are Weighed in the Balance. Manila is about the search of Julio Madiaga for his sweetheart Ligaya Paraiso, who was lured to the city for an illusory better life but ended up as a victim of prostitution and died a violent death. It exposed the seamy side of the city, replete with slums, prostitutes, and street thieves. With Manila, the "Brocka movie" was said to have been born, which helped the moviegoing public to form expectations of a film made by Brocka (such as a good dramatic story which was logical and sensible, excellent acting performances, a clearly stated theme, and rich visual imagery that reflected the theme of the movie[38]). The film won nine FAMAS awards, was named Best Picture of the year, and earned a Special Award for Brocka from the Catholic Mass Media Awards.

Insiang (1976) showed the harshness of slum life and how this condition contributed to the metamorphosis of the barrio lass, Insiang, from innocence to worldliness. Insiang introduced Brocka and the Filipino film to European audiences when it was invited to be screened at the Cannes Film Festival. In the same year, he made Lunes, Martes, Miyerkules, Huwebes, Biyernes, Sabado, Linggo (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday), the film among Brocka's works with the longest title and jokingly known among Filipinos as "Isang Linggo" (one week). On a serious note, however, the film uses the structuring motif of seven

miniportraits; it deals with the tales of seven women who work as hospitality girls in a night club in the red-light district of Olongapo City which caters to American servicemen from nearby Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Station. In 1978, Brocka teamed with the well-known actress, Vilma Santos, in Rubia Servios, which is about the horror of rape; the protagonist Rubia is abducted and brutally assaulted by the son of a wealthy businessman. In Rubia Servios, wealth is equated with political power when the law is unable to put the rapist in prison. Through the film, Brocka critiques the Filipino's moral belief in the laws of the land and solicits the support of the audience in condoning Rubia's only available recourse of killing her rapist.

Jaguar and Bona, both produced in 1980, heralded a good year for Brocka. Both films brought international fame to Brocka when they were screened at the Cannes Film Festival in France. Jaguar gave Brocka his fourth FAMAS Best Director Award. Bona is a study of a fan's devotion to her movie idol and featured Filipino superstar Nora Aunor in the title role. The film examined the subservient role of the female in patriarchal Filipino society, and also explored the themes of alienation and violence as the result of repression. The Marcos censors disapproved the exhibition of the film, arguing that it depicted too much poverty. Upon "sanitizing" the film, Bona was approved for local exhibition and for export as an entry in one of the minor competitions at the Cannes Film Festival. Angela Markado (Marked Angel, 1980) which was screened and won Best Film at the Nantes Third World Film Festival in France, presents another angle on the subject of sexual assault - gang rape. Brocka's 1982 film Cain at Abel (Cain and Abel) drew from the biblical tale to chronicle the

sibling rivalry between two antagonistic brothers who vie for the inheritance of a ranch, a struggle which ends in the futile death of both.

1983 was very significant to both the Filipino people and Brocka. A political upheaval occurred with the assassination of ex-senator Benigno Aquino, Jr. (a political opponent of Marcos). This event led to an upsurge of protest from all sectors of society against the whitewashing measures adopted by the dictatorial regime of Marcos in connection with the investigations of the assassination; Aquino was killed immediately upon his return from many years of self-exile in the United States with the goal of reconciling differences with Marcos. Brocka was one of the artists who joined an anti-dictatorship struggle and was highly visible in the "parliament of the streets." He involved himself with three militant organizations: Justice for Aquino Justice for All (JAJA), National Alliance for Justice, Freedom, and Democracy (NAJFD), and the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (New Nationalist Coalition, BAYAN).[39] For a short time, Brocka gave precedence to these political activities and temporarily put a halt to his filmmaking. He became more vocal against government censorship by arguing that it posed a serious impediment to the artistic development of the Filipino.[40] These activities marked the beginning of Brocka's overt politicization.

In 1985, Brocka was arrested for giving support to a jeepney driver's strike; his incarceration caused domestic and international protests calling for his release. Marcos gave in to international pressure and released Brocka, who soon went back to filmmaking by producing compromise films to pay debts that had accumulated

between 1983 and 1985. These compromise films included Ano ang Kulay ng Mukha ng Diyos? (What is the Color of God's Face?) and White Slavery. The former won Best Screenplay and Best Supporting Actor in the Catholic Mass Media Awards and Best Child Performer in the STAR Awards. Within the same year, he also made Miguelito: Ang Batang Rebelde (Miguelito: The Rebel Youth), primarily produced as an acting vehicle for Aga Muhlach, whose family-owned D'Wonder Films bankrolled the project. The film centered on corruption and injustice in a small town, it was reminiscent of You are Weighed in the Balance but fell short of the serious social commentary it was envisioned to be. Though considered a compromise film, Miguelito reaped awards from many local award-giving bodies such as FAMAS (Best Story); Best Director and Best Film in the Catholic Mass Media Awards; Best Movie in the STAR Awards; and Best Actress in the Gawad URIAN. Despite the gruelling production schedule that Brocka threw himself into, he did not stop his participation in the various rallies and protest marches of the anti-Marcos movements. In the latter part of 1985, he made My Country: In Desperation/Bayan Ko: Kapit sa Patalim, a film about labor unrest. My Country was Brocka's most politically-charged film to date, as he wove into the narrative his experiences with various labor and political movements. The film was also shown at the Cannes Film Festival and it was named Best Film by the British Film Institute. However, it had problems with the Marcos censors because of its depiction of protest marches in addition to the film's use of the song "Bayan Ko" (a popular song of the 1930s protesting American domination of the Philippines that later evolved to become a symbolic protest song against Marcos after

Aquino's assassination). The film was eventually screened in local theaters after the 1986 People's Revolution.

Because of the domestic problems caused by My Country, Brocka made another series of compromise films, including a few significant ones: Napakasakit Kuya Eddie (Hear My Problems Brother Eddie, 1986), about the plight of Filipino overseas workers whose separation from their families results in broken homes; Maging Akin Ka Lamang (If Only You'll Be Mine, 1987), a komiks novel produced by Viva Films about the fatal attraction of a woman to the boyfriend of her sister; and Babangon Ako't Dudurugin Kita (I'll Rise and Pulverize You, 1989), a Sharon Cuneta starrer produced by Viva Films which is about the revenge of a wife against her unfaithful husband.

In 1988 Brocka made Macho Dancer, which is described as the director's "unblinking look at the lives of male and female prostitutes."[41] It is the examination of a social problem that has always haunted Philippine society as well as an investigation of other related social ills such as drug trafficking and the exploitation of minors. In 1989, through a Filipino-French co-production arrangement, he made Fight for Us/Les Insoumis/Orapronobis, a film about human rights violations under the Aquino government.

Brocka continued his furious output into the 1990s; among the films prior to his death in 1991, four are especially significant: Biktima (Victim, 1990), about a female human rights lawyer who falls in love with the person she is prosecuting for the crime of rape; Dirty Affair/Gumapang Ka sa Lusak (1990), about politics and sex;

Kislap sa Dilim (Spark in the Dark, 1991), based on a komiks novel about the rape of a newly married woman by another man in front of her husband and how the crime affected their life as a couple; and Sa Kabila ng Lahat (In Spite of Everything, 1991), a commentary on the role and responsibility of the print and broadcast media in society. The untimely demise of Brocka has been a blow to the Philippine film industry and to Filipino culture because it has lost a prolific director, a great artist, and an articulate social critic who constantly pricked at the consciousness of government leaders, industry figures, and the Filipino society.

ENDNOTES

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23. Stam, 211.

24. Kiebuzinska, 79.

25. Bertolt Brecht, Brecht on Theatre, trans. and ed. John Willet (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), 14.

26. Frederic Ewen, Bertolt Brecht, His Life, His Art, and His Times (New York: The Citadel Press, 1967), 209.

27. Melanie Manlogon, "Film and Reality According to Lino Brocka," Midweek, 13 April 1988, 20.

28. Brecht, 71.

29. Lino Brocka, "Philippine Movies: Some Problems and Prospects," Manila Review, October 1974, 61.

30. Brocka, 61.

31. This is derived from the word "gestus," a gesture or kind of acting that is said to have a social significance or ideological undertones. For a detailed discussion, see Brecht, 80; and Wright, 20.

32. "Senator Butz Aquino on Brocka," Journal, 27 May 1991, 13.

33. Landicho, "The Cinematic World of Lino Brocka", 30.

34. Ramon Magsaysay Foundation, 9.

35. Ethel Ramos, "Remembering Lino Brocka," Ang Pahayagang Malaya, 24 May 1991, 15.

36. Parel, 4.

37. Ibid., 5.

38. Pio de Castro III, "Philippine Cinema (1976-1978)," in Philippine Mass Media: A Book of Readings, ed. Clodualdo del Mundo (Manila: Communication Foundation for Asia, 1986), 193.

39. Raymond Burgos, "Brocka: Artist-activist for the *Masa* [Masses]," Philippine Daily Globe, 27 May 1991, 5.

40. Ramon Magsaysay Foundation, 24.

41. Mario Bautista, "The Brocka Filmography: Impressive and Significant," Philippine Cinema, May 1991, 3.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSES OF Macho Dancer AND Fight for Us

Macho Dancer

The EDSA revolution (also known as the People's Revolution of 1986) brought renewed hope and public confidence in the government when Marcos, the symbol for all repression in the Philippines, was successfully driven out. The ascendancy of Corazon Aquino to presidency is said to have given the country a "new lease on national life,"[1] and that even after the fanfare and celebration, a post-revolution euphoria lingered for a couple more years. However, much to the disappointment of some sectors of the Filipino populace, Aquino's administration was not comprehensively able to address the social problems that plagued the country, including urban and rural poverty, inflation, military and police abuses of power, drug trafficking and prostitution. The administration's argument was that if political and economic reforms were set in motion, then the various social ills would be cured. Though dissatisfaction and dissent were expressed by a disillusioned few, these voices were overridden by Aquino's popularity as the sacred symbol of the bereaved widow, martyr, and modern-day madonna, who through her suffering brought redemption to the country.[2]

Between 1986 to 1988, film scholars and historians noted a "dry spell" in the production of social commentary films. In the first years of the Aquino government, the local cinematic landscape was composed of commercial formula escapist films. However in 1988 Lino Brocka came out with a film that was singled out as the post-revolution era's "first major serious output."[3]

The film Macho Dancer was perceived to be what the local movie audience needed as a respite from a great number of formula escapist films that either offered a refuge from the country's worsening social conditions or inoculated them from the stress and anxiety of daily living with a temporary tranquilizing experience.

The depiction of the body as a commodity in Filipino films is quite common with the visual and narrative attention devoted to the body often used to signify the bottom line of marginalized existence.[4] Prostitution is illegal in the Philippines, yet it has entrenched itself as a flourishing business in both urban and rural areas, resulting in what could be described as an "erotic economy"[5] for those working outside the law. While the flesh trade provides an underground economy, it also provides a rich source of subject matter for many art forms, especially film. Hence, prostitution is not only a social reality; it frequently stands as a metaphor for the economic and moral deterioration of a society. While not proposing a solution to the problem of prostitution in Manila and other urban centers in the Philippines, Lino Brocka's Macho Dancer focuses on male prostitution and the conditions that propagate it. Set at about the same time that the film was produced (i.e., the post-Marcos era), it

provides a cinematic representation of a marginalized underworld that has been resistant to any change in leadership.

Macho Dancer concerns itself with issues of gender, sexuality, class struggle, and authority. Through a narrative revolving around friendship and camaraderie, the theme of sexual exploitation is conveyed without alienating the mainstream audience the film was intended for. Brocka's use of visual excess, especially in the gay bar scenes and the gay "mama-sans", while contributing to the film's excitement, makes it less threatening to the audience since excess as an overstatement lends a paradoxical quality of unreality to the social reality represented.

Macho Dancer tells a fairly simple story of a rural youth lured to the big city in the hope of a better economic situation, but who instead is exposed to the harshness of city life and ends up as a hardened individual unable to resurrect an innocence that once was the core of his existence. Borrowing from Hollywood's genre of the melodrama, Macho Dancer generates emotion within a formulaic narrative structure that is characterized by a clear opposition of good and evil within a restricted milieu. The theme of the innocent in opposition with a social evil, recurrent in several of Brocka's earlier works, is the starting point for the film's conventionally moral and humanitarian point of view, coupled here with a sentimental and optimistic perspective which is characteristic of one strain of the genre.[6] Aspects of film noir also are suggested through manipulations of the more subtle qualities of tone and mood.[7] Following the classical Hollywood narrative structure, the protagonist Pol (Alan Paule) is introduced in the first ten minutes of the film. Operating within a marginalized

milieu marked by moral and economic deprivation, Pol ekes out a living as a prostitute to support his mother and three younger siblings. At this initial stage, Macho Dancer presents contradictions in the character of Pol: First, while his intentions of supporting his family are noble and worthy of praise, the means by which he attempts to do this are not socially acceptable; second, while Pol affects an innocent countenance, the fact that he has had sexual experience is perceived to rob him of innocence; and third, while his environment offers him other, more acceptable avenues for survival, he seems unable to take on these challenges. The viewer is placed in an eternal "tug-of-war" when confronted with these and other contradictions throughout the film.

Pol has an American G.I. lover named Larry, with whom he maintains a monogamous homosexual relationship; Larry provides for the financial needs of Pol and his family in exchange for the sexual pleasure provided by Pol. As Larry's tour of duty in the Philippines ends, Pol is passed on to Larry's friend Jim, who is also an American serviceman. It is suggested, however, that Pol and Jim's relationship does not work out, since Pol runs off to Manila with Greg (Pol's hometown friend). The representation of American servicemen as sexually exploitative of innocent Filipinos like Pol takes Macho Dancer into nationalist, anti-American territory. It can be argued that an ideological tension rooted in colonial discourse is at play here; the native's submission to and dependence on a "superior" white race is made explicit as a plot element. The text suggests an economy that is dependent on and at most times tied to that of an imperialist power. Pol is positioned as the Filipino who is dehumanized by

an oppressive state and social system, and exploited and held captive in his own country by its former colonial master (in much the same way, Pol's friend Greg is dependent on his Japanese clientele).

The rest of the film deals with Pol's experiences in Manila, which prove cataclysmic. In the dark alleys and bright neon-colored gay bars, Pol meets other macho dancers and clients who have become indifferent to their environment; the competitiveness and harshness of the city had produced a numbing effect on these individuals. Macho Dancer constructs Manila as a malevolent locale where a subculture that exists at night hides by day. A similar representation of the Philippines' capital city is also evident in some of Brocka's earlier works, such as Manila in the Claws of Neon/Maynila sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag (1975), Insiang (1976), Bona (1980), and Jaguar (1980). Manila is presented as a visual spectacle of flashing neon lights and thriving gay bars replete with female impersonators, macho dancers, and male and female homosexual clients. However, for all the negative qualities attached to Manila (as it is constructed in the film), it is still looked upon as a "land of opportunity." Like a moth to a flame, Pol ventures to Manila, where he meets Noel, Dennis, Bambi, and Kid who are instrumental to his discovery of the harshness of city life. Each has his/her own story to tell that collectively comprises the sub-plots in the narrative: Noel, one of the first people Pol encounters and who becomes his friend, came to Manila in search of a lost sister and is subsequently killed; Dennis, a hardened macho dancer, gets entangled in the complex and dangerous business of drug trafficking; Bambi, the worldly prostitute, becomes Pol's

first heterosexual experience; and Kid, the cop who runs a big protection ring and drug syndicate, murders Noel and in turn is killed by Pol.

The presence of a male protagonist in Macho Dancer represents a shift from the conventional focus of the melodrama, which most often privileges a female perspective. The construction of Pol within melodramatic conventions as the "subjugated female" and as a "signifier of sexuality" redefines existing assumptions about the relationship of genre to gender; the relationship suggests that specific genres have privileged specific genders because of cultural constructions that make them complicit with particular cultural forms.[8] Historical specificity surfaces in this argument; cultural practices change and individuals inhabit specific historical dimensions. Robert Deming points out that the cultural practices that have helped to fix "masculine" identity in the past may not be applicable in the present time because cultural practices change. Applying this concept to Filipino film practice, the melodrama (as in the West) has always been considered "woman's turf," where, as Emmanuel Reyes points out, women, and the problems they have to overcome, occupy a central position in the narrative.[9] However, because culture as an active process links the production of meaning to the social structure of a society in a specific historical dimension, the shift from a traditionally accepted mode of communication to a radical or unconventional mode is possible. This is evident in Macho Dancer. Entertainment writer Eddie Libo-on has commented on Macho Dancer's redefinition of the melodrama:

> For once, a young male is the focal point of the movie, unlike many bold films which almost always featured young and not so young females gyrating in wild abandon.[10]

The articulation of the human body in Macho Dancer raises questions involving the construction of sexual identity and sexual difference in the film. The body as an object of spectacle and pleasure defines Pol's place of subjugation in the context of the represented milieu. The visual strategy of Macho Dancer encourages the viewer to assume a hidden and unseen position that is scopophilic in nature. This is a key element of Laura Mulvey's theory of visual pleasure in the cinema, in which she postulates the act of looking as the key source of that pleasure, with a reciprocal pleasure derived from being looked at. Mainstream cinematic conventions such as invisible editing, the shot/reverse shot editing pattern, and the inviolate nature of the "fourth wall" (i.e., the characters in a film do not look directly at the camera lens, which stands in here for the viewer's gaze) have produced in the viewer a sense of separation from the film and plays on a specifically voyeuristic fantasy.[11] Macho Dancer begins with a moment of erotic spectacle as two people make love; similar scenes are shown throughout the film, which eventually establishes a pattern within the film's structure - homosexual and heterosexual bedroom scenes, macho dancing sequences - all of which serve the purposes of visual punctuation and establishing a narrative rhythm. Postulating woman's position in patriarchal culture as a signifier for the male other, Mulvey states that the woman is featured as the point of spectacle which is privileged as the object of the look.[12] However, Macho Dancer takes Mulvey's argument in a different direction by presenting the male (importantly, an

exploited, socially powerless male) as the object of the look. This brings to mind an extension of Mulvey's argument proposed by Paul Willemen, who contends that both the female and the male body can be situated as spectacle in the scopic drive and that within patriarchy, though women have traditionally been the object of the male gaze as perpetuated by cinematic convention, the object of desire can also be male.[13] The gaze that the female body is subjected to in Mulvey's theory comes from the male spectator; Willemen concurs when he states that

> The narcissistic identification with the ideal ego in the diegesis would therefore not be a mere mediation in order to get at a desired woman, but the contemplation of the male hero would in itself be a substantial source of gratification for a male viewer.[14]

In Willemen's argument, eroticized viewer identification can be constructed from the male vantage point even if the object of the look is also male. As with the female, the male body can be subjected to the erotic gaze of a male spectator with the latter deriving pleasure from it. However, the pleasure derived from this kind of looking is said to be based on a homosexual voyeurism that must be repressed in a patriarchal and predominantly heterosexual society because the male body cannot be marked explicitly as the erotic object of another male look.[15] But this is not the case in Macho Dancer. In the macho dancing sequences, in particular the three "shower" dances, the macho dancers' bodies clearly become the erotic object of the male look of the spectator within the film (the club clients) and the spectator outside the film (the viewer). The macho dancers' bodies are offered as sexual spectacle to the point where fetishistic looking is encouraged, especially through the use of soap bubbles and

flickering colored lights all of which stresses the spectacular aspect of the dance and most importantly, the male bodies on display.

Macho Dancer's opening scene follows the Hollywood convention of "invisible" editing and the shot/reverse-shot technique. Editing creates a fictional world through the juxtaposition of several shots leading to a construction of "reality" and eventually the construction of a spectator.[16] Inscribed in the cinematic text of Macho Dancer is "the look" through which the characters within the film communicate and which serves also to bind the viewer in. The film's first shot is a close-up of a youthful male torso rising and falling rhythmically; without any camera movement, the head of Pol's lover Larry enters the screen and gradually moves up Pol's body. The rhythmic cadence of Pol's torso indicates that the sex act has been going on for a considerable amount of time and that the spectator has arrived at the peak of Pol and Larry's lovemaking; this first shot is 36 seconds long and cuts to a 13-second close-up of the two kissing. There is a cut to a third close-up with Pol on top of Larry. The fourth shot is a wide shot revealing how the room looks and the position of the couple in bed, which then dissolves (indicating a time lapse) finally to a close-up of Pol's face registering climax. These five shots were all from the point-of-view of the camera "eye" which is described by E. Ann Kaplan as

> the look of the camera in the filming situation (called the profilmic event); although technically neutral, this look is inherently voyeuristic and usually "male", in the sense that a man is generally doing the filming.[17]

The viewer's position in this situation is constructed in imitation of the camera's; as Kaplan notes, "the spectator is forced to identify with the look of the camera, to see as

it sees."[18] The first three shots in this sequence are tightly framed; this trains the eyes of the viewer to focus intently on the bodies in a fetishistic manner. Voyeurism is encouraged by the sequence of shots, and Pol's body is feminized so that it can be fetishized; the male is figured conventionally as the "active" presence in terms of the codes of narrative, and spectacle usually reserved for the depiction of women.[19]

A striking aspect in Macho Dancer's role reversals is that while Pol assumes a conventionally feminine role in his homosexual exploits (he has a gentle personality and physical attributes such as a soft lambent face), his heterosexual side also emerges in the film. His consistent assumption of a passive role in his activities as a male prostitute arguably suggest a lack of commitment to and identification with the homosexual lifestyle. Film critic Joel David has discussed the ambiguity of Pol's sexual identity by saying that

> The issue of credibility at this point centers on how Pol could have retained his heterosexuality all this time. Having had sufficiently profitable trauma-free career progressions, plus the casual consent of his family and hometown friends, there would have been the least chance of falling for a woman who never bothered to hide her brutalization from him...There would also have been every opportunity to develop an emotional dependence on Noel, with whom Pol had shared not just the melodrama of the latter's search but also, and more saliently, a bedroom, a wardrobe, and a live erotic act.[20]

As the argument goes, given the several sexual encounters that Pol and Noel were subjected to together (e.g., agreeing to perform for a pornographic film), it is impossible for Pol not to renounce his heterosexuality. Then, in the last macho dance routine with Dennis, "Pol consummates his relationship with Noel by offering his last live act to his late friend."[21] However, the film also constructs Pol as heterosexual through his emotional and sexual relationship with Bambi, through which he

discovers new aspects of his masculine identity. This ambiguity about Pol's sexual identity is resolved to an extent in the text by its construction of Pol as an individual whose social and economic circumstances are oppressive, and therefore having a drastically limited range of options for controlling his destiny. The notion of "free will" has little relevance in Pol's world, so it is not surprising that throughout the film, Pol assumes a passive (or merely inexpressive) countenance, rarely expressing pleasure in what he does (especially what he does for a living). The only instance in which he exhibits pleasure in macho dancing comes in the dance he dedicates to Noel, the meaning of which is itself ambiguous. There are homosexual connotations, but it may also be read as an act of friendship and nothing more. Ultimately, it may be most accurate to suggest that Pol is constructed in the film as an "ambiguously bisexual" character.

Pol's attraction to Bambi raises tensions between notions of gender and sexuality. The opening homosexual love scene establishes ideas about Pol's sexual identity that are seemingly reinforced throughout the first thirty minutes of the film - until he meets Bambi, at which point the situation becomes more complex. Bambi is the antithesis of Pol; she is a hardened prostitute with a jaded outlook. While she exhibits a degree of frivolity typically attributed to the female gender, she complements this with a veneer of toughness and manifests pragmatism in her daily existence (traits typically attributed to the male gender). Pol's sexuality is anchored on more familiar ground for mainstream audiences by the presence of Bambi. The viewer's attention on Pol is diverted to Bambi, who becomes the object of the

combined gaze of Pol and the supposedly "masculinized" viewer of the film. Bambi's aggressiveness is directly in opposition with Pol's submissive countenance, but in bed Pol becomes the aggressor while Bambi allows herself to be subordinated (an accepted patriarchal role). The presence of Bambi allows Pol to assume a more conventional male role, and his portrayal loses the fetishism that was accorded in the beginning of the film.

Macho Dancer's representation of the Filipino gay community is no different from that of other mainstream media - it is constructed as exotic, excessive, and sexually perverted. Reyes writes that, "Filipinos have a higher level of tolerance for homosexual behavior hinged on the homosexual's ability to make himself useful to society."[22] The gays depicted in Macho Dancer are club managers, hence, economically viable individuals - their strength and power over Pol and other macho dancers is equated with their economic clout. Financial power shrouds their sexual identity and therefore renders them less threatening to the viewer. Gays are treated as exotic creatures, as spectacle - their manner of dressing, the way they talk, and their recreational diversions (e.g., silk flower making) construct them as different, queer, and "other".

However, there is a voice of resistance to marginalization that is tied up with Macho Dancer's representation of the Filipino gay community, a resistance conveyed through spoken language. Filipino "gayspeak" is very different and distinct from the national language (Pilipino) and English. The English subtitles provided for an international audience do not reflect the gayspeak spoken in the club manager's

offices, but the connotations are discernible to a Filipino audience because of intonation and certain vocabulary choices. In this instance, language as power forms the basis for resistance which in turn becomes the key to identity. Gloria Anzaldua's essay "How to Tame a Wild Tongue" speaks of language as an ethnic identity that is

> twin skin to linguistic identity - I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself...I will no longer be made to feel ashamed of existing. I will have my voice...I will overcome the tradition of silence.[23]

The gays in Macho Dancer are a cohesive group because of their distinct, self-identifying language. But while gayspeak represents a form of resistance to the dominant culture, this differentiation also serves to emphasize on the "otherness" of the gays represented in the film. As a whole, the gay community represented in the film, though they are "economically useful," are portrayed in a negative way because it is located within the underworld milieu of sexual exploitation and figures prominently as the oppressors of powerless people like Pol, Noel, Dennis and the other macho dancers.

Brocka presents a busy underworld of prostitution. The often full house atmosphere at Mama Charlie's club suggests its viability as a business. The frequent turnover of clients in the biggest prostitution den (where Noel's sister is held captive) indicates that there is a market for such business. Each whorehouse is depicted as having a specialty, as revealed in the scene in which Bambi tells Noel of a new whorehouse that specializes in young women from the Visayas (meaning that Noel may find his sister there, and he does). Because prostitution is illegal in the Philippines, it is therefore practiced in a covert manner. Women forced into the flesh

trade are either locked up in whorehouses and brothels or ply the streets in disguise. The representation of prostitution as a microcosm of Filipino society is chillingly apparent in Macho Dancer; it is replete with hierarchies which mirror the larger setting. In the film, male and female prostitutes are portrayed as human beings with human aspirations. They are as Filipino as they come, reared in traditional social and Christian values; Pol helps his mother earn a living and Noel exhibits a strong sense of familial piety through his quest for his sister. The value of friendship and love is repeatedly played out in the film (between Pol and Noel, Pol and Greg, Pol and other macho dancers, and Pol and Bambi). The filmmaker's respect for his characters is manifested in his dignified handling of a sleazy world, a perspective praised by Elliot Stein:

> Brocka is describing a milieu in his country...not attempting to conform to any any American group's notion of what's politically correct...He clearly respects Dancer's whores and hustlers...[24]

Though Brocka does not make a moral judgment about prostitution and homosexuality, he is unambiguous in his negative appraisal of law enforcers as corrupt and exploitative. There is no redeeming value attributed to the policeman Kid in the entire 136 minutes of the film. Some critics have suggested that this overt favoritism is a weakness in Brocka's films; Domingo Landicho has proposed that

> The psychological framework in understanding social realities typical of Brocka's cinematic characters may deprive the human rationality of the basic objectification process in viewing human condition. The greatest weakness in this kind of viewpoint is the tendency to see the world introspectively and view reality from a subjective framework. Subjectivism may blur the social dimension and diminish its understanding to a great extent.[25]

Brocka takes advantage of his artistic license to express his political beliefs by constructing the police as uniformly evil. This stance, of course, distorts the larger social framework, wherein there also exists good, conscientious law enforcers; more to the point, Brocka's rhetorical strategy here diminishes the very real complexity of the issues involved. Hence, the representation of law enforcers in Macho Dancer must be viewed with a degree of skepticism because "the psychological insight so penetrating in his characters may not speak well of a scientific social perspective."[26] The policeman (Kid) is introduced 15 minutes into the film, seen emerging from an upper room in the first of the gay bars frequented by Pol and Greg. Kid is the stereotyped tough guy in a black leather jacket. To a Filipino viewer, one need not reveal Kid's persona in the dialogue because in the context of Philippine movies, "dirty cops" have always been represented in the same stereotypical way. Introducing the character of Kid in a gay bar setting adds to the construction of corruptness, especially when Greg informs Pol about the protection ring Kid is running outside the confines of the law which runs contrary to the basic notion that policemen should protect and defend the citizenry from crime. Authority as symbolized by the policeman is subverted in the persona of Kid. Clearly, Macho Dancer condemns the police force by showing them as weak (open to the temptation of corruption), self-centered, and exploitative.

Class struggle as well as class difference also figures prominently in Macho Dancer. Class aspirations, economic survival, and the accumulation of material wealth as a marker of upward mobility form the moral basis for prostitution and other illegal

businesses. Pol represents an underprivileged class whose inhabitants face a daily dilemma of overcoming adverse social realities such as poverty. He prostitutes himself through his relationship with the American Larry. Racial difference does not figure prominently here; instead, the lure of material wealth compels Pol to maintain the relationship. The rural area of the country is represented as an economically deprived locale populated by a homogeneously low social class, while Manila is represented as a "Filipino dream" due to the diversity of social classes and the opportunities for upward social mobility offered there. Tensions within social classes are also represented in the film through the basic differences between Greg and Pol. Within the milieu of the macho dancers, social hierarchies such as the position of the gay "mama-sans" above that of their macho dancer employees mirror the class differences within Filipino society as a whole.

Ideological contradictions surface in the representation of class struggle in Macho Dancer: while Pol and his friends value the dignity of work and believe that access to material wealth can only be accomplished through industry and perseverance, their choice of profession goes against the dominant culture's definition of a "dignified existence" (engaging in a legal and morally acceptable way of earning a living). The macho dancers are constructed as value-laden individuals who in their own way do not defy certain aspirations delineated by the dominant culture (e.g., wealth equals success); however, their choice of profession is a tacit manifestation of resistance to the dominant ideology.

Some narrative and thematic elements of Macho Dancer are reminiscent of Brocka's earlier work. Clearly resonant is its commonality with Manila in the Claws of Neon/Maynila sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag (1975) in terms of the milieu depicted (both films use Manila as its backdrop) and the storyline about "people who try their luck in the city only to see their dreams shattered by an alien geography etched in cruel contours."[27] The theme of prostitution continues from Lunes, Martes, Miyerkules, Huwebes, Biyernes, Sabado, Linggo (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, 1976) and White Slavery (1985). The concept of economic survival reminds one of My Country: In Desperation/Bayan Ko: Kapit sa Patalim (1985). The depiction of urban poverty and the disintegration of the individual in the city is familiar because of Insiang (1976) and the representation of homosexuality echoes Dipped in Gold/Tubog sa Ginto (1970), Ang Tatay kong Nanay (My Father Who's Also a Mother, 1978), and Palipat-lipat, Papalit-palit (Changing Lovers, 1982). It is not that Brocka simply recycles his previous films into his more recent ones; rather, this return to familiar thematic terrain confirms an unchanging reality that the director sees, stressing the continuing impoverishment of countless real-world versions of Pol, Noel, Julio, and Insiang.

In so far as Macho Dancer is "instructive" in creating a level of awareness about an aspect of Filipino social reality, it must be viewed with a critical eye. The viewer must be able to shift through the various thematic ambiguities represented by Pol, Noel, Bambi, and Kid, especially in the film's last scene, in which Pol is on the journey back to his family and the province. Prior to this scene, Pol kills Kid to

avenge Noel's death at the hands of the corrupt cop (conveniently, nobody witnesses the murder committed by Pol). This gives rise to contradictions, especially within a Filipino viewer, because the act of killing even in the form of revenge is contrary to Filipino Christian belief. While Pol's decision to return to the province can be seen in a positive way, the fact that Pol has committed a crime and escaped scot-free preserves a sense of narrative irresolution. The ending also lends itself to several readings, it remains unclear whether Pol will resume a life of prostitution in the province or will seek other, more socially acceptable ways of living. Brocka encourages the viewer to think about Pol's solution to his and Noel's oppression. The satisfaction of the viewer is provided not by narrative closure but through a stimulation of the viewer's thoughts (self-reflexivity).

The relationship between Macho Dancer's representations of aspects of Philippine social life is arguably very close to social phenomena existing in Filipino society. The Philippines has remained an underdeveloped country; its economic condition has always been a major concern of past governments because it affects all levels of society. This underdevelopment has often been attributed to the country's neocolonial ties with the United States and its economic dependence on other industrial countries. This chronic dependency on foreign investment and trade has resulted in an economic imbalance of power; the Philippines has often provided cheap labor that has brought huge profits to multinational companies,[28] and it has yielded to the trade demands of other countries, often to its disadvantage. This situation has rendered the Philippines powerless within the world economy, produced

and perpetuated massive poverty, and caused moral and economic turmoil.[29] Macho Dancer alludes to this situation when it focuses on Pol's dependency on Larry and on the manager of the gay club he works for. Within Filipino society, Pol is powerless because he suffers the economic discrimination of low wages and because he has to endure a dehumanizing form of labor, to which the manager and Kid are indifferent as long as they profit from Pol. Trapped by material circumstances, Pol prostitutes himself and allows others to exploit him, which, mirrors the situation of the Philippines within the global economy. In Macho Dancer, prostitution becomes a form of wage labor linked to economic survival. Lino Brocka believes that prostitution is more the product of economic imbalance than moral decline; he states that

> because people are poor, they don't have any other recourse but to sell their bodies. Don't tell me they're prostitutes because they enjoy it. They're prostitutes because they need the money...And for them, it is the only job that is open to them.[30]

A similar sentiment was expressed by Benigno Aquino, Jr., when during an interview he also discussed the relationship of prostitution to the economy of the country; Aquino said that

> when your young women start selling their bodies, my friend, that's the best indicator that your economy is bad...When I was a newsman, everybody used to laugh at me when I'd go to a foreign country. The first thing I would do is look for prostitutes. If there were between five and a dozen on one corner, then you'd know that the economy was shot. But if you couldn't find them, and had to go to the police and pay them to help you find a piece of tail, then you knew that the economy was booming - because women wouldn't sell their bodies. Look at the prostitution in the Philippines today. It's a sign of corruption at every level and of the total desperation of the people.[31]

Aquino had described the economic situation of the country years before Brocka made Macho Dancer. The same situation remains evident in the post-EDSA period. The unequal distribution of wealth is clearly etched in the socioeconomic divisions in Filipino society, where a large percentage of the population belongs to the lower class (in Manila alone, approximately one-third of the city's population of 9 million belongs to this class). Poverty is visually evident in many urban centers like Manila, where slum areas are everyday spectacles. David Steinberg, describing the class differences in Manila, writes that

> In few cities of the world is the gap between the rich and the poor so great. From the residential areas of Makati, Forbes Park [elite sections of Manila], and other subdivisions, a stream of airconditioned Mercedes Benzes moves through the poverty-stricken zones as if through a separate world.[32]

The difficulty of economic survival is not only evident to Filipino adults but to young people as well. In a poor family, members are expected to earn a living in order to enhance the family's chances for survival (children are looked upon as having economic value: the more children one has, the more income-earning bodies are generated). Hence, the educational development of the young is given a low priority. Child and youth labor becomes a reality for many young Filipinos. Being deprived of an education makes more desirable jobs inaccesible and as a result, many young people have turned to crime or illegal ventures such as drug trafficking and prostitution.

"Life as it normally happens" is mirrored by Macho Dancer, also in its depiction of the migration of people from the rural provinces to Manila. The city is still considered to be a more affluent place than the rural areas; it is a communication,

financial, business, and cultural center where many rural folk believe they and their families will have a better opportunity for success.[33] This belief is shattered when they realize that beneath the glare of affluence lies a "depersonalized, monetary society in which traditional verities are blurred by anomie."[34] In the film, Pol journeys to Manila and once there, he discovers the differences between country and city life.

Brocka's use of authentic locations, such as actual gay bars, further links the film to the real society. He states that

> Some viewers may indeed find some of the scenes as abominably lewd. But then, that's how scenes take place in actual gay bars and male [and female] prostitution houses. We didn't invent any scene for cinematic effect. Almost everything in the movie is what really happens in real life...If people find those scenes unforgivable, then it's up to them - or to all of us - to do something for the sake of our fellow human beings who are in the flesh trade.[35]

Macho Dancer presents a social framework akin to any hierarchically structured society. Movements within this "ladder of social acceptance" indicate a form of struggle, which, if victorious, results in upward mobility, and if unsuccessful, in more oppression. The film's social significance lies in the way it depicts the preservation of Pol's masculine identity by emphasizing conventionally the feminine role of Bambi in a patriarchal setting - by presenting aesthetically excessive macho dancing sequences, Brocka emphasizes the repugnance of a macho dancer's job; he comments on the notion of defeated humanity through Bambi, who opts to stay in the flesh trade, and through the death of Noel at the hands of the cop; and he injects a sense of sobering reality when the elimination of the evil cop (Kid) does not signify an end to the social problem, as another cop immediately replaces him and merely continues the corruption within the system. It may be argued that the representations of gender and sexuality,

power, and class struggle in Macho Dancer cumulatively work as an allegory of the larger, real society it hopes to enlighten.

Fight for Us/Les Insoumis/Orapronobis

On June 5, 1986, within a hundred days after assuming the presidency, Corazon Aquino began talks with communist insurgents to establish a ceasefire and work toward the peaceful end to the communist and separatist armed insurrections led by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the National Democratic Front (NDF) through its military wing the New People's Army (NPA).[36] At the time, the insurgency campaign had been going on for seventeen years; its goal was to transform the country into a socialist state through armed revolution following the Maoist formula of protracted war in the countryside.[37] Today, the insurgency movement is still active and the Philippine government and the CPP have not reached an accord that would put an end to the ideological-political war. Leonard Davis writes that

> The collapse of the peace talks between the Aquino government and the NDF in February 1987 led to even further political instability. Aquino's "declaration of war" intensified the counter-insurgency operations against the NPA...paving the way for the emergence of right wing anti-communist vigilante groups.[38]

Vigilante groups were the Aquino administration's addition to its counter-insurgency campaign in 1987, civilians from remote villages in insurgency-stricken provinces were handpicked, trained, and armed by the military to assist in eliminating communist elements in their region. These groups, such as the ALSA MASA (Mass Uprising) and the TADTAD (Chop-Chop) in Mindanao, were directed to exterminate

individuals or groups of individuals that were identified with the NPA. Filipino journalist Sheila Coronel describes the cultic and fanatical deeds of vigilante groups:

> The vigilantes bore holes into tombs and steal the kneecaps of the dead to make amulets which, they believe, will shield them from bullets. They also string around their necks vials containing oil which they say, heats up when a communist approaches. The Tadtad, fanatic cultists that roam the hinterland villages of Mindanao got their name because they have been known to chop their victims. In Davao del Sur early this year, a group of Tadtad cut off the head of a young farmer whom they suspected was a rebel and then paraded the decapitated and bloodied head around town.[39]

Reports such as Coronel's were ignored by government, military, and church officials; instead, they publicly endorsed the vigilantes' "good deed" of helping the government with the insurgency problem. These endorsements only served to fuel the aggressiveness and fanaticism of vigilante groups, and in 1987 and 1988, human rights violations were reportedly committed by both vigilantes and the military. This resulted in criticism from members of the Philippine Congress of the Aquino government's support for groups who committed worse abuses than those perpetuated during the Marcos regime.[40] Hence, on July 25, 1988, Aquino, through a presidential order, disbanded the vigilante groups. Some vigilante groups, however, did not heed Aquino's order and continued their operations.

While the 1987 insurgency and counter-insurgency campaigns in the provinces were real, they remained distant events to those living in the urban centers, especially the bourgeoisie and the elite. Despite this, media coverage of the insurgency situation was extensive, and even the Filipino film industry found an audience for action movies that depicted military-insurgent encounters as well as "heroic" vigilante deeds. One such film was Kapitan Pablo, Cavite Killing Fields (Captain Pablo, Cavite Killing

Fields, 1987), a biography of a barrio leader turned vigilante fighter, that unambiguously glorified the vigilante movement. However, with the mounting criticisms lodged about the human rights violations committed by vigilante groups, films of this type constituted a short-lived cycle. Within the same year, films that dealt with the lives of well-known insurgency leaders were produced, such as Balweg: The Rebel Priest, about Father Conrado Balweg, a priest turned rebel who became one of the senior commanders in the NPA; and Kumander Dante (Commander Dante), about the exploits of the NPA's commander-in-chief Bernabe Buscayno (alias Commander Dante), who was incarcerated during martial law but was released under the Aquino regime as part of its reconciliation efforts. The emergence of these films were reflective of the changes in the political structure of the country; riding on the wave of the post-EDSA revolution, the Filipino film industry found commercial value in the reconciliatory moves of the new administration. These "bioflicks" played on the Filipino moviegoer's curiosity because of their portrayal of marginalized individuals who followed a non-mainstream ideology, and they were designed to appeal to a predominantly male audience whose "macho fantasies" were fulfilled. In as much as these movies dealt with the sensitive theme of "political outlaws," they toed industry lines by fitting into the action film genre and working within the star system. Emmanuel Reyes describes the Filipino action film as a genre that deals with the themes of revenge, insurgency, gangland mayhem, and police operations, borrowing elements from the western, detective drama, war movie, and the martial arts thriller with the protagonist embodying the aspirations of the common citizen who has had it

with the atrocities, excesses, and red tape in his confused society.[41] Though the themes of such movies have an inherent ideological perspective, they typically fall short of posing a threat to the dominant class because the ideological content is diminished relative to the exaggerated representation of violence, making these films more escapist entertainment than social treatise. As with the films about vigilantes, the depiction of insurgency leaders was also a short-lived narrative hook due to the collapse of the peace talks between the government and the insurgents. Action films in later years focused on police and military operations (e.g., Tubusin Mo ng Dugo [Redeem With Blood, 1988] and Lost Command [1989]).

The themes of insurgency and counter-insurgency resurfaced in Lino Brocka's Fight for Us/Les Insoumis/Orapronobis in 1989. Much more dialectical in approach than his earlier issue-oriented films Manila in the Claws of Neon/Maynila sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag (1975) and My Country: In Desperation/Bayan Ko: Kapit sa Patalim (1985), Fight for us raises questions of ideological and class struggle in the Philippines, the intervention of the church in state affairs, and the legality and constitutionality of paramilitary groups. The film was a co-production between a French company and a Filipino entity. It was banned from local screening due to the timeliness and sensitivity of the subject matter as well as the depiction of "offensive" scenes involving cannibalism (in the French version) and violent scenes such as the massacre of nine men (in the American version). The film has been released and distributed internationally and has earned accolades for its technical polish and taut presentation of events.

The original title for the film was Orapronobis, derived from the Latin prayer phrase "Ora Pro Nobis", but the French producers did not use the Philippine title because as screenwriter Jose Lacaba states, it was "probably considered as an uncommercial tongue twister."[42] Les Insoumis became the French title, the word *insoumis* not translating precisely as "rebel" but approximately meaning "unsubdued," "unconquered," "unvanquished," and "conscientious objectors."[43] The English title Fight for Us was coined for the American market, and many detractors misinterpreted it as an appeal to foreigners to fight the battles of the Filipinos for them. However, Brocka denied this allegation, stating that

> The American release title is Fight for Us...That was Globus' idea. He found Les Insoumis too intellectual. Fight for Us sounds like an action movie...That's what Canon Films is known for.[44]

As pointed out earlier, the film exists in two forms, a French version (the original) and an American version. This became one of the points of contention when the film was banned by MTRCB Chairman Manuel Morato and was the focus of criticism by two pro-Aquino newspaper columnists,[45] to whom screenwriter Jose Lacaba responded. As gleaned from the critiques and Lacaba's response, the main difference between the French and American versions lies in the former's depiction of more "cannibalistic" scenes that are absent in the latter version. Lacaba writes that the French version contained a scene

> showing Bembol Roco, as the vigilante leader [Commander Kontra], about to eat (not actually eating) a portion of human brain. This appears in the beginning, in one of the pre-title sequences.[46]

The scene indicated by Lacaba follows the killing of the priest in the precredit sequence; in the American, the scene is abruptly cut to black immediately after Kontra shoots the priest. Moreover, Lacaba also mentions that toward the end of the French version, Kontra's deputy Django is also shown about to eat but not actually eating Kontra's heart. This scene was also edited out of the American version.

As a cinematic representation of post-1986 Philippine sociopolitical life, Fight for Us purports to expose the hidden realities of the supposedly more benevolent "people-oriented" Aquino administration, such as the continued militarization of rural areas resulting in the frequent violation of human rights. It also offers a critique of the parameters of the democratic space that the new government claimed to provide. Utilizing a combination of docudrama and melodramatic conventions, the film deals with this ideological struggle through the perspective of protagonist Jimmy Cordero (Philip Salvador), a priest turned revolutionary who rejoins society as a reformed rebel (or rebel returnee) after his release from Marcos-imposed detention by the new administration. Being out of touch with society, Jimmy lauds the new dispensation initially, but he gradually realizes that the oppressive structures of the former regime remain in place. Jimmy's shift from the status of ex-rebel to taking up arms again is depicted through a series of events and incidents both political and personal. This is an analysis of the American version of Fight for Us and will focus on selected sequences that make up the film's main argument and relate the cinematic representations to Philippine contemporary social reality.

Historical specificity plays a key role in reading the film text of Fight for Us. The resemblance to actual people and events in the film give a journalistic and documentary quality to it. The film has been likened to a newspaper report because of the relevance of the theme and its insightful representation of the social and political conditions of the country. The precredit sequence of a priest killed by the head of the Orapronobis alludes to the 1985 murder in Cotabato (a province in Mindanao) of an Italian missionary who was allegedly shot by paramilitary groups during the Marcos regime. The vigilante groups (e.g., Alsa Masa and Tadtad) are represented in the film by the fictional Orapronobis while the Santa Filomena folk represent the peasants from Leyte who fled their home in 1987 to escape the terrorism of a vigilante group. Hence, Fight for Us becomes readily identifiable even to those

> with half the recollection of headlines hurriedly read in the last few years since EDSA; [they can] vaguely remember that these events took place in real life. The film has sewn fictional tragedies that ultimately form one composite truth.[47]

Brocka's use of superimposed titles to denote time frames in the precredit (October 1985) and post-credit sequences (November 1988) is a device that places the film and the viewer in the context of the historical period represented. Viewer identification then is dependent on the audience's knowledge and awareness of the country's sociopolitical history in order to fully understand the situations represented in the film and their significance to the political era depicted.

The inspiration for Fight for Us came to Brocka as early as 1986, during his membership in Aquino's Constitutional Commission. He was assigned to preside over a public hearing in Gingoog, Misamis Oriental (in Mindanao), where a massacre

allegedly perpetrated by the Tadtad had taken place.[48] Through his direct dealings with the affected people, Brocka saw the magnitude of the human rights violations committed by paramilitary groups without the awareness of the government, which quite ironically formed, armed, and trained them. In 1987, when news about the Leyte refugees broke, Brocka involved himself in the process through which the refugees sought help from the government. He related in an interview one incident he could not forget:

> I was there when one of their leaders - a woman - was abducted in full view of everybody at noon on the steps of the Supreme Court. It was a death squad. They couldn't be anything else.[49]

This occurrence would later be represented in Fight for Us in the scene where Esper (Gina Alajar), a resident of Santa Filomena who seeks redress for the oppression and terrorism wrought by the Orapronobis in her village, and her son Camilo are abducted in front of a courthouse in broad daylight and in full view of reporters, human rights lawyers, activists, and supporters. In his interest in representing situations derived directly from social reality, Brocka can be seen as Brechtian in the manner he manifests concern for the political efficacy of an art rooted in realism, an art that involves the discovery of the causal complexes of society and the unmasking of the prevailing view of things.[50]

The precredit, credit, and post-credit sequences, with a total running time of approximately nine minutes, establish the significant themes to be explored in Fight for Us. The precredit sequence opens with an on-screen crawl that provides information about the production of the film - it was shot clandestinely and depicts

authentic situations. This foregrounds the film's claim as a "faithful" representation of events and partly provides an explanation for any technical aberrations such as mismatched shots. There is a cut to a wide shot of a priest on a motorcycle emerging from a swirl of dust while negotiating a rural dirt track; as he approaches a checkpoint station manned by armed men, the date "October 1985" is superimposed. This bit of information connotes the martial law period during which military and counter-insurgency paramilitary groups set up checkpoints in remote towns and barrios in insurgency-stricken provinces to ensure the "protection" of local citizens from communist infiltration. The film's villain is introduced in the middle of this sequence in the person of Commander Kontra, the head of a paramilitary group known as the Orapronobis; the Santa Filomena folk and Esper likewise figure prominently as the terrorized people at the mercy of the Orapronobis. The priest is killed by Kontra at the end of the sequence. There is a cut to black (three seconds long) and the passage of time to 1986 is indicated by documentary footage of the EDSA revolution with title credits superimposed on it. These documentary shots were aired over television at the height of the revolution and shortly after its success; and constitutes images that are easily identifiable to the Philippine audience with regard to their historical significance - the affirmation of a collective consciousness by overthrowing an oppressor.

Departing from the classical Hollywood narrative convention of introducing the protagonist as soon as the film begins, the precredit sequence instead introduces the villain; this establishes the premises by which the other events in the film should be read. Like a historian who selects and assembles facts to form a historical argument,

Brocka positions his audience to unambiguously denounce paramilitary groups. The precredit sequence becomes a key to understanding the development of the protagonist's consciousness as well as rationalizing the decision that comes at the film's end. While the black screen that immediately follows the killing of the priest indicates a time lapse, it also presents a historical gap - Fight for Us does not dwell on the incidents that led to the people's revolution such as the presidential "snap" elections called by Marcos where massive election fraud was allegedly committed and generated the circumstances that led to Aquino's entry as a presidential candidate. However, the tension created by this historical gap is dissipated because it is assumed that the events within the elided period are known to the viewer, since they merited extensive local and international news coverage.

The credit sequence utilized documentary footage shot on video that gives an illusion that one is watching a television screen. The montage of highly recognizable scenes from the EDSA revolution form a contrasting image to the televised image of Marcos in his last broadcast during the revolution. Parallel editing techniques indicate that both the Marcos telecast and the mass movement are happening simultaneously; the sudden cut-off of the Marcos broadcast signify the triumph of the revolution. The credit sequence then connects with the post-credit sequence of Jimmy and other political prisoners in a detention cell. However, the viewer identifies Jimmy as the protagonist only toward the end of the post-credit sequence, when the camera focuses on him as the prisoners cheer their pending release. This is immediately followed by a scene in which Jimmy is met by his mother, friends, supporters, and Trixie (Dina

Bonnevie). In as much as the introduction of the villain before the protagonist is uncharacteristic of Brocka's narrative construction, the presentation of the protagonist within the first ten minutes of the film still conforms with Hollywood classical conventions. However, it would be unjust to compare Fight for Us only with Brocka's other works since any film, as the product of a cultural process, is unique and significant with respect to the development of the filmmaker's consciousness as well as the changing social, political, cultural, and economic forces that surround him/her. Fight for Us becomes culturally significant because it "consigns documentary events onscreen to the onslaught of a narrative which has drawn voraciously from known facts...sandwiching the presentation between history on one hand, and realistic imagery on the other."[51]

The film next jumps to November 1988, back to Santa Filomena where a group of nine men are walking down a dirt road. They are stopped by the Orapronobis and asked to produce identification papers which the paramilitary group claims to have distributed to the barrio folk. When the men fail to produce the necessary papers, they are ordered to run and subsequently are gunned down. Brocka's return to Santa Filomena stresses the idea that the situation has not changed in the remote barrio and that the Orapronobis are still terrorizing the people. This scene became the focus of debate in several critiques of the film published in Manila. One newspaper columnist wrote that the scene alluded to the 1982 shooting of nine youths after a basketball game in Cauayan, Negros Occidental,[52] while another wrote that it closely resembled a 1984 massacre of nine men in Langoni, Negros that the military claimed was an

"encounter."[53] No matter how muddled the recollection of specific dates and places may be, this only serves to confirm the relationship of the film to the reality of Filipino social experience. New York-based Filipino writer Ninotchka Rosca confirms this by saying that

> The amazing thing about this film...is that we can cite any number of news reports to affirm the veracity of incidents in Orapronobis...we wish there was no reason to have made this film; but because it is here and there was a reason, we wish Filipinos would deal with the reality it portrays.[54]

The bulk of the story occurs within a time frame stretching from late 1988 to early 1989, Jimmy is married to Trixie, a bourgeois turned human rights worker, and it is through her that Jimmy is thrust into human rights work while regaining his personal equilibrium after six years of detention. At this point, Fight for Us takes a melodramatic turn by relating the marital life of Jimmy and Trixie and showing how large-scale political events affect their personal lives. Jimmy's status as a "rebel returnee" lands him several television guest appearances, and on one of the programs he is confronted by the silhouetted image and voice of Esper in a video interview. Jimmy's reaction is to join a fact finding mission to Santa Filomena, "where he must not only confront the Orapronobis, now a vigilante group that is military-armed and government recognized, but he must also face his past in the uncertain conditions of the present."[55] Santa Filomena represents Jimmy's past life that somehow did not break free from him and as soon as he reaches the barrio, he finds himself unwilling to relinquish his own hold on the past. Jimmy's return to Santa Filomena and his renewed involvement with Esper and her family produces an ideological struggle through which he

> strains beneath the weight of the painful conflict between the reality of this repression (which he thought had departed with the unlamented tyrant) and his firm belief that despite all these vestiges of dictatorship, some democratic space had been cleared by those who fought for it.[56]

This struggle is embodied in the characters of the two women in Jimmy's life - Trixie represents the new order while Esper represents the old that continues to exist. Seen in another way, Trixie represents the Right (the dominant class) while Esper represents the Left (committed to revolutionary change). Trixie embodies the ideology of the dominant bourgeois class; in her secure and privileged position, she can afford to dabble in human rights work, which she essentially treats as a job she is good at. She is capable of running the office while Sister Marie and others are off on a mission, but she never joins fact-finding missions nor is she allowed by Jimmy to join him. While the narrative constructs her on the one hand as an activist (one who emphasizes vigorous action for political ends), Trixie ultimately accepts the limitations on activism set by the dominant class; she seeks redress to certain problems through "acceptable" means, such as appearing on a television public service program to appeal for the release of a co-worker who was abducted. Moreover, when she becomes emotional (on three occasions), she quickly discards her belief in human rights and voices her desire for a "normal" life. At the other extreme is Esper, who represents the harassed and oppressed lower classes. Her involvement with Jimmy during his revolutionary days suggests that she was a rebel once. In the dialogue between Jimmy and Esper on the first night of the fact-finding mission, she reveals that Camilo is his son, born while Jimmy was in detention. This revelation stirs a paternal concern and possesiveness in Jimmy, who pressures Esper to let the child

know about his identity. Esper is reluctant to do so, worrying about the repercussions it will have on the child and the community. Esper then talks about her marriage to Roque, a comrade who had been a good father to Camilo and to their two biological children. After Roque's death, Esper has become an ordinary citizen for the sake of her children.

The instability of Esper's underprivileged state as a single mother and a member of the lower class helps to place her as a strong Filipino woman; she bravely meets her adversaries in the form of poverty, the military, and the Orapronobis. With Trixie, Jimmy's revolutionary/activist persona is repressed by the dominant ideology she represents, while with Esper, he finds his identity. In Fight for Us, the Filipino woman is projected as a strong influence on the male and on state affairs, the latter allusion is historically rooted, as women have figured prominently in the revolutionary struggles of colonial times (e.g., Gabriela Silang, Gregoria de Jesus, Melchora Aquino, etc.). In the Philippines, "the position of the wife as co-equal of her husband in married life is a unique phenomenon in Asia...She exercises an active role in politics and in business...She is a dominant figure in many aspects of welfare work...Raised with the expectation that men are morally weaker, the Filipino wife is inclined to think that it is her task to lead her husband subtly into the realm of spirituality, towards an increasingly disciplined life."[57] In this context, Trixie leads Jimmy into her human rights work and it is she who pacifies his anger and frustration when he is stonewalled by the military and the church in his search for the abducted Esper and when his

request is denied for an audience with the Cardinal regarding his appeal for the withdrawal of the church's endorsement of vigilante groups.

The representation of religion and the church is an important aspect of Fight for Us. The church is depicted as having a dual position within society - as the liberator of the poor from their oppressed state and as an institution that abets and condones oppression. More of the film dwells on the former than on the latter. Fight for Us focuses the viewer's attention on the revolutionary involvement of church people which, as political analysts have pointed out, is a controversial phenomenon not only in the Philippines but in other developing countries as well. Christianity was the basis for the colonization of the Philippines and on the part of the Filipino native, resistance to the colonizers came in the form of defending an indigenous religion and way of life. Conversion to Christianity represented political collaboration with the colonizer.

> Thus, Christianity was restricted to the politics of colonialism among Spaniards, and the politics of collaboration among the natives. Although the Christian faith in this politically captive form was shared with the natives, the institutional church itself was not open to them.[58]

Through the practice of "Liberation Theology,"[59] some members of the clergy in the Philippines have become committed to the national revolution against oppression, as represented in the film by Jimmy Cordero (before leaving the priesthood), Sister Marie, and Bishop Romero. The Church, as an institution separate from the clergy, has assumed a non-committal stance to the "revolution" by endorsing the vigilante groups which it believes to be made up of God-fearing people opposed to other groups who spread Atheism (it is implied that communism is a Godless way of life, an enemy

belief system that must be eliminated). Political orientations in the film are interpreted in the light of religion, especially in the scene in which Kontra equates communism with satanism. In line with this, Fight for Us examines the fine line separating the practice of Christian values from support for rebel activity in a discussion between the members of the fact-finding mission and Colonel Mateo. When Mateo expresses his doubts about Esper's status as an "ex-rebel" and reminds her of an incident in which her husband was caught giving food to rebels, the following exchange occurs;

> Esper: Kristiyano ho iyon. Kung may lumapit sa kanyang nagugutom, pinapakain niya.
>
> Sr.
> Marie: Ako man Colonel, kung may lalapit sa aking may baril, hindi rin siguro ako makakatanggi.
>
> Mateo: Nagkamali ang asawa mo Aling Esperanza, ang napakain niya ay mga vigilante na nagpanggap na rebelde.
>
> [Esper: He is a Christian. If someone asks for food, he will feed them.
>
> Sr.
> Marie : I would do the same Colonel; if someone with a gun asks to be fed, I don't think I could refuse them.
>
> Mateo : Your husband made a mistake Mrs. Esperanza; those he fed were actually vigilantes pretending to be rebels.]

Religion and the practice of the Christian way of life is central to the way of life of the Santa Filomena folk. They can not perceive what Mateo accuses them of. Since political and ideological beliefs are tied up with religion, this theme remains unresolved in the film.

Religion also figures prominently with the Orapronobis. The name itself is a phrase from the Latin prayer that asks for the divine intercession of the Virgin Mary;

their fanatical belief in their own invincibility is rooted in religion, indicated by the hodgepodge of religious icons and artifacts in Kontra's hideout. Davis traces the origins of the role of religion in vigilante groups as another expression of revolt described as

> natives invoking Christian symbols and forms in rebelling against various oppressive and exploitative features of Spanish colonial rule...Although dominantly Christian in form, the animist base of native religion remained in such folk or popular Christianity. To this day, many vigilante groups use names for their associations and words in their rituals which are a mixture of Christianity and animism in their origin, but have nothing in common with any recognized church group.[60]

Brocka conveys a strong political statement against the government in Fight for Us. As discussed earlier, it has been said that the film represents his own disillusionment with the Aquino administration and its indifference to the situation of the rural poor due to the counter-insurgency measures taken by authorities.[61] The government is represented by provincial officials (the mayor and the governor who block the efforts of the fact finding mission) and the military (represented by Colonel Mateo, who extols the deeds of the Orapronobis and is scornful of the fact-finding mission and the Santa Filomena people). The military is depicted as encouraging the lawless behavior of the Orapronobis. One criticism lodged at Brocka in relation to the film, was that he did not look at the possibility that the government was taking measures to resolve the problem.[62] Ultimately, the military is presented as an entity that hides the truth from the people in an attempt to whitewash its own mistake, by using rebels as a scapegoat for any human rights violations the military may have knowingly or unknowingly committed or allowed. In a scene toward the end, where

government soldiers and Orapronobis men are seen loading onto a truck the bodies of some Santa Filomena folk including Esper and Camilo who were killed by Kontra, Mateo spews out an "official" version of the incident saying that an encounter ensued between the rebels and the military and Orapronobis. This is a throwback to the rhetoric of the Marcos regime, where the official story could be expected to be far different from the actual events.

Adding to the accumulation of events and situations that guides Jimmy through his ideological struggle and eventually to the resolution of his dilemma is the visit of his friend and revolutionary comrade Rene (Pen Medina). Rene informs Jimmy that he has returned to the underground movement and persuades Jimmy to take up the revolutionary struggle again. The latter responds:

Jimmy: Mahalaga ang human rights work.

Rene: Kaya na ng iba iyan. Hindi dapat matali diyan ang isang katulad mo na mahaba ang karanasan sa rebolusyon, sa armadong pakikibaka.

Jimmy: Ewan ko chong, pero sa tingin ko, iba ang sitwasyon ngayon eh. Dapat iba rin ang paraan ng pakikibaka.

Rene: Chong, ilusyong repormista iyan eh!

[Jimmy: Human rights work is important.

Rene: Leave that to others. With your long experience in the armed struggle, you should not be tied up in that kind of work.

Jimmy: I don't know, friend; you see, the situation now is different, hence, one must use a different strategy for seeking change.

Rene: My friend, that's a reformist's attitude!]

The indecisiveness of Jimmy leads Rene to leave him a phone number in case he changes his mind. They agree on code names : Rene is Diego and Jimmy is Danton. The armed struggle is constructed in the film as the best way to achieve change, while human rights work is portrayed as ineffective. When Rene leaves his gun with Jimmy to avoid getting caught at a police checkpoint, a degree of predictability is introduced. The gun signifies a temptation for Jimmy to rejoin the movement.

The sequences of the last thirty minutes accelerates to the film's climactic point, where Jimmy resolves his dilemma and makes a choice. It starts with the abduction of Esper and her son. They are brought to Kontra's hideout, where, because of Esper's resistance to Kontra's "persuasion techniques," she is raped in front of her son. In a valiant effort, the son attempts to rescue his mother by striking Kontra, who reacts by shooting the child. In a fit of rage over the murder of her son, Esper grabs a gun and fires at Kontra, who is wounded but returns fire and kills Esper. Meanwhile, Jimmy learns of Esper's whereabouts but arrives too late. The Santa Filomena church is swarmed over by military troops, Orapronobis men, barrio folk, the media, and human rights workers; like moths to a flame, they have converged at Santa Filomena for a story.

Jimmy finds Esper's body and arranges it tenderly. His anguish is buried deep within him. He then finds his son's body and gathering the lifeless form, cradling it close to him, he carries it into the church. The camera follows the action throughout this long take until he sits on a wooden pew. No sound is heard except for the magnified sound of Jimmy's footsteps and his breathing that indicates his rage and

anguish. A slow ninety-second zoom-in to a tight close-up of Jimmy's face suggests that this is a turning point in Jimmy's life and leads the viewer to speculate on his next move. The next scene finds Jimmy arriving home, where he looks at his sleeping wife and child. He goes to his study, gets his portfolio and extracts Rene's gun and phone number. This scene also has no other sound except for incidental sounds such as the dialing of the telephone. The camera is focused on Jimmy and zooms in to a tight close-up as he says his final line : "Hello. Meron akong message para kay Diego; sabihin mo galing kay Danton." [Hello. I have a message for Diego; tell him it's from Danton]. Then the screen turns black.

Fight for Us presents an ideological slant that is opposed to the dominant ideology in Philippine society. It views sociopolitical events from the "other side," which makes it an act of advocacy at the same time that it condemns the existing social order. As it stacks up its criticisms of the new administration (the damning aspect), it likewise calls for a rising up in arms to effect change (the advocatory aspect). Because of its documentary style, the film has been widely evaluated in terms of its "truthfulness," how well it was able to depict the real conditions in the country. However, film as an art form is a mere representation of reality, as Brocka described it, "an imitation of life." A form of realism is embraced by Fight for Us due to its narrative coherence, the plausibility of its characters, and the re-creation of a believable world. The representation of a restricted milieu is clearly evident in the film. This kind of depiction often frames the decisions of the characters from a personal viewpoint instead of being shaped within a larger social framework. Hence,

Jimmy Cordero's decision to return to the underground movement is depicted as more the result of personal tragedy than ideological convictions. As in Macho Dancer, Brocka's microcosmic approach must be taken with caution - his overt subjectivism does not easily allow for a way of reading the film text except on his terms.

The wide range of reactions that Fight for Us has elicited stems from the film's re-creation of current history. This was one of the reasons for the local banning of the film - it was seen by officials as an incitement to rebellion. It deals with a subject matter that was geared to undermine the Filipino people's faith on the Aquino government. The Filipino community in Paris, France was reported to have voiced their outrage at the "malicious" portrayal and misrepresentation of the Philippine situation and branded the film as anti-Filipino.[63] The milieu represented in Fight for Us does not conform to the image of the society that the Filipino ruling class has of itself. The ideological tension that arises from these reactions are due to the continued desire of the bourgeoisie to cling to its interests that are supported by a media that has failed to provide them with an alternative vision or image of itself, and society; instead, its media has ingrained within the dominant class a distorted image of social reality where everything is "true, good, and beautiful."[64] During the period of martial law, Filipino films used the historical past as a metaphor to discuss current social issues, working around the paranoid censorship rules of that regime. The twenty years of dictatorship arguably created an audience that has become psychologically uncomfortable with seeing particular kinds of images of the present milieu through a medium that has been known and accepted as an entertainment

vehicle rather than an instrument of confrontation. The country's long history of colonization also contributed to this phenomenon; Filipinos have been steeped in Western thought (specifically American thought), and the moviegoing audience has been conditioned to Hollywood's aesthetic norms, which means that films that do not fit the accepted structure are assumed to be radical, hence, to be avoided.

The cultural significance of Fight for Us is diminished if it cannot be shown to the people who inspired it and to whom it is most directly targeted. The mere act of viewing a film is not sufficient to initiate a "post-experiential transformation" of the viewer. Ideological positioning takes time and is dependent on the input from various stimuli (institutions and individuals) surrounding an individual to help him/her form a concept of self and society. The images of Philippine society represented in the film are similar to those of print and broadcast news coverage; differences emerge through the film's use of docudrama conventions (presenting documentary reality through a script, actors, and sets) and through Brocka's carefully constructed narrative, which is designed to move the viewer's sympathies into a particular ideological camp. The close relationship of the film's cinematic representations to Philippine social reality is due to the historical grounding of the film text. For now, Brocka's aggressive mirror in Fight for Us will have to remain directed at a foreign audience. However, because of the historical specificity of this cultural artifact, there is hope that it will eventually be screened in the country of its origin.

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52. Pedrosa, 6.

53. Carranza, 5.

54. Ninotchka Rosca, "Letter from New York: Orapronobis," The Sunday Times Magazine, 26 November 1989), 23.

55. Carranza, 5.

56. Ibid.

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CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

The advent of a technology is said to be a boon to a country and its people. It usually arises from and responds to certain needs and aspirations circulating within the social, political, economic, and cultural framework of a society. Inventions pave the way for technologies, as in the case of the photographic process that led to the development of cinema technology in the West. Moreover, technologies are frequently mobile, and they establish interlocking connections with other social and economic factors. As soon as a technology is assimilated into the dynamic process of cultural production of a nation, it lends itself to political and economic manipulations by enterprising individuals and institutional entities that make possible the movement of technology to other nations. Such was the case with the cinema, when it began to tap the global market for the technology and the cultural product of that technology (the film itself) at the turn of the century. Also, as carriers of culturally-specific values and beliefs, movies in many instances served the purposes of colonial and neo-colonial regimes.

Tracing the historical development of the cinema in the Philippines yields insight into the medium's assimilation within the Filipino way of life. This Western cultural product initially responded to an economic and cultural need - film production

and exhibition became viable businesses on the basis of the medium's status as a technological novelty and because film was seen as a means of expanding an insular worldview. The capitalistic philosophy underlying present Filipino film practice, then, is historically grounded. In time, the impetus of economics combined increasingly with political motivations, as the transfer of colonial rule from a European to an American power was effected. Film became a vehicle of cultural domination under American hegemony that forestalled the emergence of a Filipino national language and the development of a true Filipino film form in the early years of the country's occupation. American pacification policies and the market domination of American films aided in the creation of a dependency upon and desire for the American way of life. This is manifested in present day Philippine society through the use, for example, of "Taglish" (the use of English words within Filipino sentence structure) and Filipino film's continued adherence to American (Hollywood) cinematic and business conventions (e.g., continuity editing and the star system).

The significance of a historical tracing of cinema's development in the Philippines is placed in the context of its evolution into a means through which a people's experiences and understanding of themselves could be mediated. A technology can be beneficial when it is used by a people in the process of their own cultural production. This study has shown that the cinema had weathered the ups and downs of Philippine sociopolitical life. It was able to create an effect on its initial audience during Spanish colonial times when at this early stage the word "cine" was adopted into the native language. The improvement of social and economic conditions

under the U.S. regime gave cinema a chance to grow and for new cinema technology to arrive. While the cinema was used as an instrument for American cultural domination, it also became a medium of expression for Filipinos as soon as the means to do this became possible. The films of Jose Nepomuceno and other Filipino directors are most significant because they re-established a sense of Filipino identity that was lost in the early years of American rule. Their films depicted a native image and a narrative content that were identifiable to a Filipino audience.

In terms of film form, Filipino films continue to be structured within an American aesthetic norm. Experimentations with the film medium has been concentrated, for the most part, on content rather than on form. The failure to devise a uniquely Filipino film form is one of the products of the country's long colonial history, which repressed indigenous creativity. As Emmanuel Reyes points out, "film form in Philippine cinema is largely derivative of a style known as the classical Hollywood cinema."[1] Because of this, in those isolated instances of formal experimentation by a Filipino filmmaker, the finished product is judged by "Hollywood standards," and if it does not fit into the established criteria it is condemned. Historians and social analysts refer to this way of thinking as the Filipino's "colonial mentality," still aspiring for an alien way of life and still following alien standards of aesthetic beauty. The formula film concept and the use of stars with box-office appeal in present Filipino film practice are other manifestations of this mentality. This represses any spark of creative ingenuity because of the industry's practice of appraising a film purely by its box-office performance. A film's

success is equated more with the revenue it earns than its narrative and thematic content, and formal characteristics.

A great majority of mainstream Filipino films continue to be compared with "technically superior" Western films, and if they do not possess the so-called intellectual and technical quality that the foreign products have, they are downgraded or ignored by local critics and scholars. Even the works of the New Cinema filmmakers (who have had the advantage of schooling in the art of the film) are judged against their foreign counterparts. One such review by a Filipino newspaper columnist described Lino Brocka's Fight for Us as being, "in the tradition of Constantin Gavras and Gillo Pontecorvo, [in which] Brocka and Lacaba paint a picture of a society in turmoil."[2] Although reviews such as this could stir a sense of national pride because the film was able to attain a level of intellectual quality attributed to a "superior" foreign product, it also serves to strengthen a sense of inferiority to a Western power and promotes the false notion that excellence is possible only by approximating the qualities of a foreign product. This notion ignores the pragmatic variables that intervene in the production of films in the Philippine setting, such as financial inaccessibility to the raw materials of filmmaking (imported film stock and equipment), a limited market, and government restrictions. It is an injustice to compare the Filipino film with its Western counterpart since films are products of a cultural process; hence, they carry in them ideological perspectives and production practices that are culturally bounded.

The New Cinema of the Philippines provides insight into the profound effect of history and politics on film as a medium of communication and artistic expression. It was motivated more as a reaction against a political force than as a creative move toward the formulation of an indigenous Filipino film form. The new film consciousness that galvanized the movement was on the level of ideological orientations that defined the content and quality of the films. In terms of structure and form, the films of the New Cinema were akin to existing Western creative philosophies such as Italian Neo-realism, Russian Montage, and French New Wave Cinema. The New Cinema was a revolution geared toward the restructuring of present Filipino film practice; the idea was to redefine its capitalistic ideology by making it attentive to the production values of a film and rid it of the commodity concept under which it operated. The efforts of the New Cinema must be seen in the light of the ways in which it explored an alternative film form that was feasible within the existing industry, as well as its investigations of new thematic paths that could be used in the articulation of experiences and observations about the Filipino way of life. It is argued that the New Cinema is the most important moment in the history of Philippine cinema because of its emphasis on the development of a medium that can be instrumental in effecting artistic innovation and social transformation. It is hoped that in time, a uniquely Filipino film form will emerge from the continued work of the New Cinema, and for the government and the commercial film industry to see the New Cinema filmmakers as partners instead of adversaries in their common pursuit of progress for the Filipino nation.

If it were not for Lino Brocka's disillusionment over the capitalistic nature of the Filipino film industry in the early 1970s, it may have taken a considerably longer time for a new cinema to evolve in the Philippines. The release of You are Weighed in the Balance but Found Lacking/Tinimbang Ka ngunit Kulang (1974) and its commercial success arguably provided the impetus and inspiration for other Filipino filmmakers of the time to explore more "difficult" themes in their films. It also drew the attention of film producers to the economic potential of merging art and commerce, which in turn eased the "distrust of artists" that had been festering in the local film industry of that period. Brocka's persistently critical attitude, coupled with an innate courage and outspokenness, brought about this revolutionary movement in the industry. Throughout his lifetime, Brocka never reneged on his duty as an artist and as a leader in the New Cinema movement. He led fellow filmmakers in fighting for their rights of free expression during the Marcos years and under the Aquino regime, he maintained his artistic standards and critical perspective and in general served as a role model for other young filmmakers. He never detached himself from Filipino society, and he unselfishly worked towards the progressive enlightenment of the Filipino moviegoing audience through his socially-critical films. This characteristic of Brocka has helped the New Cinema of the Philippines become stronger in its struggle for its rightful place in the Filipino film industry. Despite Brocka's untimely demise, it is hoped that the work started by this Filipino filmmaker will be continued by those he has taught, touched, and nurtured.

The articulation of direct social commentary is especially evident in the works of Lino Brocka. Brocka's stylistic and thematic consistency says a great deal about his personal experiences and his worldview. The subjective realities represented in his films are rooted in direct observation and Brocka's personal investigations into the contexts of historical events in Philippine social life. One cannot discount the contribution that his films have made toward the encouragement of a critical way of thinking among his audience, as well as the example set by Brocka's work habits as a standard of artistic control. The issue-oriented stance of Brocka's social commentary films stems from a thoughtfully-developed critical consciousness and resistance to authority; these are personal traits that contribute to the development of his arguments about the milieu he is representing through his films. His meticulous chronicles of the lower class life validate the relationship of human experience and social processes as integrated through artistic expression; an artist's personal link with particular social experiences, leads him/her to develop a focused, personalized perspective that relates to the larger social framework. Brocka's indulgence in melodrama and other varieties of formulaic narrative primarily constitute a strategy for not alienating his audience. Through melodramatic modes, he communicates his social message while also providing the entertainment value of the genre: a dramatization of a personal story through which viewer identification is facilitated. The exploration of political issues and the expression of resistance typically are conveyed in a Brocka film as stories of individuals who operate within a socially restricted milieu that leads them to find solutions to their problems. In as much as these "solutions" are arrived at through

individual decisions, following the argument that a society is composed of individuals, then the amalgamation of individual decisions or choices amounts to a group consciousness.

Manila in the Claws of Neon/Maynila sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag (1975) serves as the marker in tracing Brocka's maturing as a filmmaker, which reached its peak with Fight for Us (1989), in which the social reality Brocka saw fourteen years earlier was still evident: the struggle of the lower classes continues and the resistance to a dominant ideology is still necessary. This notion is also evident in Macho Dancer (1988), a film that revisits a social situation that the director represented in his earlier film Lunes, Martes, Miyerkules, Huwebes, Biyernes, Sabado, Linggo (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, 1976) . This leads to the conclusion that films are produced not in isolation from their social milieu and historical context because the social realities inherent in any historical dimension provide the material for the stories being told. A filmmaker as a member of society is not detached from her/his milieu; in fact, the society helps to shape and condition her/his consciousness. Thus, as this study has argued, Lino Brocka's social, political, and cinematic perspectives are cumulatively the product of a combination of his own individual creativity and the socializing institutions within which he lived and worked.

The significance of Brocka's depiction of contemporary Philippine social reality in Macho Dancer and Fight for Us lies in the ways he articulates, at the level of human experience, the social phenomena he sees. To Brocka, knowledge about the world is a matter of personal experience, stemming from a situation in which the self

is born into a world that is historically given and socially structured. The individual positions her/himself within that social dimension; her or his ideas about the world are dependent on experiences that aid in the classification of objects, people, and social situations within this environment. Hence, Kid the cop in Macho Dancer and Colonel Mateo in Fight for Us exist less as characters than as important elements within the milieus of the film's protagonists; they are primarily symbols of a distrust of law and authority that may reveal certain aspects of contemporary Philippine social life. While these two films deal with different social realities, they are approached by Brocka in the same manner as personal struggles within a restricted social setting. Meaning is abstracted through the use of historically positioned symbols, ideas, and values drawn from direct experience or from other media representations.

As cinematic representations of post-1986 Philippine social and political life and as explorations into the psyche of the oppressed, Macho Dancer and Fight for Us encourages reflexive interaction by the viewer. Brocka's introspective approach pushes the viewer to position her/himself within the realities and problems represented in the films and experience catharsis in much the same way that Pol and Jimmy achieve the solutions to their problems. The ambiguous endings of both films allow the viewers to complete the stories themselves. This notion of reflexivity draws on Brocka's advocacy of the mimetic and reflexive characteristics of art: "While it is a mirror that reflects, it is also a mirror that confronts." While the images contained in Macho Dancer and Fight for Us closely resemble Philippine social phenomena, they are still representations bound by cinematic conventions and artistic interpretation.

Brocka is situated as the interpreter of objective reality, and since interpretation is mediated by him (therefore subjective), certain aspects of that reality may or may not be articulated in the films. This close textual analysis of Macho Dancer and Fight for Us presents only one approach to the study of film as a cultural artifact in relation to the society from which it originated. The sociocultural approach utilized by this study has focused on the historical grounding of cinematic texts. It also has called attention to the thematic and stylistic approach of one Filipino filmmaker, Lino Brocka, to the representation of the social realities of his country.

ENDNOTES

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2. Tom Cruz, "Cineaste: Committed Cinema as Horror Show," Philippine Star 29 October 1989), 21.

APPENDIX A

PRODUCTION CREDITS FOR

Macho Dancer (1988)

AND

Fight for Us (1989)

Macho Dancer
A Viva Films Release (1988)
Running Time: 136 Minutes
Rating: Unrated (American Release)
For Adults Only (Philippine Release)

CAST

Jacklyn Jose	(Bambi)	Cherriebee Santos	(Pol's Sister)
Daniel Fernando	(Noel)	Dan Bermudez	(Pol's brother)
Princess Punzalan	(Pining)	Rommel Santos	(Pol's brother)
Alan Paule	(Pol)	Anthony Taylor	(Manager)
William Lorenzo	(Dennis)	Mel Davidson	(Larry)
Jimmy Reyes	(Policeman)	Paul Holmes	(Jim)
Marie Barbacui	(Lesbian Bouncer)	Mel Arca	(The Bouncer)
Angelo Miguel	(Jun)	Tony Mabesa	(Raymond)
Johnny Vicar	(Kid)		
Lucita Soriano	(Pol's Mother)		
Joel Lamangan	("Mother")		
Charlie Catalla	("Mama" Charlie)		
Timothy Diwa	(Rolly)		
Bobby Sano	(Greg)		

CREDITS

Producer	: Boy C. de Guia
Executive Producer	: Boy C. de Guia
Director	: Lino Brocka
Assistant Director	: Bey Vito
Story and Screenplay	: Ricardo Lee and Amado Lacuesta
Cinematography	: Joe Tutanes
Editing	: Ruben Natividad
Art Directors	: Larry Matic and Buboy Tagayon
Sound Supervision	: Willie Islao
Musical Direction	: Mon del Rosario
Production Manager	: George Santos
Talent Coordinator	: Dante Romero
Production Design	: Benjie de Guzman

Fight for Us/Les Insoumis/Orapronobis
Canon Films/Pathe Europa Release (1989)
Running Time: 92 Minutes
Rating: R (American Release)

CAST

Philip Salvador	(Jimmy Cordero)
Dina Bonnevie	(Trixie)
Gina Alajar	(Esper)
Bembol Roco	(Commander Kontra)
Ginnie Sobrino	(Sister Marie)
Abbo de la Cruz	(Django)
Pen Medina	(Rene/Diego)
Joel Lamangan	(Colonel Mateo)
Gerard Bernschein	(Father Jeff)
Ernie Zarate	(Bishop Romero)
Jess Ramos	(Captain Sumilang)
Bon Vibarr	(First TV Host)
Raquel Villavicencio	(Second TV Host)
Joe Taruc	(TV Journalist 1)
Dodie Lacuna	(TV Journalist 2)
Esther Chavez	(Trixie's Mother)
Estrella Kuenzler	(Jimmy"s Mother)
William Lorenzo	(Trixie's brother)
Ruben Rustia	(Monsignor)
Tess Dumpit	(Malou Lazaro)
RR Herrera	(Camilo)

CREDITS

Producer	: Salvatore Picciotto
Executive Producers	: Boy C. de Guia (Special People Productions) Bernard Guiremand (Bernadette International)
Associate Producer	: Leonardo de la Fuente
Director	: Lino Brocka
Assistant Director	: Bey Vito
Screenplay	: Jose F. Lacaba
Editors	: George Jarlego Sabine Mamou Bob Wade
Cinematography	: Rody Lacap
Casting	: Zenny Basco

APPENDIX B

FILMOGRAPHY

1. WANTED: PERFECT MOTHER

Producer	: Lea Productions
Direction:	: Lino Brocka
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar
Editing	: Felizardo Santos
Screenplay	: Lino Brocka
Story	: Mars Ravelo
Music	: D'Amarillo
Year Produced	: 1970
Awards	: The 1970 Manila Film Festival (Best Screenplay and Best Actor)

2. SANTIAGO

Producer	: Lea Productions
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar Doming Valdez
Screenplay	: Lino Brocka
Story	: Lino Brocka
Year Produced	: 1970
Awards	: FAMAS (Best Supporting Actress) Citizen's Council for Mass Media (Best Director)

3. DIPPED IN GOLD/TUBOG SA GINTO

Producer	: Lea Productions
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Cinematography	: Steve Perez
Editing	: Felizardo Santos
Screenplay	: Lino Brocka
Story	: Mars Ravelo
Year Produced	: 1970
Awards	: FAMAS (Best Director, Best Actor)

4. NOW!

Producer	: Lea Productions
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Krip Yuzon
Cinematography	: Loreto Isleta
Editing	: Felizardo Santos
Music	: Danny Subido
Choreography	: Boonie Weinstein Calagopi
Year Produced	: 1971

5. LUMULUHA PATI MGA ANGHEL (EVEN THE ANGELS ARE CRYING)

Producer	: Lea Productions
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Mario O'Hara
Story	: Mars Ravelo
Cinematography	: Loreto Isleta
Music	: Doming Valdez
Year Produced	: 1971
Awards	: FAMAS (Best Supporting Actress, Best Child Actor, Best Child Performer)

6. CADENA DE AMOR (CHAIN OF LOVE)

Producer	: Lea Productions
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Mario O'Hara
Story	: Mars Ravelo
Cinematography	: Loreto Isleta
Editing	: Felizardo Santos
Music	: Jose Marie Chan
Sound	: Ramon Reyes
Year Produced	: 1971
Awards	: 1970 Manila Film Festival Rajah Soliman Award

7. STARDOOM

Producer	: Lea Productions
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Orlando Nadres Lino Brocka
Cinematography	: Freddie Conde
Editing	: Felizardo Santos
Music	: Jose Marie Chan
Year Produced	: 1971

8. CHERRY BLOSSOMS

Producer	: Lea Productions
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Alfred Yuson
Cinematography	: Steve Perez
Editing	: Felizardo Santos
Music	: Jose Marie Chan
Year Produced	: 1972

9. VILLA MIRANDA (MIRANDA MANSION)

Producer	: Lea Productions
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Story	: Marty Gee Aragon
Screenplay	: Orlando Nadres
Cinematography	: Loreto Isleta
Editing	: Felizardo Santos
Music	: D'Amarillo
Year Produced	: 1972

10. YOU ARE WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE BUT FOUND LACKING/TINIMBANG KA NGUNIT KULANG

Producer	: CineManila
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Mario O'Hara
Cinematography	: Joe Batac, Jr.
Editing	: Augusto Salvador
Music	: Lutgardo Labad
Year Produced	: 1974
Awards	: FAMAS (Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Musical Direction, Best Song and Best Sound Recording) Catholic Mass Media Awards (Special Award)

11. TATLO, DALAWA, ISA (THREE, TWO, ONE)

Producer	: CineManila
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Tony Perez Sister Angela Barrios Orlando Nadres
Cinematography	: Romeo V. Vitug
Editing	: Augusto Salvador
Music	: Minda Azarcon
Year Produced	: 1974
Awards	: FAMAS (Best Supporting Actress, Best Screenplay, Best Story)
Other Information	: A trilogy: MGA HUGIS NG PAG-ASA (THE SHAPES OF HOPE), HELLOW SOLDIER, and BUKAS MADILIM. BUKAS (TOMORROW THE DARKNESS).

12. MANILA IN THE CLAWS OF NEON/MAYNILA SA MGA KUKO NG LIWANAG

Producer	: Cinema Artist Philippines
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Clodualdo del Mundo, Jr. Edgardo Reyes
Story	: Edgardo Reyes
Cinematography	: Mike de Leon
Music	: Max Jocson
Editor	: Ike Jarlego, Jr.
Year Produced	: 1975
Awards	: FAMAS (Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Supporting Actor, Best Screenplay, Best Story, Best Cinematography, Best Editing, Best Sound) Catholic Mass Media Awards (Special Award)
Other Information	: It has a French release.

13. DUNG-AW (LAMENTATIONS)

Producer	: Siguion-Reyna Productions
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Written by	: Lino Brocka
Cinematography	: Romeo Vitug
Music	: Lutgardo Labad
Year Produced	: 1975
Other Information	: Screened at the 1981 Nantes Film Festival, France

14. INSIANG

Producer	: CineManila Corporation
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Mario O'Hara Lamberto Antonio
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar
Production Design	: Fiel Zabat
Music	: Minda Azarcon
Editor	: Augusto Salavador
Sound	: Rudy Baldovino
Year Produced	: 1976
Awards	: FAMAS (Best Supporting Actress, Best Actress, Best Director) GAWAD URIAN (Best Supporting Actor, Best Director) Catholic Mass Media Award (Special Award) MetroManila Film Festival (Best Actress)

INSIANG (Continued)

Other
Information : Screened at the Cannes Film Festival (France)

15. LUNES MARTES MIYERKULES HUWEBES BIYERNES SABADO LINGGO (MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY SUNDAY)

Producer : Mever Films/CineManila
Direction : Lino Brocka
Screenplay : Orlando Nadres
Cinematography : Romy Vitug
Production Design : Fiel Zabat
Editing : Augusto Salvador
Choreography : Bayani Casimiro
Music : Danny Subido
Year Produced : 1976
Awards : GAWAD URIAN (Best Supporting Actress)

16. TAHAN NA EMPOY, TAHAN (CRY NO MORE EMPOY/STOP CRYING EMPOY)

Producer : CineManila Entertainment Corporation
Direction : Lino Brocka
Screenplay : Jose Dalisay, Jr.
Story : Jose Dalisay, Jr.
Cinematography : Jose Batac, Jr.
Editing : Augusto Salvador
Production Design : Fiel Zabat
Music : Ernani Cuenco
Sound : Luis Reyes
Year Produced : 1977
Awards : FAMAS (Best Supporting Actress and Best Child Actor)
Gawad Urian (Best Supporting Actress)

17. INAY (MOTHER)

Producer : Lotus Films Incorporated
Direction : Lino Brocka
Screenplay : Butch Dalisay, Jr.
Story : Lino Brocka

INAY (Continued)

Cinematography	: Jose Batac, Jr.
Editing	: Augusto Salvador
Production Design	: Fiel Zabat
Year Produced	: 1977

18. TADHANA: ITO AND LAHING PILIPINO (FATE: THIS IS THE FILIPINO RACE)

Producer	: National Media Production Center
Direction	: Lino Brocka Lamberto Avellana Manuel Conde Ishmael Bernal Joe Dagumboy
Screenplay	: Butch Dalisay, Jr. (For the episode on THE REFORM MOVEMENT)
Year Produced	: 1977
Other Information	: A government-produced series about the Filipino race. Lino Brocka directed the episode entitled " The Reform Movement".

19. AY NAKU, INAY! (MOMMY, OH NO!)

Producer	: Lotus Films Incorporated
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Jose Dalisay, Jr.
Cinematography	: Joe Batac, Jr.
Year Produced	: 1977
Awards	: FAMAS (Best Comedy)

20. RUBIA SERVIOS

Producer	: Sampaguita Pictures
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Mario O'Hara
Story	: Aida Sevilla Mendoza
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar
Editing	: Jose Tarnate
Production Design	: Mel Chionglo
Music	: Freddie Aguilar
Year Produced	: 1978
Awards	: MetroManila Film Festival (Best Editing)

21. GUMISING KA MARUJA (MARUJA, AWAKEN)

Producer	: FPJ Productions
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Tony Perez
Story	: Tony Perez
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar
Editor	: Augusto Salvador
Art Director	: Mel Chionglo
Sound	: Rolly Ruta
Year Produced	: 1978
Awards	: GAWAD URIAN (Best Cinematography) FAMAS (Best Actress, Best Editing, Best Sound)

22. HAYOP SA HAYOP (BETWEEN ANIMALS/BEAST TO BEAST)

Producer	: Showbiz Incorporated
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Mario O'Hara David Martin Jose Dalisay, Jr.
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar
Editor	: Augusto Salvador
Music	: Ernani Cuenco
Editor	: Augusto Salvador
Year Produced	: 1978

23. ANG TATAY KONG NANAY (MY FATHER WHO'S ALSO A MOTHER/MY FATHER MY MOTHER)

Producer	: Lotus Films Incorporated
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Orlando Nadres
Cinematography	: Jose Batac, Jr.
Editor	: Augusto Salvador
Production Design	: Fiel Zabat
Music	: Lutgardo Labad
Year Produced	: 1978
Awards	: FAMAS (Best Child Actor)

24. MANANAYAW (TAXI DANCER/THE DANCER)

Producer	: Emperor Films International Incorporated
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Jose Dalisay, Jr.

MANANAYAW (Continued)

Cinematographer	: Jose Batac, Jr.
Editor	: Segundo Ramos
Production Design	: Fiel Zabat
Music	: George Canseco
Year Produced	: 1978

25. INA, KAPATID, ANAK (MOTHER, SISTER, DAUGHTER)

Producer	: Regal Films
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Mel Chionglo
Story	: Mel Chionglo
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar
Editing	: Augusto Salvador
Art Director	: Mel Chionglo
Music	: Ernani Cuenco
Sound	: Luis Reyes Ramon Reyes
Year Produced	: 1979
Awards	: GAWAD URIAN (Best Actress) Catholic Mass Media Awards (Best Film, Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Lead Performer)

26. INA KA NG ANAK MO (YOU ARE THE MOTHER OF YOUR CHILD)

Producer	: Movie Masters
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Jose Dalisay, Jr.
Story	: Letty Farnas
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar
Editing	: Edgardo "Boy" Vinarao
Production Design	: Joey Luna
Music	: Ed Pagayon
Year Produced	: 1979
Awards	: FAMAS (Best Actress) MetroManila Film Festival (Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress and Second Best Picture)

27. INIT (PASSIONATE HEAT/HEAT WAVE)

Producer	: Showbiz Incorporated
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Tony Perez
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar
Editing	: Augusto Salvador
Music	: Ernani Cuenco
Year Produced	: 1979
Awards	: FAMAS (Best Supporting Actor)

28. JAGUAR

Producer	: Bancom Audiovision Productions
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Ricardo Lee Jose F. Lacaba
Story	: Nick Joaquin
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar
Production Design	: Bobby Bautista
Music	: The Vanishing Tribe
Editor	: Rene Tala
Year Produced	: 1979
Awards	: FAMAS (Best Picture, Best Director) GAWAD URIAN (Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Supporting Actor, Best Supporting Actress, Best Cinematography, Best Screenplay) Catholic Mass Media Awards (Special Award for Lino Brocka and JAGUAR)
Other Information	: Screened at the Cannes Film Festival 1980 (France)

29. BONA

Producer	: NV Productions
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Cenen Ramones
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar
Editor	: Augusto Salvador
Production Design	: Joey Luna
Music	: Max Jocson
Sound	: Ben Patajo Rudy Baldovino
Year Produced	: 1980

BONA (Continued)

Awards	: Gawad Urian (Best Actress)
Other Information	: Screened at the Cannes Film Festival 1980 (France) Screened at the New York Film Forum

30. NAKAW NA PAG-IBIG (STOLEN MOMENTS OF LOVE/STOLEN LOVE)

Producer	: Associated Entertainment
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Eddie Naval
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar
Editing	: Augusto Salvador
Music	: George Canseco
Year Produced	: 1980

31. ANGELA MARKADO (MARKED ANGEL/MARKED ANGELA)

Producer	: Four Seasons Incorporated
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Jose F. Lacaba
Story	: Carlo J. Caparas
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar
Editor	: Augusto Salvador
Production Design	: Joey Luna
Year Produced	: 1980
Awards	: GAWAD URIAN (Best Cinematography)
Other Information	: Awarded Best Film at the Nantes Film Festival (France) 1983 Pesaro Critic's Price

32. BINATA SI MISTER, DALAGA SI MISIS (SINGLE HUSBAND, SINGLE WIFE)

Producer	: Special People Productions
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Jose Dalisay, Jr.
Story	: Efren Abueg
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar
Editor	: Efren Jarlego
Production Design	: Joey Luna
Music	: Rey Valera
Year Produced	: 1981

33. HELLO YOUNG LOVERS

Producer	: Regal Films Incorporated
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Jose Dalisay, Jr.
Story	: Jose Dalisay, Jr.
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar
Editor	: Rogelio Salvador
Production Design	: Joey Luna
Music	: Rey Valera
Year Produced	: 1981

34. KONTROBERSYAL (CONTROVERSIAL)

Producer	: Four Seasons Films/Peter L. Gan
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Tony Perez
Story	: Tony Perez
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar
Editor	: Augusto Salvador
Production Design	: Joey Luna Benjie de Guzman
Choreography	: Bobby Salvador
Year Produced	: 1981
Awards	: GAWAD URIAN (Best Actress)

35. BURGIS (BOURGEOIS)

Producer	: Four Seasons Films
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Jose Dalisay, Jr.
Cinematorgraphy	: Conrado Baltazar
Editor	: Ace Salvador
Music	: Rey Valera
Production Design	: Joey Luna
Year Produced	: 1981

36. CAUGHT IN THE ACT

Producer	: Regal Films Incorporated
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Joey Reyes
Story	: Joey Reyes
Cinematography	: Totoy Jacinto
Editor	: Rogelio Salvador

CAUGHT IN THE ACT (Continued)

Production Design	: Joey Luna
Music	: Max Jocson
Year Produced	: 1982

37. PX: A THIRD WORLD STORY OF LOVE AND HATE

Producer	: Sining Silangan/Trigon Cinema Arts
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Ricardo Lee
Story	: Ricardo Lee
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar
Editor	: Efren Jarlego
Production Design	: Joey Luna
Sound	: Rolly Ruta
Year Produced	: 1982
Other Information	: Screened at the 1983 Manila International Film Festival

38. IN THIS CORNER

Producer	: Martierra Films/Agrix Films
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Reuel Molina Aguila
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar
Editor	: Augusto Salvador
Production Design	: Peque Gallaga
Music	: Rudy Rivero
Year Produced	: 1982

39. PALIPAT-LIPAT, PAPALIT-PALIT (CHANGING LOVERS)

Producer	: HPS Film Productions
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Bibeth Orteza
Cinematography	: Alvaro de Guzman
Editor	: Rene Tala
Production Design	: Joey Luna
Music	: Tito Sotto
Year Produced	: 1982
Awards	: GAWAD URIAN (Best Supporting Actor)

40. MOTHER DEAR

Producer	: Regal Films Incorporated
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Jose Javier Reyes
Story	: Jose Javier Reyes
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar
Editor	: Rogelio Salvador
Production Design	: Joey Luna
Year Produced	: 1982

41. CAIN AT ABEL (CAIN AND ABEL)

Producer	: Cine Suerte Incorporated
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Ricardo Lee
Story	: Ricardo Lee
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar
Editor	: Efren Jarlego
Production Design	: Joey Luna
Music	: Max Jocson
Year Produced	: 1982
Awards	: FAMAS (Best Picture, Best Child Actor) Film Academy of the Philippines (FAP) Awards (Best Actor, Best Supporting Actress)

42. STRANGERS IN PARADISE

Producer	: Regal Films Incorporated
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Jose Javier Reyes
Story	: Jose Javier Reyes
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar
Editor	: Rogelio Salvador
Music	: Rey Valera
Year Produced	: 1983

43. AKIN ANG IYONG KATAWAN (I OWN YOUR BODY)

Producer	: Golden Dragon Films
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Jose Javier Reyes
Story	: Jose Javier Reyes
Cinematography	: Pedro Manding
Editor	: George Jarlego
Music	: Willie Yusi
Sound	: Ramon Reyes

AKIN ANG IYONG KATAWAN (Continued)

Production Design	: Joey Luna
Year Produced	: 1984

44. HOT PROPERTY

Producer	: PLG Pictures/Peter L. Gan
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Jose Carreon
Story	: Jose Carreon
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar
Editor	: Efren Jarlego
Music	: Willie Yusi
Year Produced	: 1984
Awards	: MetroManila Film Festival (Third Best Picture, Best Supporting Actor, and Best Music)

45. ADULTERY: AIDA MACARAEG CASE NO. 7892

Producer	: Regal Films Incorporated
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Jose Javier Reyes
Story	: Jose Javier Reyes
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar
Editor	: Rogelio Salvador
Theme Song by	: Gines Tan
Music	: Lutgardo Labad
Sound	: Leonides Maclang
Year Produced	: 1984

46. EXPERIENCE

Producer	: Regal Films Incorporated
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Jose F. Lacaba Roy Iglesias
Story	: Jose F. Lacaba
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar
Editor	: Rogelio Salvador
Music	: Willie Yusi
Year Produced	: 1984

47. MIGUELITO: ANG BATANG REBELDE (MIGUELITO: THE REBEL YOUTH)

Producer	: D'Wonder Films/Alex Muhlach
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Jose Dalisay, Jr.
Cinematography	: Armando Jarlego
Year Produced	: 1985
Awards	: FAMAS (Best Story)
	FIlm Academy of the Philippines (FAP) Awards (BestSupporting Actress, Best Actress)
	GAWAD URIAN (Best Supporting Actress, Best Actress)
	Catholic Mass Media Awards (Best Actress, Best Supporting Actress, Best Film, Best Director, and a Special Award)
	STAR Awards (Best Movie)

48. WHITE SLAVERY

Producer	: Special People Productions
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Ricardo Lee
Story	: Ricardo Lee
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar
Editor	: George Jarlego
Music	: Willie Yusi
Year Produced	: 1985

49. MY COUNTRY: IN DESPERATION/BAYAN KO: KAPIT SA PATALIM

Producer	: Malaya Films/Stephen Films/Tony Gonzales
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Jose F. Lacaba
Cinematography	: Conrado Baltazar
Editor	: George Jarlego
Production Design	: Joey Luna
Sound	: Pierre Rissient
Year Produced	: 1985
Awards	: FAMAS (Best Actor)
	GAWAD URIAN (Best Screenplay, Best Actress, Best Actor)
	Film Academy of the Philippines (FAP) Awards (Best Director, Best Story Adaptation)
	STAR Awards (Best Director, Best Actor)
	Catholic Mass Media Awards (Best Actor, Special Award)

MY COUNTRY: IN DESPERATION (Continued)

Other Information	: Named Best Film by the British Film Institute Screened at the Cannes Film Festival (France)

50. ANO ANG KULAY NG MUKHA NG DIYOS? (WHAT IS THE COLOR OF GOD'S FACE?/HAVE YOU SEEN GOD'S FACE?)

Producer	: Lea Productions
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Jose Dalisay, Jr.
Story	: Jose Dalisay, Jr.
Cinematography	: Pedro Mandig
Editor	: Augusto Salvador
Production Design	: Benjie de Guzman
Sound	: Rolly Ruta
Year Produced	: 1985
Awards	: Catholic Mass Media Awards (Best Screenplay, Best Supporting Actor) STAR Awards (Best Screen Adaptation, Best Child Performer)

51. NAPAKASAKIT KUYA EDDIE (IT HURTS SO MUCH BROTHER EDDIE/HEAR MY PROBLEMS BROTHER EDDIE)

Producer	: Special People Productions/Boy C. de Guia
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Jose Javier Reyes
Cinematography	: Pedro Manding
Editor	: Ruben Natividad
Production Design	: Edel Templonuevo
Year Produced	: 1986
Awards	: GAWAD URIAN (Best Supporting Actor) Catholic Mass Media Awards (Best Supporting Actor)

52. HINUGOT SA LANGIT (PULLED FROM THE HEAVENS)

Producer	: Regal Films Incorporated
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Year Produced	: 1986

53. MAGING AKIN KA LAMANG (IF ONLY YOU'LL BE MINE)

Producer	: Viva Films Incorporated
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Jose Dalisay, Jr.
Additional Dialogue	: Rene O. Villanueva
Story	: Ric S. Aquino
Cinematography	: Rody Lacap
Editor	: Ike Jarlego, Jr.
Production Design	: Edgar Martin Littaua
Year Produced	: 1987
Awards	: FAMAS (Best Supporting Actor) Film Academy of the Philippines (FAP) Awards (Best Actress, Best Supporting Actor, Best Song) STAR Awards (Best Actress)

54. PASAN KO ANG DAIGDIG (I CARRY THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD/I CARRY THE WORLD ON MY SHOULDERS)

Producer	: Viva Films Incorporated
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Rene O. Villanueva Orlando Nadres
Story	: Pablo S. Gomez
Cinematography	: Rody Lacap
Editor	: Ike Jarlego, Jr.
Year Produced	: 1987

55. NATUTULOG PA ANG DIYOS (GOD IS STILL SLEEPING)

Producer	: Seiko Films/Robbie Tan
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Orlando Nadres Gina Marissa Tagasa
Story	: Ruben Marcelino
Cinematography	: JR Peterman
Editor	: Augusto Salvador
Music	: Dionisio Buencamino
Year Produced	: 1988
Awards	: STAR Awards (Best Screen Adaptation, Theme Song of the Year)

56. MACHO DANCER

Producer	: Special People Production/Boy C. de Guia
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Ricardo Lee Amado Lacuesta
Story	: Ricardo Lee Amado Lacuesta
Cinematography	: Joe Tutanes
Editor	: Ruben Natividad
Distributor	: Viva Films Incorporated
Year Produced	: 1988
Awards	: GAWAD URIAN (Best Supporting Actor, Best Supporting Actress)
Other Information	: Screened at the Toronto Film Festival

57. KAILAN MAHUHUGASAN ANG KASALANAN? (WHEN CAN YOU WASH YOURSELF OF YOUR SINS, WHEN WILL YOU BE FORGIVEN FOR YOUR SINS)

Producer	: Vision Films/Charo Santos
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Jose Dalisay, Jr.
Story	: Salvador Royales
Cinematography	: Rody Lacap
Editor	: Augusto Salvador
Music	: Willy Cruz
Year Produced	: 1989
Awards	: Catholic Mass Media Awards (Best Actress)

58. TATLONG MUKHA NG PAG-IBIG (THREE FACES OF LOVE)

Producer	: Viva Films Incorporated
Direction	: Lino Brocka Emmanuel Borlaza Leroy Salvador
Screenplay	: Roy Iglesias Jose Javier Reyes Loida Virina
Cinematography	: Ato Bernardo Pedro Manding Romeo Vitug
Editor	: Ruben Natividad
Year Produced	: 1989

TATLONG MUKHA NG PAG-IBIG (Continued)

Other
Information : This film is a trilogy. Lino Brocka directed one of the stories. The other Directors are Leroy Salvador and Emmanuel H. Borlaza.

59. BABANGON AKO'T DUDURUGIN KITA (I'LL RISE AND PULVERIZE YOU/I WILL MAKE TRUE MY REVENGE)

Producer : Viva Films Incorporated
Direction : Lino Brocka
Screenplay : Jo-en Chionglo
Story : Gilda Olvidado
Cinematography : Pedro Manding
Editor : Ike Jarlego, Jr.
Year Produced : 1989

60. FIGHT FOR US/LES INSOUMIS/ORAPRONOBIS

Producer : Salvador Picciotto
Direction : Lino Brocka
Distributor : Canon Films/Pathe Europa
Screenplay : Jose F. Lacaba
Cinematography : Rody Lacap
Editor : George Jarlego
Sabine Mamou
Bob Wade
Year Produced : 1989
Other
Information : Banned from screening in the Philippines.
Co-production between French producer Bernadette International and Philippine Company Special People Productions.
Screened at the New York Film Festival (USA).
Screened at the Cannes Film Festival (France).

61. HAHAMAKIN LAHAT (WILL TRAMPLE ON ANYTHING FOR SUCCESS)

Producer : Regal Films Incorporated
Direction : Lino Brocka
Screenplay : Ricardo Lee
Cinematography : Pedro Manding
Editing : George Jarlego
Production Design : Benjie de Guzman

HAHAMAKIN LAHAT (continued)

Music : Nonong Buencamino
Year Produced : 1990

62. KUNG TAPOS NA ANG KAILANMAN (WHEN FOREVER ENDS)
Producer : Seiko Films/Robbie Tan
Direction : Lino Brocka
Screenplay : Gina Marissa Tagasa
Story : Nerissa Cabral
Cinematography : Pedro Manding
Editor : Ike Jarlego, Jr.
Year Produced : 1990

63. BIKTIMA (VICTIM)
Producer : Viva Films Incorporated
Direction : Lino Brocka
Screenplay : Jose Dalisay, Jr.
Cinematography : Rody Lacap
Editor : George Jarlego
Year Produced : 1990
Awards : Film Academy of the Philippines (FAP) Awards (Best Actor)

64. AMA...BAKIT MO AKO PINABAYAAN? (FATHER...WHY DID YOU ABANDON ME?)
Producer : Seiko Films
Direction : Lino Brocka
Screenplay : Lino Brocka
Story : Pablo Baltazar
Cinematography : Pedro Manding
Editor : Efren Jarlego
Year Produced : 1990

65. DIRTY AFFAIR/GUMAPANG KA SA LUSAK
Producer : Viva Films
Direction : Lino Brocka
Screenplay : Ricardo Lee
Year Produced : 1990
Awards : Film Academy of the Philippines (FAP) Awards (Best Picture, Best Director)

DIRTY AFFAIR (Continued)

Cinematography	: Pedro Manding, Jr.
Other Information	: Screened at the San Francisco Film Festival 1992

66. KISLAP SA DILIM (A SPARK IN THE DARK)

Producer	: Bonanza Films/Reflection Films
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Gina Marissa Tagasa
Story	: Elena Patron
Cinematography	: Clodualdo Austria
Editor	: George Jarlego
Year Produced	: 1991

67. SA KABILA NG LAHAT (IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING)

Producer	: Viva Films Incorporated
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Roy Iglesias
Story	: Roy Iglesias
Cinematography	: Clodualdo Austria
Editor	: George Jarlego
Music	: Jaime Fabregas
Year Produced	: 1991
Awards	: STAR Awards (Movie of the Year, Director of the Year)

68. MAKIUSAP KA SA DIYOS (PLEAD WITH GOD)

Producer	: Regal Films Incorporated
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Raquel Villavicencio
Story	: Raquel Villavicencio
Cinematography	: Pedro Manding Clodualdo Austria
Editor	: George Jarlego
Production Design	: Benjie de Guzman
Year Produced	: 1991
Awards	: PMPC Awards (Movie Director of the Year, Movie Editor of the Year) GAWAD URIAN (Best Supporting Actor)

69. HUWAG MONG SALINGIN ANG SUGAT KO (DON'T TOUCH MY WOUND/NOLI MI TANGERE)

Producer	: Goldi Pictures/Vic Tan
Direction	: Lino Brocka
Screenplay	: Ricardo Lee
Story	: Lino Brocka
Cinematography	: Clodualdo Austria
Editor	: George Jarlego
Year Produced	: 1991
Other Information	: Lino Brocka was in the last phases of shooting for this film when he died. Actor Christopher de Leon and Director Ishamel Bernal were supposed to finish the film. As of this writing, the film remains unfinished.

70. IYONG IYO ANG KATAWAN KO (I GIVE YOU MY BODY/MY BODY IS YOURS)

Producer	: Unknown
Year Produced	: Unknown

71. LAMPANG KERUBIN (LIMPING CHERUBIM)

Producer	: NV Productions
Year Produced	: 1991
Other Information	: Unreleased

72. HAPDI (PAIN)

Producer	: ABS-CBN Television Channel 2
Year Produced	: 1991
Other Information	: Marketed as a "tele-movie" aired over ABS-CBN Channel 2 in the Drama Anthology *MAALA-ALA MO KAYA (CAN YOU REMEMBER?)*.

73. HOW ARE THE KIDS?

Producer	: C19 Productions
Direction	: Lino Brocka (for "Oca") Rolan Bykov (for "Llouba") Euzhan Palcy (for "Hassane") Ciro Duran (for "Carmelo") Jean-Luc Godard (for "The Infancy of Art")

HOW ARE THE KIDS (Continued)

Direction	: Anne-Marie Mieville (for "The Infancy of Art") Jerry Lewis (for "Boy")
Screenplay	: Lino Brocka ("Oca")
Story	: Lino Brocka ("Oca")
Cinematography	: Rody Lacap ("Oca")
Editing	: George Jarlego ("Oca")
Music	: Nonong Buencamino ("Oca")

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