MOVIE TIMES

Published 1984. Author, Isagani R. Cruz. With an Introduction by Bienvenido Lumbera. Manila: National Book Store.

Movie Times is an anthology of film articles, previously published in diverse newspapers and magazines. Illustrated and indexed, the book is divided into three parts: "Film in the Modern Filipino World," "The Landscape of the Filipino Film," and "A Gallery of Film Artists." The second and third sections contain reviews arranged according to issues and filmmakers, respectively; the issues are *komiks*, first films, Filipinos as rebels, Filipinos abroad, "plagiarism, influence, and spoofs," and mediocrity, while the film artists are directors Ishmael Bernal, Lino Brocka, Celso Ad. Castillo, Gerardo de Leon, Mike de Leon, Maryo J. de los Reyes, Marilou Diaz-Abaya, Laurice Guillen, Mario O'Hara, Fernando Poe Jr, Eddie Romero, and scriptwriter Ricky Lee.

It is in the first section that the author's critical essays are compiled: "Understanding Movies," "Books on Films," "Years in Review," "The Betamax Controversy," "Why Study Popular Culture?" "The *Siyanga Pala* Syndrome," "Censorship," and "For Teachers Only: Using Film to Teach Literature," which was part of the ***Proceedings of the 1980 CETA Convention of 1981***, 1981. Among the titles, the first presents Cruz's framework for film appreciation, stipulating three elements that constitute his definition of a good movie: technical excellence, literary value, and cinematic sense. "Why Study Popular Culture?" acknowledges the importance of approaches drawn from sociology, history, and structuralism—a view capably realized by Cruz himself in a number of his critical works published after ***Movie Times***.

In the end, the book can be said to indicate where Cruz has come from just as it also provides an effective recollection of a number of local film titles. ● Joel David

THE NATIONAL PASTIME: CONTEMPORARY PHILIPPINE CINEMA

Published 1990. Author, Joel David. Pasig City: Anvil Publishing Inc.

FIELDS OF VISION: CRITICAL APPLICATIONS IN RECENT PHILIPPINE CINEMA

Published 1995. Author, Joel David. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

WAGES OF CINEMA: FILM IN PHILIPPINE PERSPECTIVE

Published 1998. Author, Joel David. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press.

Joel David released these three books on Philippine cinema in the last decade of the 20th century.

The National Pastime is a compilation of over 50 reviews of movies in the 1980s and critical essays on film that were published in ***National Midweek*** magazine, where David was "reviewer in residence." He also discusses alternative works, such as short films, 16 mm, Super 8, video, television, *komiks*, stage, and book forms by reviewing notable or representative samples.

With an introduction by Bienvenido Lumbera, this book is divided into 10 sections. These are "Directors 1" (Eddie Romero and Mike de Leon), "Issue 1" (censorship, film reviewing, and criticism), "Genres" (horror, sex, and action), "Alternative 1" (formats), "Actors" (Niño Muhlach, Roderick Paulate, and Nora Aunor), "Directors 2" (Mario O'Hara and Peque Gallaga), "Issues 2" (the significance of the 1986 EDSA Revolt, the re-emergence of the studio system), "Genre" (melodrama), "Alternative 2" (media), and "Directors 3" (Ishmael Bernal and Lino Brocka).

The author opens the book with "A Second Golden Age (An Informal History)," an essay that takes its cue from Lumbera's historicization of a new Philippine cinema. David proposes to mark the beginning of the period with Lino Brocka's resurgence, particularly with his film ***Maynila: Sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag*** (***Manila: In the Claws of Light***), 1975, instead of basing it on the establishment of the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino (MPP) in 1976, and to end it with the EDSA Revolt in February 1986.

In the closing essay, "Ethics First (Rather Than Aesthetics)," David recommends formalist and structuralist approaches for local film practice. But in the epilogue, "Moving Picture: World's Shortest Prequel," he also offers ways to re-examine the wealth of ideas he presented in the book.

Whether he is evaluating *masa* comedies and melodramas, such as ***Kumander Gringa*** (Commander Gringa), 1988, and ***Nagbabagang Luha*** (Smoldering Tears), 1989, experimental forms like ***Bilanggo sa Dilim*** (Prisoner in the Dark), 1986, or a cause celèbre like ***Orapronobis*** (***Fight for Us***), 1989, David pulls out all the stops with his acerbic wit, masterful command of film theory and cinematic language, regard for history and culture, and passionate faith in cinema.

In ***Fields of Vision***, David invests himself in a variety of critical enterprises and divides them into three parts: "Panorama," "Viewpoints," and "Perspectives." "Panorama" is a lengthy and dense essay that pinpoints the "non- or anti-Hollywood influences in local cinema," particularly how and where modifications or differences occurred. One such influence is neorealism, which is exemplified by the works of Italian directors such as Roberto Rossellini (***Rome, Open City***, 1945) and Vittorio De Sica (***The Bicycle Thief***, 1948). Neorealist films were marked by the primacy of sociopolitical themes, and the practice of using nonprofessional actors, actual locations, reasonable budgets, and basic equipment. Neorealism was perceived as a challenge and a conspicuous departure from the Hollywood model of film production.

David points out that when neorealism reached the country in the 1950s, its most prominent proponents were Lamberto Avellana, ***Anak Dalita*** (***The Ruins***), 1956, and Gregorio Fernandez, ***Malvarosa***, 1958, who both worked within the local studio system. They were able to exhibit their neorealist tendencies in the so-called prestige products of studios—films meant for the international festival circuit. In short, even if they took their cues from the European neorealists, they succeeded in creating films that were "different" in the sense that these works could not have possibly matched the moneymaking ability of surefire hits. Instead, these prestige movies were aimed at earning

international awards, citations, or plaudits to boost the studios' image.

"Viewpoints" includes works David produced during his "comparative reviews" days. An example of this practice is "Woman-Worthy," David's take on Chito Roño's ***Kasalanan Bang Sambahin Ka?*** (Is It a Sin to Worship You?), 1990, and Brocka's ***Hahamakin Lahat*** (***All Be Damned***), 1990. David uses one critical heading for both films for good reason: they are melodramas with female leads who are unlike the long-suffering, passive Madonnas that Filipinos have gotten used to. Using this genre, Roño and Brocka get down and dirty—that is, they explore the desires and pleasures of the so-called bad girls instead. With this critical device, David frees himself to some degree from discussing the specifics of either film, thus leaving him with more room to expound on the generalities of both.

David's "canonizing projects" are in "Perspectives." An example is his "Ten Best" survey, which evolved from a group project of sorts during his stint as the secretary of the MPP. He eventually expanded his study and set definite criteria pertaining to data gathering and tabulation and the selection of respondents. His "Ten Best" lists focus on scholars, directors, critics, and screenwriters, among others.

In the third book, ***Wages of Cinema***, David scrutinizes deconstruction, historiography, postcolonialism, and other trends in Western film discourse in a critical interrogation of Philippine cinema. The book is not so much about the films discussed or film-related trends and developments as much as it is about the conditions that make their existence possible. It is David's attempt to situate or perhaps haul Philippine cinema onto the world stage, if you will.

The book has three main sections: "Subjectivities," "Specificities," and "Sexualities." In a marked departure from the first two books, David also includes foreign films, such as Robert Altman's ***Nashville***, 1975, Nagisa Oshima's ***In the Realm of the Senses***, 1976, and Régis Wargnier's ***Indochine***, 1992, as texts for study. These were mostly used in reassessing questions regarding gender, genre and race, structure as well as autobiography, and authorship that the author posed in his earlier writings "in the light of how these may best contribute to the interest of Philippine film criticism, production, and viewership." ● Eileen Ang

NATIONAL/TRANSNATIONAL: SUBJECT FORMATION AND MEDIA IN AND ON THE PHILIPPINES

Published 2001. Author, Rolando B. Tolentino. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

This book analyzes the media representations of the Philippine nation as well as the cultural politics involved in the formation of the Filipino subject through transnational media. The national, according to Tolentino, refers to the "disjunctures, primarily those generated from within, in which the nation... comes into being and ceaselessly defines itself." While the transnational refers to "the contending ways that capital, systems of power and knowledge, cosmopolitanism, urbanity, modernity, and postmodernity are penetrated within the nation's own being." For Tolentino, the critique of power "can materialize only by interfacing the national and the transnational."

Given this framework, Tolentino offers an evaluation of several texts in the three sections that constitute the book. The first section, "National/Transnational Disjuncture," juxtaposes the contending issues in the formation of the nation and the various representations of the Filipina. The first chapter of the section reads into the advertisements of mail-order brides. The second delineates the concept of "Inangbayan" (Motherland) in Lino Brocka's political films ***Bayan Ko: Kapit sa Patalim*** (My Country: Gripping the Knife's Edge), 1984, and ***Orapronobis*** (***Fight for Us***), 1989. And the third locates the place of the "Filipino/a" in Filipino/a American media arts.

The second section, "Colonial and Imperial Localities," evaluates how colonialism and imperialism have penetrated and defined what is national-local. Tolentino analyzes the tensions of nationalisms that exist in Antonio Roman's ***Los Ultimos de Filipinas*** (The Last from the Philippines), 1945, which is Spain's attempt at "defascistization," at the same time that it stakes a claim on the meaning of the 1896 Philippine Revolution. In the remaining two chapters in this section, he critiques the place of Kidlat Tahimik in the rhetoric of First World critical theory, especially in the work of Fredric Jameson, and the negotiation of national subjectivities in the autobiographical films of Kidlat and Nick Deocampo.

The final section, "Asia Pacific Imaginations," investigates how Filipino subjectivity is "produced" in Asia Pacific media texts. The first chapter of this section maps the "archipelagic space" of Philippine cinema vis-à-vis other Southeast Asian cinemas through a consideration of the omnibus film ***Southern Winds***, 1992. The second delves into the geopolitical spaces of Chinese city films and how the Filipino is animated in or by these films. The final chapter problematizes the practice of subcontracting labor in the realm of cinema and beyond it, as well as inside and outside of the nation. ● Patrick Campos

NATIVE RESISTANCE: PHILIPPINE CINEMA AND COLONIALISM, 1898 TO 1941

Published 1998. Author, Clodualdo del Mundo Jr. Manila: De La Salle University Press.

In this book, Clodualdo A. del Mundo contends that culture was a tool used by both the Spanish and American colonizers to further their conquest of the Philippines. However, he argues that the colonizers' tool was also a site of decolonization and "native resistance."

Through a careful analysis of four extant prewar Filipino films—***Giliw Ko*** (My Love), 1939, ***Tunay na Ina*** (Real Mother), 1939, ***Pakiusap*** (Plea), 1940 and ***Ibong Adarna*** (Adarna Bird), 1941—this book traces how traditional Spanish theatrical forms were indigenized into distinctly Filipino genres, such as the *moro-moro* and the *sarsuwela*. It also explores how the technology and practice of film arrived at a time of turbulent transition: the 300-year Spanish regime was drawing to a bloody close, the fires of revolution fueled the birth of the Filipino nation, and the Americans began their ruthless occupation of the Philippines with a lethal mix of culture and violence.

Within this historical context, del Mundo tracks how native resistance continued with the adaptation of cinema

itself, borrowing heavily from the traditions of moro-moro and sarsuwela. As such, the book debunks the common view of these movies as paltry imitations of glamorous Hollywood productions. Instead, it shows how Filipino films from this era were products of a foreign medium that was localized and modified to suit the sensibilities and realities of the native milieu.

The author, however, concedes that these films take on the colonizer's worldview, affirming the superiority of the imperialist, who rightly lords over his inferior—the native. In insidious but marked ways, this perspective made its presence known and felt. Heroic characters were portrayed by movie stars with refined, Caucasian features while villainous and second-fiddle roles were played by dark-skinned, dim-witted simpletons. Film plots seemed to champion the virtuous but downtrodden poor, but in reality they glorified the privileged and benevolent elite.

The book concludes with a chapter titled "Looking as Bondage," which discusses how local filmmakers still struggle to break free of this colonial legacy. It is up to them to retrace their roots and examine complex issues such as representation with fresh eyes, argues del Mundo. Because without new ways of seeing, Philippine cinema is doomed to remain shackled to the same old blinders that obscure meaning and meaningful work. ● Eileen Ang

NOTES ON PHILIPPINE CINEMA

Published 1989. Author, Emmanuel A. Reyes. Manila: De La Salle University Press.

This is a collection of critical essays as well as a transcription of Reyes's 1984 documentary ***Vic Silayan: An Actor Remembers***. The book contains 14 film reviews previously published between 1984 and 1987. They deal with ***Snake Sisters***, 1984, ***Kapitan Inggo: Kumakain ng Bala*** (Captain Inggo: Bullet-Eater), 1984, ***'Merika*** (America), 1984, ***Isla*** (Island), ***Boatman***, 1985, ***Virgin Forest***, 1985, ***Bomba Queen*** (Porn Queen), 1985, ***Miguelito: Batang Rebelde*** (Miguelito: Young Rebel), 1985, ***Scorpio Nights***, 1985, ***Silip*** (***Daughters of Eve***), 1985, ***Bagong Hari*** (New King), 1986, and ***Olongapo ... The Great American Dream***, 1987.

The essays include "Form in the Filipino Film," "Myth and Philippine Cinema," "Murder by Frame," "Black and White in Color: The Lure of Komiks Movies," "Does Political Repression Make Good Cinema?," "Images of Ourselves in Our Own Reality," "Why Does Somebody Else Have to Tell the Story of Our Revolution?," and "The Aesthetics of the Short Film." These constitute the author's articulation of his approaches to the appreciation of cinema in general and that of the Philippines in particular. The first two average about 30 pages each.

"Form in the Filipino Film" draws significantly from David Bordwell's "Classical Hollywood Cinema," Bordwell and Kristin Thompson's ***Film Art: An Introduction***, and W. Tatarkiewicz's "Form in the History of Aesthetics" in the ***Dictionary of the History of Ideas*** by Philip Weiner. After discussing ***Sister Stella L.***, 1984, in the context of "classical Hollywood cinema," Reyes opines that mainstream Filipino film has evolved its own narrative form, different from that of the Hollywood film. Hence, its conventions should not be seen as "flaws" but rather as "traits." Reyes then enumerates four formal traits manifested in Philippine cinema: "a scene-oriented narrative, a tendency for overt representation, circumlocutory dialog, and a narrative that emphasizes the centrality of the star."

"Myth and Philippine Cinema" has a five-part outline, consisting of the subtitles "Stranger Than Fiction," "On Themes, Messages, Symbols and Realism," "The World on Her Shoulders: Women in Melodrama," "Macho Fantasies: Philippine Cinema's Action Heroes," and "Gay and Really Useful: Homosexuality and Philippine Cinema." Here Reyes once more appropriates the same assertion in "Form in the Filipino Film" and suggests "myth in relation to a society's value system as revealed by cinema" as an additional subject for study. ● Joel David

READINGS IN PHILIPPINE CINEMA

Published 1982. Editor, Rafael Ma. Guerrero. Manila: Experimental Cinema of the Philippines (ECP).

This is an anthology of 26 articles grouped into four general topics. The articles in the section "History" include Santiago A. Pilar's "The Early Movies," P. T. Martin's "The 'Silent Pictures' Era in the Philippines," Celso Al. Carunungan's "Early Years of Philippine Movies," Jessie B. Garcia's "The Golden Decade of Filipino Movies," Agustin Sotto's "The Celluloid Route of ***Genghis Khan***," and Bienvenido Lumbera's "Problems in Philippine Film History." The section "Themes and Interpretations" includes Nicanor G. Tiongson's "From Stage to Screen: Philippine Dramatic Traditions and the Filipino Film," Petronilo Bn. Daroy's "Social Significance and the Filipino Cinema," Guerrero's "Tagalog Movies: A New Understanding," and Jose F. Lacaba's "Notes on 'Bakya': Being an Apologia of Sorts for Filipino Masscult." Essays in the section "Stars and Their Public" include Andres Cristobal Cruz's "Remembrance of Movies Past" and features by Virgilio S. Almario on Nora Aunor, by Quijano de Manila aka Nick Joaquin on Fernando Poe Jr, by Denise Chou Allas on Dolphy, and by Jullie Yap Daza on Eddie Rodriguez. The last section, "Directors and the Industry," contains Amadis Ma. Guerrero's "Gerardo de Leon: A Master Filmmaker Speaks Out"; Charles Tesson's "Gerardo de Leon: An Amazing Discovery" and "The Cult of the Image in Lino Brocka"; T. D. Agcaoili's "Lamberto V. Avellana: A National Artist and His Times"; Eddie Romero's "My Work and Myself," "A Film Director Speaks Out," and "Film Censorship and Social Change"; Rafael Ma. Guerrero's "Lino Brocka: Dramatic Sense, Documentary Aspirations"; Mario A. Hernando's "Ishmael Bernal: Merging Art and Commercialism"; and Lino Brocka's "Philippine Movies: Some Problems and Prospects."

As manifested in the scope of its concerns, the book aims to encourage an appreciation of its subject matter in both beginner and connoisseur, native or foreign. Guerrero's introduction, cognizant of the then sincere aspirations of his publisher, the Marcos-era ECP, announces: "Signs abound towards that unravelling progress of the Philippine cinema. For the first time it has become possible to believe that Tagalog movies cannot but become better ..." Thus, one can detect the wide-ranging optimism manifested in the arrangement of articles. Observations of various problematics are limited to the historical first half of the book. In the second half are unquestionably favorable assessments of accomplishments in Philippine cinema. ● Joel David