

The Sentrong Pangkultura ng Pilipinas (Cultural Center of the Philippines), the premiere government arts institution in the country, was established in 1969 to preserve, promote and enhance the Filipino people's cultural and artistic heritage. A reorganization in 1986 has added to that task the recognition and support — usually in the form of awards and grants — of outstanding Filipino artists who have made substantial contributions in their particular creative fields.

The new management also began to recognize cinema as a legitimate, popular and highly influential art form and to acknowledge the contribution of local filmmakers and other film artists in enriching the country's cultural life. This it has done by mapping out programs consisting of film showings and serious film discussions at the Center through its Coordinating Center for Film, and through outreach programs that have taken critics and filmmakers to several key provincial cities to disseminate the art of film through lectures and screenings of select full-length feature and short, experimental films.

Shortly after the death of Lino Brocka in 1991, the Center began to conceive of a worthy tribute to the versatile film maestro who was the first recipient of the institution's highest honor, the *Natatanging Gawad CCP* (Outstanding Artist Award) for cinema and theater in 1989 and once a participant to the CCP's outreach project. The CCP then organized film retrospectives and decided to publish a book that would lead to a deeper understanding of his life and work.

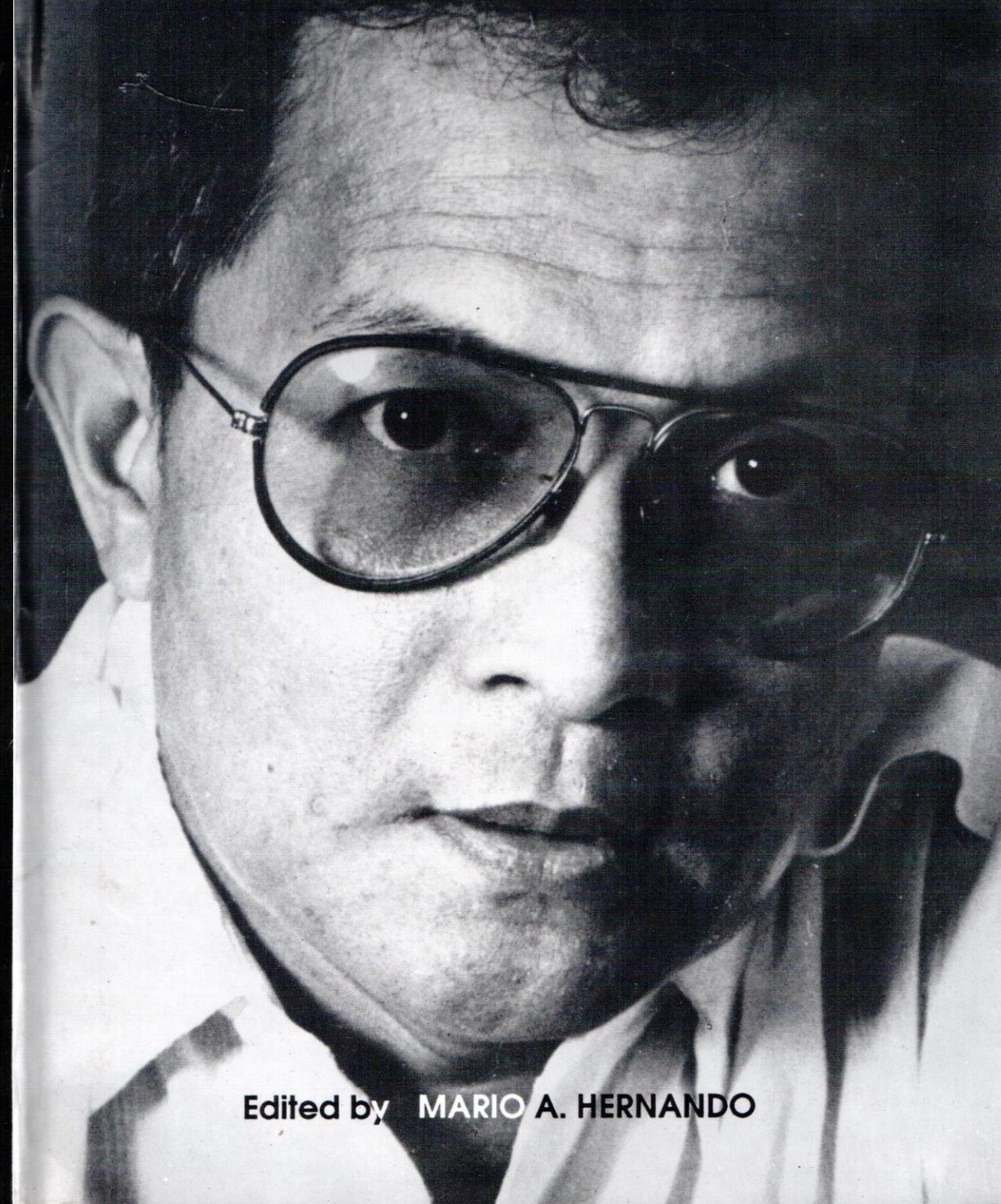
Lino Brocka : THE ARTIST AND HIS TIMES

Edited by Mario A. Hernandez

1993

Lino Brocka

## THE ARTIST AND HIS TIMES



Edited by MARIO A. HERNANDO

*LINO BROCKA, The Artist And His Times* is a study of the most influential and popular Filipino filmmaker who died in a car accident in May, 1991. From the '70s to his death, Brocka created a prodigious body of works, including the films that stand out as some of the most important ones ever produced in the Philippines: *Maynila, Sa Mga Kuko Ng Liwanag, Insiang, Bona, Jaguar, Kapit Sa Patalim* and *Orapronobis*.

The book attempts to present a comprehensive view of the artist's life and work, with special sections devoted to reviews of his most important films and a complete filmography prepared and written by a personal friend of the late artist, Agustin Sotto. It features fresh essays written by highly qualified authors on the subject's contribution to contemporary Philippine culture and history.

Though Brocka earned world renown as a director of realistic, socially meaningful film melodramas set in the squalid slums of Manila, he was also a towering figure in the Philippines as a social and political activist who relentlessly criticized the Marcos dictatorship and its successor, the Aquino regime for which he once worked briefly as a member of the Constitutional Commission. As a theater artist, he produced, directed and/or acted in some of the most successful and acclaimed theatrical presentations in Manila. His career as a TV director encompasses his entire professional life, with several TV series, shows and specials to his credit.

The book was edited by journalist Mario A. Hernandez, a senior editor at the daily newspaper *Malaya* and a film critic for print and the television show *Movie Magazine* on GMA-7.

Cover photograph by  
Jaime Zobel de Ayala  
1988

Cover design by  
Raffy Castañeda

Published by the  
Sentrong Pangkultura ng Pilipinas  
(Cultural Center of the Philippines)  
Coordinating Center for Film  
CCP Complex, Roxas Boulevard  
Manila, Philippines



**LINO BROCKA**  
**THE ARTIST AND HIS TIMES**

MARIO A. HERNANDO  
E D I T O R



SENTRONG PANGKULTURA NG PILIPINAS  
CULTURAL CENTER OF THE PHILIPPINES  
M A N I L A  
1 9 9 3



**EDITORIAL BOARD**  
Ma. Teresa Escoda Roxas  
Nicanor G. Tiongson  
Florendo R. Garcia

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**  
Mario A. Hernandez

**ASSOCIATE EDITOR**  
Agustin L. Sotto

**PROJECT DIRECTOR**  
Victoria D. Belarmino

**EDITORIAL STAFF**  
Anna Victoriano, *editorial assistant* • Angelo de Silva, *photographer*  
• Glenn S. Mas, *proofreader* • Ed Cabagnet, Marianela Garbo,  
Haitifha Oriemo, *administrative staff* • Tomas Vargas, Jeremias Pacheco,  
Manny Paparo, Pancho Alcazar, Melvin Ibasco, *support staff*

**ART DIRECTOR**  
Rafael Castañeda

**BOOK DESIGNERS**  
Rafael Castañeda and Felix Bacolor

ISBN 971-8546-16-2



**SENTRONG PANGKULTURA NG PILIPINAS**

Cultural Center of the Philippines  
Coordinating Center for Film  
CCP Complex, Roxas Boulevard  
Manila, Philippines

Copyright, Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1993.  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

No portion of this book — text, photograph or artwork — may be reproduced  
without the permission of the publisher and/or the authors and/or the photographers and artists.

COLOR SEPARATION BY CHROMAGRAPH • PRINTED BY RAINTREE PUBLISHING HOUSE  
FIRST PRINTING, 1993

Cover Photograph: Jaime Zobel de Ayala

The views and opinions in the articles are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher.

**CONTENTS**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>FOREWORD</b>   | 1   |
| <b>INTRODUCTION</b>   | 2   |
| <i>BIOGRAPHY</i>  | 5   |
| <hr/>   |     |
| <b>LINO BROCKA</b>  | 7   |
| <i>ARTICLES</i>   | 21  |
| <hr/>   |     |
| <b>THE THEATER ARTIST</b><br>Brocka's Theater: Something From The Heart<br><i>by John Ven Velasco</i>   | 23  |
| <b>THE FILM DIRECTOR</b><br>Lino Brocka: Director in Control<br>(Blending Popular Entertainment,<br>Realism and Social Comment)<br><i>by Mario A. Hernandez</i> | 38  |
| <b>THE TV ARTIST</b><br>Lino Brocka: The Craft and Business of Television<br><i>by Butch Francisco</i>  | 49  |
| <b>THE CO-SCRIPTWRITER</b><br>From Gingoog to Greenhills:<br>Lino and His Writers<br><i>by Jose Dalisay, Jr.</i>  | 74  |
| <b>THE ACTOR'S DIRECTOR</b><br>Lino Brocka and His Actor's:<br>A Question of Trust<br><i>by Nestor U. Torre</i>   | 86  |
| <b>THE INTERNATIONAL ARTIST</b><br>Lino Brocka — The International Director<br><i>by Agustin L. Sotto</i>   | 101 |
| <b>THE STREET PARLIAMENTARIAN</b><br>The Brocka Battles<br><i>by Jo-ann Q. Maglipon</i>   | 118 |



REVIEWS

COLOR FOLIO

TUBOG SA GINTO

by Clodualdo del Mundo, Jr.

TINIMBANG KA NGUNI'T KULANG,  
MAYNILA SA MGA KUKO NG LIWANAG, DUNG-AW:  
THE CULT OF THE IMAGE IN LINO

by Charles Tesson

TATLO, DALAWA, ISA

by Alfredo Roces

MAYNILA SA MGA KUKO NG LIWANAG

by Bienvenido Lumbera

INSIANG

THE SLUM EATS ITS OWN CHILDREN

by Mario A. Hernando

LUNES, MARTES, MIYERKULES,  
HUWEBES, BIYERNES, SABADO, LINGGO

'Lunes, Martes...' Plateau of Contrivance

by Alfred Yuson

INAY

The Matriarch According to Lino Brocka

by Pablo Tariman

INA, KAPATID, ANAK

by Pio de Castro III

JAGUAR AND BONA

Slum Triptych: The Struggle for Dignity

by Alain Garsault (Translated by Carolina S. Malay)

NAKAW NA PAG-IBIG

by Isagani R. Cruz

KAPIT SA PATALIM AND ORAPRONOBIS

Stories of Our Country and Brocka's Melodramatic Strategy

by Clodualdo del Mundo, Jr.

MIGUELITO

A Powerhouse Cast

by Butch Francisco

155

157

60

163

165

169

172

175

177

180

182

184

191

MACHO DANCER

Macho Dancer: A Postscript

by Nick Cruz, S.J.

ORAPRONOBIS

Lino Brocka's Orapronobis

The Film of the Decade

by Emmanuel A. Reyes

SA KABILA NG LAHAT

Sa Kabila ng Lahat: Brocka's Success Within a Compromise

by Grace Javier Alfonso

INTERVIEWS

BROCKA'S RESPONSE TO MAGSAYSAY AWARD

BROCKA'S BREAKTHROUGHS

by Justino Dormiendo

A, EWAN, BASTA KINA DIREK PA RIN AKO

by Ricardo F. Lo

LINO BROCKA: DIREKTOR PARA SA MGA PILIPINO

by Fanny A. Garcia

ON "TINIMBANG KA NGUNI'T KULANG"

by Agustin L. Sotto

ON "MAYNILA SA MGA KUKO NG LIWANAG"

by Agustin L. Sotto

ON "INSIANG"

by Agustin L. Sotto

ON "JAGUAR"

by Agustin L. Sotto

ON "BONA"

by Agustin L. Sotto

PETE LACABA ON "KAPIT SA PATALIM"

by Agustin L. Sotto

FILMOGRAPHY — by Agustin L. Sotto

GLOSSARY

NOTES ON THE CONTRIBUTORS

193

195

199

203

205

207

211

213

220

222

226

232

233

237

245

309

310



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mrs. Pilar Brocka and Danilo Brocka  
National Library and Adoracion Bolos, Ma. Luisa Moran and Lita Almazan  
Ramon Magsaysay Foundation • PETA  
CCP Coordinating Centers for Literature • Broadcast Arts  
Visual Arts • Museo • Library • PR • Marketing  
Production Design • Theater Operations  
Rosalie Matilac • Bong Brillante • Arnold Jumpay  
Boner Medina • Reb • Cesar Hernando  
Herminio S. Beltran, Jr. • Enrico J. L. Manlapaz

## FOREWORD

**I**n the highly commercial world of movies and entertainment, where the concern is for instant hits and success, little is devoted to the serious study and appreciation of artists and their works. As a result, students, scholars and ordinary moviegoers have only a few books to refer to — to gain a broader perspective and deeper insight on Philippine movies. Even more curiously, very little has been published to provide readers with objective and informative materials on the individual artists.

*Lino Brocka: The Artist And His Times* addresses this lack, being the first book ever to look into the life and times, as well as the works, of an important Filipino artist. It is both a loving and critical look at the controversial, multi-talented and internationally renowned director of films, theatrical presentations, television shows, and militant activist. For the longtime Lino Brocka follower, this book is meant to be a second look at the highly accomplished talent and a first attempt to appreciate his achievements in their totality. For others, this serves as both an introduction and an initial appreciation.

The Sentrong Pangkultura ng Pilipinas (Cultural Center of the Philippines) has always taken an active role in instilling appreciation of Philippine arts and culture, often by honoring individual artists. It is only fitting and proper that the Center acknowledge the significant contribution of film artists, and this it has done through various projects and this publication. We are proud of this modest effort, a meaningful and, hopefully, useful tribute to the artist who helped vastly in upgrading and professionalizing local cinema.



MA. TERESA ESCODA ROXAS  
PRESIDENT



NICANOR G. TIONGSON  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR/  
VICE PRESIDENT



# INTRODUCTION

**I**N the early '70s, barely out of college, I had my first encounter with Lino Brocka when I tagged along with a writer-friend who was interviewing him at the old ABS-CBN studio at Roxas Blvd. in Pasay City. Lino then was the talent to watch; he was already riding high as a movie director with a string of hits for Lea Productions, but here, he was doing an episode for a TV drama series with young actress Hilda Koronel.

In this first meeting with him, Lino was initially rather reserved and dispassionate as he fielded questions about his rosy career in the movies and the stars, but as the interview drifted toward the subjects that fired him up, including censorship and the critics, he began to drop his guard and became spontaneous, hurling invectives and exhibiting the trademark candor and passion that would make him one of the most colorful and aggressive personalities ever to grace Philippine show business. Yet it looked like he was an outsider that time. On the bohemian critics who panned his movies, he would say, "They're one of a kind, these so-called artists who hang around Los Indios Bravos (the hip joint frequented by Manila's café society in the late '60s and early '70s), and the moment you enter the door, all eyes will focus on you, and they will size you up, their brows arched, and look down on you. *Akala mo, kung sino sila.*" In one of the old interview pieces included in this book, Ricardo F. Lo has portrayed accurately the same Lino Brocka that I met that evening, though Ricky's interview with the director was conducted at another time.

My next meeting with Lino would be at Club Filipino at Greenhills in 1975, where movie industry leaders were honoring the winners of the just-concluded FAMAS Awards with a dinner, and most of the winners then were people involved in the two movies which Lino directed, *Tinimbang Ka Ngunit Kulang* and *Tatlo, Dalawa, Isa*, including Lolita Rodriguez and Anita Linda. We were there as one of the non-FAMAS people invited by movie industry leaders to form the panel that would make the final selection of FAMAS Award winners. That time, the FAMAS was wracked with enough controversy to require the interference and independent judgment of outsiders to salvage the group's credibility and integrity. That was then. Seated beside me, Lino was telling me something that one thought was being said in confidence: "I thank you guys, and not those who sell movie awards." But when it was his turn to rise and speak, he said the very same thing with even more ferocity and sharpness to everyone present.

There would be many other encounters with Lino. Some friendly, others cold or hostile. He would call me up to agree and disagree with me on something I had just written, and he would go on interminably. This fragile critic-artist relationship would end when he refused to accept the Urian best director award for his film *Jaguar* from the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino, which I was part of, at the Urian Awards rite.

Years later, there would be a thawing, especially when we were part of the rising tide against the dictatorship, he as leader, and we would bump into each other in the streets on the same side fighting the same battle as comrades-in-arms. However, even this could not totally remove the tension that naturally exists between one who reviews and criticizes movies regularly and one who does the movies.

Nevertheless, one cannot fail to appreciate the fact that from the time Lino rose as a bright star in Philippine entertainment up to his death in 1991, he personified the very qualities that the movie industry lacked and needed desperately: seriousness, creativity, dedication, resoluteness, guts. He was a man of contradictions. But that only made him more human and complicated. Nevertheless, he was, to use a trite expression, a giant among men.

Contrary to initial impression, his lasting contribution to Philippine art and culture does not start and end with his prodigious body of films. He was many other things at the same time: filmmaker, actor, theater artist, TV director, co-writer of scripts, lecturer, star at international film festivals, government critic and activist, street parliamentarian. As actor's actor, he was able to elicit good performances from virtually every star of consequence in local movies, while others were often quoted as saying the then familiar expression "I want to be directed by Lino Brocka." He may have repeated and contradicted himself in his films as in his personal remarks, but he was consistent in his pursuit of excellence and the truth. And his influence has been far-reaching and solid.

Outwardly, he was the colorful, flamboyant and angry show biz leader that the public perceived him to be, but this was not mere empty posturing. He had to fight to be able to leave us a substantial and significant body of works. He professionalized the system, helped several other artists achieve personal and professional progress, raised the level of the audience's critical awareness, brought international honor for the country, and generally, made this world a better, richer place for those whose lives he touched through his works and his person.

\* \* \*

After Lino died that fateful summer night, the Cultural Center of the Philippines decided to embark on a project that would not only keep the memory of the late artist alive but also make his followers and the people in general understand his life's work and appreciate his legacy better. This book is the result of that undertaking.

In conceptualizing this book, a group composed of Dr. Nicanor G. Tiongson, the Artistic Director of the Sentrong Pangkultura ng Pilipinas (Cultural Center of the Philippines), Agustin Sotto, the director of the Center's coordinating center for film, and writer-journalist Jose F. Lacaba (he later backed out of the project because of other previous commitments), took into consideration the many roles which the late artist played in enriching our cultural life. It prepared a syllabus that covered every important activity of the subject: his theatrical works, his television stints, his films, his international success and his political battles. Separate articles on his honored status as an actor's director and a co-author of scripts were to be included.

When this writer took over Pete Lacaba's job as editor, minor alterations had to be made from the original plan due to exigencies, but essentially, the thrust and content outlined in the original plan have remained. Asked to write one of the articles, Clodualdo del Mundo Jr. proposed instead a thorough analysis of Lino's two films *Kapit sa Patalim* and *Orapronobis* to be made purposely for this book.

For the major pieces, the writers assigned are authoritative in their respective areas. Thus, Butch Francisco, our most widely-read TV critic, has been given the difficult task of gathering data on Lino's full television work, which is next-to-impossible because of the perishable nature of video and the inability of local networks and independent producers to keep a permanent video collection of the shows. To make his article more exhaustive and useful, Francisco sought the help of over dozens of people involved in Lino's TV shows, including Hilda Koronel and Celeste Legaspi. Jo-Ann Q. Maglipon, a progressive writer, has interviewed even more people, as though meticulously picking up tiles that fit together, to complete her mosaic of Lino Brocka, the political animal. Johven Velasco, a versatile theater artist and Lino's co-worker at Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA), zeroes in on Lino's theatrical works.

Some problems: Francisco observed that some interviewees made statements that contradicted each other, apparently a toll of time. And then, he and other writers noted that key artists



once close to the late director, they who would have provided us with valuable bits of information and insights on the subject, made themselves scarce for the interviews. A pity because these were the creative people whose film careers took off because the late director fuelled and polished them.

Another section examines the artist in interview articles that present his views and opinions from the horse's mouth, and here, we see different facets of the director's personality: high-strung and temperamental in one interview; serious, as in his acceptance speech at the Ramon Magsaysay Awards; and thoughtful and contemplative in another interview. But never was he a dull interviewee.

Primarily a filmmaker, Lino is best remembered for his cinematic accomplishments. Therefore, whole sections have been devoted to reviews of his classic and major films originally published at the time of the films' release, and a new, comprehensive filmography prepared and written by Sotto, a personal friend of the late director. For this, we watched some of his old films, Sotto carefully taking down the production credits, synopses and whenever available published comments on the movies. Expectedly, some of these films are not available anymore, whether in film or video format.

Invariably, Lino's most important movies (*Maynila Sa Mga Kuko Ng Liwanag*, *Insiang*, *Jaguar*, *Bona*, *Kapit sa Patalim* and *Orapronobis*) would be discussed extensively in the various sections: the articles, reviews, interviews, and filmography. They appear in their original language, like Del Mundo's review of *Tubog sa Ginto*, which begins in Tagalog and after a few paragraphs proceeds in English. Charles Tesson's interviews in French, however, have been translated in English.

Though we originally set out to use only the best materials for the reprints, we were bogged down by time and the lack of resources. One writer declined to have his mixed review of an early Brocka movie used for this book, suggesting that a homage of this nature merits only positive words and sympathetic recollections and assessments of the artist and his works. But our view is that Lino Brocka was such a positive force and a towering presence in Philippine arts and culture that even monument-bashing cannot now destroy or damage his reputation or his lasting legacy, and in fact, his accomplishments are so numerous and formidable they require only a balanced, well-rounded, honest and full appreciation.

Finally, our boundless gratitude goes to some people and institutions who have helped us make this book a reality: Ms. Pilar Brocka and Danilo Brocka, the late artist's mother and brother respectively, who have entrusted to the Center Lino's collection of books, movie memorabilia, movie stills, personal photos and newspaper and magazine clippings; the Center's staff; Lea Productions; Cesar Hernando and Ronald K. Constantino for the other photographs and stills; and Jaime Zobel de Ayala for the striking photograph of the subject on the book cover.

We hope the reader will find this book both educational and entertaining— maybe something like a Lino Brocka movie.

Mario A. Hernando

*b*IOGRAPHY



## LINO BROCKA \*

**L**INO Brocka saw the world through the eye of a camera. Hundreds of movies were catalogued in his memory to be used as examples and comparisons, and bits of his own past continually surfaced in films he has already made and others which he hoped to make. For him movies had at various times provided an escape from everyday reality, a study of American lifestyles and language, a training ground in cinema techniques, a platform for social and political commentary, and international recognition.

Nothing in Brocka's parentage or early life was either typical or straightforward. His birth certificate was incorrect. The preschool education he received from his father was exceptional but unlike that received by his peers. His description of his childhood was glowing, but this time of happiness was cut tragically short when he was only six. The honors and awards he garnered in high school belied the fact that he and his brother worked long hours earning money to survive. Even the university education frequently ascribed to him was not completely accurate.

Lino's father was Regino Brocka, a skilled carpenter, boatbuilder and salesman from the Bicol peninsula, Sorsogon province, Luzon, the Philippines, who settled his schoolteacher wife and family in the town of Pilar, while he traveled extensively throughout the islands plying his various trades. On a trip to Nueva Ecija, a province in central Luzon, he became infatuated with a 15-year-old girl named Pilar Ortiz. Much against her family's wishes Regino took her back to Bicol and, deserting his legal family, lived with her on an island off the coast.

For many years, they had no children. Their first child, Lino, was born on April 3, 1939 and at that point Regino's legal wife filed a charge of bigamy against him, largely, she later said, as an attempt to force him to return to her and their family. Regino was convicted and sentenced to two years in Muntinlupa Prison, near Manila. Lino and his mother moved into a rented room close to the prison and there his brother Danilo was born. After his father was released, they returned to their island and a more or less normal life.

The dominant force in Lino's life throughout his childhood and youth was his father, even long after the latter's death. On their island, 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. As an older man, his advice and opinions were sought and listened to, and he took an active interest in politics.

Regino poured his knowledge, experience, time and love into Lino, the child of his old age (Danilo was still too young). Using the sand on the shore, a stick, seashells, water, leaves and pets (a monkey and a talking bird), Regino taught his son the alphabet, arithmetic and natural science, as well as singing, dancing and reciting poetry. He carefully explained to Lino the difference between right and wrong and emphasized the importance of admitting his wrongdoing, rather than waiting to be found out. Regino also took the young boy with him to meetings and introduced him as if he were an equal; afterwards he encouraged him to ask questions and offer opinions.

*\*From the Ramon Magsaysay Awards Foundation program brochure (September, 1985).*



Lino said: "I have vivid memories of my father because I had a very good, very, very happy childhood. The island was like that in *Blue Lagoon*, the film which starred Jean Simmons." This idyll ended abruptly when the boy was six. His father went to the mainland for supplies for his own birthday and failed to return. Every night for the next week, his mother took a lamp to the top of a cliff overlooking the sea, hoping her husband would see it and find his way home. Finally, word came that the body of an unidentified man had been found and buried on an adjacent island; he had been killed in what was later suspected to have been a political murder. Lino, his mother and his three-year-old brother went across and watched while the partially decomposed body was disinterred and identified as Regino. Lino's childhood had ended.

With Regino went the family's security and social position. His mother was not from the island, she had no relations nearby, and was only a "second wife." The small family had to move from their house and Lino watched and tried to understand when his mother went to work in town as a taxi dancer, and then "married" a local fisherman who was kind to Lino and his brother but totally different from their dead father. Her new life apparently did not work out, and in time, Pilar wrote to her family in San Jose, Nueva Ecija, asking for help. They had not heard from her in 15 years.

In San Jose, Pilar and her children were poor relations. The family was split up, with Lino being sent to live with the aunt who was the family's mainstay, and his brother to their grandmother; their mother was sent to work in another town in a branch of the fashion school owned by the family.

At his aunt's, Lino was treated like a houseboy, subjected to teasing and physical abuse, and was expected to behave as a typical Filipino child, not asking questions and certainly not offering opinions. This situation lasted for four miserable years. Both of the brothers were desperately unhappy but did not want to add to their mother's problems by telling her. After a serious argument with his



In high school, Brocka directed his efforts toward excellence.

aunt which culminated in her throwing a large bowl at him and knocking him unconscious, Lino ran away to his grandmother's. The next time Pilar visited her children, they poured out their stories of maltreatment. Pilar broke relations with her older sister, moved back to San Jose, and she and her children were again reduced to a hand-to-mouth existence.

Lino at this time was only ten years old and his brother seven, but they began working at any job they could find. They helped their mother give home permanents; they collected and sold the fragrant, rough-surfaced *pakiling* (*Ficus odorato*) leaves for cleaning walls; they grew bean sprouts and strung *sampaguita* (jasmine) leis, and sold them in the marketplace where Lino would recite poetry and sing a particularly heartrending song about being an orphan. At the same time his mother struggled to obtain papers which would qualify her to teach in elementary school.

The only relief Lino found from this day-to-day struggle was at the movies. In those days, children were admitted free as long as the



Brocka delivers his valedictory address on his high school graduation, 1956.

tops of their heads did not reach the ticket counter or if they were in the company of an adult. When he grew too tall to slip under the counter, and there were no adults around, he found ways to sneak in. The movies showed him another world, America, where everything was beautiful, everyone danced like Fred Astaire and swam like Esther Williams, where there was no poverty. (Lino even tried breathing underwater "like Esther Williams," and his failure only convinced him that Americans could breathe underwater but little Filipino boys could not.) It was a fantasy world — which he did not realize at the time — and he loved it.

Once his mother started teaching, the family's financial situation eased considerably. Lino's energies were now directed toward success in high school. The only way he could repay his mother for all her hard work was, as he saw it, to get good marks and win all the prizes so that she would be called up to the stage with him at the awards ceremonies. He excelled in his academic subjects as well as in oratory, debate and any area that involved

performing. In his spare time, he also read his way through the small San Jose Library and devoured books by authors like A. J. Cronin and Somerset Maugham sent to him from Manila by a friend.

Lino Brocka graduated from Nueva Ecija North High School in 1956 with six medals and a scholarship to the University of the Philippines (UP). He entered pre-law because his mother wanted him to become an attorney and then president of the Philippines. (A fortune-teller had once read his palm and predicted he would be "known throughout the Philippines," and Pilar decided only the president could be that widely known.)

Brocka's first year at UP was cataclysmic in many ways. First and most importantly, his relationship with his mother changed when he accidentally discovered that part of the family's present financial security was the result of her long-standing liaison with an official from another town. The admiration and filial responsibility he had always felt toward her were diminished, as was his willingness to pursue the career she wanted for him. He now looked back on his high school days and realized that, although he was well liked and a consistent prize-winner, he was not accepted by the elite — at school or in town. He had been excluded, he decided, because his classmates' parents had known about his mother and, in their small-town fashion, had taken their moral indignation out on her son. *Belonging*, something his mother had never been able to achieve, either on the island or in San Jose, became a paramount ambition in Brocka's life.

In consequence, he dropped pre-law and began taking only subjects which interested him (mostly literature and poetry) and ignored others which bored him (chemistry and math) but which, unfortunately, were requisites for graduation. Because his grades were so bad, his scholarship lapsed at the end of his first year and from then on his attendance depended on how many part-time jobs he could find and how much money he could save for tuition. He was to remain a student, off and on, for nine years.



During these years he often begged professors to allow him to audit classes. One professor who accommodated him, Alfredo Morales, Dean of Education, not only permitted him to attend his lectures but arranged a research job for him. Brocka now doubts that Morales needed the research done, but certainly he, Brocka, needed the money and benefited from the experience of systematic study. By the time he left the university in 1964 the perennial student had enough English credits for a master's degree, but still lacked some first year requirements for a B.A.

While at the university, Brocka joined the Dramatic Club which was directed by Wilfrido Ma. Guerrero. The other club members, Brocka recalls, were from the upper class, wealthy, spoke English well and were in the intellectual mainstream: "All the most interesting people were there. The girls were beautiful, the men were big, [for a country boy] it was just like going to New York!"

And a country boy he was. Because he had been performing in public since he was four or five, it was only natural that he auditioned for a speaking role, but his thick provincial accent was to prove a major barrier. Trying out for a minor part, he remembers skidding onto the stage panting, "Mader, mader, look at da gurls in der baiting shoots (bathing suits)!" Guerrero sent him back to make the entrance again, but there was no improvement. Frustrated, Brocka argued, "But that's the way we say it at home." Guerrero tartly pointed out that Brocka was not at home; he was in Manila, and if he couldn't say it right then, someone else could!

The would-be actor next tried prompting, but he prompted too loudly and with too much expression. Humiliated and discouraged, he dropped out of the club for a while. He went back to watching American movies by the hour, and spent more hours in empty fields practicing an American accent and drawling the latest slang. He began carrying the "right" books — such as the poems of Arthur Rimbaud — and slowly edged his way back into the Dramatic Club as a stagehand.

He swept, pulled curtains, moved scenery and hung around, desperate to be included, terrified of being socially gauche, wanting to *belong*. He can laugh about it now, but then: "It was all so painful. That's what I remember. I used to stand in the rain to get taxis for them, anything."

But the boy from the provinces went beyond sweeping and curtain-pulling. He sat through rehearsal after rehearsal, watching directors and listening to actors. He learned about set design, especially on a low budget; he learned how to position lights and use them to advantage; he learned how to improvise and make do. When Brocka left UP and the Dramatic Club, he had a solid knowledge of basic stagecraft.

During his years at UP, Brocka worked at a music shop and in the canteen on campus. Later he worked in the film industry, doing publicity for American "B" films shot in the Philippines and packaged in Hollywood; once he worked as an assistant director. Some friendships from the Dramatic Club, like that with Behn Cervantes, now a fellow director, were permanent.

It was Cervantes who introduced Brocka to a team of young Mormon missionaries in 1961, largely to rid himself of them. Brocka listened, first out of politeness, recognizing that whatever the missionaries were preaching, their beliefs were deeply sincere. Slowly, he seemed to hear echoes of his father teaching him about honesty, about commitment, about living what you believe. He responded to the Mormon concept that God has created the world for us and that we should feel good about ourselves, in contrast to what he saw as the Roman Catholic concern with guilt. And he liked the emphasis on simplicity in Mormonism, in contrast to the pomp and ceremony he associated with the Catholic faith into which he had been born.

Brocka became the team's first Filipino convert and agreed to go to Hawaii on the two-year mission required of all male Mormons — in part to get away from the Philip-

pinas and the pointless life he felt himself to be living.

He was not a successful missionary, but in the mission field, he learned a lot about himself. He did not mind working as a two-man team but refused to report on his partner to their superior. He found that he was older than the average missionary, with more life experience and more views of his own. The idealism with which he entered the church soon became tempered by the realization that the Mormon church was not different from other large organizations, and that Mormons were like other people — some believed and lived the credo, some did not; some did their work humbly, while others curried favor with their superiors; some supervisors gave their teams leeway and others insisted on absolute obedience.

Brocka was transferred from Oahu to Hawaii to Kauai to Maui to Lanai, and finally to Molokai island, in less than 12 months. During this period, along with routine missionary activities, he taught part of a course in World Religion at the University of Hawaii; contributed to fund raising by staging plays and shows for tourists; worked with third generation Filipinos who were ashamed of their ancestry; and discovered that manual labor — construction work and pineapple picking — was not for him. A series of unsatisfactory reports followed him from place to place which asserted that 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.

His last assignment, Molokai, was apparently the church's post of last resort. If he had any religious experience during his two years as a missionary, it was here during his year at the Kalaupapa leper colony. Very slowly, "to keep from dying of boredom," he began to get involved in the lives of the lepers and the multi-denominational staff. They worked together on projects, put on performances, went fishing in the early morning and talked about what

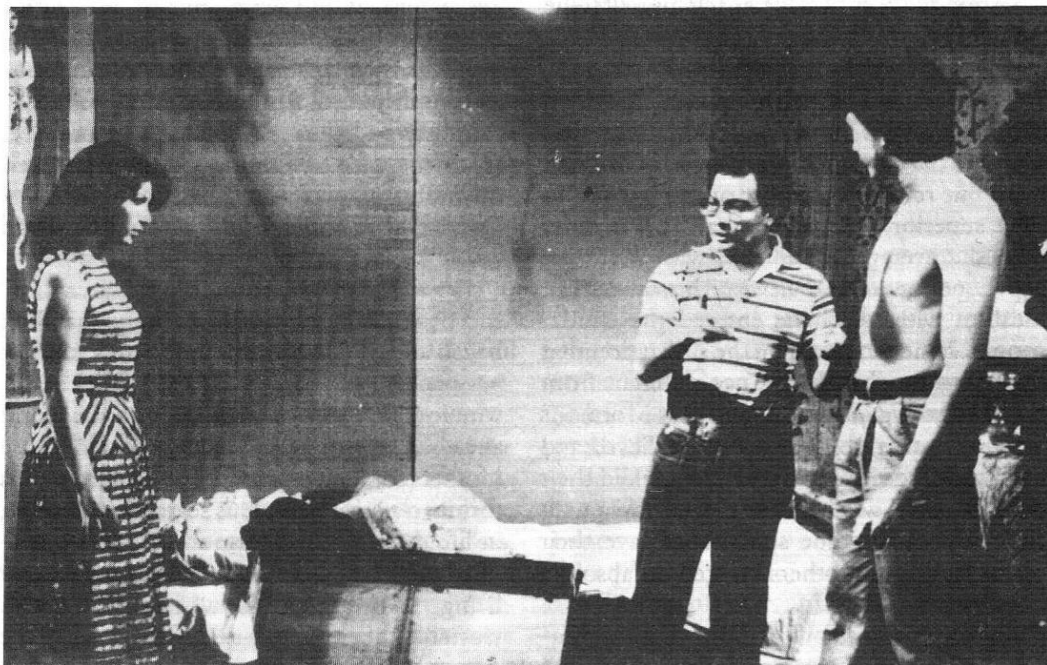
was important and what was not. On infrequent trips to Honolulu, the young man listened to friends moaning about their problems and how difficult their lives were. In contrast, the lepers on Molokai were positive, facing life with cheerful, good humor. Even their funerals were happy because they believed that after death, they would be made whole again.

Brocka had a lot of time to think and he began to put his own life into some kind of perspective. He had gone from being a prize-winning high school graduate with the world ahead of him, to a university dropout whose mother compared him unflatteringly to his former classmates, and his search for meaning in life through the Mormon faith was unfulfilled. Gradually, he formed his own credo for living: to be grateful for what he had, not to clutter his life with non-essentials; to reject the excuse that something is futile and therefore not worth doing; and finally resolving that



Brocka poses with brother Danilo, left, mother Pilar, seated, and a cousin in San Jose, Nueva Ecija.





Lino directs Chanda Romero and Phillip Salvador in *FLORES PARA LOS MUERTOS*, 1977.

“life will never put me down, I shall prove stronger than life.”

After completing his missionary commitment Brocka attended the Mormon Church College of Hawaii for one semester in a last attempt to complete his education. He paid his own way, working as a groundsman, but found the Hawaiian climate so conducive to sleeping under coconut trees that he failed to attend classes. Thus, still without a degree, Brocka decided to visit the U.S. mainland.

His arrival in San Francisco with \$50 in his pocket ended his membership in the Mormon church. He lived for a few weeks in the city’s “tenderloin district,” learning from hoboes how to survive. At last, he got a job as a busboy in a restaurant at Fisherman’s Wharf where he ate his first solid meal in a month. Two months later, he took a job in a hospital for the elderly where the administrator offered him a permanent position and help in getting American citizenship if he would stay, but he refused.

In Manila, before his mission, Brocka had experienced a feeling of choking, drowning in

his own life. After five months in San Francisco, he felt an overwhelming homesickness for the Philippines, a feeling which attacked him every time he travelled. Therefore he returned to Manila in 1968 with no money and no job. His mother, who no longer had dreams about his becoming president and just wanted him to have an occupation, urged him to come home to the province. She bought 3,000 chickens and set him up in the business of feeding, caring for, and marketing the birds. For years afterwards, he could not stand the sight of a chicken.

On a weekend escape to Manila, his old friend Behn Cervantes introduced him to Cecile Guidote, who was the founder of the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA). They asked him to join PETA but, thinking of his mother’s disappointment if he should make such a move, Brocka returned home. The next time he was in Manila, however, he dropped by Fort Santiago where PETA was rehearsing its first play. The crazy, hectic confusion of rehearsal was like opium; he knew *this* is where he belonged, not in San Jose with the despised chickens.

Brocka’s visits to Manila increased to every weekend, and two-day weekends lengthened to three, four and five days. Finally Guidote worked out a plan whereby he could eke out a slim existence in Manila. PETA was producing a television program called *Balintataw* (Pupil of the Eye). The association agreed to pay him 10 pesos for each press release he wrote, and the same amount plus transportation for each script he delivered to the actors. Guidote also arranged for him to act in crowd scenes for an additional pittance.

Brocka made one more trip back to San Jose to tell his mother what she already suspected, that his heart and soul were in Manila. Reacting with understandable anger, Pilar announced she never wanted to see him again.

For the next two years, the young man lived behind San Andres Market in Leveriza slum. He walked miles across town to save jeepney fares, and at Xavier House, PETA’s headquarters and the living quarters of the priests at Ateneo University, he sometimes helped himself to the food in the refrigerator. He recalls this period with embarrassment and comments, “I’m sure Father Reuter [the drama director] knew I was taking food and, because he knew I was really hungry, he made sure no one did anything about it. If Father Reuter asks me to do anything, go anywhere, I will go, even to Timbuktu!”

PETA staged plays and gave drama workshops both in Manila and the provinces. Brocka went everywhere and did anything: errands, scriptwriting, acting, leading exercises and ultimately directing a few of PETA’s TV shows. In 1970 a producer with Lea Productions saw one of these shows and asked if he would be interested in making a film to be entered in the Manila Film Festival (MFF).

Now that Lino Brocka’s name is internationally known, much attention has been focused on this first film — for which he also wrote the screenplay that won the Best Screenplay Award from the MFF. Critics have looked at *Wanted: Perfect Mother*, and tried

to make it more than it really was. Brocka himself is uncomfortable with the acclaim. He says that all he did was borrow from the big international picture of the year, *Sound of Music*, and from a Philippine comic serial. The film portrayed the problems of a governess to a brood of motherless children, and “there was a lot of singing.” The movie made money at box offices across the country, including theaters in Manila where previously only American films had been shown.

Lea Productions thought it had found a gold mine: a director who made a movie in three weeks and wrote his own script (minimum costs) which was their all-time top money-maker (maximum profits) and which won an award (prestige). He had also proved that Filipino movies could make as much money as English-language films and so opened previously closed doors to locally-made films.

Brocka made nine movies during the next four years for Lea. From Teodorica Santos, who was in charge of production, he learned a great deal about trade-offs in the industry. For



Brocka takes a break from the shooting of *WANTED: PERFECT MOTHER*, 1970, with Liza Lorena and the children, Arnold Gamboa, Ariosto Reyes Jr., Snooky and Gina Alajar.



example, if a director had a special story he wanted to film, he had first to make money with one or two crowd-pleasers; then he could make the film he wanted.

After the success of *Wanted*, Brocka was allowed to select and write his next story, *Santiago*, and was given a well-known star, Fernando Poe, Jr., for his male lead. He was also allowed to bring in PETA actors to play minor roles and crowd scenes, a move which resulted in a more professional film.

*Santiago* (1970) was a war picture, with sufficient action and a known star to attract audiences, and sufficient serious content and realistic characterizations to impress critics. It earned him the Best Director Award from the Citizens Council for Mass Media (CCMM).

The success of *Santiago* allowed Brocka to tackle a more sophisticated story, *Tubog sa Ginto* (Dipped in Gold, 1970). Based again on a comic serial, with therefore a built-in audience, *Tubog* told the story of a wealthy married homosexual and his family. Brocka approached the usually taboo topic with sensitivity and sympathy, using actors and actresses like Lolita Rodriguez who were stage-trained, rather than film stars. He won the approval of young intellectuals for his willingness to make a movie about a controversial subject, and he won the acclaim of the critics and received the Best Director Award from the Filipino Academy of Movie Arts and Sciences (FAMAS).

Lino Brocka quickly became a *name* in Manila's large motion picture industry; Lea Productions' darling; the most talked about, written about, young director in the business. Beginning with his first movie, Brocka showed no unwillingness to work within a given framework such as a serialized comic. Such stories were familiar to thousands of readers who would pay to see them recreated on the screen. What Brocka concentrated on was adding to or enriching a formula story: he made the characters more realistic, he tried to avoid stereotyped situations and endings, and he focused on acting, not just from his stars but from all his performers.

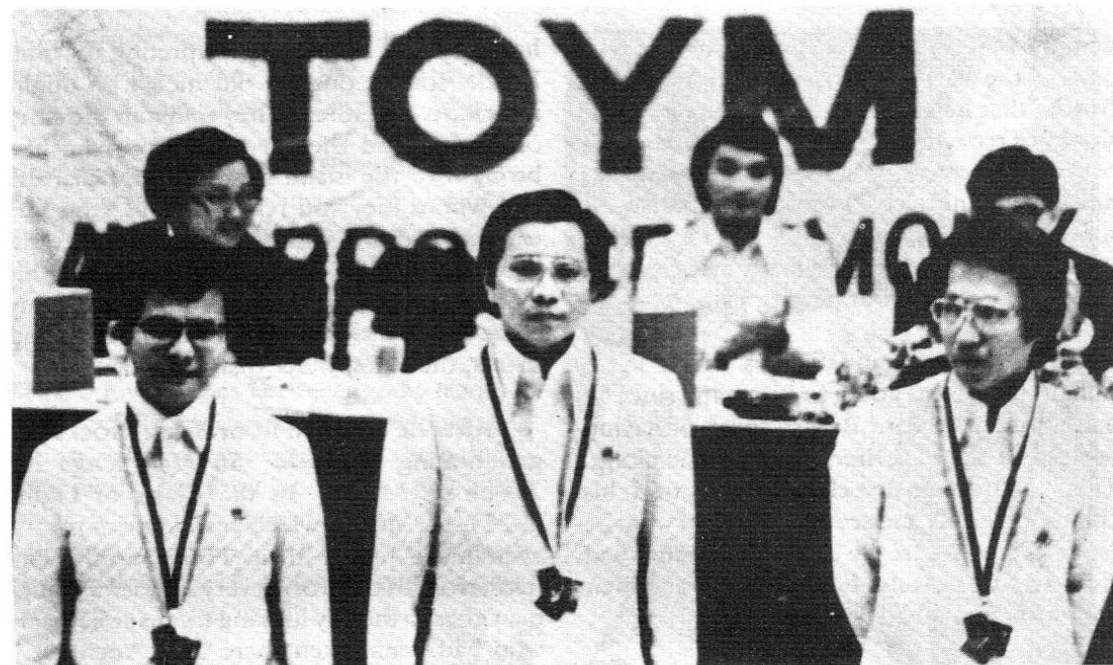
In the industry, he is known as an actor's director, and for good reason. Low budgets and short shooting schedules force directors to rely on actors with proven box office appeal and formula stories, and they usually skimp on everything else. But Brocka has used actors with stage as well as movie experience, choreographed crowd scenes carefully, and worked intensively with individual actors, explaining characterization so that he can get exactly what he wants in one take. He has also looked for new talents in the fields of music and script-writing.

With Lea Productions, Brocka made one more award-winning movie, *Stardoom* (1971, Best Director, CCMM) which was about movies. It told of a young performer forced into stardom by his ambitious mother (Lolita Rodriguez again) and the fatal results of that ambition.

After his first success, Lea had provided him with a car, and then with a furnished apartment. He found himself slowly succumbing to a sensation that life was choking him, and in 1972, after nine movies with Lea, Brocka quit.

He spent the next two years teaching film, drama and speech at two colleges in Manila, St. Theresa's and St. Paul's, directing for television, and continuing his work with PETA. He taught his students that entertainment could and should make the audience think. Teaching helped him organize and refine his concepts of entertainment and movie making, and exposed him to young, educated minds and sensibilities, the vanguard of what he hoped would be intelligent audiences for future movies and plays. His work in the provinces with PETA taught him to improvise and use local situations and conditions as the core around which the workshops, and later films, were constructed.

Unlike many Filipino producers and directors at that time, Brocka disagreed with the notion that the majority of moviegoers could not possibly appreciate subtle, meaningful subject matter, or fine, underplayed acting;



Brocka, left, received the TOYM award in 1975.

that more violence, more sex, more stars, and more fantasy layered onto much-used plots were necessary. And his experiences in the provinces convinced him he was correct.

In 1974 he got together a group of about 100 artists and small investors, and with 10 businessmen who matched their investment, formed CineManila to produce relevant, artistic films. CineManila was divided into two groups — the artistic group which he headed that would produce the films, and the business group which would handle their financing, packaging and selling.

The first film was born of Brocka's memories of his childhood. *Tinimbang Ka Nguni't Kulang* (Weighed But Found Wanting, 1974) was the story of a 16-year-old growing up in a small town; he is young enough to be unprejudiced but old enough to notice what goes on around him. The film touches on ostracism, love, cruelty and forgiveness. While certainly not ending happily-ever-after, it speaks both of rebirth and maturity.

*Tinimbang* was an artistic and box office success sweeping the FAMAS Awards including the Best Director Award for Brocka. The

film became required viewing in religion classes in many Catholic colleges which regarded it as a major statement about Christian living. Within weeks of *Tinimbang's* release, Brocka was once more the most talked about director in the Philippines.

CineManila made three more films, all but one directed by Brocka, but none achieved the success of the first. While directing, Brocka cheerfully signed checks, personally-guaranteed loans, anything that was put in front of him. When the expected profits did not roll in, he learned an extremely painful lesson about business. The financiers who in the beginning had talked glibly about profit-sharing, did not talk now about debt-sharing. To make matters worse, CineManila's last film was hit with a lawsuit.

The company declared bankruptcy, but Brocka, who had personally signed many of the loans, ended up owing 800,000 pesos, plus the constantly accruing interest.

With the help of friends, advances for making films for several companies and cutting his own expenses drastically (he does not even own a car) he has reduced his debt, and now



with the Magsaysay Award money, he hopes to pay off the balance. It is entirely typical of Brocka that he accepted the personal responsibility of repaying the small investors who had backed the project. It is also typical that he has not become noticeably more businesslike. If someone comes along with an idea for a movie he likes, he will still make the movie first and think afterwards about getting paid.

Between films in 1975, a friend mentioned that he was going to Bicol, and since he had frequently heard Brocka speak of having been born there, invited him to come along. This was Brocka's first chance to return to his childhood home and see how much of what he remembered was really true. His mother had always refused to talk about his father and their life on the unnamed island.

Now, without telling her, Brocka set out on a personal odyssey into his past. He and his friend rented a motorized *banca* (outrigger boat) and visited all the islands near Pilar. On the evening of the third day a small island far from shore kindled a spark of recognition: there was the lagoon, the rocks and a row of



Brocka was the first recipient of the Gawad CCP Para sa Sining for Film in 1989.

houses. With his friend interpreting for him, Brocka sought out the old men who might remember his father. They told him the story of Regino and the very young girl he had brought to the island from Nueva Ecija, the one whom they still referred to as "the foreigner," and of his other family which was still living on the peninsula. Brocka called on his father's legal wife and heard about the bigamy charge. He also met his six half-brothers and sisters, the eldest older than his mother.

After he returned from Bicol, Brocka began filming *Maynila Sa Mga Kuko Ng Liwanag* (Manila In the Claws of Light, 1975), the movie which many critics regard even more highly than *Tinimbang*. The framework of the story is very simple: a young man goes to the city looking for his sweetheart who had been taken there by a "recruiter." Slowly and remorselessly, the city consumes him as it consumed their love after they share one bittersweet night together. Brocka's filmmaking came of age in *Maynila*, both in content and technique, and the "typical" Brocka movie was born. Shot in the slums of Manila, the seamy underside of a big city was exposed with its call boys and street thieves. The plight of the casual construction worker was clearly delineated with on-site accidents and callous supervisors; and people who rose above their problems to offer friendship to a stranger were shown with a dignity which underscored their essential goodness. Brocka regained his position as the most sought-after director in the Philippine movie industry.

At this time, Brocka also began to receive international exposure. In 1977 he was invited to send *Insiang* (the heroine's name) to Directors' Fortnight, an invitational event hosted by the French Directors Society as part of the Cannes Film Festival. In 1980, *Jaguar* was entered in competition at the Cannes Film Festival and in 1981, *Bona* was included in the Directors' Fortnight. Since then, his movies have been shown at film festivals around the world. In addition to viewing competing films, Brocka was exposed to foreign critics and to retrospectives of other directors. He began to see that his better films would be

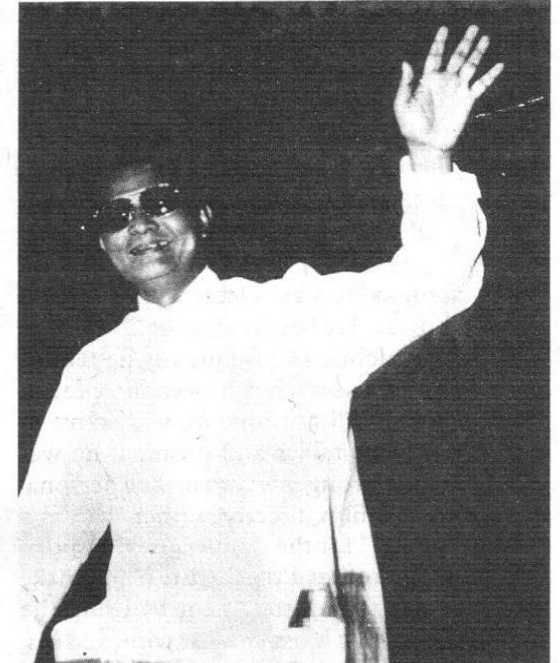
categorized as "film noir" (black film), comparable to the films from the 1940s like those of John Garfield, which were the antithesis of the happy MGM extravaganzas Brocka had watched as a child. "Film noir" deals not with fantasy but with reality; instead of glorifying superheroes, it looks with sympathy on the common man and the human condition.

In *Insiang*, Brocka shows the ultimate slum brutality — a daughter, raped by her mother's lover, takes her revenge by leading him on until her mother, in a fit of jealous rage, kills him. The movie delineates the painful change in the girl from innocent (or as innocent as is possible in such crowded living conditions) to scheming bitch. The slum itself is also a malevolent character, refusing to give up its grip on any of its inhabitants.

The story of *Jaguar* (nickname for bodyguard), produced in 1979, is different, centering on the universal hope to improve oneself. A security guard, chosen to be the personal bodyguard of a rich businessman, convinces himself that this is an indication of friendship and equality. When he kills for his employer and is abandoned by him, his delusion is shattered.

Beginning in the mid-1970s, the government of President Ferdinand Marcos began approaching Brocka to make films it wanted—e.g. eulogizing Marcos as a war hero, interpreting the works of famous Philippine authors, or making "educational" films keyed to the schools. As an inducement, it offered to pay off his debts. In every case, he eventually refused, primarily because he did not respect the political morals of the people he was dealing with. In an indirect way, these approaches to him by the government led to his eventually taking a political stand against it.

Brocka's involvement in the political scene did not stem from any inherent interest in politics. His refusal to ingratiate himself with the Marcos regime by making "approved" movies began for personal rather than political reasons. For similar reasons, he disapproved of the direction being taken by the Film Center



Brocka attends the press conference of *BAYAN KO: KAPIT SA PATALIM* at the 1984 Cannes Film Festival.

and the Experimental Cinema of the Philippines — feeling the taxpayers' money was being spent on cheap sex pictures.

In 1983, he formed Concerned Artists of the Philippines (CAP) which he chaired for two years. His premise was simple: artists are first and foremost citizens, and must address the issues confronting the country.

Brocka and members of CAP were asked to be present on August 21, 1983 to welcome Benigno Aquino, a political opponent of Marcos, when he returned from his self-imposed exile in the United States. Brocka was a personal friend of two members of the Aquino family. Following the brutal assassination, he and CAP helped plan some of the funeral events that took place around the country.

Following the assassination — which so shocked Philippine society — Brocka began speaking at rallies, both in Manila and in the provinces. At the same time, he became more vocal about government censorship of movies, which he considers to be a serious impediment to artistic development. In December 1984,



he and a number of actors and directors demonstrated against the head of the Censorship Board. They were supported by some of the jeepney (small bus) drivers, and in return, they supported the strike a month later by the Jeepney Drivers' Association. As a result of his support of the latter, Brocka was arrested and jailed for 16 days.

As soon as he was released, he resumed making movies. He had to support himself, he had to repay debts, and frequently he had to pay his own expenses when he went to speak in the provinces. All the time he was active in anti-government rallies and protests, he was searching for a stronger way to make a personal statement, as a film director, rather than as a "warm-up man" for the politicians who spoke after him. He realized that artists could make the most meaningful statement by using the medium they were most familiar with, and his, of course, was film. He decided, moreover, that his best venue was the International Film Festival in Cannes.

Brocka flew to Paris and asked Stephan Films to participate in a movie, to be shot in the Philippines, with the post-production (final editing) to be done in France, a not unusual procedure. He then got financial backing from Malaya Films, a company with anti-government leanings. He combined two stories which had already been approved by the Board of Censors and which were based on true events: one a strike at a small factory and the other a robbery/hostage case. The film depicts a young man who is enmeshed by circumstances beyond his control. His wife is pregnant and needs medication. With a strike looming at the factory where he works, he makes a private deal with his employer not to walk out. His fellow workers learn of this and ostracize him; his boss fires him despite their agreement. In the end, he is involved in a robbery attempt that goes wrong and is shot to death while his wife watches helplessly.

Much of the footage of the film was shot at night because Brocka was busy speaking at rallies during the day and filming the protest

marches — by students, housewives, priests and nuns which he later wove into the movie. The film was sent from the Philippines to France, and during the editing its double title emerged: *Bayan Ko: Kapitsa Patalim*. The first phrase, *My Country*, refers to the protest song which is sung throughout the movie; the second, "Double-edged Knife," alludes to the Philippine saying, "A desperate man will hold on even to a double-edged knife."

When Brocka arrived at the 1984 Cannes Festival, he wore a *barong Tagalog* (loose Philippine shirt) with a blood-red map of the Philippines printed on the front, and underneath it the word "justice." His reaction to accusations of being overly theatrical was amused: "Of course, that's the whole point. If I could have dragged a coffin in here with me, I would have."

The critics' enthusiasm was unrestrained. *Bayan Ko* garnered rave reviews at Cannes, and later won the Best Film of the Year Award from the British Film Institute and the critics group, the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino.

When Brocka sought to bring the film back to the Philippines, a predictable legal battle ensued. The film was rejected by the Board of Censors as subversive (inciting to rebellion). After the subversive charge was withdrawn and the film permitted entry, the Board then charged the film was lascivious and would have to be cut. Brocka and Malaya Films filed suit in the Supreme Court which ordered the board to approve its showing to adult audiences (over 18). The court ruled the board could not cut but only classify.

This was a considerable victory for Brocka and the Concerned Artists, who have believed all along that the Board of Censors should be abolished and replaced by a ratings board set up by the film industry itself.

Fame and recognition at home and abroad made very little difference to Lino Brocka. When asked about having two films entered in competition at the Cannes Film Festival, he



Conrado Baltazar, right, handles cinematography for many of Brocka's major films.

merely replied, "It opens the door for other Filipino directors and films." When asked about his travels to film festivals around the world, he talked about being homesick for the Philippines. Nor did critical acclaim make it any easier for him to make his kind of movies. Producers were still afraid that he would turn out heavy, arty films which would not do well at the box office.

Fame did have a few advantages, however. The Philippine government, which had refused to renew his passport after he returned from Cannes, quickly reversed itself when he was invited to speak at a human rights conference by none other than the Prime Minister of France.

Brocka saw no inconsistencies in his life. He firmly believed that films and politics (or concern for the human condition, particularly in the Philippines) cannot be dissociated. He never lost his desire to develop what he called "the Great Filipino Audience." This, to him,

was more important than creating "the Great Filipino Movie." He did not consider filmmaking in the Philippines much different from filmmaking in other developing countries — or in Western countries at an earlier stage in their development; like others he was hampered by low budgets, insufficient time and outdated and much-used equipment. He also had to make popular movies in order to eat.

With a larger budget, with more time and more freedom, what would he do? Ideas bubbled out. "I'd like to do a film on the mothers of detainees, those mothers who come to trials and wait and wait. I want to do one on child prostitution. It could never be shown here, but maybe I could do it for distribution abroad. I've talked to these kids, you should hear them! I'd love to do *Noli Me Tangere* (Jose Rizal's classic about the Philippines, titled in English *The Social Cancer*) with young actors as in *Romeo and Juliet*. And *All Those Lovely People* and *The Scent of Apples* about Filipinos in the United States. And . . . ."





Brocka goes to the streets to protest the banning of *BAYAN KO: KAPIT SA PATALIM* in 1984.

\* \* \*

Not all of his plans were to be fulfilled. After midnight of May 21, 1991, having spent some time at a music lounge in Quezon City with actor and constant companion William Lorenzo, Brocka headed for home, with the latter on the car driver's seat. Their vehicle swerved and smashed into a corner on East Ave. near the Quezon Memorial Circle upon avoiding a head-on collision with another vehicle. Brocka was dead upon arrival at the hospital, while Lorenzo, seriously hurt, remained unconscious for several days.

The ensuing funeral wake at a social hall at the University of the Philippines campus was attended by throngs of people from all walks of life—movie fans from the city and from as far as the provinces as well as friends, supporters, colleagues in the entertainment and the arts, comrades in the political struggle, government officials and other political figures. No other late artist or show business personality had been accorded similar attention and homage: Brocka's movie *Sa Kabila ng Labat* was then playing to SRO crowds in Metro Manila, while two other films were to be released posthumously several weeks later one after the other, *Kislapsa Dilim* and *Makiusap sa Diyos*.\*

\* Additional text by the editor.

## ARTICLES



## BROCKA'S THEATER: SOMETHING FROM THE HEART

Johven Velasco

**F**OR many, many years, theater life and selfless work for Lino Brocka was PETA.

When he joined the Philippine Educational Theater Association in 1967, he had had an apprenticeship in theater at the U.P. Dramatic Club as a marginalized stagehand who, on rainy days, hailed taxicabs and opened umbrellas for the more favored members of the company who spoke English well and with a twang, something which the *provinciano* from San Jose, Nueva Ecija never learned to master. He had joined a Mormon mission to Hawaii that brought him to the lepers of Kalaupapa. He had fled to mainland U.S.A. and there in San Francisco scavenged for food for some time, found a great love but left the mainland with a broken heart. He had returned to the country and worked as script supervisor to film director Eddie Romero, then doing American "B" movies. And he had missed theater life and theater work a lot.

Lino met Cecile Guidote, the indefatigable founder of PETA. He was awed with the lady's bursting energy and passion for theater, more so with her grand vision of a national theater that would seek to make theater as popular as the movies and coordinate the activities of campus and community theater groups throughout the country. He was impressed with this theater group that sought to develop contemporary Filipino dramaturgy by encouraging Filipino playwrights to write original plays in Tagalog and translations or adaptations of foreign plays to make them more understandable to the local audiences. He was stimulated over PETA's plan to go into production of a television

drama anthology that would bring to the mass audience the best of Filipino writing, prize-winning short stories and one-act plays adapted for television, as well as original teleplays by well-known and up-and-coming writers alike. He was excited over Cecile's formula to build a wider audience for theater with the help of popular movie stars. Moreover, Lino saw the people in the company. They were a motley group of established as well as up-and-coming literary figures, radio drama and *komiks* writers, drama students of Cecile at St. Paul's College, a few *colegialas* from the Assumption, some students from the Ateneo, drama teachers and students from public schools, none of whom was a regular member. Each one came as his/her participation was needed.

When Lino learned more about PETA—that it had a repertory group, a training institution that conducted workshops on theater arts, a unit that initiated high school students to theater work—he decided that he would join the company and help implement the grandiose plans of PETA's visionary founder.

Actually, PETA then was smaller than what it seemed. But in intent and pretenses, it was larger than any other theater company. It was an organization with an impressive network of local and international theater artists developed by its founder. Most of it, however, was only in Guidote's mind, in her vision that was written in her masteral thesis that drew a blueprint for a national theater movement that would flourish in the coming years. After all, Guidote had formally organized PETA only a few months before Lino came.





LARAWAN, 1969, features, left to right, Dante Rivero, Rita Gomez, Leopoldo Salcedo, Lolita Rodriguez, Veronica Palleo and Jesus Paredes.

Lino started out in PETA as publicity director. He wrote not only press releases and implored editors to give them free space in their cultural page; he also wrote articles for the playbills that documented and annotated each production. Cecile gave him a special assignment: liaison work with the movie press, for she was courting the same market that these people were addressing.

Later, along with another PETA member, Remé Grefalda, Lino found himself serving like some administrative assistant to Cecile, making arrangements and implementing plans for this and that national or international theater festival or conference, or manning workshops and office secretariats. To many students who joined PETA's workshops and eventually became members, Lino's was the face that first greeted them.

In between publicity work and administrative tasks, Lino pursued his artistic interests. Cecile handpicked him to be her assistant director for a few plays that she directed. The first time was in 1967, when she mounted Alex Swanbeck's *A Pet for Company*, a play whose Tagalog translation *Hayop Man Ay Dapat Mahalin*, Lino did (Swanbeck was a friend of Lino's back in San Francisco). The

following year, Cecile found Lino ripe for a directorial job. She gave him *Cargoes*, one among the trilogy of one-act plays written by Nestor U. Torre mounted for the second Annual Festival of Filipino Plays, a project for the Playwrights Development Program of the Company. Two other new directors did the second and third plays. Joey Gosiengfiao directed *No Sadder Race* and Behn Cervantes megged *And A Happy Birthday*. That same year, too, Lino played the role of the revolutionary leader Pio Valenzuela in another Torre play, *Indio*, the Tagalog translation of *One Swallow in Its Summer*.

By the time Lino directed his first play in PETA, he was more than prepared. Back at the U.P., the underestimated stagehand, overlooked and untapped as an actor because he was tiny and dark and worse, uttered bad-sounding English, would keenly observe how Wilfrido Ma. Guerrero handled his performers and blocked his scenes. If only in his mind he would direct his own play and realized that it came to him naturally, instinctively. But much more than the technical skill that he had observed and absorbed, he had gathered precious insights about human nature during the days of his Mormon mission. With the lepers of Kalaupapa, he learned

much about life in general. Alone in mainland U.S.A., he reflected and learned much more about himself in particular.

From Cecile, Lino learned how to block effectively for a difficult but challenging stage that combined the qualities of a proscenium and a thrust stage, utilizing every available space, favoring not one audience position but several, leaving no dead spots. He likewise learned that every movement on stage must be logically motivated. Also from the infectious Cecile, he got the awesome high energy that he would have while directing on stage. He would be all over the place: at footlight barking instructions, on stage demonstrating how he wanted a movement precisely executed, whispering motivation to his actor/actress, or sharing a technique or two when he/she would be having some difficulty.

Like Cecile, he performed while directing without intending to.

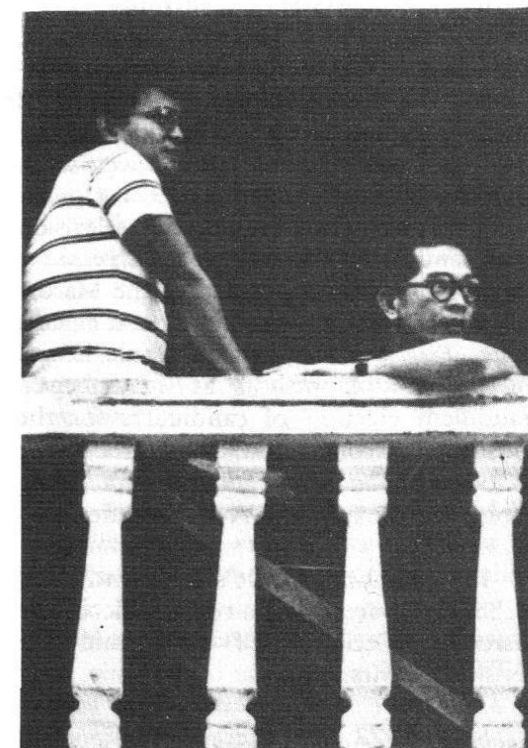
Lino was also one of the young talents trained for television directing under Lupita Aquino (then Concio) along with Gosiengfiao, Elwood Perez and Maryo J. de los Reyes, who like Lino subsequently became active movie directors. For four years, from 1967 to 1970, PETA produced *Balintataw* with Channel 5. It gained recognition from the Citizen's Award for Television as Outstanding Dramatic Anthology for 1967-68 and for 1969. The experience in directing for television proved most useful when later Lino would be tapped to direct movies.

In 1971, Lino took a breather from PETA. A misunderstanding with Cecile, whose gargantuan plans became too overwhelming for comfort, precipitated the respite. Lino was exhausted and fed up after the Third World Theater Festival and Conference which was held in Manila. It seemed so disorganized and all messed up with promises and pledges made here and there to raise the needed funds on time. Lino thought he'd lose face for he was one of those in the front-line. Besides,

at that time, Mrs. Emilia Blas of Lea Productions had discovered Lino and she would give him one movie assignment after another.

Unknown to Lino, he would return to PETA after two years to take a more significant and critical role in the organization. That was in early 1973 when Cecile Guidote left the country in a huff to escape political harassment.

Between 1970 and '72, Lino had made eight movies, all under the Lea banner, for Mrs. Blas tied him down to an exclusive two-year contract. Of those movies, he could single out only a few which brought him artistic satisfaction. There was *Wanted: Perfect Mother* (1970), significant in that it was Lino's movie directorial debut. There was *Tubog sa Ginto* (1971), which won him his first Best Director Award from the FAMAS; then *Santiago* (1970) his anti-war film, and *Stardoom* (1972), his indictment of



Brocka and playwright-actor Orlando Nadres teamed up for several stageplays and films.



the corruption of values in the local movie industry. All the rest were commercial compromises and concessions to an industry that favored escapist entertainment. The idealistic new director, whose entry into the industry was noticed, hailed and celebrated, was burnt-out and frustrated after his initial two-year stint that he wanted to quit from mainstream movie-making.

Also by 1972, the national political climate was getting repressive. In answer to what was claimed to be a deteriorating peace and order condition, Ferdinand E. Marcos had declared martial law on September 21. Political rivals and detractors of the Marcos couple were being detained in prison.

Cecile Guidote had reasons to worry and contemplate on a surreptitious flight to safer grounds. Her theater company had been critical of the regime, for one. *Timbangan ay Tagilid*, 1970 (writer, Marilou Jacob; director, Frank Rivera), intimated corruption in the judicial system. *Halimaw*, 1971 (writer, Isagani Cruz; director, Felix Padilla, Jr.), billed as a contemporary zarzuela, allegorized the rise of fascism. *Aidao*, 1972 (writers, Marilou Jacob and Franklin Osorio; director, Cecile Guidote), deceptively set in Maranao culture, satirized the 1971 Constitutional Convention. Even her new television drama anthology that followed *Balintataw, Ito ang Pilipino*, was critical of the Marcos government. For its initial episode, it taped a satire, *Eleksiyon Daw*, which Cecile herself directed. It took potshots at the perceived fraudulent election of candidates for the constitutional convention. Consequently, the episode was banned from going on air, aborting altogether the new PETA drama series.

In addition, Cecile's boyfriend then, Heherson Alvarez, was a vocal critic of the Marcoses. Cecile herself never hid her derision for Mrs. Marcos.

So in 1973, right after the ceremonies of the Ramon Magsaysay Awards where Cecile

was honored and recognized for her achievements in Theater and Communication Arts, along with other Asian awardees from various fields, PETA's founder fled incognito from the country. PETA was left without a mother.

Cecile's wards were at a loss but they nevertheless tried to go on. They elected Joy Soler, president of the Kalinangan Ensemble, PETA's repertory company, and Pio de Castro was appointed acting artistic director. After four months and four one-act plays directed by young, new directors, Joy quit over some disagreements with some company members on leadership style. For many years under Guidote, power was centralized in one person. This time, the members clamored for active participation in decision-making.

Meanwhile, after Cecile had left, PETA's main supporter, the influential newspaperman, Teodoro F. Valencia, was getting confused with the different, unfamiliar faces that were soliciting financial help in behalf of PETA at his office in the National Parks Development Committee at the Rizal Park. Mr. Valencia's office administered the Fort Santiago Park and hence its theater amidst the ruins, the Dulaang Raha Sulayman, home of PETA plays. Valencia summoned Lino to his office one day and gave him an ultimatum: he wanted to talk and deal with only one person on PETA matters and preferred that it would be Lino. Otherwise, he would give in to pressures coming from other theater groups which wanted the Sulayman as venue for their own plays. Lino had no choice but to accept the challenge. PETA would lose its exclusive use of the theater which, incidentally, was designed and constructed by Leandro V. Locsin, the same architect and now National Artist who designed and constructed the Cultural Center of the Philippines (main building). Lino had just become PETA's caretaker. Functionally and officially, it meant that he was now the organization's executive director, a position which he held from 1973 until 1985. Essentially, he had become



Brocka acts in *ANG TATAY KONG KALBO*, 1970, the Pilipino adaptation of Eugene Ionesco's *THE BALD SOPRANO*.

PETA's surrogate mother.

One of Lino's first moves upon assuming the position was to appoint a chairman for PETA Kalinangan Ensemble to oversee the company's day-to-day operations and an artistic director who would plan the line-up for each theater season. Even if he stopped making movies for Lea, Lino had plans of putting up his own movie outfit with friends to make the kind of movies that he really wanted to do. Lily Gamboa (now O'Boyle) was appointed chairman while Felix Padilla, Jr. or Nonon was designated artistic director. To Lino went the responsibility of raising funds for PETA's upkeep and survival. But meanwhile, it was back to stage directing for him.

For the 1973 season, Lino directed a trilogy of one-act plays of psychological and social realism. Billed as *Tatlo*, the three plays were: "*Bukas Madilim Bukas*," written by Orlando Nadres; "*Isang Laro*," by Mario O'Hara; and "*Bubungang Lata*," by Agapito Joaquin. In this production he used movie actors and actresses like Lolita Rodriguez,

Mary Walter, Pinky de Leon, Ronaldo Valdez, and Alicia Alonzo, together with Mario O'Hara, a stage and radio talent.

Although by 1974, he was busy again making movies this time for CineManila, the outfit that he and his friends formed, Lino never reneged on his duty as PETA's fundraiser. "*Siya talaga ang takbuhan namin*," said Soxy Topacio, actor-writer-director who once served as chairman of the Kalinangan Ensemble and is now PETA's executive director.

"*Madalas 'yan sasabihin namin: 'Lino wala kaming pambayad sa secretary.'* So, *sasabihin naman niya: 'Tatawagan ko si ganito [anyone of the big businessmen whom Cecile had introduced to him before or whom he had personally met and befriended and who agreed to be a member of PETA's Board of Trustees]' o kaya naman, 'O, eto muna ang pera ko...'*," Soxy continued.

"*Kahit anong hectic ngschedule ni Lino, kahit 'yan inabot ng alas siyete ng umaga sa*



*pagsu-shooting, halimbawa ng Maynila..., pag pinuntahan namin 'yan at sabihin namin na: 'Lino, kailangan tayo ni Mr. Valencia...gusto kang makausap ni Mr. Valencia...'* Alas nuwebe nandoon na 'yon sa Luneta. Pag PETA na 'yong may kailangan, andoon kaagad 'yan. Alam 'yan ng lahat ng mga artista niya. Lino had given PETA that kind of attention. So, I think, being with PETA and ensuring its financial survival was Lino's biggest contribution to Philippine theater," Soxy concluded.

For many theater groups, especially of the '60s and the '70s, it was easier to find production money and benefactors than a regular audience. It was not unusual then for the theater artists to perform to only a handful of audiences consisting of relatives and friends. PETA members remembered how each time before a performance, when only a handful of tickets had been disposed of at the box office, they would coax the promenaders at the Fort to try and watch their play. Audience development was indeed high in many theater groups' priority list of programs, much more

with PETA which was seeking to make theater a regular cultural fare among the residents of Metropolitan Manila.

Lino was in complete agreement with Cecile on her strategy to bring in people to theater—invite popular movie stars to perform on stage. Movies is the Filipinos' mass entertainment even then and movie stars had such magic and fan following.

Lino's initial two-year stint in the movie industry had earned him a reputation as an actor's director. If ever Lino, a newcomer, got noticed and subsequently developed a following among local moviegoers, it was because his movies were generally well-told and well-acted. The reputation spread among movie stars and the more serious among them wished to be directed by this newcomer who seemed to draw out the best in a performer. Working with Lino was an opportunity to test their mettle and improve their craft.

Inviting movie stars to appear at Fort Santiago, therefore, was not at all difficult



Brocka shows Bembol Roco, Mario O'Hara, and Ben Rubio how to act out a scene in *MGA AMA, MGA ANAK*, 1977.

even if oftentimes Lino would ask them to lower their fees, in fact, drastically cut them down. And the stars agreed in exchange for the training that they would get and perhaps the experience of performing before a live audience who could give instantaneous feedback.

The movie actors and actresses that Lino invited would appear on stage at Fort Santiago as well as on PETA's *Balintataw*. With their stage counterparts who were asked to appear in the movies and on television, they made up the Movie Actors Workshop, an informal, unstructured group of movie and stage actors and actresses who crossed the boundaries of their respective medium in practising and honing their craft.

A talented lot fired with much passion for acting, theater actors and actresses unfortunately could not live (up to this time) on acting for theater alone. At the same time, Lino saw the need to infuse the industry with new blood and breed of performers whose orientation is less commercial and whose dedication is more to their craft than to the whims of their fans. While the movie industry had a fairly good share of actors and actresses of no mean talent, strong support from second leads and bit players was much needed. Thus, Lino fielded his friends and tested stage actors and actresses in his movies as early as 1970 when he did *Santiago*. Despite the initial objection of his producer—Lino demanded a talent fee higher than the usual fees given to movie bit players for his stage actors and actresses—Lino would tap through the years the likes of Mario O'Hara, Celeste Legaspi, Joonee Gamboa, Adul de Leon, Angie Ferro, Soxy Topacio, Maryo J. de los Reyes, Lily Gamboa, Tommy Abuel, Jojo Abella, Bey Vito, Len Santos, Manny Castañeda, Nina Lorenzo, Melvi Pacubas, Lorli Villanueva, Maya Valdez, June Keithley, Nanding Josef, C.B. Garrucho, Joel Lamangan, Louella Albarnoz and Laurice Guillen, to mention some. Soon other directors followed suit and many of these stage actors and actresses eventually took second lead roles.

Yet the stage actors who used to employ big movements to reach an audience at the farthest corner of the theater needed to adjust their acting style for the camera where even the smallest movements are readily registered and magnified tenfold. Lino, therefore, saw the reciprocal need to train actors and actresses for the stage and for the camera. He formed the Movie Actors Workshop officially in 1973. The training that its members underwent, however, was largely on the job where Lino would motivate, give pointers or deliver instantaneous lectures on good and bad acting, or in many instances demonstrate how a scene should be done on stage or for the camera. Later, in 1977, a six-week summer course for aspiring movie actors was given by Lino and Laurice Guillen.

Apart from constantly reminding his actors and actresses that for the stage, one made bigger movements while for the movie or television camera smaller movements would suffice, most especially for tight shots, Lino did not give much distinction between stage acting and acting for the camera.

"It was the sense of immediacy. I think that was Lino's great contribution to actors..." assessed Nonon Padilla, "that the actor has to do things now, that the drama is not happening elsewhere. It's happening to you as an actor and it's happening now and you have to project that whether to the camera or to the audience beyond the stage." Nonon continued and recalled bemusedly: "But he had this thing about breathing, y'know... the heavy breathing to give it a dramatic quality..."

Nonon who directed Lino in *Indio* said this of Lino, the actor: "He was always conscious of rhythm, of picking up the scene, of making it alive and suspense-filled." Lino demanded the same from his actors and actresses.

If oftentimes Lino demonstrated how he wanted a scene acted out, it was to give his





Phillip Salvador as Tony seduces Charito Solis as Perla in *LARAWAN*, 1979.

actor or actress an idea of what he felt the character's essence was. Of course he did not do that to everybody. Not to Lolita Rodriguez for one. He respected and trusted her talent that much such that he allowed her to rehearse placidly where he demanded performance level from others. He knew that come performance time, she would execute her scenes as incandescently as he would have imagined and wanted.

The Movie Actors Workshop had had its share of critics within PETA itself. Some thought that the movie stars were being given special treatment. That was partly true. Others thought that should the appearance of movie stars continue, the choice of plays would be adjusted to whichever movie actor or actress was being eyed to appear on stage the following season. Moreover, the opportunity of company members to get good roles was being lessened and limited. Still there were those, like Nonon, who frowned at the commercial bent of it all. That was exactly what he felt when PETA produced and got

Bembol Roco to appear in *Hanggang Dito na Lamang at Maraming Salamat* in 1975. It was a hallmark in the history of PETA and of contemporary Philippine theater.

"I didn't like the idea that Lino had cast Bembol Roco for the role because...he was gonna use Bembol, a star for his next movie which was *Maynila*...So, in effect, he was using the theater as a publicity gimmick for his movie production. I didn't like that and I accused him of it," recalled Nonon.

Soxy has fonder memories of the play that was directed by Lutgardo Labad or Gardy. "*Pinag-aralan ni Lino ang* script. Then he agreed to play Fidel. *Pero usapan namin*, it would only have a one-night performance, exclusive for PETA and friends. *Kaya ang* program [playbill] *noon, ano lang, e...drinowing lang namin. Ako ang* designer *noon, e. Pero pagdating ng* performance, full house *kami. At marami pang nakapila. So, noong nakita ni Lino 'yon—'Ay, ano 'yan, bakit ganyan kadami? 'Ewan ko, Lino,' sagot*

*ko naman. Ang dami-daming tao. Nung* first night *tatlong* shows *kami*. So from then on, *tinanggap na ni Lino na siya talaga ang tagahanap ng pera para sa PETA,*" laughed Soxy with mock insight. "For one whole year, *ang Hanggang Dito...ang nagpasok ng kwarta sa PETA.*"

*Hanggang Dito na Lamang...* broke all box office records in Philippine contemporary theater. While it may not be the first Filipino play on homosexuality—Wilfrido Ma. Guerrero for one wrote and staged *A Clash of Cymbals* in 1969(?)—it certainly was the longest-running and most-produced play not only by PETA which toured it nationwide for about a year, but by other theater groups as well; in fact, it is even credited as the play that initiated Filipino plays into the dinner theater circuit previously dominated by foreign musical plays.

Orlando Nadres, then one of Lino's closest friends aside from Mario O'Hara, wrote the play specifically for Lino. It was Lino's "coming out" play, if one may call it. Before *Hanggang Dito*...Lino was reticent about his true sexuality. In fact, there was a time when he as PETA's executive director "banned" the scandalous manner by which the gays of PETA (and the girls who mimicked them) were greeting each other. In true screaming-faggot fashion, greetings were shouted in shrill voices across the open-air auditorium, spiced up with expletives and terms of endearment that would later be immortalized in the growing lexicon of Manila's gay subculture. The gays of PETA who had been circumspect in Cecile's presence finally released their primal scream as soon as Guidote had left the company. So when Lino opened up to both Dandy and Mario, the former was inspired to write a play about a character named Fidel, who in the end had to reveal his true sexuality to the boy whom he had reared for many years as a surrogate parent and who had become the object of his love and repressed desire. The script was presented to the artistic director for consideration and despite his personal

reservations about the quality of the play, Nonon agreed to do the play if only because it was the first time that such a topic of timely sociological import would be tackled at the Sulayman. Besides, there were those in the company who believed that the company should present more plays that are near the life experiences of the contemporary Filipino.

Again Nonon frowned at the commercial come-on of the play. "I had complete reservations about it as a play. Because I did not think it was a good play. It was such a self-indulgent script." But he conceded: "It was a moving experience for a lot of people. For a number of us, we were cringing, you know, in our seats—with embarrassment. It was not because of the subject matter that we had reservations. It was the mere fact that you were exploiting something in the most commercial way possible."

Some critics had encouraging words for the play. Rosalinda L. Orosa of the *Philippine Daily Express*, in her review of the play dated 24 February 1975 said:

"The play is tightly-structured and thoroughly absorbing, with its share of dramatic conflicts and, more importantly, with its keenly perceptive delineation of the two main characters—one representing the overt homosexual and the other, the homosexual in disguise...*Hanggang Dito*...makes for compelling theater not because of its 'sensational' subject but in spite of it..."

Lino himself might not have thought the play artistically outstanding but its success taught him and the company a thing or two. First, to be successful with the audience, to create an impact among them, a play must be culled from their real life experiences, with characters that are familiar to them or with whom they could identify or empathize. Second, the audience wants their actors and actresses to act realistically, uttering lines that are raw and down-to-earth as they (the audience) would in real life—nothing poetic nor pedantic. Third, popular movie stars indeed draw the crowd in.





Brocka plays Fidel, a closet queen, with Manny Castañeda as Julie in *HANGGANG DITO NA LAMANG AT MARAMING SALAMAT*, 1975.

Later, in his choice of plays to direct for PETA, those three points were Lino's primary considerations. The fourth had to do with subject matter, and insofar as that was concerned, apparently the lust in the female characters is what interested Lino. Nonon saw that this element was prominent in Lino's version of *Larawan* (that starred Lolita Rodriguez, Charito Solis and Phillip Salvador), more than in the version that was directed by Cecile (1969). Nonon added: "He would choose scripts that had these things. Y'know the female either as victim or someone hungry for companionship. Lino would also choose scripts that made for a good acting piece. For example, if he just wanted to see Lolita Rodriguez deliver Blanche Dubois' famous aria, for Lino that was a reason good enough to direct *Flores Para Los Muertos*. He felt that there was no need to rationalize its production in any ideological or bigger framework or rationale. Eventually, Laurice Guillen played Blanche Dubois.

In addition, Cecilia Bulaong Garrucho observed that it was more the homespun drama that excited Lino. "That means," C.B. explained, "the American realistic play type—the likes of, aside from Williams, William Inge or the plays of that generation like *Tea and Sympathy* and *Comeback Little Sheba*, where you have a mixture of poetic realism and domestic drama. Actually, I guess, pieces people can easily identify with and easily understand but at the same time well done *naman*. Well crafted and well acted, versus the play which is highly artistic and maybe a little bit difficult to understand."

Lino's big productions in PETA validate the observations of Nonon and C.B. From 1977 to 1980, Lino directed plays among whose characters are passionate, lustful women longing for companionship. These plays were: *Mga Ama, Mga Anak*, 1977 (an adaptation by Pete Lacaba and Virgilio Almario of Nick Joaquin's short story, "Three Generations"); *Flores Para Los Muertos*, 1977 (Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*, translated by Orlando Nadres); a restaging

of *Larawan*, 1979 (Nick Joaquin's *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino*, translated by Alfred Yuson and Franklin Osorio), and *Pusa Sa Yerong Bubong*, 1980 (Tennessee Williams' *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, translated by Tony Perez). The reruns of *Mga Ama, Mga Anak* (1979), *Flores Para Los Muertos* (1980) and the premiere of *Pusa sa Yerong Bubong* were billed as Movie Actors Workshop productions. The first two were restaged at the Philamlife Auditorium as PETA's commitment to the management of the Philippine American Life Insurance Company in exchange for the free use of office, training and rehearsal spaces at the East side lobby of the Philamlife Bldg. at UN Avenue where PETA held offices and activities from 1978 to 1981.

Lino's choices of plays to direct manifested his preference for realistic plays. As Nonon puts it: "He was always for realism. He never had any other style."

Other colleagues in PETA agree that Lino did not go for the expressionistic style that the company was experimenting with, much less for the absurd plays that the company mounted in a series in 1970. He appeared in two of these plays, Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, which was directed by Gardy for PETA and in Eugene Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano*, directed by visiting American director Randy Ford for an Assumption Convent production. On *Waiting for Godot*, he couldn't understand the play, Lino claimed, and was puzzled, amused and at the same time irritated that the director had asked them, the cast, to jump and shout all over the theater. He simply found the approach and the style ridiculous and it made no sense to him.

"He never bothered to understand modern styles and he would always scoff at them," continued Nonon. "Lino didn't think that theater was cerebral or intellectual. He always thought that it was something emotional, something from the heart."

Actually, Lino did appreciate some non-realistic styles of expressionistic and experi-



mental theater. In fact, there were two experimental plays that he liked very much. One was Rizal's *Junto Al Pasig*, translated in *Tagalog as Sa Tabi ng Pasig* (1973), which Nonon directed. He thought it was total theater, creating powerful images through the fusion of text, music and movement. Another was Al Santos' *Si Tatang Athp. mga Tauhan ng Aming Dula* (1975), which was directed by Lito Tiongson. Tiongson used 12 actors perched on bamboo scaffolds looking like clowns with their white masks and red noses; they narrated the tragic story of Valentin de los Santos and the Lapiang Malaya, a post-war vestige of pre-war messianic peasant societies that ran afoul with government forces, whose members were subsequently massacred as they attacked with courage and deep faith, armed with nothing but sticks, bolos and amulets.

Lino liked both plays, deeply appreciative of the creative work that went into them. Perhaps because the plays were reminiscent of *Alamang*, a theater piece based on a Korean folktale, *Dhyana*, which was directed by visiting Korean director and friend of Cecile, Duk Yang Yoo. It was presented as the Philippine or PETA entry to the First World Theater Festival in 1971. That play was particularly significant for PETA since the Korean director made the members discover the use of folk expressions: chants, rituals, dance, ethnic music. Lino thought that *Alamang* was very theatrical and it used native cultural forms of expression.

Lino couldn't explain why he liked the plays. He just knew instinctively that the artists behind the production were doing something creative and brilliant. However, much as he was capable of appreciating stylized, experimental plays, he found himself inadequate to do one.

Whether for theater or for the movies, Lino, his colleagues agree, approach things with gut instinct. He abhorred intellectualizing and theorizing. For him, theater was something very instinctive.

Soxy would relate: "I know Lino read Stanislavsky. He was aware of method acting. And part of it is *yung paggawa ng* biography. *Yun bang lalagyan mo ng* physical, psychological at social dimensions *'yong isang* character *na* you're going to portray. You will try to trace that character's history from the time he/she was born, or even before. *Naku, ayaw na ayaw niya 'yon.* When they were doing *Hanggang Dito...pinagawa ni* Gardy *'yung* cast *niya ng mga* biography. Much as he hated doing it, *gumawa rin siya ng* biography *kasi* Bembol was there and Lino wanted him to learn the approach of theater actors in attacking a role."

Similarly, instead of the usual approach of actors to study a character's units and objectives for a particular scene, Lino preferred that they observed instead human nature. Lino's comment to Soxy once intimated his abhorrence for theorizing and intellectualizing. "*Nakakatakot 'yong mga taong laging aral nang aral. Lalo na 'yong mga naka-attend ng* workshop. *Akala mo kung sino nang napakagagaling.*"

And yet Gardy Labad who had directed Lino more than once believed that without Lino knowing it in many instances he applied in practice what the theories say. "He was largely an instinctive artist," he affirmed.

What Lino had in abundance was a keen sense of melodrama, a great sense of the narrative whether he was doing a Nick Joaquin or some *komiks* material for the movies. As Nonon puts it: "He perfected the sense of melodrama...I don't know if that's what you call the *'pulso ng masa'*...that immediacy or that sense of urgency that is always there in his works."

C.B. Garrucho ventures an explanation for Lino's penchant for melodrama. "It's a must that you read about his life. His life and everything that happened to him—a lot of terribly painful things—are the basis of his art. The basis of his art was life. Without knowing Lino's story, we will not understand him as an artist."



Phillip Salvador and Hilda Koronel star in *PUSA SA YERONG BUBONG*, 1980.

Because as a child in Nueva Ecija, he was rejected and maltreated by his own relatives, and as a young *provinciano* studying in Manila for the first time he was not completely accepted in the circle where he thought he belonged, Lino saw everything from the eyes of the marginalized and the oppressed, observed C.B. Garrucho. In many of his movies, he made us see life from that viewpoint.

Not surprisingly, Lino would be in complete agreement with PETA as it lined up the plays for KE's theater seasons. Particularly after 1977, the company's repertoire consisted largely of plays depicting the conditions of the marginalized sectors: the farmers, the fisherfolk, the workers, the ethnic communities, the urban poor and other small people of Philippine society. On stage as in the movies, the voices of the timid and the silent should be heard, Lino concurred. At times though, he would have strong disagreements with the company's artistic leaders over the manner and style of depicting truth and socio-political realities.

Such as in 1983, when during the PETA Night of the company's forthcoming twinbill presentation, *Si Huwan Pabrika at si Mariang Aliv*, Lino gave the first play a dressing down for being like a "teach-in" on workers' plight, replete with sloganeering. The PETA Night is a critics' night traditionally set by the company to gather feedback and suggestions for improvement on the content and form of a production before it is finally presented to the public. Every company member, from the artistic director to the humblest stagehand, is given the right and the opportunity to comment on the work of their colleagues. As a result of Lino's criticism, *Huwan Pabrika* was rehashed just a week before playdate. Still the revised play was far from what Lino was looking for.

Although the structure of the play was altered and some lines were edited in consideration of the kind of audience at the Sulayman — most of whom were not highly aware politically — the style and the form were still urgent theater. Angry or sober, in con-



trast, Lino wanted his plays with characters that gradually develop as events slowly unfold, where character changes are well-motivated and progressed step by step and not by leaps and bounds, like a good realistic play.

Largely as a result of PETA's interaction with the grassroots and exposure to the conditions of the various sectors of Philippine society in the course of its members' search for materials for their plays, as well as in the application of the PETA pedagogy that sought to empower the voiceless through theater arts, games and skills, the company had evolved and developed a kind of theater similar to those evolved in Africa and in Latin America (e.g. Augusto Boal's "theater of the oppressed"). Called "people's theater" by its practitioners, it employs a style where community issues and problems are dramatized and discussed openly by the folk themselves without any pretense to any so-called artistic restraint or subtlety. The approach, style and temper of such theater would through the years be assimilated into PETA's own theater aesthetics whether for its protest plays on the street during rallies and demonstrations or for its realistic-expressionistic plays on national or sectoral issues at the Sulayman.

Admittedly political in that these plays induce or stimulate action toward confrontation of issues and resolution of problems, not a few regard and dismiss such "people's theater" productions as nothing but agit-prop, especially those who limit the function of theater to entertainment or as an aesthetic showcase. Worse, PETA was perceived as an advocate of a particular political ideology. Lino himself thought so. He reacted rather hysterically over an information given by a friend, Marichu Maceda, that some PETA leaders and members were marxist ideologues pursuing a hidden agenda in the company, that Gen. Fabian Ver had a list of the names of these "subversives." He confronted the leadership one fateful day sometime in 1981, the day when — the members shudder in recollection — Lino Brocka dropped "the

bomb" that virtually exploded right before the faces of the PETA leadership and almost led to the disintegration of the company. He accused and lambasted leaders for using the company and the unsuspecting members for their own ideological ends. Fortunately for the company, after the initial shock over the disclosure and the witch-hunting that followed (the presence of government intelligence agents among the members and applicants was also suspected), the members consolidated following a series of meetings and sessions of soul-searing and re-examination of the group's true vision and goals. The members reaffirmed their self-imposed role and image as a mirror of its times and as an embodiment of protest theater critical of any repressive regime and system.

PETA through the years had become a controversial cultural group. To the conservative sectors, it was nothing but a radical political group that uses theater for its propagandas; to the radicals, it was merely a sympathetic group of theater artists maybe genuinely concerned with the plight of the masses yet timid and indecisive, lacking true grit to go all the way in promoting their political conviction. Truth is PETA has always been a pluralistic group of politicized artists who would not hesitate to go out into the streets and cry out their latest protest against perceived injustices even as they create worlds of fantasy on stage. But the members' political convictions and persuasions vary; they are united only in that everyone is a professed nationalist with strong pro-people sentiments. Within the company, tension oftentimes exists as the members work at maintaining a balance.

Protest and politics in theater were nothing new to Lino, for even during Cecile's time, PETA through the Kalinangan Ensemble and through *Balintataw*, had always been critical of the Marcos government. Yet he believed that he was an artist first and foremost and true artists did not mouth slogans nor wave flags.

That was before 1984.

Between 1984 and 1991, the year he died in a car crash, Lino made the following movies, among others: *Miguelito* (1985), *Kapit sa Patalim* (1984), *Macho Dancer* (1988), *Gumapang Ka sa Lusak* (1990), *Habamakin Lahat* (1990), *Orapronobis* (1989), and *Sa Kabila ng Lahat* (1991), political dramas most of which were fictionalized accounts of actual events or true-to-life stories of corruption in government, power games and power play, and fascist ascendancy. Despite the commercial concessions and the



HANGGANG DITO NA LAMANG AT MARAMING SALAMAT, 1975, gave Lino one of his most memorable roles on stage.

melodrama, they were as provocative as the angriest PETA play of protest, most especially *Orapronobis* which was never shown commercially in the country. During that period, as he realized that no one was safe in this country with the assassination of Benigno S. Aquino, the homecoming political rival of the dictator; as he relentlessly fought against movie censorship that brought him to the halls of the Supreme Court; as he joined hands on the streets with members of other sectors struggling to preserve their human rights and dignity, causing not only his detention with Behn Cervantes after joining jeepney drivers in their strike, but also his break up with Valencia who warned him against joining rallies and demonstrations (the old man said: "You know I work for the man. Lino, you're biting the hands that feed you. You better make a choice."); as he eagerly joined Cory Aquino's Constitutional Convention full of hope and great expectation, and left frustrated and hopeless even before sessions were over; as he came face-to-face with others who are marginalized as he and his family were, this time not merely by familial contempt for sinful pasts, but by bigtime interests and even greater power brokers, Lino's political growth was hastened. He saw what his theater colleagues saw earlier. And he was angry even more. One did not have to be an ideologue. One only had to have a heart.

The season after Lino's death, the PETA Kalinangan Ensemble mounted in his memory and honor a stage adaptation of what would have been the script for another cinematic opus on human rights, the second of the trilogy that Lino and writer Pete Lacaba envisioned (the first one being *Orapronobis*). *Misererenobis*, the play, could have been directed by Brocka himself. The play had women characters ravished by the past and permanently wounded. It had anger and re-creations. It had remorse. Above all, it had a heart.

And it was a compelling political drama.



## FROM GINGOOG TO GREENHILLS: LINO AND HIS WRITERS

Jose Dalisay, Jr.

SOMETIME in 1986, on their way to Gingoog City, Lino Brocka and Pete Lacaba passed a trailer on the roadside being loaded with dead bodies. Lino was then a member of the Constitutional Commission and he had taken Pete on as a technical assistant. They stopped and asked the townsfolk about the dead. Cultists, they were told. Believing the newly-installed Aquino administration to be a communist regime, they had attacked the local police station with their bolos, reaping only their own slaughter. Now their thick peasant feet, splayed and bloodied, hung out stiffly over the trailer's edge. The image would impress itself, quietly but surely, into the hearts and bones of the two men passing by. Much later, years later by which time the "Tadtad", in one of those curious ironies of Philippine politics, had become co-opted into the government's counter-insurgency program Lino and Pete would pause and recall the scene, and do *Orapronobis* with a vengeance worth the wait.

*Orapronobis* was to be one of Lino's last great films, a project that drew its power from its unflinching representation of social crisis writ large, and yet writ simultaneously in the fine trail of blood that led in Lino's and Pete's minds from Gingoog to the rise of the vigilantes, the Leyte refugees, and the ambushes of Commander Dante and Nemesio Prudente. The Lacaba script which originally would have been titled "Tadtad" would change between 1986 and 1988 as the Philippine political landscape itself would change. But having taken its time, and in minding the many crises of the hours in between, it would emerge no less stark and broad, and yet no less precise than the first roadside image that gave rise in Lino to the fury that so often informed his films.

*Orapronobis* was to have been the first part of a political trilogy; *Miserere Nobis*, a human-rights story, and *Children of War*, inspired by the plight of the people in Marag Valley. There were to have been other equally-ambitious projects: *Noli Me Tangere*, *Guardia de Honor*, a full-length feature on the *muro-ami*, and a film on human rights commissioned by the British Broadcasting Corp.

They would reach various stages of completion, and stall, or be finished by other directors, as protege Christopher de Leon would finish *Huwag Mong Salingin ang Sugat Ko*. For Lino, in his later years, there would always be more and better projects and less time, until there was no more time.

*Orapronobis* saw Lino at the finer and ultimately more memorable extreme of his and the industry's possibilities. There was another extreme, which I among his other writers grew very familiar with, those movies that announced, from the marquees down to the gossip columns, that they were out to make money and nothing more and nothing less: the "commercial" movies, in our verbal shorthand, the starbuilders, the haymakers, the surefooted spawn of the *komiks* and of *segurista* producers. Cutaway, if you will, from Gingoog to Greenhills, to the genesis of another project, *Hello, Young Lovers*.

It is 1981 and the *bagets* are beginning to crowd the veterans out of the billings; under contract to Regal Films, Lino gets an early-morning call from "Mother Lily" Monteverde; she had a dream, she tells him, in which the song "Hello, Young Lovers" kept playing; therefore, taking that as a propitious sign, she has decided to produce a *bagets* movie with that title. Lino phones men — he keeps me on call for seven-day wonders — and together we answer the summons to appear forthwith at

the Regal roundtable in Greenhills to discuss the storyline. Mother's lieutenants and *alalays* are in perfect attendance; somewhere in the background, Albert Martinez is flexing his muscles and smiling at everyone. I get the feeling that Albert Martinez will be in the movie. Douglas Quijano, Mother's factotum, does most of the talking, which is just as well, because neither Lino nor I have the faintest idea what the movie will be, apart from the title, which is graven in stone. Someone remarks that Snooky and Gabby Concepcion are under contract to Regal; they would make a fine pair; and so we have our casting. Someone else remarks that Snooky would look terrific in a gauzy soft-focus shot, Jane Seymour-like, preferably in Baguio (later, we settle for Tagaytay); Lino listens, and I begin to scribble notes on yellow pad paper. There must be no deaths in the movie, someone remarks; Mother was averse to movie deaths. So noted. And then we take a quantum leap to the movie's ending, when someone remembers the rousing finale of *The Graduate*, where Dustin Hoffman steals Katharine Ross away in a bus; and so shall Gabby (on a motorcycle). Meeting ended. Lino and I ride back to his apartment

on Scout Albano in Quezon City with a movie title, two stars, an obligatory scene, a deathless plot, an ending, and a sinking feeling that this was no way to make a movie, but that a movie would be made nonetheless by sheer power of assembly. And so *Hello, Young Lovers* was made, as quickly as it was forgotten. Lino would direct many other projects like it, alongside his more serious work. The enduring wonder of Lino was his flexibility with material -- a flexibility no doubt helped by the dire economic straits he almost invariably found himself in which is not to say that Lino smiled blithely through such confections as *Hello, Young Lovers* and *Burgis* (another Snooky-Gabby starrer); he would often laugh and scream "Nakakasuka!" over the inanities and twisted-pretzel plots we found ourselves working with, but his mirth tinkled in a basin of dismay, and conversely, he understood the realities of Philippine filmmaking too well to let his sarcasm get the better of his projects. When he was done with retching theatrically after recounting the plot of the next *komiks* project we were due to do, Lino would pause, and announce, sedately, that "I think we can do something with this." That "something"



In *TAHAN NA EMPLOY, TAHAN*, 1977, relatives played by, left to right, Orlando Nadres, Rosa Aguirre, Rodel Naval, Lorli Villanueva and Armida Siguion-Reyna, mourn the death of a family member.





Dolphy playing the role of a gay beautician breaks down as his aunt, played by Lorli Villanueva, looks on in this scene from *ANG TATAY KONG NANAY*, 1978.

meant the infusion of any possible measure of sense and social criticism into the story, and while the results were necessarily varied, the impulse was always there to leaven the ridiculous with the sublime: to reconcile, as it were, the often intractable realities of commercial moviemaking with the realities of Filipino living and of his own crusades.

Contradiction, compromise: to suggest that Lino Brocka was uncompromising in his work would be both a lie and a disservice, because if there was anything Lino felt he had found to bequeath to Philippine filmmaking, it was the sullen art of working within the commercial system while seeking to broaden the possibilities of the system from within and without. He was, after all, no stranger to the dubious extreme: earlier in life, he had scripted B-movies for Cirio Santos with titles like *The Arizona Kid* and *The Sexy Bombshell*; the future had to be an improvement. In Lino's later years, Ricky Lee says, the director felt excited to have found his ideal working medium: the commercial project with a social dimension. Both aspects were important to him: commercial appeal guaranteed mass audiences and, to put it simply, more work for

himself and his regular crew; and as Lino's political insight sharpened, he began to see beyond the individuality of his characters and their dilemmas, and to express them as social paradigms.

It may be that our critics and viewers will wish to remember Lino more for *Tinimbang*, *Maynila* and his other milestones on the way to *Orapronobis*, but Ricky Lee, who worked with Lino perhaps more closely than any of his other writers, remembers a time in the pre-Aquino years when Lino was trying to sell his box office capabilities: "Lino had basically three types of projects: the *komiks*, *bonggang* commercial project; and then, at the other extreme, the serious political project; and midway, a commercial project with social content. In fact, before he died, he was doing a lot of work with this third type, and he was very excited about it, to be recognized as a box office director. It wasn't always that way. We used to crawl around the circuit, looking for producers who would take us, but their thinking was all the same: serious director, serious writer. We were getting rejected right and left...."

Among the casualties was a Japanese Occupation story, plotted by Nick Joaquin, which Lino and Ricky were trying to package as an action movie. "We talked about what sort of commercial gimmick would sell," Ricky says, "and we were desperate enough to think of putting a woman on a horse because it seemed like a sexy idea. But nothing came out of that, either. One project that did push through which we wanted to market as an action movie was *Cain at Abel*, but it still wasn't as commercial as it could have been. It was an odd situation. There we were, trying to prove that we could do box office movies as well as anyone else, but nobody believed us, no one took us seriously."

The fact was that even earlier, Lino had proven his box office capabilities, his sense of what the *masa* wanted and his willingness to give it to them, in such projects as *Wanted: Perfect Mother* (based on the Mars Ravelo

*komiks* serial) and *Santiago* (a Fernando Poe, Jr. epic that, Lino would recount, would turn his hair white as an educational experience in dealing with the Star Syndrome). But somewhere along the way to the Urian awards which he would come to reject with a properly dramatic flair, the Brocka name became a baggage tag of "quality," translatable in producers' eyes into a high seriousness that the critics adored but which cost, and lost, money. Still, there can be no mistaking that Lino himself an inveterate movie fan found challenge and satisfaction in making commercial movies: good ones, better ones, movies with saleable "production values" and a modicum of sense. It was important for him to prove this to his producers, because, over the balance sheet of his career, the blockbusters would in effect finance the smaller, riskier albeit more critically successful turkeys he would talk them into buying now and then.

When Lino had a commercial or *komiks* project in the works, he more often than not turned to me, or to Joey Reyes. To this day, when asked what I did for Lino, I say with a laugh and no malice whatsoever that I wrote some of his most forgettable movies, not all of them, to be sure, and not all of them forgettable, but when it seemed at one point that I was doing an inordinate number of them, I took a two-year break and tried to forget the movies myself. Joey he reserved for the most *bongga*, the most *masalimuot* projects. ("This is too complicated," he told me once, reviewing a storyline that involved at least four love teams and all kinds of triangles in between. "I better give it to Joey.") Lino and I were never close friends, in the way that he and Pete, and especially Ricky, would become, although we would do some thirteen or fourteen full-length projects together between 1977 and 1990. I was working in a government PR office for most of those years and while he never brought it up with me (as he, for example, would later warn Ricky away from government-funded projects), what he must have perceived to be my lack of a personal commitment to his own causes hung between us, although it didn't do much else otherwise, except perhaps to inhibit

him from assigning me outrightly political work (with the notable exception of *Miguelito*, of which more later). Lino seemed mystified and yet reassured by the humdrum constancy of my life as a professional and family man; I was predictably and reliably constant, ready for any kind of job. I suspect that eventually he valued me for the plodding good humor that could take any twist and turn of the human psyche. He was always more of an optimist than I was and, more materially, for my speed. Never mind the quality, but I could turn scripts around from the first phone call to the finished typescript in anywhere from three days to three weeks, and to a man as harried as Lino got, I was Boy Wonder on call.

I fail to recall how and when we first met; but it had to have been at PETA, which staged a play of mine early in 1977; Lino was directing a TV series for Channel 2 called *Lino Brocka Presents*, using many PETA talents, and I was soon writing teleplays for the drama anthology; Lino liked the scripts for they were compact, cheap to produce and easy to shoot ("Remember," he would tell me, "we only have one camera.") I learned to write living-room dramas with no more than two or three main characters. It was to be an amazingly busy year for Lino and me; we segued from TV into one of the most curious episodes of contemporary Philippine filmmaking the *Ito ang Labing Pilipino* project, produced by the NMPC and conceived by Imelda Marcos to be the country's filmic history from Ferdinand Magellan to Ferdinand Marcos, a gargantuan command performance that would involve seven or eight of the country's top directors and their writers, each of them assigned a chapter from the history book. Lino took on the Gomburza story; why he took the assignment on in the first place escapes me now; I can't even recall having seen the finished product, or tell what became of it, after the investment of the millions. What was more memorable was what took place off-camera, in that plush corner of San Miguel not too far from the Palace known as the Oldenburg mansion, where Madame herded all of us one evening for a lecture on how to make a movie — her

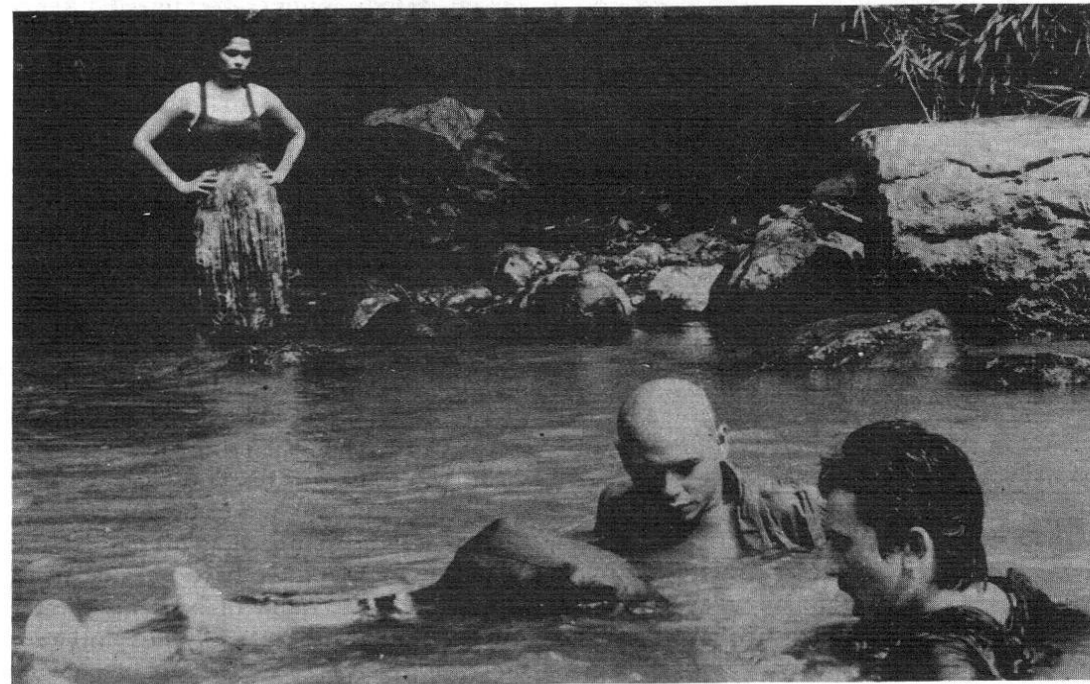


movie— amidst the gleaming silver, the floor-to-ceiling mirrors, the Cambodian artifacts and the dreamy portraits: “Take care,” she said, “that when you shoot, you avoid any show of poverty. We should emphasize the beautiful in the Filipino.” We listened to her sullenly until the meeting ended with a pre-dawn guided tour of the premises and its trove and Lino and I could only find relief in the notion that we had been assigned the 1870s, when, presumably, there was suffering among the Indios. Lino’s one enduring gain from *Labi*, as he would recall to Pete Lacaba later, was his discovery of Phillip Salvador; he had been cast among the extras, a convincingly efficient *guardia civil*.

Our first full-length project together was a Nino Muhlach tearjerker, *Tahan Na, Empoy, Tahan*, for producer Jesse Yu’s newly-organized Lotus Films. Lino had one directive: “Make them cry.” This was easier for Lino than me to do, as I was soon to discover the nearly-inexhaustible lodestone of Lino’s stories and of his pain: his origins in San Jose, Nueva Ecija, the small-town gallery of battered orphans, dolorous mothers, abusive relatives, likeable rogues, persecuted misfits, soulful prostitutes and vampiric politicians that Lino would be forever returning to. *Empoy* was Lino’s story, a showcase of his childhood griefs. As he was wont to do for sympathetic listeners many times over, he would enact in that dim apartment on N. Domingo in Cubao, with the black paper cross on the front door, where I would first visit him his favorite childhood scenes, most notably his role as a sampaguita vendor at the public market in San Jose; it was then he discovered, he said, the power of theater, the ability to draw tears and a few centavos from passersby with his shameless rendition of “Ang Maging Ulila,” with his kid brother Danilo dutifully tugging at his side. Lino loved to perform these scenes; he himself was, of course, an actor (and he loved to sing in his rich baritone when prodded; “What I Did for Love” was his showstopper); but he appreciated the difference between acting and performance, and when it came to his own material there was no doubt what he

wanted to do. From *Empoy* (and even earlier, as in *Tinimbang to Orapronobis*, his material, his experiences, things he saw and things he heard, would be fair grist for the mill. Quite often, an impasse in a story-plotting session would be broken by a personal recollection which would find its way into the story. The simple truth was that Lino loved storytelling; and his was a complicated life, so there were many stories to tell.

Our second project was just as close to real life as *Empoy*. *Empoy* did handsomely at the tills, as we had hoped it would, and for a reprise or, more likely, as a concession from a grateful producer Lotus let Lino do *Ay, Naku, Inay!* (later shortened to *Inay*) on a shoestring budget. *Inay* was to be Lino’s left-handed paean to the Filipino mother, a celebration of her aggravations as inflicter and inflictee, and again he drew from the obvious, ample and available resources of his own mother’s presence. I remember Lino’s mother well: a slight, kindly woman who seemed at once proud of and perplexed by her son’s celebrity and city living. By this time, Lino had moved with his mother to Roosevelt, near Pantranco, a larger, greener house where Lino could indulge in a passing fancy with *bonsai*. Lino would recall, as we made up *Inay*’s storyline, that he had once found his mother watering the dwarfs, and that she had answered his exasperated scream with a logical rebuke: “You don’t know how to take care of your plants, that’s why they never grow.” I contributed my stories of my own mother’s excessive fastidiousness (she would, for example, ceremoniously wipe the plates our maid had already scrubbed and burnished to a gleaming perfection, just to prove a point); such was the stuff that *Inay* was made of, and it turned out to be one of Lino’s rarest projects, a quiet, comic, intimate movie that was a character study more than anything. It won prizes and citations and, as importantly, a Metro Manila Filmfest rebate, because it was a box office disaster, a warning light that would blink in producer’s heads for years to come. No wonder that, when Lino and I next approached Jesse Yu and Dolphy with a story that would have taken the come-



Hilda Koronel, left, is the cause of conflict between two robbers on the run, Phillip Salvador and Bembol Roco, in *HAYOP SA HAYOP*, 1978.

dian on a historic departure from his *Fefita Fofonggay* stereotype (casting him as a Binondo *calesa* driver who would fall in love with one of his battered prostitute-customers, to have been played by Pilar Pilapil, and with Nino Muhlach as his sidekick), we got thumbed down; the Dolphy project would push through, however, and superbly at that, albeit in another mold as *Ang Tatay Kong Nanay*, scripted by Dandy Nadres.

Lino and I were to do a dozen more movies together among them, *Mananayaw*, *Hayop sa Hayop* (Hilda Koronel’s foray into “boldness”), *Ina Ka ng Anak Mo*, *Maging Akin Ka Lamang* and *Miguelito*. We settled into an almost invariable routine: a producer would call Lino; Lino would call me to his place, where, for two to three hours and over cups of coffee (Blend 45 or some such instant; he would have none of the fancy Jamaican or French brews), we would thresh out a storyline which, often as not, was based on previously available or prescribed material such as a *komiks* serial or something from his file cabinet (where he would dig out, for

example, Letty Farinas’ long-submitted story for *Ina Ka*). I would then get another two or three days to return with a sequence treatment, a scene-by-scene breakdown of the whole movie and anywhere from two weeks to a month to finish the script.

Lino (and, presumably, the rest of the industry) valued speed (aka *haste*). As his assignments grew and sometimes overlapped, we learned to work on very tight schedules. Lino himself, the director, was known as a fast shooter so we had to keep pace with his availability and that of his star, who were kept on a constant whirl by the *lagare* system (except for the few truly good actors and actresses whom Lino had taken under his wing and was actively seeking assignments for). And Lino remembered deadlines, which the writer more than once wished he had forgotten. For such as Ricky Lee, Joey Reyes and me, two weeks was par for the course; once, having to finish a script (for an abortive Marichu Maceda production about orphans in wartime) before going on a foreign trip, I had all of three days to do the job, and so it was done with much



gnashing of teeth; but that, happily, was an exception. But there seemed to be a time when I was writing scripts so quickly, one after the other, that one of them I would actually fail to see (*Dalaga si Misis, Binata si Mister*); nor did I care what it looked like, either, and at that point I took a self-imposed sabbatical.

Ricky recalls a visit to Hollywood with Lino to meet with David Putnam, the head honcho at Columbia before it was bought out. Typically, Lino had come to the meeting in denim jeans with a busted seat. On the table was a 50-page treatment of *Guardia de Honor*, which Ricky had prepared. When Putnam asked how long it would take him to finish the full script, Ricky said a month; seeing Putnam's hesitation, Lino and Ricky conferred between themselves; and returned with a better answer: two weeks, at which Putnam was even more dumbfounded. As it turned out, Putnam could not believe that it was possible for a full script to be written even so quickly as a month. *Guardia de Honor* and Putnam would fall victim to the merger wars, a blight of the American '80s. It seemed a shame that, unlike Mother Lily, David Putnam could not act on inspiration, take the two *Pinoy*s at their word, and start shooting within the month.

For some of us, speed turned out to be the enemy. Good-naturedly, Ricky and I had often wondered why, all other things being equal (which, of course, they were not, but one kept hoping), Pete seemed to be getting all the serious and more leisurely assignments, while we got the commercial quickies. "My frustration," Ricky would tell me with a wry smile, "was that I never got around to doing serious projects. But when I brought it up with Lino, he said it was only circumstantial." Pete himself would later solve the mystery for us: "Lino tried me on a commercial job. But he found me too slow. In *Angela Markado*, I was still writing the script when Lino started shooting. He would get the dirty copy, fresh off the typewriter, and shoot. He got frustrated with me *sa mabilisan*. So when he needed speed, he went to you guys, and saved me for the longer-gestating projects." Lino, of course, had other writers working for him: Doy del

Mundo, Dandy Nadres, Roy Iglesias, Reuel Aguila, Rene Villanueva and, of course, Joey Reyes, possibly among others. But once settled, he didn't move around too much. "He was very choosy about his writers," Ricky says. "He knew whom he could work with, and whom he couldn't. He was very wary of trying out new talent, even when I introduced him to some good people I knew."

In a sense, Lino's movies were easy to write; in the same sense, they could be frustrating. His dramaturgy was simple, his narrative linear. Ricky explains: "I hope this doesn't get misinterpreted, but when you think of it, Lino wasn't as modern in his sensibility as you might have expected him to be. He was very traditional in his approach, in his sense of the classical unities, and we have to understand that this was the result of both his theater background and his personality. His plots were direct, with a strong narrative and unambiguous characterizations. Good and evil were clearly delineated, and evil had to be punished. He was impatient with horizontal details." There were, of course, rare exceptions; I was more than gratified when, in *Miguelito*, he retained a scene where the villainous mayor pauses to reflect on how truly he loved his victim, once.

But *Miguelito* was an even greater exception for me, in that, for the first time since *Inay*, we had a free hand in writing the story. Aga Muhlach was being built up by D'Wonder Films from teen heartthrob to dramatic star, and how to do it became our problem, but a welcome one. Again, Lino returned to his small-town basics in fashioning out a story of gross injustice, patronage and motherhood; again, the film won rave reviews and awards; again, the film flopped at the ticket booth.

We wrote a great many scripts, and many projects fell by the wayside for one reason or other. That, too, was par for the course. Pete and Ricky would have collaborated on another movie, the film version of *Bubungang Lata*; legal complications aborted that one. Pete wrote a full-length adaptation of Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* (already filmed as *A Place*



Chanda Romero and Phillip Salvador do an erotic dance in *MANANAYAW*, 1978.



in the Sun); Lino had me do another version, which didn't work out either. Pete scripted a film version of *Larawan* (Nick Joaquin's *Portrait of the Artist as Filipino*, which had been shot in English), but the producers folded up before the movie could be made. The *Noli* would have been done by Pete, who wrote a treatment based on the novel; then Ricky did the full script, and all would have been set until the producer, San Miguel Corp., had a change of heart and dropped the project (which TV would pick up as a miniseries, with a largely new cast and crew). Out of a settlement he salvaged out of *Noli*, Lino personally advanced Pete some money to start work on *Orapronobis*. And so it went, and we learned to take it all in stride because it was an industry rife with pitfalls, and at least, with Lino, we always had one foot on level ground.

Pete Lacaba did five completed projects for Lino: *Jaguar*, *Angela Markado*, *Experience* (with Roy Iglesias), *Kapit sa Patalim* and *Orapronobis*. Already a respected poet and journalist before he turned to scriptwriting, Pete had known Lino from PETA days, as a frequent visitor to Fort Santiago. Just before the imposition of martial law in 1972, Pete interviewed Lino for *Asia-Philippines Leader* magazine in an issue devoted to Filipino trend-setters; Pete saw the future of Philippine cinema in Lino. Coming out of detention in 1976, Pete gave Lino a script. "At that point," Pete recalls, "Lino rejected the idea, because it wouldn't have passed the censors." The script was to see fruition in slightly more negotiable times, as *Kapit sa Patalim*; it remains Pete's personal favorite to this day. Lino had interjected some of his own ideas into the story by then, but as it was invariably his practice he claimed no story credits. Pete then wrote a storyline that would also prove initially unworkable for production reasons, based on good friend and fellow journalist Nick Joaquin's "The Boy Who Wanted to Become Society"; set in the '50s, the period story was too expensive to produce as such, so Lino and Pete reworked the idea, and turned it into *Jaguar*.

*Jaguar*, Phillip Salvador's build-up movie after *Mananayaw*, was to have two script-

writers: Pete Lacaba and Ricky Lee. The two were friends, both having written for the *Leader*, both had written for the movies earlier, Pete for Joey Gosiengfiao, Ricky on two pseudonymous projects. How and why the two worked together on *Jaguar* (a prison term for *guwardiya* that Pete would remember) was, until recently, a mystery to Ricky that Pete would clear up with a simple explanation: "I couldn't figure out the ending. So I called Ricky and asked for his help. We divided the story evenly, right down the middle. When we were both done, we put the two parts together and worked out the minor discrepancies."

Pete was to work with other directors (Elwood Perez, Fyke Cinco, Mike de Leon) and other writers (Mau Samonte, Roy Iglesias), as would Ricky, who would be Marilou Diaz-Abaya's mainstay; I did one script for another named director who stole my script and my fee (my initiation into *subaan*) and an aborted EDSA project for Marilou. Lino was different not for any necessary fault of the others, who were fine professionals in their own right (with the exception of my Houdini). Lino went beyond the mere demands of the profession.

"Lino took care of his people," Ricky says. "He was concerned with details that could affect the writing. He asked you if you were paid, if your fee was fair, and so on." This was true for me as well as for the rest of the crew. In a business without managers and agents and few contracts to rely on, Lino took it upon himself to secure the best terms he could for his workers; if society was to change, the industry was one good place to start. Not infrequently, Lino's activism went over to outright charity in the aid of unemployed friends, whom he would then do his utmost to place in upcoming projects. He was a generous man, some would say too generous, with a practical bent. Pete recalls: "On Christmases, he sent over a bag of garlic, or rice, with a note: *Isang praktikal na pamasko* (a practical Christmas gift)."

Moreover, and within the business, "Lino understood the collaborative nature of the work," Ricky adds. "He respected your points.

He felt compelled to explain any changes he made in the course of shooting. He would call you and report on what worked, what didn't, and tell you how he felt about what he did. If there was time, he would ask you to rewrite if changes were needed." Lino didn't require us to be on the set; in fact, the one time I saw him shoot was on our very first film, *Empoy*. From thereon, the storyline, the sequence treatment and the script done to as much detail as necessary, which meant that Lino didn't want it cluttered up with cinematographic cues, would be enough, save for the revisions he felt he needed help with, as conditions demanded. Pete says: "Lino consulted you before making any major revisions. He kept me working so much on revisions to *Jaguar* that at one point I just wanted to tell him to go ahead and do whatever he wanted, that, really, I didn't mind."

Nonetheless, Pete valued working with Lino immensely: "Lino was open to stories I wanted to do. Most of my other projects were commissioned. You know how it is, we do

carpentry work if they want a certain kind of table, you go ahead and build one to specifications." Pete would do two commercial projects with Lino: *Experience* and *Angela Markado*. The latter (based on the Carlo J. Caparas *komiks* serial) was memorable for both Pete and Lino, because it would yield an insight into the wherefores of one of Lino's pet peeves, aside from Imelda Marcos, vigilantes and the censors chief: film critics. "We couldn't believe it when *Angela Markado* was picked to represent the Philippines at the Nantes Film Festival," Pete says, "considering that it was such a rush job, an out-and-out commercial movie. Imagine our reaction when we heard that it had won first prize at Nantes. We laughed our heads off. Lino kept saying, 'See, look at these critics, they don't know anything!'"

Still, for all his incredulity, Lino was hardly impervious to criticism. Ricky characterizes him as a "reactor." Lino kept piles of newspapers on his table, which he would devour, and



Phillip Salvador, left, and Rez Cortez star in the celebrated Brocka film, *BAYANKO: KAPITSA PATALIM*, 1984.



respond to, particularly negative criticism of his work. He felt that the critics failed to understand what he was trying to do within the conditions he was working under, and he had no hesitation about making his reactions known, privately and publicly. He was in the habit of calling friends, particularly Ricky and Pete, and launching into hour-long dissections of this or that review; either that, or, Ricky remembers, "He would call you and say, 'Have you read this? No? Read it.' And just as abruptly he would hang up." Pete recounts a more trying moment, when *Jaguar* was given best direction and best script awards by the Manunuri: "Of course I was pleased, and planned to go to the ceremonies. But then, knowing how Lino felt about the awards and his intention to boycott them, I asked him if I should go. He told me to go, because my case was different from his, and so I went and picked up my trophy, only to see Lino appear, to reject *his* award. I felt foolish, and was sore about that for a while." Lino never expected us to believe him outright, or to take up his causes and fall in among the faithful; but he wanted to be heard, and we heard him well.

And yet Lino's seeming peevishness was principle to the man. According to Ricky, "He was very definite about his views, you might even say bullheaded. When he didn't like something, that was it, he didn't. If there was one small detail about a project that he couldn't reconcile himself into accepting, it was no go." It would cost Lino more than words. He and Ricky would have done an international project focused on the life of a South African boxer; a Dutch writer had written the first draft of the script, which Ricky rewrote. But the project fell through, because, Ricky says, "There was something Lino didn't like about it." He applied the same "bullheadedness" to his workers' well-being. "He was always ready to defend his writers. When he felt that we had been aggrieved by a bad review, he would say 'Hey, let's go and hold a rally!'" Ricky says.

Lino's *lumpen* predispositions would be refined with time and some instruction. Pete recalls that when the Nationalist Alliance was

being organized, Lino, Mel Chionglo and Mike de Leon had come to him for a briefing on the political situation--a reviewer, as it were, on the basics of Philippine political science. "And so I explained to them what 'national democratic' meant, what 'social democratic' meant, and so on. Finally, Lino asked me, 'Well, what about me, Pete, what am I?' And I told him, half seriously, 'You, Lino, are an anarchist. What you hate, you want to bomb.' It was comic exaggeration, but Lino would realize how far he had to go." And just how far along did he come? "I think the ending of *Orapronobis* says a lot," Pete says. "That was Lino's idea. I kidded him that I would be the one taking the flak for it, but Lino insisted that we do it. He had gone beyond personal hatred and individualistic violence to more broad-based resolutions." He had realized, in Ricky's phrase, his ideal of "the artist as a citizen of his country."

Pete and Ricky were to become more than scriptwriters to Lino. They became friends, advisers and occasional ghostwriters of short speeches and remarks that Lino would be asked to deliver at conferences, festivals and the many other public events his celebrity brought him to. Pete, his technical assistant at the ConCom, drafted letters and briefing papers for him. Lino would tell him: "I need you to write my remarks for me because you're sober. If you left it up to me I'd be cursing all over the place." Yet later, draft in hand, Lino would return with an exasperated grin: "I couldn't help it. As soon as I got there and when I started speaking...."

When he started speaking, Lino could say quite a lot. I didn't see Lino the last four years of his life; I was in the United States attending graduate school. But I would *hear* Lino every now and then; he would call during his trips to one festival or other. It amazed him that I could bear to be away so long, when he couldn't stand expatriate life for more than two weeks. He despised airplane food, he said; he had packed home-cooked *adobo* along for his trans-Pacific dinner. He was wary of moving around New York too much, he said; he



Brocka coaches Lorna Tolentino and Richard Gomez in a scene from *KAILAN MAHUHUGASAN ANG KASALANAN*, 1989.

had been told that the FBI, or some other spy agency, was on his tail. The movies back home were getting worse than ever, he said; it was getting to be all *komiks*. Early one morning, around four Wisconsin time, he called to say that he had a job lined up for me for Charo Santos' new Vision Films. It was a *komiks* project, weren't they all, but perhaps there was something we could do with it. He would send me the plot by DHL. He did, a few days later, and I sent him back the script for *Kailan Mabuhugasan ang Kasalanan?* also by DHL, happy to apply my newly-acquired computer literacy and the free laser printing in school to an old task; they wrote better scripts at home, I thought, but I'll bet they never saw one so neat. *Kailan* would make a killing at the box office; there would be more long-distance calls (meanwhile, Lino had gotten his time zones right), and another script, *Biktima* (the first

title of mine that would ever get used). We made plans for a TV series, and yet another film. I made plans to go home in June.

And then Lino died towards the end of May, as abruptly and as unearned as one of our worst endings. To Ricky Lee, the message arrived on his answering machine; a friend came by and brought him to the hospital, where he finally gathered his wits and cried. Pete would not hear the news until several hours later, people having forgotten his phone number. My sister knew mine, and called me in Milwaukee the day after. I remembered the black paper cross on Lino's door, the first time I came to visit. We had never talked about religion, although it figured often enough in our movies. I was never going to ask him now, but I wished him well, and shortly after packed my bags.



## THE BROCKA BATTLES

Jo-Ann Q. Maglipon

One day Lino Brocka had to give a lecture on national issues to an audience that happened to be Makati rich. Now, it must be understood that Brocka had never been at home with people who don't rest one foot on a chair while eating green mangoes slobbered with crushed *kamatis* and *bagoong*. The many times his fame did push him into rich company he came out civilized enough—the fellow was an excellent conversationalist—but anyone watching Brocka in a setting like that had to know that the man was too poised, too modulated, too perfect—like a Salieri introducing Mozart to the king—to hold on to the stance too long. That is to say, if he didn't get out of there soon, something would give. Well, as it happened, something did. For a good hour, he was getting all these remarks from a fragrant audience about the lazy peasant and the thieving poor. He began to get hot inside but kept his poise and lectured on. Soon his nose began to bleed. He kept right on with his talk, tilting his nose to stem the flow of blood, periodically dabbing at it with a handkerchief. That went on and on—the bleeding and the lecturing—until it was time to go. His friends insisted he have a doctor tourniquet his nose or something—such were the kind of knowledgeable friends he had—to which he reluctantly agreed. Lo and behold, once there the doctor exclaimed: "You've burst an artery! Your blood pressure shot up too high! More of this and you could have died!" From now on, the doctor warned, never again get agitated!

It was like telling a python it was bad for its health to wrap itself around a nice fat hen.

Lino was always trying to behave, of course. He tried, even in the last anti-censorship rally he attended. The gang had gathered

in front of Manuel Morato's office to protest the no-show of "Dear Sam...Sumasaiyo, Juan," the anti-bases documentary that the censors had decreed was "injurious to the prestige of the Republic of the Philippines." Ishmael Bernal kept pushing Lino to speak, but Lino kept declining: "Huwag na, alam mo naman ang bunganga ko." But as he looked up at the sun bearing down, he espied this TV cameraman atop a roof. Without warning he waved him down, then let loose instructions like a hotshot movie director would: "I-close up mo! Close up ha? Close up!" Then, from whatever it was that possessed him, he screeched: "Hoy M—! P—mo, b—ka! Bumabaka! Parcho tayong pumupunta sa J—. Ang code name mo doon: Mafia!"

By god, nobody could speak. Not even his friends. Everyone in that crowd hated the



The activist flashes the clenched-fist sign.

guts of the censors chief, but *this* was not civilized. Or so they said to him. But Lino—being Lino—remained uncontrite. He hated hypocrites, he fumed, and that guy lording it over the country's morals ate the crown on this one live. Let Morato deny what he'd just said; *he* was willing to swear to it on a stack of bibles. Surprisingly, Morato skipped that dare, but a brother appeared on TV threatening to sue Lino.

In the end Lino would be saved from this brouhaha, and the man to do it for him would be Morato himself. For as the days tumbled on, the public would see that the censor's chief more than understood Brocka's language. In his own tirade against journalist Sylvia Mayuga who had batted for the showing of Martin Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ*, Morato wrote: "For those like you who favor the showing of this blasphemous film portraying Our Lord Jesus Christ having sex with Mary Magdalene, I have this to say: Why don't you play the role of Mary Magdalene and have yourselves 'penetrated' by Marcos on film?" He added: "And if, as you said, I committed 'a crime against our intellectuals' struggle to keep in touch with the work of the world's best, then watch it in betamax in the privacy of your bedroom and have your own orgasm alone." (*Daily Globe*, 3 Dec 1988).

Personal—highly personal—was the way of Lino Brocka's battles. Every cause, every fight, every placard had to have a face and a name.

Imperialism to him was these Americans with the gall to keep their bases grounded here. ("Nakakahiya! Ang kakapal!") Running dogs were Ambrosio, Pepe, and Christian supping at Esperanza's, he bet his life, to plot out the next putdown of the minority bloc—Lino's bloc—in the Constitutional Commission. ("Kasuklam-suklam!") Once upon a time government was Imelda in resplendent vanity dropping her leavings—as with those beautiful Kurosawa films of the Manila International Film Festival—for artists to pick up where they could. ("Malandi!") In the here and now government has been

Cory in her *duster*, the very thing reflecting, Lino once gave in to analyzing, governance at once faded and forgettable. ("Ay, hopeless!")

His battles swung from catering problems in show biz to stand-offs at Mendiola bridge, from confrontasi with armed vigilantes to putdowns of Johnny Litton live on Channel 4 ("Balimbing!"), from snubs of friends he expelled from his life to snubs of Kris Aquino. He mixed them all—and exhausted himself equally for each.

All had one thing in common after all. All had touched off Brocka's sense of right and wrong.

His was a right and a wrong that the modern world no longer sees much of: a code of moralisms spreading its clamps over behavior both private and public, impervious to change in clime or era, wary of explanations, disdainful of compromise. It was, in short, the perfect code for a perfectly self-righteous man.

Not for him today's sophisticated accommodation. Good was good and bad was bad. This was bad: Cardinal Sin officiating over Ferdinand-Imelda affairs in the Palace. This was good: Snubbing—circa Imelda—the Manila International Film Festival, the ECP, the CCP, the Film Center, and the Coconut Palace. These bad: Joseph Estrada and the Mowelfund. These good: Women journalists, strikes, and Fr. Reuter, S.J. And for all time, under all circumstances, these remained so.

If you were a friend and you'd turned—uhh—wayward, he didn't mind setting you straight. He felt absolutely correct exhorting one writer-friend to drop a movie funded by Marcos's National Media Production Center about Filipino migrants in America. It didn't matter that the writer had a track record for doing independent stuff, that he'd be working with a director he trusted, and that he'd already bought his ticket to New York. "That's government money!" Lino would say, brushing all argument aside. Then he would lay it out: "If you take that job, I won't feel comfortable working with you anymore." Of course it would never occur to Lino that



threatening to withdraw all future assignments from his friend wasn't a friend's way. The only thing that *would* occur to him would be that he'd made his friend do the Right thing — which made him not only a director and a partner but a real friend.

Now if you weren't a friend but were a mere presidential aspirant, he didn't even bother to negotiate. Just two weeks before Lino's fatal accident, Eddie Garcia had called him aside at the Magnatech studios. He'd received an offer, Eddie said, to do a film on the life of former President Jose P. Laurel. The deal was for him to star in it and for Lino to direct. This meant really big — the *big* rolling in Eddie's mouth — money, although they'd have to finish it before the 1992 elections. Lino asked, "Where's the money coming from?" "Doy Laurel," Eddie replied. And forthwith Lino said, "I'm sorry Eddie but I can't." So that ended that.

Sometimes it didn't end, which was worse. Woe to the enemy whose skeleton in the closet Lino would uncover. The man was as good as dead. For, once convinced of the enemy's moral inferiority, Lino's energies for slaughter were prodigious. The man could retell the tale of the same skeleton of the same closet any number of times over any number of days. Or weeks. Or months. And at its original energy level, too. Make no mistake. For sheer reach, Lino's verbal assault was lethal.

It didn't matter either who you were or even if you were on *your* home ground. Justice Enrique Fernando, now retired, was certainly right there in flesh and blood in Supreme Court premises when Lino flayed at him over the infamous Marcos Preventive Detention Action—the decree that made FM sole arbiter of life, imprisonment, or death. During this period Lino had been keeping earnest company with men like Jose "Pepe" Diokno and Lorenzo Tañada who spent wise hours discussing this latest stunning decree. Lino was thus very sure of himself that day in July 1983 at a demonstration in front of the Supreme Court. It must be remembered that at the time that august Court was the only institution left people thought they could

implore to defy Marcos. As events would prove, this was wishful thinking. And Justice Fernando, who made like a man of the law patronizing a show business celebrity, got it from a raging Brocka who couldn't care less—or maybe even forgot—that this man had the power to put him away, and for as long a time as he damn pleased.

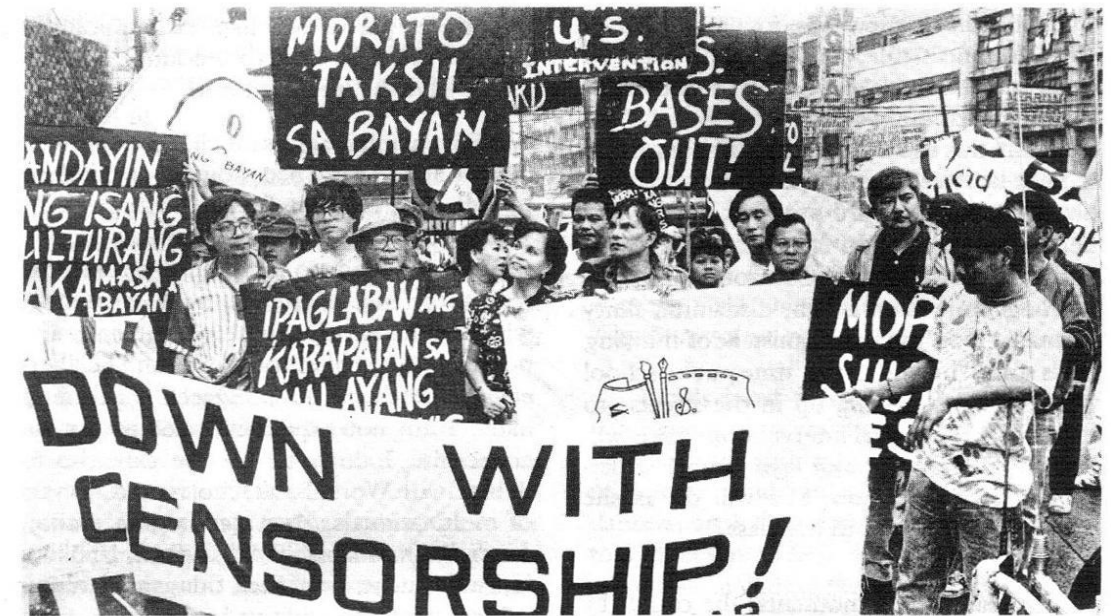
Completely unchastised, Brocka would just a week after meet with painters, writers, musicians, film-and-stage artists, and poets at the National Press Club to draft a declaration of principles for the newly formed Katipunan ng mga Artista sa Sining Para sa Mamamayan. KASAMA, as it was called, would be an exclusive grouping of artists whose activities included inviting speakers like former Justice Cecilia Muñoz Palma to browbeat the case of the PDA.

Neither for Lino the way of strategy-and-tactics or, heaven forbid!, civility. Both struck him as fake. What was fake was wrong. What was wrong you didn't do, period. Why, nothing could be simpler.

He had to go teach his Left friends these things sometimes. Like on that day he found them huddled discussing a walk-out in the Constitutional Commission. Like it or not, one was abrewing, but these friends wanted to "strategize" the whens and hows. No! said he. If anyone walked out at all, it had to be because he truly believed the supreme law of the land had become a joke, not because walking out was the dramatic thing to do at a given politik moment! He won his case.

As for civility—well, no one ever knew Lino to punish himself. Getting ribbing as Cory's possible Minister of Culture in the wantonly happy days of February 1986, he struck back: "*Ebakit, papayagan ba nila akong umihi diyari sa puno kung minister na ako?*" Which, if truth be told, was exactly what he did by a Malacañang tree that heady February night the palace gates were stormed.

When politics did force something more complex on him, Lino looked a wee bit lost. "Ironic" was all he managed to say the day he was told that Juan Ponce Enrile and Joseph Estrada would be marching with him on the



Brocka leads a rally against censorship organized by the Concerned Artists of the Philippines and other film artists, 1990.

same anti-bases side. Then he turned away and mumbled, "But don't expect me to be friendly with them."

In the Marcos years, against all odds, he stayed with BAYAN—an organization that has called itself progressive for about as long as the military has called it a Communist front—because he found people there who were, as he put it, "*Mga kauri natin.*" All through the period when BAYAN's allies were abandoning it because of the Left scare, Lino did not waver, standing side by side with old man Chino Roces.

And even as this move practically threw him in the category of Left, fact is, no one, not even the Left, ever thought him that. Invariably they said his politics was gut feel, pro-poor, much of it heart. That he had a rebel's impatience for answers. That he enjoyed knocking Authority of any kind. And that none of what he was was rooted in ideology.

The Aquino years of 1986-87—which found the Left still unsure of its footing under a popular dispensation it had not helped bring to power—strained Lino's relations with BAYAN. "*Walang nangyayari,*" he lamented in a letter he sent to his friend Lean Alejandro,

BAYAN secretary-general. In this letter he owned up to being demoralized and cynical. The Left seemed to be making so many mistakes! And he was sorry, but the Left no longer inspired him. But, he added, someone like Lean still did, and he swore that one day he would go on to lead a Lean Alejandro for President Movement. The day the young and brilliant Lean would be assassinated by men variously associated with rebel military forces or with goons hired by a political rival, Lino would be a broken man.

Lino himself never thought he was Left.

All he knew was that Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos were absolutely bad people. Had a firing squad been organized to do them in, said he, he would have been right in there as marksman. Of course he knew next to nothing about guns and firing them, he carried on, but he would have trained mightily for the job. "The Filipinos were too kind," he said absolutely. "They should have been killed!"

But lest the wrong parties get the wrong signals from all his gun talk, he spoke thus: "Definitely I'm *not* going to the mountains. I'm too much of a coward to do *that*, but that is my prerogative."



All he also knew was, for every year of Cory Aquino's rule, his agitation grew by leaps and bounds to where a blood vessel threatened to burst again, until—whoosh!—it hit him that she was no savior of the race. He did not like her judgment in advisers, did not like her attitude toward peasants, did not like her taste—period. In fact he carried around with him this theory that Corazon Aquino was nothing more than a rich, disdainful, flinty woman. “Don't make the mistake of thinking she's soft,” he said at the time public school teachers were massing up in the streets to press for presidential intervention. “She will not be moved by *yang mga* hunger strike-hunger strike *na 'yan*. She will do as she pleases. She belongs to her class.”

In really tired moments, he could be heard mumbling: “*A, wala nang pag-asa ang gobyernong ito. Mamumundok na lang ako.*” Then he'd turn around to make sure you got that right: “*Pero hindi ako komunista!*”

Fact is he knew so little about communism and admitted this to the world. He

didn't even particularly like reading political tracts. Was it as he liked to announce? That he didn't have the intellect for it?

His enemies said as much. They poohed that all he had was a bad mouth—and indeed he had that. His own friends were given to saying he liked action, not rumination. He was just the kind to jump head-on into the fray in defense of friends, right or wrong, whoever the enemy, whatever the cost, and bother with the questions later. And he liberally splattered his public speech with things like: “I am not a political scientist nor an economist. I do not have the expertise to debate with World Bank scholars and lawyers of multinationals. *Ang mga jargon, manay, hindi ko maintindihan!*” Indeed, thinking himself gauche about such things as ideological paradigms, he paid awed attention to what his more learned friends had to say.

And yet anyone at all who came up close to him—including his own learned friends—could not fail to see in Lino a mind of the sharpest curiosities about politics, economics, psychology, government, the arts. And a mind,



The first rally of the Free the Artist movement was held at Liwasang Bonifacio in 1983. The movement eventually became the Concerned Artists of the Philippines.

moreover, with the supreme talent for absorbing all that he caught and, rarer still, with the genius to translate the mass of that into word and action.

It is an uncontested bit of truth that out of Lino's agitated passions—which routinely sent him calling bleary friends at a horrid six in the morning—have arisen many a statement, a rally, and even the beginnings of an organization. “*Sobra na 'yan, kailangang banatan 'yan!*” he'd say to Pete Lacaba one morning, Ricky Lee on another. “*Isulat mo. Isulat mo. Ikaw naman ang magaling diyari. Pipirmahan ko. O, miting tayong mamaya sa Little Greenhouse.*” But leave it to Lino to insist anyway that he had no aptitude for political theory. He left that sort of thing, said he, to those who liked to punish themselves.

Sometimes, however, his interest would be tweaked. One fine day in Marcos's time, it was, so he went to friend Pete and demanded to know, “*Ano ba 'yang soc dem at ano 'yang natdem?*” Pete explained. Still perplexed, Lino asked, “*E ano ako?*” “That depends,” Pete answered. “*Ano ba ang gusto mong mangyari sa bayan?*” Without a by your leave, Lino answered, “*Ay, e gusto kong pagbobombahin at granadahin 'yang Malacanang, 'yang MIFF, etc. etc.*” So then Pete said to him, “*Anarkista ka.*” At which, illumined, Lino went around that whole day telling friends, “*Alam ko na kung ano ako. Anarkista ako! Sabi ni Pete, anarkista ako!*”

Plentiful as Lino's political battles were, they all began, innocently enough, with the battle with censorship.

The original object of his ire: Marcos's Executive Order 868. Indeed this one made the mother of censorship laws, Republic Act 3060—a mishmash of American colonial mores put together in 1961 and applied to Philippine arts and letters a good 23 years—look positively enlightened.

The new order gave the Board of Censors the right to pre-censor storylines and sequence treatments, approve all promotional materials, and censor the movie itself. It

also gave censors the ultimate power: the license of theatres and cinema houses. And for the first time ever bestowed on the body control over live entertainment. To name just a few: concerts, plays, fashion shows, lunch and dinner presentations, even documentaries shown at Goethe House. And just in case anyone missed the point, EO 868 was changing the name *Board of Censors* to the *Board of Review for Motion Pictures, Television, and Live Entertainment*.

Lino's howl following this announcement would find its echo in the howl of the best of them. Suddenly, the fractious citizens of culture would have a coming together: dancers, actors, painters, newscasters, sculptors, directors of film and stage, musicians, writers—including the country's decorated national artists. Even more unheard of, they would choose the asphalt and heat of Liwasang Bonifacio to do their howling in. As they did on February 11, 1983, when the first ever anti-censorship rally in modern memory would be launched.

They were a sight to behold. Anita Linda sat serenely on the pavement unmindful of the two o'clock sun, Phillip Salvador and Bembol Roco keeping her handsome company. Peque Galaga waved long locks and a tiny flag. No one remembered to get a rally permit, but someone remembered to bring the balloons. Then they saw that people at the far end had no idea what was going on up front. “Shouldn't we use walkie-talkies and radios?” someone asked, but someone else shrieked: “But suppose the police answered on the other line?” “Ok, let's use runners” was somebody's bright suggestion to which everybody agreed except that no one remembered to assign anybody to do the running. There was so much democracy, it was a wonder anything moved. One soul came up with the inspired proposal that they tear up EO 868 like Bonifacio and Co. did with the *cedulas*, but he got shooed out of there. Which was to go first? Laurice Guillen's speech or the PETA skit? By the time Lino's turn to speak came, the megaphone had lost its batteries. Did it matter? He simply shouted himself hoarse railing at the gods about the



freedoms they promised to wrest back. Then Nonoy Zuñiga sang about a bird struggling to be free, everybody joined in, and someone finally remembered to release the balloons. At rally's end, they were all 500 of them rather pleased with themselves. They had never done anything like this in show biz, and now that they'd pulled it off nothing could dampen their spirits, not even the fact that moviedom's current box office, Vilma Santos, came way after pack-up.

Lino Brocka started it all.

Behind the scenes, it was Lino and a few close friends who drove themselves limp mounting a phone brigade. "The first thing we told them," Lino recounts, "was that this had no political coloration. That we will not involve ourselves with human rights and we will not talk of civil liberties. That we will stick to censorship and Executive Order 868. That was understandable because movie people were hesitant. We had balloons, it was supposed to be a party, not a rally. Gloria Diaz came with her *yaya* and her umbrella."

And way after the balloons had been released, Lino Brocka kept at it.

Four short days after, he would gather the artists one more time. The rally had been a great party, he said to them, but the party was far from over. It was up to them now to see this one through. So how are we going to call ourselves? How do we sign our press releases? he asked. They couldn't just keep signing their individual names; they had to show Macoy they had the numbers! Somebody said, Well that really depends on what we want to say. To which somebody answered, It's simple, the bottomline is we want to free the artist! And that was roughly how they began calling themselves the Free The Artist Movement. Now what to do for a leader or spokesman? This one barely needed discussing. Lino was a natural. He not only had the loudest voice, he not only was the most agitated, he was also the fastest artist alive. Who cared that he had kidney trouble and diabetes? At the time, with doomsday news

coming in every other day, he was what everyone needed. Months after, the group would still be carrying on the fight, this time as the Concerned Artists of the Philippines. Brocka would be its founding chairman.

The fight between censors and artists would see-saw throughout. Soon after the Liwasang Bonifacio rally, censorship relaxed visibly. Then it rose again with a vengeance. Incensed, Lino and Co. raised bolder demands. They now hollered for the closure of Manila cinema houses for an entire week. They agitated followers into distributing manifestos in cinema lobbies. They programmed dialogs with the Church. They even experimented with the idea of work stoppage in the movie industry. And at a high point, they demanded the ouster of Marcos's chosen censors chief, Maria Kalaw Katigbak.

It might as well be said now that from the first day she gathered movie people at the residence of her sister Pura Kalaw Ledesma, Lino had had a very bad feeling about Katigbak. There she was, clearly prosperous, a former beauty queen who also called herself a writer going on about how she'd heard local films were such low-grade products, about how she herself hadn't bothered to watch any of them but, see, there were all these strangers egging her on to clean the smut so that now what she wanted to know was how she could help, and how about beginning with those Chinese producers who ran the industry, didn't they think it was time these foreigners were put in their place, why, *she* could do that! Lino raised his hand. Then he said in a voice poised, modulated, too perfect: "I beg to differ, Mrs. Chairman. But it is in fact the Chinese producers in the country who pay what is agreed upon and pay it on time. Unfortunately, it is our experience that it is Filipino producers who cheat us." "Oh, if that's how you feel," she dismissed. "I was just trying to help."

Minutes after, with the meeting still underway, Lino crept out to his Fiera and left. Later he would predict that the movies were in for a bad spell. Seeing Maria and her sister

Pura there, he said, reminded him of the Paula and Candida of Nick Joaquin. That can only mean, he said, that the guardians of conservatism would lord it over the landscape once more.

They did.

The new censor had the blithest way with the scissors. She cut away at men and women kissing, snipped at any nudity and attacked bed scenes. She banned outright films that showed, she sniffed, schoolgirls getting pregnant and criminals committing crimes. Of course, that her cutting skills did not apply equally to all—foreign films always had a way of getting away with more—was another power she exercised. But, in her most alarming crusade yet, this God-fearing Catholic initiated the burning of offensive film negatives. Not prints, she announced, but negatives. Alarmed by visions of the Third Reich burning books and Spanish colonizers burning pre-Hispanic literature, Lino and the Concerned Artists of the Philippines stepped up their campaign. Classification was the answer, they shouted, not censorship! And Maria, they shouted louder, was *never* going to be the answer!

Armida Siguion Reyna would find out first hand just how dead-on Lino and Co. were. There Armida was at the censors office, ready to risk her money in local movies, bringing along with her Ricky Lee's script of *Noli Me Tangere*. To her misfortune, Maria's operative rule was that no permit could be given "unless the writer will attest that the story is original." Well and good, maybe the intent was to prevent intellectual piracy. But what to make of this? Poor Armida had to say that the story was not in fact original. Well, the censors chief said, then no permit. Armida—probably wondering if she'd been transported to never-never land—managed to say: "How can I claim it's original? It's Jose Rizal's!" In many seasons thereafter, Armida and Lino would find kinship in their marches against censorship. And, they might as well say it: against illiteracy, too.

But the censors nightmare would not end there. On the contrary, it would turn

vicious. The coiffed censors chief was a woman who scratched—or so Gina Alajar found out. "*Sumama akosa ilang rally laban sa censors*," Gina relates. "*Alam mo naman, it's hard to say no to Lino. Lalo na kung alam mong may katwiran ang ipinaglalaman niya.*" To her anger, this cost many of them their jobs. "*Marami ang na-blacklist noon.* Katigbak took a video of all those who joined the rally which became the basis of the list. Blacklisted *ako noon.* '*Yong tipong hindi ka kukunin ng* producers because if they get you for their movies *hindi aaprubahan ng* Board of Censors. Lino was also blacklisted. *Hindi siya kinukuha ng* producers."

But if Maria Kalaw Katigbak was nightmare, Imelda Romualdez Marcos was ghoul.

Lino recalls her bidding him come to the Palace and turning on the charm: "Your job as a director is to be part of nation building," she said to him. "And one of the first steps toward nation building is image building. It's not true that people in Tondo are poor. It's your perception that's negative. In Tondo, children are smiling. They are not poor. They are rich in material spirit; they may be poor in material wealth..."

Seeing her up close, Lino became desperate, and schemed to find ways and means to get her off his back. It was during this benighted period that Imee Marcos walked into Lino's life. She saw herself as an artist and now she wanted, she said, to be cast in his production. Imee! Imee was the solution! If he could "neutralize" her, Lino thought, he might just gain some breathing space for his films! For her part, Imee seemed anxious to please Brocka—and probably disliked her mother enough at the time anyway—because she always nodded in agreement even when he was spouting those far-from-flattering remarks about her mother. They hit it off. At one point in their friendship—to the consternation of all—he actually thought of casting Imee in the title role that would eventually have everyone falling in love again with Hilda Koronel as the loveliest face in cinema: *Insiang*.



But this was, everyone would say in a hush then, *before* the Tommy Manotoc abduction. Tommy, for those too young to recall, was a married man separated from his beauty queen-wife who had come acourting the presidential daughter. Well, everyone whispered some more, the fabulously enriched Marcoses had grander plans for their daughter than *this*. The next thing anybody knew, Tommy, whose family was identified with Marcos foes, was reported kidnapped by unidentified men after having dinner with Imee. Everyone of course believed it was the Marcos couple that did it—but which one? Was it Ferdinand? It was such a botched up abduction, people speculated, it couldn't have been him. Was it Imelda? Oh, but don't you see, others speculated back, it was precisely made to look like bloody blundering business so that *he* could have it blamed on *her*! Whichever parent was the culprit, in the next days Imee would become more visible: spreading her estranged accent before glittering awards ceremonies and extending her grasp to the Experimental Cinema of the Philippines. When at last Tommy "surfaced"—*Bulletin Today* got a dressing down from Marcos himself for using the term; what, demanded FM, did the newspaper think this was a hoax?—from the hands, Tommy said, of the New People's Army, Imee had become a dutiful Marcos daughter for good. At about this time, objections by her parents to her fiance ceased to be heard. The Lino-Imee friendship had ceased too.

The film *Insiang*, sans Imee, was completed. And to Imelda's horror this film with the audacity to present Philippine slum life in technicolor was invited for showing at the Cannes Film Festival's Directors' Fortnight!

Not three years after, Imelda bristled once more. This time the offending piece was Lino's *Jaguar* which showed life — once more in technicolor — in urban hovels. Worse, it now added men getting back at their masters! This time Imelda gave it to him straight: "I don't like your films, Lino. They're pessimistic, hopeless." But Lino had



Brocka speaks at a Bagulo rally.

learned his lessons well. He now went about dealing with Imelda the painless way: he pandered to her ego. He worked it out so that Sean Connery, *the* Sean Connery, would write personally to the Madame asking for *Jaguar* to be brought to Cannes. It worked. The woman, said Lino, was absolutely flattered. More, she became anxious to show Connery there was no such thing as ugly censorship going on in her republic! That done, *Jaguar* became the first Filipino film to be shown in Cannes in Main Competition. It screened right up there with some of the very best of 1979: Federico Fellini's *La Citta della Donne*, Jean Luc Godard's *Suave Qui Peut La Vie*, Alain Resnais' *Mon Oncle d'Amerique*, Carlos Dagues' *Bye Bye Brazil*, Bob Fosse's *All That Jazz*, and Akira Kurosawa's *Kagemusha*—the last two eventually sharing the Golden Palm Award for best picture.

*Jaguar* would itself open to clapping and cheers of "Bravo *Jaguar*! Bravo Philippines!"



Imelda Romualdez Marcos was a target of Brocka's activism.

Lino and his stars Phillip Salvador and Amy Austria would walk out of the screening room right up to a five-minute standing ovation by the grand stairway of the Cannes film palace. The film would thereafter also signal Europe's interest in Third World films.

Five years after, bigger trouble. This time the object of Imelda's disgust would be Lino's *Bayan Ko: Kapit sa Patalim*. This one — wouldn't Imelda know it — splashed slum culture in full glory on the big screen. In any case, this time around Lino didn't bother with her or her ego. He simply spirited *Kapit* off to its French co-producers, and from there it was easy street to Cannes, where it became only the second Filipino film entered in official competition. The risk seemed worth it. For if *Jaguar* before this had been well-received, *Kapit* drew rave reviews. Censors Chief Katigbak of course got back at Lino, and her way was to charge him with smuggling. Lino's local producer, Antonio Gonzalez of Mondragon fame, would scoff.

Doing one better, Lino would bring the fight all the way to the Supreme Court, and win years later, when Imelda had long been driven out of the Palace.

Then Cory Aquino came along. Ah, alleluia! Lino extolled. With her at the helm, he had the highest hopes for his beloved arts. But as fate would have it, his first major disappointment with his President would be in the very area of his craft: the appointment of Manuel Morato as chief of the Board of Review of Television and Motion Pictures.

By the end of Morato's term, artists were full of horror stories about films and documentaries banned, run out of playdates, set up for amputation: Isip Pinoy's *Ang Maralitanag Taga-lunsod* by Ishmael Bernal, Inside Story's segment on *Gringo Honasan*, and Ateneo's *Dear Sam...Sumasaiyo, Juan*. There was the batch from PETA: *Rosario Baluyot*, the story of a young girl raped by an American serviceman, *Fantasya*, a drama on the exploitation of women, and *MTV*, an anthology of protest songs. Then there was Lino's own *Orapronobis*. Morato raised a stink so malodorous over the showing of this one abroad that, by the time the film came back home, local distributors were loath to touch it. Which, Lino said, was Morato's intent anyway. *Orapronobis*, thus far, remains the Brocka film which showed to *uniformly* rave reviews abroad but which has never been shown in commercial run locally.

Yet, such are the ways of Philippine censorship that even as he chopped away, the country's chief censor could deny its very existence. "I have no powers to ban," Morato liked to say. "That is the sole prerogative of the President. We only disapprove." Of course, if the filmmaker was so stupid as to insist on showing a "disapproved" film: "My God," said Morato, "he'd be brought to court!" On his fourth year at the censor's seat, Morato announced: "I never banned a film in my life."

Of Lino Brocka and Ishmael Bernal, the most prominent among his critics, Morato would say: "*Bastos at walang modo ang dalawang yan. Kulang sila sa pansin. At ginagamit lang nila ako...para mapansin sila*"





Brocka's powerful verbiage enthralled crowds at Liwasang Bonifacio.

at mabigyan ng trabaho." But the man would be magnanimous: "Well, it's okay. Ako, I'm not happy where I am. I'm not enjoying my position. I have no intention of using this job as a stepping stone to politics."

Barely 17 months after he said this, Manoling — with much coyness and fey—ran for the senate, and lost.

Bloody as his movie battles were, Brocka's street battles were decidedly bloodier business. Literally. Even if — being Brocka — he rendered both his equal and enthusiastic angers. Take January 28, 1985. The period: a full year before anyone imagined the 20-year Marcosian dictatorship could be toppled so dramatically.

Lino and friends—which included director Behn Cervantes and PETA artists—came out to support a strike led by jeepney drivers in busy Cubao. Partly they did because the drivers were members of cause-oriented groups that supported an earlier rally by

artists, and partly because the issue was something the artists could back: a rollback in oil and gasoline prices.

Suddenly, bedlam. Pictures in the papers the following day showed riot troops charging the ranks of demonstrators and beating men and women with truncheons. As Lino tells it, the other side was first. "Nagpaputok, manay, nambugbog. They were really trying to hurt this boy. Noong makita kami ng bata, sabi sa amin, 'Huwag niyo akong iwan.' Duguan, pinagtulung-tulungan talaga nung plainclothes, ang dami nila, ang dami nila!" Lino never left the boy's side—even when the boy was hauled to jail.

One hundred fifty-one people were arrested, counted the Task Force Detainees. Of these, five were formally charged as strike leaders. Lino—to everyone's shock—would be one of them. Ismael Mathay, then vice-governor for Metro Manila, accused Lino and Co. of intimidating drivers and commuters into joining the strike and setting up barricades. ("Iba na talaga ang tagahawak ng payong—napakaloyal," Lino rejoined, in obvious reference to Mathay's additional duties of holding an umbrella to his boss Imelda Marcos's coiffure.) The Northern Police District, for its part, accused the five of exhorting crowds to revolt. "Sumama kayo at makiis sa isang madugong himagsikan!" they were supposed to have said. Add to that: "Sandatang pumuputok ang iharap sa baril ng pulis at militar!" (To all of which Lino would sniff: "Ano yabhhn? D'yos ko, anong mga salita yan? Napaka-tactless.")

Tactless or not, the charge of illegal assembly would stick. And just when volunteer lawyers—which included Wigberto Tañada, Frank Chavez, and Haydee Yorac—were about to spring him out on bail, what should happen but that the dreaded Preventive Detention Action would be slapped on him. Now this was the big time! For now, no pardon was possible from anyone in the Republic of the Philippines other than from Marcos himself!

With the PDA would descend a graver charge: inciting to sedition. This one, Lino

knew, carried the maximum penalty of death.

Every day, journalists hounded his jail cell. Nuns kept vigil. Nora Aunor came to visit. Cory Aquino, then the most famous widow in the land, did too. Dancers from 690 waved from behind steel gates. His househelp, faithful Nila, came teary-eyed and covering her face. Lino, touched, comforted her, "Okay lang, Nila. Wag na." But Nila only sniffled some more, "Hindi okay, Kuya Lino..." "O bakit?" Lino asked, concerned. "Hindi okay," she sobbed, "kasi pinutulan tayo ng ilaw!" Behn nearly drove Lino crazy with his complaints about the million and one mosquitoes, while Lino drove Behn batty with the ease with which, in shorts and T-shirt, amidst the stink and bites, Lino slept ever so blissfully.

When he did awake, Lino was given to thinking out loud in front of reporters—and suspiciously within earshot of his jailers: "Every experience is material for a movie. There are so many insights, so many perceptions. You know the system, how it works, how people

are pressured to sign affidavits, the workings of power, the injustice of it all. This will make a darn good movie!"

Lino's mother said she cried when she visited only because she was so happy. "Sapagkat maraming tao, mga madre na nagdarasal, dumadalaw. Hindi ako nalungkot...Ang daming bigay sa kanila ng mga tao, puno ang isang kuwartong maliit. Puno! May pagkain, sipilyo...Ang ginagawa ni Lino 'yong mga pagkain ibinibigay sa ibang nakakulong...At saka kung may nagbibigay ng kuwarta, binibigay nila sa pamilya, para sa transportasyon ng pamilya."

But friends add that even in prison, Lino would remain what he was: the self-righteous oaf. Knock his head if you will, they said, his rules on right and wrong did not bend. "Ministro ang dating ni Lino, maski saan," laughs friend Mel Chionglo. "Laging nangangaralsa mga artista niya, sa staff niya. Dapat ganito, dapat ganoon. Gusto disiplinang sa trabaho at sa personal na buhay. Ang mali,



Brocka joins fellow street marchers Jose "Pete" Lacaba and Haydee Yorac.



*mali.*” Well, one of the things he considered Wrong was being nice to people he considered Bad. So inside prison, during the Marcos years when every single ally counted in the fight to stay alive, Lino stubbornly stuck to his list of people who could and could not visit him. With those he deemed unfit, he saw no reason to disrupt his -uhh- busy prison schedule to grant them an audience. Period.

Lino and Co.—which also counted in Boy Roque, a film hand whose singular crime was that he searched out *direk* in the Cubao rally to hand him his filming schedule—were eventually moved through three prisons, each one more fortified than the last, and shuttled to and from court twice a day. Outside the building rallyists led by Chino Roces would wave banners and shout for their freedom. In these hearings Lino would get really worked up by state lawyers ranging witnesses (“*Mga peke!*”) and affidavits (“*Mali-mali ang Ingles, d’yos ko!*”) against him. One agitated afternoon, while the judge—1992 presidential bet Miriam Defensor Santiago—was looking elsewhere, Lino leaned forward and spat on the back of the prosecution lawyer’s *amerikana*. The lawyer, unaware of the goo sticking to his nice suit, stood to address the court, his back proudly facing the entire gallery, leaving Lino there, happily juvenile, saying to the reporter beside him, “*Ha, nakaganti na ako!*”

But, if truth be told, Lino’s incarceration had weighed on him. In the night, walled in by barbed wire and tower sentry, he knew depression. So much was happening outside: Was he finished? Will producers keep away? Of what use was he locked up? It didn’t help that his lawyers could not say when he would be released. Laws in a dictatorship mutated too much, they explained, which was why political prisoners languished in jail ten years. It was at this time too that word came about three jeepney drivers whose bodies were fished out of the Pasig River, near Quiapo. These were the drivers he had marched with in the strike of January 28 who had been reported missing. When found, they had been dead more than twenty-four hours.

The balm to his spirit came in the outpouring of public sympathy. The Concerned Artists of the Philippines mounted an information blitz that carried far and wide. European and American celebrities sent letters to Marcos demanding his release. Director Eddie Romero was reported chiding the 3rd Manila International Film Festival—renamed Manila Events ’85—in the preparatory stages then: “(One) major goal of the festival is to encourage better filmmaking in the country...How can the festival achieve that if one major filmmaker in the Philippines is under detention?”

On the eighteenth day, Marcos finally ordered the release of Lino and his group. But remember that this was nothing more than a “temporary” release, his jailers said to him. Marcos had indeed written into their papers: “without prejudice to their prosecution for offence which they may have committed.” Which meant that any one of them could legally be rearrested at whatsoever time government wished to reopen the case.

Asked by wire agencies if he was thanking the President for his release, Lino shot back: “Why should I be grateful for something that should not have happened at all?” And write it down, he said with some heat, *he* was going to march in the streets again. “Now more than ever, I’m dying to go to the next rally. The only way to fight them is to continue fighting them. You just don’t give up—now I have more personal reasons.”

In the whirlwind of the days following his release, Lino plunged into post-production work for *White Slavery*, a Sarsi Emmanuelle starrer, after which he mapped out the filming schedule for *Miguelito*, a directorial job that that would eventually give its star Aga Muhlach a best actor trophy and Lino another best director award. In and out of these, on a typical day, he would pursue his petition at the Supreme Court for the release, “untouched,” of *Kapit sa Patalim*, and the abolition of pre-censorship of TV and film material. That would be morning. By afternoon he would be found marching from



Peta and ATOM stage a picket outside the Quezon City Hall demanding the release of Brocka and Cervantes, 1985.

Welcome Rotonda to Liwasang Bonifacio. The heat would be horrid, the riot police in visible formation. And in the mass surrounding him would be—as in a stubborn flashback—a thousand more jeepney drivers.

Lino Brocka had come a long way.

There he was, exhorting PETA artists to send a delegation to a jeepney strike. And there PETA was, telling him the decision had to wait until the body met. The last thing Lino said to theatre boss Soxy Topacio was: “*Soxy, kailangang may delegation ang PETA, ano ba naman kayo!*” This was circa 1985.

Only four years back, in 1981, Lino was a different man. Back then Lino was the kind to have crowed: “You’re artists, not drivers!” For back then, Lino was rabidly anti-Left.

As executive director of the Philippine Educational Theatre Association then, he was Big Boss, and for as long as he was, none of that “progressive” stuff was going to get past him. When a friend complained to him that Leftists in PETA had formed cells that meddled in everything including the members’ love lives, Lino was ripe to drop what everyone has since filed in memory as “The Bomb.”

On that dramatic day no one in PETA will ever forget, he called everyone to a meeting that rapidly turned into an inquisition. He announced: “Something terrible is happening to PETA. PETA has been infiltrated by communists! There are underground cells here, but these cells are being organized in the guise of history lessons!” He threatened: “Let me tell you, PETA is under surveillance. There is a list with Marichu Maceda from General (Fabian) Ver. *Lahat ng Left sa PETA nakalista! Alam na namin kung sinu-sino kayo!*”

Cecille “CB” Garrucho, PETA actress, recounts, “He was exposing names. *Ikaw! Ikaw!*” It was like pulling the masks off everyone. And remember, it was the time of living dangerously. But he was paranoid, so much against the Left then.”

One artist broke down. Feeling he had to protect the others, he spoke up: “If there was a group, it was not to manipulate.” But Lino would not be deterred in his mission. His grilling trudged on, prying out names, activities, culpability. He wanted this fellow now to confess all. It got so scary two boys walked out while one girl vomited; so revolted were they at the thought of having real live communists in their midst! When it seemed



no one could breathe anymore, CB remembers crying out: "Stop it! What do you want? His blood?" Only then did Lino stop.

After the inquisition, catharsis. Newcomers were alternately fearful and tearful, keeping away from the accused lest they catch some disease, yet wanting to get close again with guys who had been real friends before all the mess. The old-timers, in the meantime, were kicking around Lino's commandment: "Everybody has the right to believe in a political ideology—but not the leaders. Because you are leaders. The members will end up joining you, not because they believe in your cause, but because you are their leaders."

In the end, it was the going political climate that helped resolve many things. This was a period—rightly said—of living dangerously, of arrests and disappearances, of ordinary people whispering about extraordinary tales of dictatorship. By this time too PETA hands had had their exposure trips to the countryside, grist for their social realist plays. In these places they saw that poverty was real, not communist imagination, and militarization was flesh and blood, hardly rebel propaganda. Getting back to the city, they saw more of the same. Lino or no Lino, it became difficult to feel kindly toward Marichu Maceda and General Ver.

Finally, the men and women Lino lynched won. PETA's leadership backed them up and so did the majority of the members. "We believe people have a right to their beliefs," they decided. It was telling that after "The Bomb" the first play PETA mounted was *Pilipinas Circa 1907*, overtly political theatre. As Gardy Labad put it: "It was part of the healing process. After everything that happened, PETA, through *Pilipinas Circa 1907*, was saying 'Whatever else happens, this remains our stand'."

The man Lino accused of being a communist remains with PETA today and says, "So many things happened after The Bomb. The movie guilds collapsed, Lino went to Bacolod and Iloilo, he joined the Concerned

Artists of the Philippines. He and Behn were detained. He developed. We never talked about it again."

No one had really expected Lino Brocka to apologize. They all knew it was not in his makeup to admit to a wrong so easily. Half of him, in any case, was still convinced he had done right by a friend who had been dealt a raw deal by the Left. It took the memorial service for Lamberto Avellana in 1991, or a good ten years after, for PETA friends Soxy, CB, and Lino to say their hellos and goodbyes. CB says, "*Yan ang tunay na pamamaalam niya sa amin. Sabi niya, 'Hoy, pumunta lang ako rito para malaman kung paano binuburo ang national artist.'*" He knew then that somehow, someday, he just might be a national artist." Lino's parting shot: "*Kung gaganyanin n'yo ako, puede ba, mga [censored] kayo!*"

They all three guffawed—and understood. Lino hated ceremony. He especially hated the idea of himself lying dead in endless days of wake while men who'd treated him badly in life fell all over themselves making him sound larger in death so that they could look larger in life. He hated the hypocrisy. Hypocrisy, his friends knew enough, was a big word with him.

CB thinks Lino might have liked it best if someone had said about him instead: "He lived, he did his best, and he died."

In the first hours of the morning of May 22, 1991, in a deserted stretch of East Avenue in Quezon City just minutes away from his new home, the man who—indeed had lived and done his best, would die in a car accident. Lino Ortiz Brocka was 52.

As it ended and as it began, Lino's life was the stuff of cinema. But as cinema went, it was film noir, with a childhood that ended all too soon, at age six, the year his father Regino died.

It is said that Regino Brocka was a man more learned and more skilled than many among his peers. In the beautiful island where he brought his family to live, he enjoyed much

respect. His political opinion mattered, and it was with some awe that the fisherfolk looked upon the array of tools he owned that built the boats they needed for their livelihood. His was the privilege too of having earned enough in his years to allow him, his wife Pilar, and sons Lino and Danilo to live well.

Lino was the firstborn and his father's favored one, in part because Danilo was too young to tag along. He it was who was taught the numbers, the alphabet, poems, movement, music, and the sciences—everything there was his father knew. And this his father did, not with blackboard and chalk the island did not have, but with use of the island's gifts: seashells, leaves, sticks, sand, stone, monkey, bird, and sky.

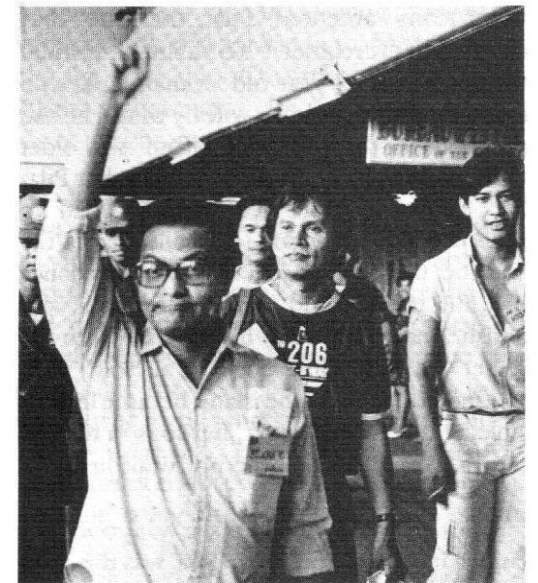
"This is how I remember my father," Lino once said, and proceeded to tell the story of the day he could not get accepted into school—a thatch affair that was nevertheless the island's proud school. It seemed that a rule said you had to be seven to get in, and being seven meant you could touch your ear with one hand with your arm hanging over your head. By whatever logic it sprung, the rule looked infallible enough: Lino, barely six, could not reach his ear. He was sent away, and went home crying. Seeing this, his father marched him right back to the schoolhouse and asked the teacher and the students to keep their eyes on his son. Then he made Lino perform. Recite the alphabet, his father said. Lino did. Recite the multiplication table, he said next. Lino did. Recite the addition table. Lino did. Write your name on the blackboard. Lino did. Recite your poem. "In the heart of the seed very deep so deep, a dear little plant lay fast asleep," Lino went on and on. Awed, the school took him in.

After that, he distinctly remembered his father saying to him: "Next time don't come home running. Show them what you can do." It would be one of many lessons his father would teach him, including one the young boy remembered very well and took very seriously: "A good man lives by what he believes." Today it is possible to think that if anyone could be made responsible for the

rules of right and wrong that Lino Brocka carried with him—sometimes heavily—throughout his life, it was the father he adored.

And if he but understood it then, the day he lost his father may well have been the angriest in his life. But as fate would have it, that dark day would be only the first of many angry days to befall him.

Regino's death remains clear in Pilar Brocka's mind. She is 78. "Birth day niya. Sabi niya, 'Pupunta ako kay Papa at kukuha ako ng isda.' E nag-boat siya. Pero bago umalis 'yon nagsalamin ako, nagsuklay ako, pagkatapos ay hinalikan na niya ako nang madiing-madiin! E di umalis na. Pagkatapos, ika-three days na hindi pa dumarating. Nagdala ako ng lampara gabi-gabi sa baybay at baka matanaw niya. Dala-dala ko pa si Lino. Tapos may sinabing inabandon sa Pilar, Sorsogon, nalunod daw. Inilibing nang mababaw. E di pinuntahan namin. 'Yon na nga... Lahat ng tao roon tabimik. Walang nagsasalita at



Brocka and Behn Cervantes leave the Quezon City Hall for a hearing, 1985.

*baka dukutin ka. Patayin ka. Hindi naman mabaho ang katawan niya. May tali ang mga kamay at saka iring ngipin dito sa harapan pumasok doon... Pulitika ang dahilan. Pinatay siya ng mga galit sa kanya roon sa bayan nila."*



A good many years later, when Lino was 36 and already famous, he became restless for the father he barely knew. He wanted to know, he said, if his memories of him were real.

He couldn't know enough from his mother who remained strangely silent about those years in an island she wouldn't even name. The story went that keeping his trip secret from her, he rented a banca to search around the islands of Sorsogon for days. On the third night, he recognized a shoreline as beautiful as it had been in his mind. "The island was like that in *Blue Lagoon*, the film which starred Jean Simmons," said he. There, speaking with old fisherfolk who remembered his father well, he was happy to hear that his father was the good man his memories had held him out to be.

But all would not be well. The years following his father's death were very dark ones and his mother would bear their brunt. Being Regino's second wife, the islanders never really accepted Pilar, the one they called "the foreigner." To them she would forever be the 23-year-old woman-child who made Regino abandon a wife by whom he had six children, the eldest of whom was older than his new bride. It did not help that Pilar had grown up amid rice fields and had no skills useful in an island. It is said that in the end she had to get a job in the town's dance hall, and it is also said that she later lived with a fisherman who tried in his fashion to be father to her children. But all told, with Regino gone, life in the island became impossible, and Pilar finally left, her sons in tow, to return to a family that did not want her.

For in the many years she was gone, her family had not forgiven. She was the child who had once defied them to run away with Regino, a married man, bringing upon the family endless shame. In a small town like San Jose, these things were not forgotten. Her own sister was harshest, and when Pilar had to leave for work in another town, this sister made sure her sons paid.

She had the young Lino get up every day at dawn to buy a barrelful of *bangus*-Dagupan for the family to sell. Once he got home, he waited for his uncle to inspect the fish one by one, and for every fish that was not fat and fresh, the boy Lino would get it in the face. But Lino even then must have understood how the angers ran in the family—for he did not tell any of this to his mother.

Every day the same aunt would command the younger Danilo to run Lino's body down with a pumice stone. "*Maitim daw, pangit ang balat,*" Danilo would recall at Lino's wake. Lino would crouch there obediently while Danilo attempted to rub the black off his brother's skin. Lino would not be heard to say a word. But toward midday, he would come to Danilo with baby powder and ask him to pour this over his back. "*Namumula at mahapdi sa gasgas ng bata,*" Danilo remembers very well.

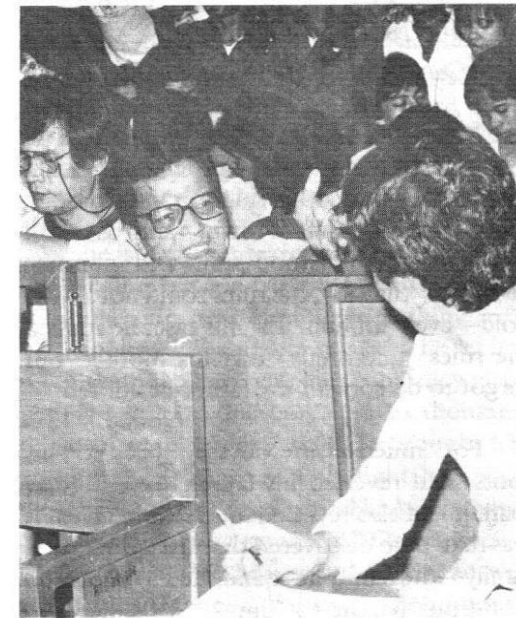
By Sunday their mother would come to visit. She recalls, "*Ang gagawin ko kay Lino kapag darating ako, tatawagin ko sa batalan. 'Ano, kumusta kayo?' 'Mabuti naman,' ika niya. Hindi siya nagsasalita. Pero I could feel it. Linggo darating ako, sabik na sabik ako. Kapag tinatanong ko, wala raw. Pero I could feel na malungkot ang mga bata.*" This was to last some four years.

It was on one such Sunday visit that she came home to find Lino crying. Prodded to tell his story, the boy finally said his aunt had just thrown a rice cauldron at him, and that it was not the first time. With that, Pilar stood up, told her son to hush, walked over to her sister, and slapped her sister hard. "*Ang dami kong tiniis sa pamilya ko,*" she says now. "*Pinaglalaba ko silang lahat, pinagpaplantsa. Ilan kaming lahat? Siyam! 'Yang kapatid ko pagka nagprito ka ng itlog at nasunog, itatapal sa mukha mo. At saka ang ginagawa ni Lino, 'yon daw toilet, kinikiskis niya ng buhangin para luminis. Patawarin ako ng mga kapatid ko, pero si Lino minaltrato nila. Noong mga panahong 'yon, iba. Kakapit ka sa patalim basta't hindi mo ipamimigay ang mga bata.'*"

With her outburst, Pilar was thrown out of the family house. But not before her sister—who still believed in the rightness of punishing Pilar and all her sons for having wronged the family name—called out to Lino to return the one shirt she had given him. Lino took it off, gave it back to her, took his mother's hand, and walked away. Years would pass but to the day this aunt lay dying, Lino refused to forgive. Nothing his mother would say to soften those years could make him change his mind.

Pilar found a nipa hut in the outskirts of town. It had gaping holes and looked ready to fall, but it would do for her family for now. At long last, the family was whole, although life promised to be harsh still.

For years, Lino and Danilo each owned only one pair of pants plus one set of school uniform. So Saturday was reserved for washing their pants, and on this day they would tie towels around their waists while waiting for their clothes to dry. "*Malaki ang tiniis naming mag-anak,*" Pilar says, to this day with tears in her eyes.



Even in a court of law, Brocka waives the rules.

On weekdays in summer, Danilo would wake up to see Lino already stringing up the *sampaguitas* floating on a basin. When he was done, the two would go off to the marketplace. Sometimes they would have *kampupot* and *pakiling* to sell along with the *sampaguita*. And to sell more, they would sing a song that didn't pretend to be anything but sad and which customers seemed to like:

*Ang mga ulila ay kaawa-awa.  
Gulanit ang damit.  
Nasaan ka? Ama ko?  
Bakit mo kami iniwanan?  
Kawawa ang buhay namin.*

By day's end, with coins in hand, Danilo would be sure to lose Lino. There was only one place to go looking for him, in any case: the movies. There he lived, and there he was happy. It felt to him that nothing was more beautiful than seeing Esther Williams dance in a pool filled with flowers or watching Lolita Rodriguez cry. Everything he saw in the movies he memorized. If there was money left over, he ran to buy the best-selling *teks*, those playing cards that carried bits of gossip about the lives of stars Charito Solis and Nida Blanca and everyone else. Everything he read there, he committed to heart.

In school he was always the courteous one with the ever ready "Good morning, Ma'm," a small dark boy who consistently brought home medals. He was gentle and did not get into fights, even if other kids his age were not as kind. They called him "*bakla*" in the grades, and in high school, despite the many times sponsors paid to bring him to Manila to bring honor to the town in oratorical contests—his "Oh Captain, My Captain" a favorite piece—and despite the many times he returned triumphant, he was never received warmly by the respectable citizens of the town.

"A small town could be so cruel," Lino would say to explain *Tinimbang Ka Nguni't Kulang*, the film that brought him prestige, and which told of an adolescent's discovery of the hypocrisy among small town folk. It was clearly Lino's story of the memories of his



own years in San Jose.

Those were years which made him see how his mother never stopped working to keep the family together. He tried to thank her back—constantly—the only way he knew how: by having her called to the stage to pin those school medals on him. For her, he worked tenaciously to win the big prizes in debate, academics, elocution—his strengths.

“Noong *hayskul* si Lino,” his mother remembers, “*dapat* valedictorian *siya*, *pero naging* second *lang* *siya*. *E mukhang* may nepotism. *At kung sino ang mayaman* ‘yon *angkinukuwan*. *Angginawa* ko, *nagalit* ako. ‘I’m not going to your graduation! *Ayoko!*’ *Nagpunta* ang principal at supervisor *sa bahay para kausapin* ako.” She might not have gone either but for Lino coaxing, “*Mama, umattend na kayo*. *Ito naman ay high school lang*. *Pagbigyan na natin sila*.”

Way into his adult years, he would go on thanking her—although this time more grandly, with the fame and the money at his disposal. From his travels he brought her silken robes and elegant shawls side by side fanciful underwear. (“*Ang huling bigay niya sa akin isang dosenang panty na bikini*,” she laughs. “*Aanhin ko kako ‘yan!’*”) He took it upon himself to send all of Danilo’s children to school. Then he set everyone up in a house that cost a good P2.3 million, a house filled with greenery and the birds that were his prize possessions. And of course he made *Taban na Empoy*, the film that all his friends knew was his private tribute to his mother.

But as in much of Lino’s life, nothing would be easy or simple. Even as he honored the mother who had given him so much, so would he find it hard to forgive her in his heart.

Many years into college at the University of the Philippines, Lino, it seems, stumbled upon a family secret. He found out for the first time that his mother was mistress to an official from another town, and even more devastating for him—had been since he was in high school. The whole town knew all

those years! It must have been why, he thought pained, the town could never accept him. Why, despite all the medals, they never let their children be his friends. His mother entreated: She did this so that *he* may finish college; couldn’t he try to understand how it was like for her? Lino not only couldn’t; he wouldn’t see her for the next three years.

“If education meant,” he told journalist Christian Blackwood, “for my mother having an affair with a married man, then fuck education, I said. That is why I never finished school...It was a painful experience. It took me time to get over that.”

But this may have been his mother’s other chance at happiness, interjected Blackwood—whose documentary of Lino’s life would win the Peace Film Prize. Didn’t he wish for his mother to be happy?

“Not with a married man!” Lino shot back. “In a small town you’re brought up to believe that’s wrong. Call it my Catholic upbringing or small town morality. I believe very strongly in some moral values. Like you don’t do unto others what you don’t want done unto you. And I’m not talking about adultery.”

He finished off: “That’s just the way I am.”

Indeed, the way he was left little room for cracks. But as his rules sprang from the moral code of a small town, and as small towns often understood guilt and penance far better than joy, the rules could not always hold—even for him. In his case, he applied the rules unerringly on his mother, but forgot to do so with the father he adored.

For much as the odyssey back to his roots had revealed his father to be a good man, it had also revealed much more. Then it was that Lino discovered that his father’s first family—the family he abandoned to become a wondrous parent to him—had suffered a great deal. Regino’s first wife had hit back by charging him with bigamy, and although his mother denies any such thing, his father’s

first wife once told of Regino being sent to do time in Muntinlupa. More than this, more telling of the family’s pain was the hatred that so consumed one son. The story goes that one day Regino’s grave had been dug up, the skull nowhere to be found. When the skull finally surfaced, the island was stunned to find it in the home of his son who had installed it on a table much like an altar, there to flay at each time he got drunk and had had too much of the world.

None of this could make Lino change his mind about his father—and well that he didn’t—but it’s to be wondered how a man such as he, so given to rules clad in iron, should fail to see that he pronounced rust so easily on his mother. Nicely for him, his mother—the same woman he’s found it hard to forgive—has enough memories of his kindnesses, and chooses to remember only those.

Today she sits in the house Lino left her surrounded by the pigeons he gave her as a gift, saying: “*Wala kang makikitang anak na kaparis ni Lino*. *Totoo ‘yan, wala! Napakabait sa magulang*. *Lahat siya ang umaasikaso; wala kang iintindihin*. *Sabi sa akin, ‘Wag na kayong magtrabaho at baka kayo madulas, matanda na kayo.’ Magpabinga lang daw ako, may katulong naman...Kaya kapag naaalala ko ngayon, kung meron akong gusto, tutulo na ang luha ko*. *Sapagkat siya, alam niya*. *Wari wala na akong pera, alam niya*. *‘O, heto ang pocket money.’ Iba, iba ang anak kong ‘yan*. *Napakabait*. *Walang hindi sa kanya*.”

She is between tears and laughter recalling the time her son treated her to a Baguio vacation. He was filming something with Christopher de Leon, she says, and he set her up in that nice cold city in some fancy place with fancy food that cost him six thousand pesos for so many days’ stay. He brought her around the shops and bought her *jus*. “*Tatlo*,” she says proudly. Still he kept asking, “*Ano pa ang gusto niyo, Ma?*” Of course she wondered why all the fuss and got her answer when toward the end of their stay he admitted that he had gone to a fortuneteller who had

said to him his mother would die soon. So here he was catching up on the time left, he said, contrite.

“*E hindi naman totoo*,” Pilar Brocka snorts at the bad fortuneteller who got away with her son’s money. Now, *her* fortuneteller was something else! “*Grade 4 si Lino noon nang nagpahula ako*,” she says enthused. “*Mayroon kang anak na magiging famous, sabi niya*. *Si Lino! Tatanyag yan, maski ano ang gawin mo, tatanyag ‘yan!’*”

True—but the fortuneteller could at least have thrown in that fame wasn’t going to come fast or easily even for a Lino Brocka.

Lino was a full seventeen when he left for Manila, the big city. He knew he had the talent—all the debates and oratorical contests he’d won were proof. His memory was precious; if he had to, he could recite his line and everybody else’s in an entire play. He knew movies like *Spartacus* and *Roberta* by heart. He had read a lot, everything in fact that the town library, puny as it was, held. Moreover, he came armed with six medals from the Nueva Ecija North High School and a scholarship to the University of the Philippines. The bright boy of San Jose, Nueva Ecija, was ready to conquer Manila. But, as life would have it, however much he tried he found he could not belong.

The U.P. stage to which he was drawn was in those days populated by the wealthy and the beautiful in the campus. He would say: “All the most interesting people were there. The girls were beautiful; the men were big. It was like going to New York!” But these interesting people couldn’t figure out where *he* was coming from. He said things like “*Mader, mader, look at da gurls in der baiting shutes!*” for “*Mother, mother, look at the girls in their bathing suits*.” And he said it with such passion, too. They died laughing.

Wilfrido Ma. Guerrero, who was like god, had Lino do that one line again and again until, frustrated with the unbending diction, the director threw up his hands and





A proud mother pins one of many medals on Brocka at elementary graduation rites.

yanked Lino out of his play. Lino was crushed. But not one to give up so easily, he moved over to prompting. Except that he prompted with such passion and volume, he left everyone snickering and slinking away.

It is said that after this, he kept away. If anyone among the wealthy and the beautiful had looked for him—except that no one did—they would have found him alone talking out loud to an empty field, desperately trying to give himself the American twang everyone else had. Or they would have spotted him in movie houses educating himself with the American films they all watched, or caught him reading the English books they all lugged about. When finally he returned, the only things he was still good for were the tasks backstage too menial for the rest.

"I was the servant of everybody," he'd say. One of his services involved bringing a case of empty Coke bottles backstage for the stars to pee in, saving them the trip to the floor

below. Once the bottles were full, he'd bring these downstairs, empty them, then bring them up again for use. And this he did, he says, for six years. "It was all so painful," he would admit after he had become famous. "I used to get taxis for them under the rain, anything."

But, unknown to all the big and beautiful people he admired, nothing was lost on the country boy who swept after everyone. He watched as sets were designed, he painted them, he mounted them. He discovered that lights positioned one way created a luminous look, another way, something macabre, changing all the time. He watched directors block scenes and actors soar or fall flat. He saw up close what ensemble work was and understood first-hand what individual creativity meant. Many years after he would say: "It was during this time that I learned all I know about theatre." Which, as he would prove years after in PETA, was more than anyone knew put together.

But at the time, all anyone saw was a small graceless boy, thin and dark and living on a budget who, moreover, was trying his best to be a university buddy. But this was 1956, when university culture was frivolous, its populace blissfully apolitical, and the *probinsiyano* not welcome to the certified social circles of campus.

Carolina "Bobbie" Malay reminisces: "*Alam mo naman sa U.P. noon. Matindi ang diskriminasyon kapag outsider ka, for example taga-probinsiya o public school, kung iba ang pananamit o accent. Even si Jose Ma. Sison pinagtatawanan namin noon. At si Ishmael Bernal, kasama rin sa dramatics club, hindi rin siya in. Pero si Lino, pinagtatawanan talaga. Nueva Ecija accent, farm boy, ang suot niya trubinized na hindi distinguished.*"

Lino, it turned out, was not one to forget despite the years, despite the fame.

Some 20 years after, Bobbie would discover this for herself. She had become a fugitive by then, a member of the underground National Democratic Front, while

Lino had gone on to national fame as director then at the thick of filming *Bona* with Nora Aunor. In a chance encounter, Lino recalled for her an incident she had long forgotten. They were about to enter the English Department, he said, but she simply refused to enter, saying, "*Hindi pinagbubukas ng pinto ang babae.*" So Lino had to open the door for her. Bobbie says, "*Hindi ko alam, dala-dala pala ni Lino ang sama ng loob na 'yon. Siguro dahil mahirap nga lang siya. Hindi niya pinakikita noong nasasaktan siya. E ako kaartehan ko lang naman 'yon. Kaya sabi ko sa kanya, Wala na 'yon, Lino, ha?*"

"I suppose," says Bobbie, "*siya mula noong umpisa, mulat na siya. At kami ang out of touch, as if in a cocoon. Mga estudyanteng produkto ng elitistang edukasyon. Akala namin noon kami na ang nakakaalam ng mundo. Intruder siya. Pero actually, ang tungkol sa mundo, alam na niya noon pa.*"

By 1961, when Mormon missionaries came into his life, he was ripe. These earnest young men seemed to hold the answer. They ascribed to a simple life, to honesty, and to a general attitude about life that allowed a person to feel good about himself and the world. His whole experience at U.P. had been dark. His mother had shamed him. There was nothing in the country for him.

It seemed august, too, on another plane. This was the period in Lino's life when he would in seriousness confront his sexuality—and become disturbed. "You realize you're different," he would say. It did not help that when he went to the library he found there "aberration" to describe what he was. Yet none of this was what he had planned for himself. "I've always wanted to have a family. I wanted to teach children the way my father had taught me," he said. He never asked to be different; he *didn't* want to be. Friends were witness to his nervous breakdown.

To the day he died, Lino, his friends say, was never completely comfortable with his sexuality. True, he would defy the world by declaring nearly thirty years later in a docu-

mentary made on his life that he *was* a homosexual. But, till the end, his friends say he seemed unable to shake off the disapproving code of Catholicism that once upon his youth in a small town he had adopted as his own.

For good or ill, however, his missionary work would not be the answer he was looking for. Lino could no more keep from being his father's son than he could keep from questioning everything, including why he had to report on his Mormon partner at all, which was a requisite. It created distrust, he protested. Thinking like this of course worried his superiors. The new Filipino convert, they thought, could be a disturbing influence, and so shunted him from post to post until in less than a year he had gone through six. Finally they packed him off to the Kalaupapa leper colony where he couldn't do much harm. Or so they must have thought. But of those months, the Filipino convert would say, "It was the most interesting period of my life."

For in the island, he lived with men whose bodies wasted away by the day but who, to his wonder, faced each new day eager for what the day would bring. More than winning converts—which they might have failed to remind him was his only assignment—he devoted his time to forging friendships. Together, they fished, talked about their lives, staged performances, ate, prayed, sang. A people diseased in body but whole in spirit—they gave Lino reason to want to live.

Still in search of something he thought missing, he eventually left the Mormons and flew to the mainland. In San Francisco, with fifty dollars to his name, he lived among hoboes until he found work as a busboy at Fisherman's Wharf. But he seemed destined to be hungry all the time. Here, he said to friends, he learned to scavenge for food in trash cans, not just once but many times.

Which now, maybe, makes that day of Ninoy Aquino's burial not so strange. At the time the thousands marching with Ninoy's cortege had wound their way from Sto.



Domingo Church to the Luneta under alternating heat and rain and much hunger. By the time a small band had broken off to grab a bite in a Luneta restaurant, nearly everyone, including Lino, was white as sheet. As expected, the place was thrown into a tizzy and service broke down. As journalists waited impatiently for food that, if it took any longer to appear could make them lose their spots in the six-by-six truck, their eyes began to follow Lino around. He was hopping from table to table, gobbling up leftover cakes and meats and juices. And then, for his final thriller, he picked up a cloth napkin, wiped his mouth, then slid this like a towel for his soaking back. That done, now alert to journalists eyeing him stunned, he smiled a cat's smile and beat everyone to the moving cortege.

In San Francisco, beyond hunger, Lino knew a real homesickness. But it was also here that he found love. The relationship—a grand passion—would end. With a broken heart, he would return to the country, penniless, still with no college degree to his name, and completely without a job in sight. He was 28.

At this time PETA had come along. And once again, theatre mesmerized him. He became, as in a repeat performance, eager messenger and all-around backstage hand, this time for Cecile Guidote and all the *colejialas* at PETA who were getting all the good roles. Cecile at least paid him P10 for every press release he wrote, another P10 plus expenses for every script he delivered, and a couple more pesos for appearing in crowd scenes. With this he financed his stay in the city. But as it was in U.P. then, so it would be in PETA now. He took in every bit of the theatre he loved so. In the next three years, he would master not only that, but television too, for PETA had *Balintataw*, and *Balintataw* needed more directors. Eventually, Lea Productions would catch one of the shows he directed and ask him if he would direct for them. Their project: *Wanted: Perfect Mother* for the Manila Film Festival.

From that time onward, he would become what the fortuneteller had once

announced to his mother: Lino Brocka, far more than any of the big and beautiful people he stood in the rain to get taxis for, would be terribly, terribly famous.

Or, by mainstream standards, terribly, terribly infamous.

It was noon of November, 1987. The period: just twenty-one months under Cory's provenance.

Lino and company had filed out of the halls of the Supreme Court. Suddenly there appeared men in plainclothes brandishing high-powered arms making a grab for Pacita Dellosa, a refugee from Leyte. Lino was first to run to her. He pulled her mightily toward him, but there were too many men far larger than he pushing her toward an unmarked car. Still Lino kept pulling at Pacita who was twisting and pushing to get back to him. Angered, one burly fellow turned his full attention on Lino and made as if to strike. Lino threw a flying kick. But the others had by then pushed Pacita into the car and hemmed her in on all sides.



A 1958 photo shows Lino with mother Pilar and brother Danilo.

The lawyers, now alerted by the commotion, made a dash for the car just when it revved up and managed to rock it with their bare hands. Lino went for the steering wheel. The men inside trained their long arms at this motley group, but the motley group would not let go of the frenzied rocking and pulling. The car got into gear. As in a blur lawyer Arno Sanidad threw himself in its path. The others yanked him out of there fast—and well they did, for within seconds, the car mercilessly crunched past the spot where he had been standing. A couple of paces behind, Lino, his veins popping, was shouting “P—ninyo! P—ninyo!” and was being locked in a vise to stop him from throwing himself at the car. In what ran for only ten minutes, another Leyteño had been abducted.

And just when everyone of his friends at Kawil, a favorite restaurant with him, was staring there alternately shocked and impressed, it was just like Lino to add, “*Manay, paggalit pala ako, lalaking-lalaki ako. E di ba nag-flying kick akong ganyan. Ay, sumunod na araw, manay, ang sakit ng mga singit ko!*”

But what, exactly, was the best known film director hereabouts doing throwing flying kicks in defense of refugees from Leyte? This started, Lino explained, when he got word that BAYAN, of which he was once a national council member, was looking frantically for sanctuary in the city for frightened village folk from Leyte. The story went that one after another these folks were being picked up by vigilantes. All they'd done, they said, was give water and food to rebels who knocked on their doors. What choice did they have? asked they. The rebels may not have held guns to their heads, but they had real guns just the same! Now the vigilantes insisted they were rebels themselves! There remaining no village safe enough, whole families poured their worldly possessions into boxes and plastic bags and fled to Manila in search of relatives. Many more did not have anyone to go to, and it was they who found refuge in the halls of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines.

So hot was the pursuit of refugees that any accommodation extended them seemed to meet with reprisal. Polytechnic University President Nemesio Prudente was ambushed by men who wielded the power to reroute traffic in the metropolis and set up road blocks in broad daylight along the route Prudente was known to take. Prudente survived, but his bodyguards were riddled with bullets. Even national media attention and the ongoing Supreme Court hearings could not sway the vigilante hand. At least once more soldiers swooped down on the Polytechnic University grounds and spirited away several menfolk in full view of hundreds of witnesses. It was at this time that Lino, with friend Maris Diokno, engineered to spirit the refugees away to separate shelters, away even from the University of the Philippines where they had been relocated.

In the night, in small numbers, Lino brought in children, old women, and couples to his mother's home. Lino's mother boldly thought then, “*Humph! Matanda na naman ako, e di ako na lang ang kunin.*” But Pilar Ortiz



Lino strikes a formal pose with mother Pilar and brother Danilo at the 1985 Magsaysay Awards celebration.





This scene from *ORAPRONOBIS*, with Gina Alajar struggling with her kidnappers, is a virtual re-enactment of an incident Brocka became part of.

Brocka, then 73, wasn't altogether sure she had done the right thing. So—in what can only remind us of the woman who confessed the revolution to a Spanish friar—she went to a priest. “*Sabi ko, bakit ako binigyan ng problema ni Lino? Kung dalhin sa akin, mga tiglima, gabi. Tanggap naman ako. Pero ang kasama mga madre. Twenty-four silang lahat.*” But, unlike the friar who broke the vow of the confessional and exposed the revolution to Spanish authorities, this priest was different. “*Si Father,*” says Pilar, “*nag-confess naman siya. Sa Samar daw ganoon ‘yon.*” Thus reassured, she kept bravely on, giving succor to refugees who were, as the newspapers reminded her each morning, prime targets of agents of the Right.

Meanwhile, her son Lino was at it day and night. “*Ang ginawa ni Lino, ‘yung radyo, TV niya dinala roon, ‘yung bentilador dinala niya. Ang isang sakong bigas sa amin, two weeks lang. Kaya lang, kako, kayo ang magsaing. ‘Yung katulong pamamalengkehin ko sa Balintawak komo mura doon. Biro mo P200 every day na pagkain. Supported ni Lino lahat ‘yun.*”

But as the days rumbled past, Lino's mother became overwrought. She imagined enemies out to get her and neighbors telling on her. She kept at Lino to tell these people to stop climbing her coconut trees; it wasn't normal! It got to where she was shooing away all bill collectors and admonishing everyone of the refugees to stay locked inside their rooms. Finally she told Lino, her favorite son: “*Nonoy, bakit binigyan mo naman ako ng problema? E kung bombahin iring bahay, o ano?*” So Lino eventually took them away from there, once more in small groups at a time.

The next several weeks would be spent trying to get the Leyteños funds and food and security. Lino and Maris continued to plot and connive, shunning the phone, trusting very few. They were there at the senate pushing for legal safeguards to serve displaced village folk; they were there among the religious floating the idea of sanctuaries.

Each day, tension bore down. At one count in the refugee battle, newspapers reported six people dead from ambushes and assassinations, hundreds locked in provincial

jails, and an undetermined number missing. Lino's driver Ver was so sure he would die he instructed Nila, Lino's househelp, to give his salary to his wife should he fail to return. Lino would repaint his Fiera—the same one that transported refugees in the night—from red to white, thinking this little bit could save the lives of his film crew that used the Fiera too. He worried about Maris whom pro-vigilante groups began to hang in their rallies—and told her to take care. If he had been scared for his own life, no one heard him say anything. What they did hear him say was: “You can't trust Cory anymore.”

It was not always so. Cory Aquino was once very special to Lino Brocka.

Lino was at the Manila International Airport eager to welcome Benigno Aquino home the dark day of the assassination in 1983. Angry and mournful over the murder, he became obsessed with the ouster of Ninoy's murderers. He it was who persuaded the Aquino family to transfer Ninoy's body to Sto. Domingo Church to give mourners a chance to mass their indignation. He was with the core group that organized the Justice for Aquino, Justice for All Movement (JAJA) which kept passions running high against government. In those early days, he was wont to tell a few: “Politicians are using Ninoy for their ends,” but kept his anger successfully at bay, knowing their big numbers were their biggest weapon against the giant Marcos. In the next two years, he would give himself full-time to protest work, putting his directorial job on hold. He was penniless.

As the snap elections sprung in 1986, he moved to support Cory's bid for the presidency. The decision cost him a parting of ways with BAYAN which had called for a total boycott. His was a decision not lightly made. These were the very people he stood side by side with in the dangerous Marcos years. He trusted these people; they were his friends. But, for now, he felt Cory needed him.

For her, he gambled his entire career,

campaigning publicly in her name at a time when no one truly gave Good a housewife's chance against Evil. And as Ferdinand E. Marcos wielded total powers the likes of which Joe McCarthy—the neanderthal who in the '50s froze many of the very best talents of Hollywood in their prime—never exercised, Lino knew that with a Marcos win, he would be finished.

For her, too, he did something that went against his very grain: he compromised.

That was, to him, what his whole stint at the Constitutional Commission in 1986 was: a compromise. In its halls, the loud and irreverent Brocka rewrote himself many times, often doing, in his words, a “*Susan Roces na dalagang Pilipinang mahinbin at pino*” and only once or twice a “*Bella Flores na mataray.*” He told everybody: “I tried real hard na maging *mabait at tumahimik*. We [the nationalist bloc] tried to behave because we wanted to show the others we were supportive of Cory.”

The once or twice—all right, five—times that he slipped, he ended up unnerving the staid. Certainly he did Ambassador Emmanuel Pelaez whom he tangled with over the U.S. bases. The ambassador was pro; Lino anti. “Lino fell short,” recalls Commissioner Wilfredo Villacorta, “of calling the ambassador disloyal to the country. He made the ambassador very uncomfortable.”

And he nearly always riled Commissioner Blas Ople. “*Iyang si Ople,*” Lino himself once said, “*tatayo kaagad at babanat ng ‘to protect the good name of the Constitution’ at kung anu-ano pa.* One time he made a big fuss about my saying bullshit. *Aba’y wala akong pakialam sa record, alisin kung alisin...*” Ople was there reaping the fruits of collaboration. Since he was a suave politician—always smiling and nice—everybody was cooperating with him.”

The day came when he threw up his hands and gave up. The fundamental law of the land had become a joke, he said with finality, and resigned. But through it all, he made sure of one thing: That his Cory be spared.



Said Brocka—

When I started out, reluctantly because I never really wanted to be a commissioner, I was so excited and full of hope. The names were so illustrious and so distinguished-sounding. But after the first caucus, I knew it was not my milieu. I felt very uncomfortable. I felt very inadequate. I didn't think I had the mind for it. The language was so totally different.

I went to Cory and told her about my apprehensions. I told her I was so honored and flattered but I thought I was out of place. I even recommended other people to take my place like Pete Lacaba and Behn Cervantes. But Cory prevailed upon me. I could not say no to her.

I did not talk much at the Con-Com. I kept very quiet because, one, I could not interpellate as brilliantly as the others, and, two, I did not trust myself. My mouth is a little unwieldy when it comes to certain issues I feel very strongly about. I did not want to antagonize anybody because sooner or later you would need their votes. I really compromised and that was a very difficult thing to do. I played a completely supporting role.

My resignation was not due to our being voted down. No, no, no. That's being very silly and stupid and narrow-minded. It was as my fellow commissioners said: "an accumulation of frustrations."

In my case the frustrations started with the inclusion of the word *love* in the preamble. It is so icky! We are all for love and all, it is hard to argue against that, but to put it in a Constitution? But they were all so enamored with the EDSA Revolution and people's power. If you look at the preamble closely, it is just a string of noble words. I wanted something simpler.

I first started to speak up on the issue of reserved seats for party-less candidates. I



Brocka and Cervantes are moved from the Quezon City Jail to the Ipil Rehabilitation Center at Fort Bonifacio.

reacted when Ople said in that stentorian voice of his, "It is a gift." *Para bang—* wow!—we are giving the Filipino people a gift, a constitutional gift. *Buong-buo ang loob niya!*

The point is that the political parties will swallow any cause-oriented candidate. *Iyang mga* cause-oriented, *magaling iyan sa mga rally, sa flag waving, pero pag pinaandar na ng mga* political parties *ang kanilang* machinery, *talo na. Kahit ano pa ang ingay mo.*

The right of these groups to a seat in the legislature is *not* a gift! It is a right they earned in the darkest days of the dictatorship. When the political parties were marginalized, it was these cause-oriented groups which carried on the fight for freedom! But their cause is lost in the Con-Com nevertheless...

Everybody talks about the people's welfare, people's rights, but when it comes to giving the people actual political power, this time no longer a nebulous paeon to their strength, ideals, and aspirations—there is such a resistance. *Ang mga tao parang ginagamit lang.*

If you really believe in the people, now is the test. And the test is to give them real political power enshrined in the Constitution. That statement of Ople about it being a gift is so *cacique*. It is so feudal. It is so hypocritical.

*Ang dami nilang speeches tungkol sa* EDSA Revolution, *tungkol sa* maturity of the people, *makukulili ang tainga mo*. But when it came to the test, *hindi nakapasa*.

Then came land reform. That article was really diluted and watered down. But even that we [in the nationalist bloc] let go. I was even the one who comforted [Commissioner] Jimmy Tadeo who felt really bad about the whole thing. I even said to Jimmy, "You can't win them all. *Unti-unti lang.*" I was already beginning to count crumbs.

Then came the discussions on national economy. The irony of it all was that I really did not even prepare for this. I was so busy with the preparation of my own article on human resources which was the next topic.

The first two days they were discussing the economy, there were rumblings. Then [Commissioner] Fely Aquino said that the word unfair should be deleted from the section because any competition from foreign sources must be considered unfair. *Nagtataka ako kung bakit napaka-importante nung unfair...* It was all building up.

I got the same feeling about the phrase "common good." It appeared so many times, and it was usually used in crises to neutralize people. They [the majority bloc] always said they believed in social justice but only for the common good. *Yun pala pag sinabing* common good *ay parang sinabing para sa* good *ng lahat*, even the rich. If you take away the lands of the rich to give to the landless, that is not common good. How can you implement land reform if you do not take away the lands of the landed?

Social justice is bloody. Social justice is painful. Nobody ever said social justice was painless!

Finally—and for me this was the straw that broke the camel's back—we have constitutionalized the opening up of our national patrimony and economy to the domination and control of multinationals, which I believe is tantamount to bartering away our economic sovereignty.

When I first sent my letter of resignation, people cabled me from as far as Mindanao. But the opinions were split. I felt I would be more effective outside the Con-Com.

Inside, I could not even understand the jargon these so-called experts on the economy were mouthing. *Hindi ko maintindihan*. I think it is on record [with the Con-Com] that I said, "Let's cut out the bullshit." Why don't we be honest? Let's not hide behind words.

When I read the report of the coalition of businessmen, *sinabi ko sa sarili ko*, "This makes sense." *Claro ang stand nina* Ding [Lichauco], economic protectionism, industrialization, and economic democracy. *Sinabi ko sa kanila* [the majority bloc], "I wish I could take your word for it, *kasi* experts *kayo*. But I feel very suspicious because some of you are connected with multinationals. How can you bite the hand that feeds you?"

There should have been a commissioner here with a different—a nationalist—perspective on the economy. I just realized it: My guess is that we, supposed nationalists, were in the commission for the civil and human rights, but *yung* economic policies, *ayos na*.

*Patawarin ako ng Diyos*, but it is gnawing in my mind. *Bakit walang* nationalist economist *sa* Commission?





In jail, Brocka is visited by Mrs. Corazon C. Aquino, who would become president of the Philippines in 1986.

There were people asking us during the public hearings *kung luto ba ang Con-Com*. *Pakiramdam nila* it was a show. I was defending it. I assured them it wasn't a show. But now how do you bring up *na baka luto nga* without personally criticizing Cory and her government? I feel so bad. I am frightened and confused by the implications.

You know, what is frightening is that those who appointed these commissioners knew fully well that these people serve the World Bank. It was Cory who appointed them. That is why it is such a dilemma. It is saddening.

My leaving the Con-Com now will not really affect anything. All the major issues have been finished. I feel very free and liberated about what I've done. I thought at first it was best to compromise. You win some and you lose some. At first, counting crumbs was enough for us. You know, *nagsisimula na kaming magbilang* in terms of, "Ah, ito naipasa namin, puwede na. Naipasok ko na 'yung ex-

pression' which will refer to freedoms other than of speech and of the press," *okay na rin*.

*Pero later, naisip ko*, Why do we have to compromise? We are talking of the supreme law of the land! *Karapatang mamamayan ang nakataya*. We are talking here about our people's future. When the national patrimony issue came up, it was the last straw, and I said to myself, "No more compromise."

With that, Lino walked out of the Commission. By the time the issue of equity for business came up—with the nationalist bloc pushing for a 70%-30% ratio in favor of Filipinos and the majority bloc gunning for a 50%-50% ratio or more in favor of foreigners, five more commissioners did too.

But as Commissioner Minda Quesada recalls, "*Nagsumamo sina Ka Tanny* [grand old man of politics Lorenzo Tañada] *at Cecilia Muñoz Palma* [Con-Com president]. *Magko-collapse daw ang Con-Com kapag hindi kami bumalik*. *Masisira daw ang credibility nito*; there was a coup d'état, etc., at that time. They appealed to our patriotism." After which Tañada and Palma turned to the majority and entreated, "*Pagbigyan na natin itong minority*."

Everyone returned, except Lino.

The upshot was that the minority group, says Quesada, was able to push the nuclear weapons ban, provide the highest budget for education, incorporate social justice and human rights provisions, recognize the equality of men and women, and give rights to non-governmental organizations. "Everything," grimaces Commissioner Wilfredo Villacorta, "that government is not following today."

For his part, Lino would repeat in dozens of interviews: "Since I am the only one who has decided not to return, my absence makes no difference, and I do not believe that it could cause destabilization. Besides, why

would I want to destabilize a government that I campaigned and fought for?"

But his Cory would not be assuaged. Lino's friends say that following that episode he was never again invited to Malacañang. And when he died, none of them remember seeing his President pay her respects to a man who once laid out for her use all the talents that were his to give.

Lino never could confine himself to any one part of his world. He had something to say about everything. In the world of movies alone, he spanned the breadth of what he called deadly infighting, unfair labor practices, political machinations, programmed intrigue, immoral business deals, and top level show business corruption. On top of that, the bulk of his perorations were nearly always unfit to print. For a supercharged Brocka wove reason with expletive, speculation with hard anecdote, modulation with bombast, research with libel. The man was not known to speak—he *performed*, and when he did, all the rules be damned.

Of all the movie wars he engaged, however, it was the war with critics that drove him apoplectic—only the disease did not extend to his tongue. "The hardest thing for critics to do," he'd flail away, "is to see a film from the point of view of the filmmaker, to see what the film is trying to achieve. Between the intention and the achievement there is a big gap—critics should compare original intention to finished product. But what they end up doing is imposing their views on the directors."

More worked up now: "The worst example is Isagani Cruz, who has come to the point of telling Butch Perez [director of *Haplos*] where to put the camera, where a zoom-in is more effective. He's already directing the film! He is not studying the film from the point of view of: What has Butch attempted and what has he succeeded in doing? Instead, he is saying: This is what I would have done if I were directing it."

The end result? "*E wala ngang magsasucceed na pelikula niyan! Kaya lagi naming*

*sinasabi: Mga* [censored], *mag-direct nga kayo, mga* [censored] *kayo!*"

Take it from him: "And all—except for Bernie [Ishmael Bernal]—who moved from reviewing to directing, failed. Now they realize you start with a vision of a film, but you're lucky if you can get 60-70 percent realized because of budget, weather, crew, actors, producers, censorship, the 1,001 problems a director faces. Later, after having directed, and failed, these critics either stop criticizing or they become very kind."

This is not asking critics—whom he insists on calling reviewers, by the way—to treat their films with kid gloves, he makes clear. "Critics feel it is not their business to know the director's problems because they are judging a finished work. And we're not asking them to understand it from the point of view of our problems. We're simply asking them to have a clearer mind. But before they start reviewing, *yong kanilang mga angst nandoon na*. *Mga frustrations nila* to become scriptwriters and directors, *nakapasok na*. So how can they have a clear vision of what the director's vision is—when theirs keeps getting in the way?"

Raising a cinematic brow, he notes: "*Gaya ni Isagani Cruz, ang sabi niya Kapit sa Patalim* [a Brocka film] was just a TV thriller. *Tapos binigyan ang Kapit ng award* [best picture of the year] *ng British Film Institute*. *E di tahimik siya ngayon*. *Malandi siya*."

What's more, he shakes his head, critics end up praising him for the wrong things. "*Akala nila* they are flattering us by saying *Kapitsa Patalim* is a relevant film," he snorts. "I am so imprisoned in that relevance thing! *Gumawa akong Adultery, patayka na manay*. *Patayka na! Kaya sabi ko*, my rebellion is that I'm not going to let you imprison me in that. I learned from *Maynila*." [Brocka's *Maynila sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag* was voted by the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino one of the best films of the '70s.]

Brocka notes, "*Ako mismong direktor* I know the film I made. *Kaya* I cannot help it





Brocka directs a union strike scene for *BAYAN KO: KAPIT SA PATALIM*, 1984.

if I say I won for the wrong film when I won for *Miguelito* and not *Kapit*. I'll be the first one to say that. Kasi they missed the whole point of how I, as a director, was trying to do *Kapit*. 'Yong word na socially relevant, nakakabulag.'

His final dig: "It's so easy to please them. *Patayuin mo lang si Nida Blanca doon at pagsalitain ng 'Katarungan ang ating kailangan', ay, manay, patay na sila doon.*"

Tell me, he prods, "*Kung sa tingin ng mga serious directors and artists, mali 'yang mga awards, saan pa ang mga award na 'yan'?*"

In one dramatic ploy, he attended the 1980 URIAN awards of the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino for the singular purpose of getting back at critics. It was a decision made overnight. He had of course been stewing for a time over some Manunuris, and now, sure he was going to win, he was ready. When he did win for best director for *Jaguar*, he strode up the stage and in full view of television cameras announced he was rejecting this award and all future awards from these critics. Critics, he lashed out, suffered from that grave disease: prejudice. Offstage he would say: "If I didn't speak

out that night at the URIAN, I would not be able to sleep. I will have to live with that for the rest of my life."

Of course that sort of drama got splashed in movie magazines—which, truth to tell, have never been comfortable with Lino's celebrity. He was not show biz enough, he guessed. He didn't open his home on his birthdays. At a Lino gathering, you saw a lot of food, but you also saw a lot of the same faces all the time, year after year: Gina, Phillip, Ricky, Pete, Bey, Soxy, Haydee, the staff. But, he dismissed, he never allowed the movie press to bother him anyway. He liked to say: "*Wala ka namang makukuhang matino diyan.*" He screened reporters he granted interviews to. But—very Lino— even as he browbeat the movie press left and right, he all the same bought off all the movie magazines in town and read them all. To understand this phenomenon, laughs a Lino friend, you have to understand that Lino was one great gossip. Why, even after he'd hanged the Manunuri in their own show, he sat around anyway because it wasn't going to be like him to miss out on all the stuff that was to come next. "*Madrama lang talaga 'yong mama,*" chorus his friends.

Given half the chance, it was the kind of drama Brocka didn't mind using on presidential daughter Kris Aquino. The story went that Cory's youngest, then the latest box-office card of the Regal camp, was drawing flak for being paid in the millions after having accomplished nothing more than being born to the President's family. Her film company now dangled before Lino—himself already paid P750,000 per picture—a project aimed at getting Kris an acting award. His end of the deal? "Name your price," they coaxed. "Humph!" Lino would harrumph to friends. "*Ayoko nga. Wala namang talent. And it's unfair. Marami namang ibang bata riyon mas may talent pa, pero P500 a day lang ang binabayad ng Regal!*"

The star system drove him batty enough. "*Ano naman ang gagawin ni Sharon Cuneta sa mga pelikula ko?*" he'd grumble. Except that, having decided to go mainstream in his last years, he relaxed this rule and actually got along with his stars, including Sharon whom he once persuaded into joining a rally against censorship, and who, it must be said, shed private tears at the morgue where his body lay.

But the stories are legion about how he, like a father or a priest, would sit a star down for his sermons. To Christopher de Leon who at one time had a reputation for not showing up on his own sets, he said: "For every day you do not come to the set because you have problems—even if these problems are love problems or plain headaches—you lose nothing. You have your cheques in advance and, if you need more, the producer will willingly sign more. But, for each day that filming stops, the little people go home unpaid. They go back to families that will not eat because their father did not earn anything for the day. And all because you, the star, did not feel like working for that day. Think of that."

His stars seemed to know, however, that behind the directorial lecture came genuine concern for them. Christopher himself did. At Lino's wake, under a huge tree and black sky, he and Phillip Salvador would go on and on about how, when Lino first plucked them from the world, he plied them with *Reader's Digest*, with films and with magazines, admonishing them to grow, to respect the



Brocka, center, Sister Christine Tan, left, and Fely Aquino, right, served as members of the Constitutional Commission.





Brocka faces a militant throng at the Quirino Grandstand.

business that was feeding them, to respect themselves. The man, they said, was always nagging them to be good.

Those years Christopher—and Bembol and Hilda, Lino's other golden finds—abandoned all these, Lino was heard to say: "I don't like building up stars anymore. They can't handle the fame. The only one who did was Phillip—but he had gone through so much before I came along. He was the one who understood that fame was something that wasn't going to be there all the time."

Gleeful at the other end watching Brocka handle his stars were his producers. He saved them the headache, after all. In any case, his producers were in luck. For a Brocka commandment his entire staff heard all the time went: "Do not bite the hand that feeds you." This meant you didn't make money off your producer's sets, off your location hunts, nor off any of the areas primed for a fast buck. What's more he saved them precious money because he was a fast worker, one of the fastest in the business, once completing a film in three weeks flat.

Of course when the gods were giving him a rough time, he'd been known to say to his manager Boy de Guia: "*Gusto mo bang ako ang kumausap sa luka-lukang Lily na 'yan?*"

And once he said to a big producer to his face: "*Bastos.*" But because he was Lino Brocka, no matter how pesky he was, he could not be ignored.

So producer and director finally negotiated a liveable give-and-take. Often this involved Lino agreeing to direct their superstars. He was, after all, known as the actor's director, and it was every producer's dream to boost studio stock by hitching an acting trophy to its star in residence. The terms also included Lino agreeing not to kill off the box-office draw. Filipino audiences did not like their idols dying on them, so producers begged him to please keep the stars alive and breathing by story's end! In exchange, producers agreed to finance some of his smaller—but to Lino, more important—projects, such as Viva Films' support for *Macho Dancer*.

Show biz being very intimate business, other terms of endearment bound them eventually. He directed *Maging Akin Ka Lamang*—a movie he called a combination of *Falcon Crest*, *Dynasty*, and *Dallas*—largely because its producers had generously advanced P80,000 for bail bond the year he got locked up for joining a jeepney strike. In return, he gave them a box-office hit. Once again, it was movie moguls he and friends ran to when they needed P29,000 for their full-



page newspaper ad against censorship in the Marcos years. The only thing the producers asked in exchange was that this not be revealed in Marcos's lifetime. It wasn't. And at Lino's funeral, it would be Mother Lily, big boss of Regal Films, who on her own would write off the bulk of the expenses. When friends streamed into the funeral home the morning of his death, Mother Lily was there, asleep on a beaten sofa, slumped in a man's jacket. She had been with Lino's body for hours.

A director's relations with his producers was not sweetness and light, all the same. There remained many projects, mainly social realist and political, that he wanted to direct that even friendly producers wouldn't touch. And there were those years when they wouldn't dare touch *him*. Government reprisal came in many forms for producers, he knew: a playdate delayed by approval deliberately delayed, a For Adults Only rating, too many cuts, an outright ban. And Lino knew, too, that millions went into making films, and thus did not blame producers in whole for their expressions of fear.

For all his struggles with the wind-mill, Lino did not fancy himself a visionary. He would have balked at appropriating so fancy a term for himself, friends say. The only

thing they remember him harping on was a cinematech to preserve all the best of old local films—the black-and-white films he so loved to watch on TV at two in the afternoon—to be housed at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines. He was the first to say he never dreamt of changing the industry. What he did want was to find relief for the here and now.

The effort, when it did happen, could be bold—and visionary. On April 6, 1986, fired by the promise of Cory Aquino as President and Augusto Sanchez as Labor Secretary, Lino spearheaded the founding congress of the Unyon ng mga Manggagawa ng Pelikulang Pilipino. Three hundred movie workers attended.

It was a first: a gathering in common cause of crew and director, extra and superstar. The little people said they were happy that at last something like this had come along. Ten-year-old Maria Ali Oblepias, a dubber, may have said it for them: "*Isinama ako ng mama ko para maintindihan ko po ang ibig sabihin ng unyon. Ang unyon po pala ay para hindi magulo yong pagda-dub. Kasi po minsan pinabihirapan ako sa pagda-dub. Minsan po, ginugulpe po ako para mapaiyak ako, kasi umiiyak 'yong bidang bata sa pelikula. Pero 'yong bida po kaibigan ko.*"



But the move proved too bold for its time. Cory, for one, would change. Barely eleven months after the mass swept her to Malacañang, she would fire her labor secretary for the ultimate sin of being pro-labor. Movie producers, in the meantime, would find ways of winning back their people from the untested promises of their union. And while it might have heartened Lino to know that five years later an unprecedented two-day work stoppage would be launched by the actors' guild, the bare truth is that organizations in the industry remain grounded at guild level. The industry-wide union Lino had long ago worked for is yet to be.

But small people have long memories all the same. Today their stories about Direk Lino remain abounding. "Walang makakapantay sa bait ni direk," Josie Tagle says for them. "Hindi pa kami nakakakita ng gaya niya. Yang si direk, 'di naman namin sasabihin maraming pinayaman. Pero maraming pinaipon, 'yong nakabili ng damit, ganoon." With him around, she says, they even got paid on time! "Hindi 'yan magsu-shooting pag di kami nabayaran. Bayaran n'yo muna sila, sasabihin niya sa prodyuser. Kaya sa set ni Lino, wala kaming delay. Ang ganda pa niyan, napasok niya ang lahat. 'Yong Seiko, Regal, lahat na. Marami kaming trabaho."

Josie figures she has brought hundreds of movie extras to Lino Brocka sets over 15 years. And always, she says, he treated them well. A Brocka set was different. "Masyadong care siya sa mga background. Kung kulang ang pagkain, kahit pa ang location ay sa hotel, umoorder siya para sa amin. Basta hindi ka magugutom sa set ni direk Lino. At walang maganda o pangit sa kanya. Kunwa, selected ang sabi sa aking kunin na ekstra. E ang dala ko merong tatlong pangit. Hindi niya 'yon tatanggalin. Aayusin na lang niya sa bandang likod o naka-side view. Para ba kumita naman 'yong tao. 'Yong ibang direktor, sisigaw pa ng: 'Ang pangit nito, ilayo!' Meron pang direktor na pinapapila ang mga ekstra kahit sa init. 'Pila kayo, bibilangin ko kayo!' At ang karamihan nagmumura. 'Alisin nga ito! Ang

tanga!' Si Lino, cool na cool. Kahit dumaan sa tanaw ng kamera ang ekstra at rolling na, sasabihin lang, 'O, hija, wag ka diyang dadaan uli.' Sa iba 'yan, nasigawan ka na ng 'Gago!'"

She says: "Walang ganyan si direk. Lahat minahal niya."

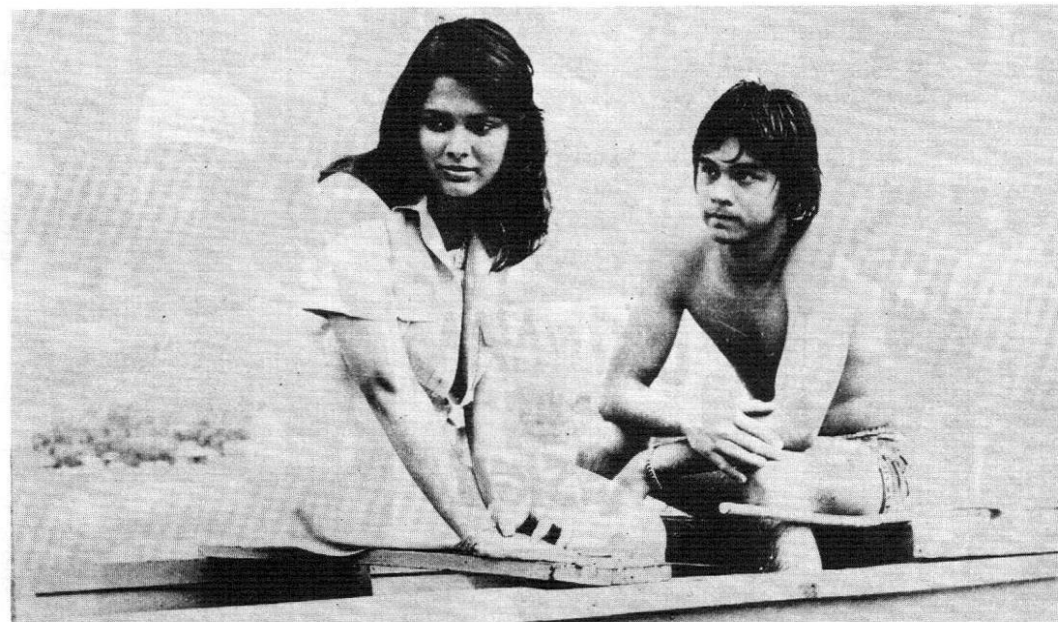
Once he was gone, things changed for them. Just days before he died, Lino had personally negotiated a P300-a-day rate for every movie extra on location in his set whether or not the extra was used in a scene. With him gone, the producers immediately cut that down to P100. "Kay Lino lang kasi takot ang mga prodyuser," she says. "Paano alam nilang si direk hindi natatakot mawalan ng trabaho."

She wants it known: "Hanggang ngayon, ang mga ekstra nagsasabi sa set, 'Naku, kung kay direk Lino, hindi mangyayari ito. Hindi tayo masisigawan.' Wala na si direk, pero araw-araw 'yan ay maririnig mo pa."

As friends and enemies knew—and both were legion—the world according to Brocka was never grey. It was a world made out of great laughs and great fights, great loves and great kindnesses. Nothing less was acceptable.

In it, when the friendships were good, they were very good. Lino's rules were bold and sweeping here. Friends were welcome to impinge on his time, ask him to rescue them from love lives turned sour, borrow all his money, call on him to fight their fights. All these he saw as the natural reciprocities of friendship; all these he gave away with great profligacy. But in that same universe, friends were loyal, brave, upright, talented, and moral. They were virtuous. As in the giving, so in the taking, the strokes were bold and unbending. Anything less spelled trouble.

Over time a pattern would emerge: The more intimate he became with a friend, the bigger the chances of a big fight ending it for them—permanently.



Christopher de Leon and Hilda Koronel play sweethearts in a small town in *TINIMBANG KA NGUNI'T KULANG*, 1974.

It was as if a friend could never do wrong—until he did wrong, whence he could never again do right. Sadly, friends he'd expelled from his life were not of small memories made. Directors, managers, actors, writers, actresses—all were at one time or another shunted from his universe so devastatingly. And all the endings were triggered by accidents lesser friendships had been known to withstand: a slight, a wayward quote, a sleight of hand with the books, an advice not taken.

Toward his last days, he was given to musing: "There must be something wrong with me. Why do I keep losing my closest friends? What am I doing wrong?" "Because you're always stricter with people closest to you," he would be admonished.

But listen as he will, he could not take the first step at reaching out once a relationship had been strained. He'd say he tried but their phones were busy or his schedule was shot or an unexpected visitor showed up. And anyway, he'd mumble, they were never really friends! Flooding himself this way with thoughts of their betrayal, he expunged little wayward guilts. *He* had done right by them;

*they* had wronged him. There was nothing to breach. With all the friends he'd turned away, he died not having forgiven. With some, he died not having been forgiven himself.

His own life he wrote in bright and bold strokes, the only strokes he knew. He was the kind to squander his Ramon Magsaysay award money on theatre friends, spreading a feast of roasted pigs and fried chickens and greens and drinks and more, stuffing them to death. "Magpakabusog kayo! 'Yong busog na busog!" he'd say to everyone. And they'd all laugh and know that this was their one chance. For tomorrow, with his flash of wealth gone, they would all be back to staring longingly at their own feasts. For whenever they hosted parties for guests who might sponsor their plays or write about their theatre, boss Lino would sidle up to them, whispering "O busog kayo, busog kayo," knowing that if he didn't, that table would be scraped empty in the minute it took for the guests to say "Thank you." Artists were perennially hungry — *that* Lino knew first-hand!

Of course Lino knew something even bigger: that it was much more comfortable and prosperous humoring the world. He saw





Lino joins the growing clamor for Ferdinand Marcos to resign.

it often enough in artists. Their success depended on their silence; the more cautious they became, the more successful they emerged. Refinement, it was called, and refinement was always rewarded. But Lino was a man to anger raised. For such a man as he, silence was death. Everyone knew that for such a man as Lino, anger was life itself.

Only days after he left the Constitutional Commission, with Cory now snubbing him, he felt drawn to the Luneta to join others mark Ninoy's third death anniversary. "I went, but not for the euphoria anymore," he said of that moment. "I knew the euphoria would never come back. I came to look for something that was lost. I want to be angry again. That saved me during those trying times under Marcos... We have to be angry to overcome our fears."

All told, to the day he died, he wasn't done.

These last years, his world began to appear to him bigger, more urgent. His political cinema had found its groove. There seemed to be an outpouring of stories to tell

in his celluloid: of the wives and mothers and daughters who waited for their men in prison, of corruption in government, of morals ran aground, of little men's little joys. His commercial successes happily held up the promise of more. He seemed excited about many things. He spoke about birds and scuba diving and how he could never get used to fast cars. He tried cleaning up his finances and investing his money somewhere wise. He talked about having five more good years in the movies left in him and feeling good about being in love at 52. He spoke about never having been happier.

In his last days, he was still slugging it out merrily for those he held dear, and still hurting friends miserably that had cared for him. "I was said that the man's judgment was not always the best; his heart not always wise. He was, after all, of many wild and immodest passions driven. He had will, he was stubborn, he was flawed. But always—always—he was significant. There was no way a man like Lino Brocka would have left the world the world the same way he found it. It's time lesser mortals thanked him that he did not.

## GLOSSARY

**Alalay** (*ä-la'-lie*) Aide who accompanies a star everywhere, helps him do personal chores and protects him from real or imagined harm. The character of Bona in Brocka's *Bona* is an alalay.

**Alternative Press** Militant anti-government newspapers during the Marcos years. It flourished after the assassination of former senator Benigno S. Aquino Jr. and virtually disappeared upon the installation of Aquino's widow, Corazon, to the presidency.

**Bagets** (*ba-gets'*) Slang for adolescents and teenagers, usually the wholesome, preppie type.

**Bakya crowd** The so-called poor and usually ill-educated masses or the C-D market targeted by movie producers. Bakya are native wooden clogs which are often roughly and simply carved and sometimes carrying intricate design. Though only very few common folk wear the bakya in these modern times, the term is still used to refer to ignorant people with poor taste. The late director Lamberto V. Avellana is believed to have coined the term.

**Bida** The hero or heroine or any principal player who may be described as virtuous.

**Bold** The term used to describe movies or scenes involving sex or nudity. It began as a byword in the mid-'70s when erotic pictures or scenes were described in advertising and publicity as "daring," "frank" and "candid."

**Bomba** (*bom'-ba*) Literally, a bomb. In the context of Philippine movies, the term was coined in the early '70s to refer to movies or scenes with explosive sex or eroticism, or performers who appear in them.

**Burgis** Bourgeois. In the early '70s activists began to use this term to refer to the middle classes, the individuals, their lifestyles and values

**Bongga** (*bong'-ga*) Slang, usually originating from the gay set, describing anything grand, elaborate, dazzling and merry.

**CMMA** The Catholic Mass Media Awards given by the Archdiocese of Manila under Jaime Cardinal Sin.

**FAMAS** Filipino Academy for Movie Arts and Sciences. The oldest award-giving body in the Philippines, formed in 1952.

**FAP** The Film Academy of the Philippines, composed of a secretariat and all the official guilds in the movie industry (producers, directors, actors, editors, production managers, etc).

**Fort Santiago** A restored, centuries-old Spanish military prison, now a city landmark and park where the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA) stages dramas during its yearly season. Annexed to it is the Rajah Sulayman Theater, an open-air theater-in-the-ruins, the venue of PETA presentations.

**Komiks** The highly popular comicbooks as spelled locally. This reading fare, a favorite source of movie stories and scripts, features melodramatic and often convoluted plots, fantasy adventures, social dramas and other folk tales.

**Kontrabida** Villain.

**Manunuri** A member of the critics group called the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino organized in 1976.

**Masalimuot** (*ma-sa-li-moo-ot'*) Complicated.

**MTRCB** Movie and Television Review and Classification Board, the official Philippine censorship body that classifies films according to their suitability to age groups. It also asks producers to remove certain objectionable portions or scenes from their films to avoid an X-rating, which would otherwise earn disapproval.

**Segurista** One who leaves nothing to chance.

**Sona** From "zoning," the act of rounding up the members of a community, usually the menfolk, in a slum or depressed area, practiced by military and police forces specially during the Marcos martial law years, supposedly to weed out wanted criminals and also to identify and arrest militant anti-government activists. Dramatized in one scene in *Jaguar*.

**Star Awards** The annual movie awards given by the Philippine Movie Press Club.

**Subaan** (*sou-ba-an'*) Filipino word referring to the bad habit of deliberately not paying debts or dues, practiced by some movie producers. The deadbeat is called manunuba (*ma-noo-noo'-ba*).

**Urian** (*oo-ree-an'*) The annual awards given by the critics group, the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino, for the artistic excellence and achievements in film.



## NOTES ON THE CONTRIBUTORS

### EDITOR

**MARIO A. HERNANDO**, journalist and film critic, founding member and chairman of the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino (1985-86, 1992-93), senior editor, columnist and former managing editor of *Malaya*. He is a film reviewer for "Movie Magazine" on GMA-7. He hosted "Tele-Vi," a movie presentation featuring the films of actress Vilma Santos, "Pamana ni Brocka," and "Hollywood Manila" on PTV-4. He authored articles published in *Urian Anthology* (edited by Dr. Nicanor G. Tiongson), *Notes on Philippine Cinema* (edited by Rafael Ma. Guercero), and *Mass Media in the Philippines* (edited by Clodualdo del Mundo, Jr.). He participated in the *Manila International Film Festival* in 1980-83 and attended the International Film Festival of Tashkent, 1988; International Film Festival of India in Calcutta, 1990; the Telluride Film Festival and New York Film Festival, 1991. He sat as jury member of FAMAS Awards, 1974; Catholic Mass Media Awards, 1975-80; Short Film Festival sponsored by the Experimental Cinema of the Philippines, 1982 and the Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1987, 1989 and 1990; Gawad CCP para sa Telebisyon of the Sentrong Pangkultura ng Pilipinas, 1988-89. He has lectured on the art of film in Manila universities in 1991 and in provincial campuses in 1989-90 (Iligan, Zamboanga City, Butuan, Bacolod, Iloilo) under various film and art outreach programs of the CCP. He toured seven cities in the United States in 1991 under the International Visitor Program of the United States Information Service.

### CONTRIBUTORS

**JOSE DALISAY, JR.** has published two books on diction and now teaches English and Creative Writing at the University of the Philippines (UP). Since 1975, he has written award-winning prose and poems, and most of his plays have been produced by theatre groups such as PETA, Bulwagang Gantimpala, Tanghalang Pilipino and those in campuses, particularly UP, and have also been staged at theater festivals in Taipei and Singapore. He has written more than a dozen screenplays for Lino Brocka including *Miguelito* and *Inay* and is working on several new projects for Viva Films with Laurice Guillen.

**CLODUALDO DEL MUNDO, JR.** Former chairman of the Communication Arts Department of De La Salle University, he is author and editor of books on film and mass media. He wrote the script of Lino Brocka's *Maynila Sa Mga Kuko Ng Liwanag*, and those of *Itim, Sa Piling Ng Mga Sugapa, Kakabakaba Ka Ba?, Kisapmata* and *Batch '81*. He also wrote the script for Mike de Leon's short film "Aliwan Paradise," which is one of four films in the full-length ASEAN anthology titled *Southern Winds* produced by the NHK and the Japan Foundation. De la Salle University published in 1991 a collection of his three scripts: *Maynila Sa Mga Kuko Ng Liwanag, 'Merika* and *Alyas Raha Matanda*. He obtained a doctorate in film and television at the Iowa State University.

**BUTCH FRANCISCO**, film and TV critic, writes a regular TV column "Teleview" for the *Philippine Star*. He was twice chairman of the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino (1989-91), managing editor of *TV Time, Parade*, and *We Forum*, and columnist and section editor of *Malaya*. He was media director of the Film Academy of the Philippines and has written for various publications like *Panorama* and *Sunday Magazine of Malaya*. He earned a journalism degree from the University of Santo Tomas. He served as jury member of Gawad CCP para sa Telebisyon of the Sentrong Pangkultura ng Pilipinas (1987, 1989), Metro Manila Film Festival (1990, 1991), Catholic Mass Media Awards (1991), CCP Short Film and Video Festival (1991), and Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster sa Pilipinas (KBP) Award (1991).

**JO-ANN Q. MAGLIPON** has published essays, profiles, investigative reports and columns in various publications — the *Manila Bulletin, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Daily Globe, Manila Times, The Manila Chronicle* and *We Forum*. Her feature articles have appeared in *Panorama, Weekend, Now, Celebrity, Observer* and *Sunday Inquirer* magazines. She was editor-in-chief of *Parents* magazine for the years 1987-1991. Following this, she designed and edited publications for the Freedom From Debt Coalition (FDC) and the National Council of Churches of the Philippines (NCCP), and is working on book concepts for NGOs. She has produced/ written for "Inside Story" and "Probe," and has scripted and narrated documentaries on the 1987 Mendiola Massacre and Asian women. She is working on her first book — *PRIMED* — a 250-page anthology selected from her 1972-1992 output published by Anvil for 1993.

**AGUSTIN L. SOTTO** is former director of the Coordinating Center for Film of the Sentrong Pangkultura ng Pilipinas. He teaches film at the film department of the College of Mass Communications at the University of the Philippines. He is contributor to *Positif, International Film Guide, Malaya, Asiaweek, Arts Monthly, Philippine Daily Express, Weekend* and *Who*. His documentary on the history of Philippine movies, "Pelikula," won second prize at the Film Academy of the Philippines Awards in 1990. He participated in the 1990 summer workshop of FEMIF, a European foundation for image and sound, in Paris. He is author of a book on Film Director and National Artist Gerardo de Leon. He sat as judge at the Carthage Film Festival in Tunisia, and represented the Philippines in various international film festivals in Cannes, Locarno, London, India, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Venice, New York, San Francisco, Honolulu, Moscow, Tashkent and Kuala Lumpur. He was lecturer at the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1984.

**NESTOR U. TORRE** is columnist of the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. He is founding chairman of the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino. He has written and directed (*Isinilang Ko Ba'y Kasalanan?*) as well as acted in (*Hari sa Hari, Labi sa Labi*) films. He wrote columns for the pre-martial law *Manila Chronicle* and for the *Philippine Daily Express* in the '70s and early '80s. He directs and acts in stage plays, revues and musicals.

**JOHVEN VELASCO** is writer, playwright and theater director. He was formerly managing editor of the Sentrong Pangkultura ng Pilipinas (CCP) Special Publications Office. Earlier, he was assistant to the Artistic Director of the CCP. He is director of the Documentation, Publication and Archives-Library Program and managing editor of the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA). He directed satirical plays *Aray Ko!* and *Fantasya Mo, Fantasya Ko*, for PETA's television series, *Handog ng PETA*. He wrote *Si Tomboy Athp*. (Nenita de la Cruz), third prize co-winner in the 1990 Palanca Awards for Literature teleplay category. He was member of the writers pool for the TV miniseries *Davao* (1991), and head writer of PETA Broadcast and Film Writers' Pool. He wrote the script for the documentary *Tatak Avellana*, wrote and directed the documentary *The Mind in the Hand That Surpasses: The Art of Napoleon V. Abueva*, and made an adaptation of the libretto *Ang Pilya*.