

# philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

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## **Inside Philippine Movies, by Infante**

Review Article: Eli Rowdy Y. Lumbo, S.J.

*Philippine Studies* vol. 41, no. 3 (1993): 390

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Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

self. Such a practical emendation would do away with the cumbersome back-and-forth page flipping, and connect the contemporary reader more intimately with the meaning behind Aquino de Belen's Tagalog. But over and above making the *Mahal na Passion* palatable to contemporary taste, Javellana's erudition eloquently enshrines Aquino de Belen's *Mahal na Passion* in its hallowed niche in Philippine literature and culture.

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**Inside Philippine Movies, 1970–1990: Essays for Students of Philippine Cinema.** By J. Eddie Infante. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1991. x, 189 pages.

Veteran actor-writer-director of film, television, and theater, J. Eddie Infante writes for students of Philippine Cinema in his eighth book, *Inside Philippine Movies*. The 189-page book is composed of a foreword by Espiridion Laxa, the Director-General of the Film Academy of the Philippines, nineteen essays which the author draws from his fifty-five years experience as actor, scriptwriter, and director, and of interacting closely with producers and other actors, directors, and scriptwriters, and, an appendix, Executive Order No. 640-A, which is basically an order by former President Marcos for the development of the movie industry.

The essays begin with quotes from different persons in the industry, and, cover an array of topics that affect, directly or indirectly, film. "Lights! Camera! Freeze!," shows the nondevelopment or snail-paced development of the quality of films in our country. The author is startled by the "freeze" in the movies, and hopes that the movies will be what they truly should be—"Lights! Camera! Action!"

"To Be or Not to Be a Film Producer," imparts some guidelines for interested producers, some of which are how organization is made, how production is brought about, how much money is needed, and whom to approach for help.

"The Screenwriter's Dilemma," "The Pros and Cons of Being a Movie Actor," "How it feels to Be a Veteran Actor," "Who's Gonna Support the 'Supports'," and "Is the Filipino Film Producer Making Money," give deeper insights into the life or plight of people involved in films. Among these, "How it feels to Be a Veteran Actor," is the best essay. It gives the reader a look, not only into the feelings of veteran actor Infante, but also a glance at other veteran actors and actresses as well—how they came to be stars, and where and how they worked.

"Theater As a Springboard to Films," "Devaluation Devalued in Films," "Whatever Happened to the Filipino Moviegoer," "Acting Technology," "Films as Reflections of National Character," and "The Job and the Power of the Critic," enlighten the reader with the essential things that affect films. "Films as Reflections of National Character" is truly the best of the lot. Laxa, in the Foreword, says, "Films as Reflections of National Character is easily the highlight of this book, for it can help instill, or sharpen, in movie people a sense of patriotism and social responsibility."

"Directorial Quirks," "How a Film Director Wastes His Producer's Money," "Relationships and the Movie Industry," and the "Producer-Director-Writer-Actor Relations," acquaint the reader with the activities, both positive and negative, of persons in the industry. "Directorial Quirks" for instance, is entertaining and interesting, for the reader sees the director as he truly is—human. The director shows "a charming childlike curiosity and an in-depth understanding of human nature."

"The need for a Philippine Film Commission," suggests the creation of an institution for the betterment of film. This essay intrigues the reader because it starts with a quote that is against the need for a Philippine Film Commission. In the essay, the author gives his idea of what the Commission should be, who should take part in it, and what role it should have in the movie industry.

A quick glance at the essays shows that they are informative, instructive, and, entertaining. However, there are some essays in the book where the author manifests his own biases, and with his personal comments transforms the essays at times into his own personal diary. But then again, the book is, *Inside Philippine Movies*, and no matter how the reader looks at it, the essays are true, behind the reel and for real. Readers of *Inside Philippine Movies* will find the book true to its title. The book is a look inside the movies. After reading *Inside Philippine Movies*, the reader will know more of the inside of the Philippine film industry, and get to see, feel, and sense, not only the "reel-ity" of persons in and behind film, but their reality as well.

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**A Matter Of Language: Where English Fails.** By Rolando S. Tinio.  
Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1990.

In the Foreword to this volume, N.V.M. Gonzalez writes: "After a sojourn abroad of nearly 17 years, how fulfilling it was for me to read in the *Philippine Daily Globe* Tinio's essays on Filipino and our twists and turns on the road to achieving a national language. Gone the mumbo-jumbo of the past