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# FROM WORK TO TEXT: FILM BILLBOARD AS ADVERTISEMENT, AESTHETIC OBJECT AND CULTURAL SIGN

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Something dark looms from afar. Then, a sinister, menacing figure emerges. Suddenly, Eddie Garcia simultaneously holds/aims fires his gun at you! Cut! Of course, as you arrange things in their proper perspective, you realize it is simply a billboard. Yes, film billboards. They imperiously hover upon us in the fringes and the dirtied streets of Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, Quezon Avenue and indeed in almost all environs of Manila. In the markets, in posts, in movie houses. Every week they are there in the same place but always never the same. Today, it is Eddie Garcia with Jean Claude Van Damme and Sharon Cuneta embracing Richard Gomez; next week Fernando Poe Jr. is joined by Gretchen Barretto in a provocative pose and Andrew E. with his horde of girls at his side.

The film billboard has been around for quite a long time now, and yet very little has been said/written about it. This paper will deal with the hermeneutics of its presence and seeming absence in

Philippine culture. Specifically, this text aims to locate the film billboard in the mode of production of Philippine film industry, to problematize its specificity and language and to position it as a social construct.

What telos or objective does a billboard occupy? Where do we locate it? Before dealing with the film billboards, the discussion will begin with the Philippine film industry in general — its development and growth over the years — and then will foreground phenomena of monopoly, profitability and intensive competition.

## THE PHILIPPINE FILM INDUSTRY

Film production is foremost a business venture. Unlike other cultural productions, such as easel painting, it is a collaborative effort among the producer, the director, the stars and the crew. This, of course, is familiar, but must be emphasized as a vantage point in order to fully comprehend the workings of film production. Even the late director Lino Brocka wrote in the *State of Film Industry* in 1984, that producers' attitude to directors must depend upon the last movie he/she did, that is, whether or not it made money. Thus, if we investigate the history of Philippine film production, we become aware of the financial struggles the early movie producers underwent to establish what we now call the "Philippine cinema." The siblings Jose and Jesus Nepomuceno, for instance, founded the Malaya Movies in 1919 which accordingly "for ten years was perpetually hounded by lack of adequate financing." (Curunungan 1983:33). As the owner of the firm, Jose Nepomuceno "had to be technical man, property man, photographer, director, scenario writer and even electrician all in one, in order to save production costs." Later, post-war movie production improved with the flourishing of successful movie outfits such as LVN Production, Ilang-ilang, and Sampaguita Pictures. But all of these are now footnotes in the history of Philippine cinema.

On the other hand, contemporary Philippine film industry exhibits a different scenario with three companies, notably, Regal, Viva, and Seiko Films monopolizing the production. The former was established by Lily Monteverde, popularly known as Mother Lily in the late 60's and now is reputedly the dominant movie producer/outfit. The other two companies set-up in the early 80's are likewise successful moneymakers. Together, they are referred to as the Big Three. Just like in the 50's, each has its own bevy of stars, set of directors/crews, clique of exhibitors and bulk of equipment. These three corporations often engage in a stiff competition for the attainment of supremacy in the local cinema such that there is never a fortnight or a week that they simultaneously screen their movies for public consumption. Consequently, the Big Three has monopolized the film production through the years. Table 1, shows the number of films produced from 1990-1992 by each outfit together with independent companies. The category "independent" refers to those which produce less than five films a year such as OctoArts, Movie Stars, Double K, Cine Suerte Productions, and others. Notice that except in 1991 alone the combined output of the three companies already constitute more than half of the total production.

TABLE 1

NO. OF FILMS PRODUCED

YEAR	REGAL	VIVA	SEIKO	IND.
1992	28	18	17	58
1991	32	15	12	69
1990	36	26	15	66

\*This is a raw data taken from the UP Film Center Library

Moreover, Regal Films apparently and consistently dominates the output. But even if it (or Viva/Seiko) outgrosses the rest, the problem is how to sustain it. Indeed, in this venture, chance is a variable factor; for instance, a film expected to be a hit sometimes bombs at the tills while a low-budgeted picture produces a new star like Robin Padilla's *Bad Boy* in 1990. This picture was produced by Viva Films and in that year with hits such as *Kahit Konting Pagtingin* starred by Fernando Poe Jr. and Sharon Cuneta, Viva Production, increased its gross revenue rank from #1709 to #1308 in the next best 1,000 corporations. It had a gross revenue of P61,009,000 and a net income of P1,389,000, while compared to, say, Sugar Philippines Inc. which ranked #71 with a gross revenue of P1,499,940,000, but only had a net income of P1,369,000. What do these figures indicate? Viva as a film outfit is, simply put, earning millions. We may say that more than 1 million is a low net income, but though the text (taken from the Top 1,000 Philippines Best 1000 corporations published by Mahal Kong Pilipinas, Inc., 1990) is silent on this, we presuppose that capital investments have been recouped. Otherwise, Viva could have already closed its factory. In fact, it is not only into film productions but also into pop music recordings with its Viva Records, Inc.

The preceding discussion constructs an image of inactivity and profitability which validates certain groups position towards the Philippine film industry. In this age, Mother Lily and other producers' preoccupation with surplus profits is blamed for the quality of film outputs. The argument is this: if Mother Lily (Regal), Robbie Tan (Seiko) and Vic del Rosario (Viva) and others are earning millions, why this saturation of "trash" movies? Of course, these groups/persons' claim is valid. While categorically not justifying the movie producers, we must recognize that the film industry as a system is also beset with commercial problems. As an industry, it must persist or perish. But how?

That the local film outfits must compete not only with each other but likewise with international companies housed in the Philippines such as Columbia Pictures, Warner Brothers, and 20th Century Fox which release Hollywood Picture is another factor to reckon with in investigating the state of Philippine film industry. Although Hollywood films bracket off certain audiences because these require an intelligibility of the English language, this set-up collapses, especially if Sylvester Stallone's or Arnold Schwarzenegger's *Terminator/Commando* pictures, for that matter, are shown. If these high tech, fast-paced films were to compete with a Lito Lapid or Baldo Marro starrer, chances are the former would yield incomparably higher gross receipts even though the latter were produced by Regal films.

Moreover, the effects of Hollywood pictures are not only on the economic and preferential levels; they also exert a great influence on Philippine cinematic production. How? There is, for instance, the imitation of characters who are non-existent in Philippine culture like Indians and cowboys, the femme fatale image, the Rambo-figure and so on. And most significantly, with too much exposure and preference to Hollywood films, the criterion used in evaluating Filipino films are likewise Hollywood-based especially among the majority of middle and upper classes. There is, of course, nothing wrong with such criterion. But there should be a mediation of its application to Philippine context. Furthermore, it should not be construed as universal. A sole film, for example, Schwarzenegger's or Spielberg's *Star Wars* is superior in terms of plastic wizardry because its budget is already the combined total of Philippine film production for the past, say, ten years.

Another factor, is the presence of television. Producers concoct new formulae in order to attract the viewers to leave their homes. But for quite a long time now, television serves as an entrepot of relished or previously shown films. Indeed, another lucrative venture. But this reduces viewership,

instead of watching them in theaters, films are awaited in TV programs such as *Tagalog Movie Greats*, *Regal Presents*, *Viva Sinerama*.

The heavy taxation imposed on film-making also needs exposition. Brocka again comments on this matter in 1984. He says, "because of it (taxation) a film with a one million budget has to earn three times this budget in Manila, alone, in order to receive that principal investment and pay the rest in taxes." (Brocka 1984: 48). This has a profound impact in the film industry. Brocka cites the superstar system which has developed over the years. Producers hire the services of the superstars to assuage their fears of not recovering back their investment. However, they (superstars) dislocate the budget because their total fees alone are enough to increase the over-all production costs.

Thus, Brocka states that "it is not enough to make a good movie, one has to consider the business side of it too?" (Brocka 1984: 49). Producers must first confront the exigencies of booking which means distributing and/or selling the film to theater owners. This is a salient aspect in the post production because this sets the playdate of the film. Such process is a facile activity for the Big Three production outfits because they have, as stated earlier, sets of exhibitors who readily accommodate their screening period(s). For instance, New Frontier Theater in Cubao, and Gotesco in Recto primarily screen a Regal produced film. However, this procedure, is very much different among independent but small-time producers who heavily invest in the production of a film such as renting film equipment and post-production studios for dubbing, editing. Magnatech, LVN, Regal and Viva offer these kinds of services. With a tight budget, more often than not, their stars are not big names. And this poses economic problems because "sometimes the bookers don't even bother to find out what a movie is all about." (Brocka 1984: 49). The standard questions they ask are "who are the actors in the film?" and "what are the gimmicks here?" (Brocka 1984: 49).

Thus, they are given playdates only if the big three do not simultaneously show their pictures.

Finally, awards do not seem to matter to Filipino movie producers because they are not an assurance that the film will earn money. Verily, what appears is a risky undertaking. If a substantial amount is expended, there has to be an expectation of surplus profits, if not a substantial return of the investment. But how is this achieved? Aside from hiring/paying the service of a bankable star, producers resort to promotional strategies, or in simple terms, advertising. This, in fact, is an indispensable element in the over-all production of a film.

The above discussion indicates that intensive competitiveness and monopolization characterize the production of films in the country, notably among the Big Three, the independent, and the Hollywood production outfits. The idea that advertising "favors either competition between producers or monopoly by creating an 'entry barrier' which prevents new forms from entering a market" (Sinclair 1987: 18) is one of the debates concerning its economic effects. This will be evaluated and problematized in relation to Philippine movies, specifically, the film billboards. Hence, the notion that advertising propels competition among producers is almost a negligent factor because it is overdetermined by a priori forces such as the film's acceptability among the bookers and theater owners, the stars presence, the playdate (usually during payday) etc. and so on. And, all of these are, in the final analysis, favorable to the Big Three companies. The screening committee of the Metro Manila Film Festival, for instance, automatically reserves the three out of six slots for them regardless of the quality of their entries.

The idea that advertising favors monopoly deserves further inquiry. Far from constructing Philippine independent producers as paupers, they do participate in the advertising process, constrained as they are by the uncertainty of the playdate. As for the Big Three, they can engage in

an all out ad campaign — especially if it is a roadshow presentation — through the mobilization of their PR people, since they can readily arrange a favorable playdate with the bookers.

## CONTEMPORARY PHILIPPINE FILM ADVERTISING

The phenomenon of film advertising is very much related to the history of film, especially in North America and France. In these countries, film productions in the last decade of 19th century consisted of experimentation of the newly discovered medium. However, people afterwards became apathetic to the producers' offers, such as short films about a coming train or a market scene. What saved them was the introduction of narrative. Later, film advertisements became a necessity when commercial films began to inundate the market.

Contemporary film advertising, Philippine experience, appears in various forms and ways depending upon which media are utilized. For example, the FM station WKC airs histrionic dialogues from an ongoing or a forthcoming film. It also offers free passes, T-shirts and others if a person calls and answers some of its commonsensical questions. In television, certain scenes are shown usually during the intermission of a primetime program. In lunchtime shows, like *Eat Bulaga*, competitions are devised, like singing the theme song, acting-out some scenes of a particular film. In recent years, however, there are TV programs such as *Movie Parade* which devote their time only to trailers of different films which are soon to be screened. This, of course, is patterned from sneak previews in movie houses shown prior to the screening of a feature film. In print media, film ads are located in the lifestyle and leisure section in the form of a review or a visual lay-out which indicates the location and date of screening. With the proliferation of fan and rumor magazines and tabloids, film advertising has found its most exciting (to some) or vulgar (to others) venue. These magazines contain the latest misfits and (mis) adventures of a

particular star whose film will be shown 2-3 weeks from now, and likewise, sensational news which range from slapping and heart-breaking incidents, abortion, suicide attempts, romantic imbroglios, a star's sojourn in Hongkong, ad infinitum. Whether these news are true or not is insignificant. These are just some of the "gimmicks" the booker wants us to know and consequently encourages. Finally there is the film billboard. But before the explication on this subject can proceed, we may ask, how do we account for all of these forms of advertising? Can we say that they encourage the reproduction of the film system?

In an empirical study, Estrella Querubin found out that film advertisements in general are not a "dominant feature" among the 200 respondents she studied from her undergraduate thesis "A Survey on the Factors that Affect the Box-Office Success of Filipino Movies," (1991). So what appears is that, without undermining its economic significance, advertising is not a major force, say, in the reproduction of monopolistic economy or condition. There is no direct relation of the ads to behavioral response leading to commercial success. If ever established, it is only marginal. Moreover, a capitalist system which houses advertising agencies, may well have "totalizing and coercive tendencies... but it also has its contradiction and in any case has to come to terms with real differences between people and real needs for it to survive as a system, let alone 'reproduce' itself." (Sinclair 1987: 59). In other words, in the analysis of the interpellations of advertisement, real and concrete differences must be considered. These include the person's position in the productive system, his/her purchasing power, age, sex, gender, education, religion and so on. For instance, a majority of female vendors consume rumor magazines in their spare time but do not have or have very limited chances of viewing the films because of temporal and commercial constraints. But how do we position the saturation of the different film ads in Philippine culture with their particular slogans, images, logos, tides, etc.? John Sinclair's analysis can be appropriated for Philippine

setting. He says that particular sector in the economy or the advertisers themselves, have penetrated the society through its marketing and communication strategies and, thus, have given them and eventually their products (ads) "a high degree of visibility." (Sinclair 1987: 34).

While film at its incipience never merited artistic recognition and was considered merely as popular entertainment, it has now been recognized (by whom?) as a "legitimate" medium and endeavor in Hollywood and in the country. One proof is the State's proclamation of some film directors as National artist awardees, such as the late **Lomberto Avellana** and **Gerardo de Leon Jr.**, or the lesser one but still prestigious **CCP Gawad Award** which includes **Lino Brocka** and **Ishmael Bernal** in its list. Consequently, the works of these directors have been subjected to analysis, interpretation in these articles of various publications.

The study of popular painting as exemplified by **Mabini Art** and film billboard presents a different scenario especially among Filipino scholars. While the former is synonymous with popular painting in general, and quite recently a topic of aesthetic and critical inquiry (see for instance **Pearl Tan-Punongbayan's** masteral thesis "Mabini Art: History, Practice, and Aesthetics"), the latter's case is ambivalent. Possibly because of its ubiquity, film billboard, unlike Mabini art, which is still housed in workshops, has not merited scholarly attention. Proof of this is its pedagogical absence in academic institutions or in concrete terms, a dearth of written texts about it. However, there is a more profound reason for such condition. The Philippine colonial experience under the Spanish rule engendered discourses on art, for instance, which operated under an exclusion/inclusion principle. These artistic discourse housed an institution like the **Academia de Dibujo y Pintura** founded in the 19th c. by **Damian Domingo**, valorized the European discourse on art which eventually "othered" the traditional or the folk practices. In the 20th c. and later periods of American rule this intensified

with the establishment of several fine art schools, notably the **UP School of Fine Arts**, which privileged oil/easel painting as one of the few and dominant art forms particularly visible in **Amorsolo** and his follower's works. Dominant in the sense that he (**Amorsolo**) was institutionally supported by the American authorities, the ruling, elite class like **Quezon**, **Vargas**, and **Yulo** clans. Basketry, mac-weaving, pottery, especially among ethnic groups, were still considered mere "artifacts" or its euphemism "craft," but not the category "art," even as the folk was appropriated via **Amorsolo's** rustic representation.

During the 50's and 60's the American discourse, especially avant-garde artistic production, exerted a tremendous influence among our artists, such as **Jose Joya**. Avant-gardism emphasizes "individual creativity" and "personal expression," thus, popular painting cannot be considered a "serious" undertaking. This notion, of course, still persists in contemporary times. But since the circumstances which have led to the exclusion of popular art/culture is/was a matter and discourse (and other determinations, our colonial experience, primarily) then the discursive and critical practice of recuperating and re-evaluating is a significant scholastic project.

In the previous section, the social and economic matrices upon which the film billboards locate themselves became the foci of discussion. Studying them, however, does not mean a consignment into the sociological realm. As mentioned above, we can likewise consider them as artistic works or, better, practice possessing aesthetic merits. This kind of evaluation can be supported by the **Saussurean** concept of differences. Accordingly, it is through the relationship of similarities and differences within a system that signs acquire meaning. If this is applied to two-dimensional visual arts, a film billboard is a specific utterance and is defined by its differences from and similarities to other signs such as oil/easel painting like **Amorsolo's**, a mural, academy painting and the like. Thus, a film billboard is similar to a



Journal and Spoliarium in terms of dimension and format but differs in authorial intention, modulation of value (light and dark), manner of representation (i.e. realism, expressionism). In other words, it has its own language and specificity, though limited in terms of vocabulary and range because of various determinations. Accordingly, "the notion of the specificity of art does not imply any universalistic or trans-historical features," but, "on the contrary, forms of art...are seen as historical and is changing." (Wolff, 1987:88). Furthermore, the acquisition of meaning of oil paintings or film billboards is culturally established.

## FILM BILLBOARD: A CASE STUDY

Billboard is quite an antiquarian form of advertising. In particular, "there had been persuasion in the various forms of newspaper, billboard and handbill advertising which had developed in Britain from at least the seventeenth century." (Sinclair 1987:6). And film billboard advertisement is related to the first movie ads which "were an outgrowth of carnival announcements." (Donahue 1987:74). This kind of advertising was done by giving away free tickets in exchange for nailing posters in different locations. The context is American but whether this practice ever took place in the country is only secondary. In principle, the film billboard advertising and poster posting are very much similar to each other.

One example of an institution which specifically ventures into film billboard production is Sagmit Advertising Inc.. It is located at 1582 Antonio Rivera St. Tondo, Manila and was founded by Eduardo Sagmit in 1960. Prior to the establishment, Mr. Sagmit was an accountant/employee at the 20th century Fox Manila office. His employment and interest in dabbling and sketching gave him the idea of putting up an enterprise which would publicize the movies to a much broader audience. Thus, he founded the joint Juco and Sagmit Advertising and eventually decided to be

the sole proprietor of Sagmit Advertising Inc. in 1960. The first clients were the owner of the Cinerama complex (now occupied by Isetann Recto) and of course the existing movie outfits then, such as Ilang-ilang Productions, Sampaguita Pictures and others. Since the death of Mr. Sagmit, contemporary Sagmit Advertising has been managed by his son, Bienvenido Sagmit. And of course, the primary patrons are the dominant movie producers in the country, such as Regal, Viva and Seiko Films, indeed the Big Three. Clients likewise include the independent film production outfits and even the foreign companies such as Warner Bros., Columbia Pictures and 20th Century Fox.

At present, a billboard requires a minimum of two days for completion. The process of production, however, starts a month at the most or at least two weeks prior to the screening of a film. The time varies because this depends upon the kind of movie. If it is a launching vehicle of a star, or a big budgeted one (called roadshow presentation), then a month is needed. However, if a producer decides to exhibit a film which had long been finished but was not shown for quite a time, a relatively short period is available for billboard production. In concrete terms, the activity starts when (after the producer has placed his/her job order), the lay-out (glossy, colorful and in poster form) of a particular film is delivered to Sagmit for billboard reproduction. The labor consists of two divisions and sets of workers -- the figurative and calligraphic painters. The former includes those who are tasked to paint the figures. The latter consists of those who execute the film's title, the star's name, the slogan such as "one friend... one enemy... a thousand bullets." At Sagmit, a total of 12 painters (for both divisions) are employed; in addition to this, there are also the sketchers and helpers or those who install/mount the billboards in certain locations. The family corporation "owns" the following key billboard places: the Banawe, Tatalon areas in Quezon City, and Legarda and Recto in Manila. The lot is leased to Sagmit Advertising which provides the iron stands for these billboards.

For a particular film, at least seven billboards are prepared by the Sagmit artists. With regards to their training, it cannot be said to be formal. Some of them have practiced their skills in drawing and painting since childhood. While others have acquired the skill through observation or apprenticeship. The latter specifically includes those helpers who observe the "Old Master" and after years of persistence venture into painting billboards for public consumption. Prior to this, the family enterprise requires a skill test for prospective applicants. For figure painters, a certain picture should be copied as naturalistically as possible. While among calligraphers, they must be able to approximate the various sizes of letters in the lay-out.

At Sagmit, the artists receive no basic pay but earn their living on a piece by piece basis. Since an average of four films are shown a week and an allotted 2-4 weeks are needed for billboard reproduction, they are never out of work. The artists interviewed by the *Tatak Pilipino* staff relates that depending upon one's pace, one can earn from more than P1,000 a week or a maximum of P12,000 a month. But while the billboards are installed prior to the screening, according to Mrs. Sagmit, wife of the founder, the paycheck usually arrives 2-3 weeks after the film is shown. This is a big drawback because the artist expects to be awarded monetarily immediately after the tasks have been fulfilled. But since films are financed heavily, the producers have to await first the box-office performance before paying other dues, such as the film advertisements. This kind of arrangement is prefigured by the company's almost dependent relationship with the producers. At times the company ventures into the production of political campaign materials, but these are only rare cases. However, its workers are never without protection. Majority of them are Social Security System (SSS) members, and, hence legitimate workers.

## THE MAKING OF A FILM BILLBOARD

After Sagmit has received the lay-out, the actual production takes place. The tasks involve the magnification of the lay-out and its re-production (in the imitative sense) in a billboard form. The lay-out is then the model or better the mother in billboard (re)production.

The following discussion is concerned with the production of a film billboard itself, specifically the materials used, the steps taken and the like.

First, the frame about 45 ft. (length) x 35 ft. (width) is assembled out of 2 x 2 pieces of wood. Then the canvas or *katsa* is wrapped, stretched like a bandage and nailed at certain points over the frame. After this has been prepared, the next step involves the first coating of a white paint. The sketching of the figures and letters follows.

Billboard painting involves a pair of workers—one figurative painter and a calligrapher. Thus, once the sketches have been drawn, either one or the other can proceed independently with one's activity. Accordingly (based on this writer's interview with them), figurative painters develop their own way of painting the figures. The technique may involve the procedure of lightly shading the countenance which is, then, eventually darkened to define the delicate parts such as eyes, nose and mouth. For some, the reverse is undertaken, that is from a dark background, they contrast this with light colors to bring about or emphasize the figure(s). The calligraphers, on the other hand, just like their partners, follow the letters' size printed in the lay-out. Since this needs magnification, the technique of percentage appropriation is used. For instance, the letters of the title generally dominate in the lay-out, thus, they are given a percentage of 100. This, then, becomes the basis of the other words, names, and so on. For example, the lead stars' names which usually are the next biggest are probably 70% in

relation to the title, the supporting cast is given 40%, and so on. Moreover, the calligraphers, for variation purposes, also employ the techniques of contrast. If the background is light then dark color paints for the letters are preferred and vice versa. The paints are commercial ones, such as the well-known Boyesen products. Colors include the primary and the fluorescent greens and pinks which are used especially for the title and the major stars' names.

If we may interrogate this hypothetical question, why is the abstract style a big implausibility in the film billboard production? As an advertising agent, it considers the process of identification not in the form of empathy but more of recognition. Who? The stars, of course. Indeed, two forces constrain the range and vocabulary of film billboards. First, the lay-out commissioned by the movie producers and second, a consequence of the first, is the fixation with naturalistic and realistic figures. The second is/was overdetermined by the star system complex which developed in Hollywood and, later in the Philippine film industry. Its history is the subject of the following quotation.

"In the early days of motion pictures, before 1920, producers of films were convinced that it would be their names that would be remembered, apart from the title, when the audience left the cinema. A so-and-so production was announced. This was an amazing miscalculation which came presumably from the producers' understandable pride in being the first to give the public this new form of entertainment. But the public did not want to know who the so-and-so's were and they still don't. What the public wanted to know was who were the actors in the movies. The audiences wanted names to go with the faces and manners of the people on the screen. Quite slowly, Hollywood began to realize the importance of the screen actor... (Mazetsberg 1967: 730)

Undeniably, the stars are the big draw to a film, be it in Hollywood or in the Philippines. Thus, a film billboard must appropriate the conventions of portraiture to convey that his/her idol's movie is forthcoming.

## TYPES OF BILLBOARD

The term billboard is/was used generically but it is actually one specific type. A billboard entirely copies the lay-out, although some portions of the latter may be given emphasis in other productions. These could be the lead star's face alone, or the star's leading lady, or simply the title plus the lead star's name and his/her face alone. The following is a classification of various billboards.

1) Billboard - Those that are hung in key places or intersections such as in Cubao, Recto etc. The size is approximately 45 ft x 30 ft.

2) Marquee - Usually in horizontal format, it contains only the title and the main stars. This is hung in the exterior of the movie house. The size varies but definitely is smaller as compared to the billboard.

3.) Standee - This is found within the lobby of the movie house. The contexts are similar to those the marquee but sometimes the figures are larger.

4) Poster - This is attached to a post, and in some cases, the rooftop of a Sarao jeepney. Among all the types, this is the smallest. It includes only the film's title, the star's face and the production outfit.

5) Cut-out - A curious blend of 2D and 3D forms. The figure 9, say, Fernando Poe Jr, is drawn on a plywood and then the outline is cut. This is, then, fastened on 2 x 2 wood frame and is exhibited in the exterior of movie houses.

6) Banner - A billboard which emphasizes the film's title, the star's name and the producing outfit. This type is devoid of figures and often

uses a cloth fabric. In most cases, this is placed below the marquee.

It is curious to know that with the advent of malls, the other types except the billboard have been rendered obsolete. They are now located only at exclusive theater houses.

The film billboard, therefore, is generally large scale and has gigantic figures, huge letters, bright hues within it. Aside from spawning various types, it includes ephemerality as a general characteristic. To save costs, Sagmit recycles a particular billboard three times after which it is deemed unworthy of further usage.

## CONCLUSION

Previously, it was construed that advertising which includes film billboards does not directly reproduce the system. But this is an incomplete formulation because it, nevertheless, contributes to the intensification of the system by reinforcing it. In other words, there is an inadequacy in the position that film billboards are autonomous cultural objects and mere appendage of the film industry. Unlike a motion picture or film, itself, which is a composition of various shots forming a narrative, a billboard is similar to the unit shot but has more to it. Often, provocative images and vehement lines are included. Furthermore, it is juxtaposed with other billboards which have almost the same contents. At first glance, images are captured simultaneously, but, eventually, the viewer shifts from one billboard to the next.

The Philippine Daily Inquirer's March 24, 1993 editorial takes the cudgels of the Citizen Action Against Crime's (CAAC) opposition of the stark presence of, first, sex and its various derivatives - profanity, nudity and violence in mass media. It says, "last week it (CAAC)... assailed greedy and unscrupulous movie, TV and radio producers and newspaper publishers for the perversion in the mass

media." And later it states, the CAAC "is taking the right tack in appealing to the mass media for restraint in the treatment of stories involving sex, crime and violence."

Again, there are conflicting views with regards to the aforementioned complaints. At this point, I would like to appropriate the following view on advertisements. This talks of the advertisement but can be extended to movies, newspaper stories and so on. It "does not so much invent social values or ideals of its own as it borrows, usurps, or exploits what advertisers take to be prevailing social values." (Sinclair 1987: 29). This position is problematic and untenable because it constructs advertising as a supernumerary thing. Since social values are already there, what they (ads, films) do is merely to reproduce them. Thus, whatever the images within are mere reflection of society's values, ideals, ideas and so on. But borrowing is never value-free, for it, in final terms, privileges/valorizes certain discourses and/or representations. Film billboard, for instance, by employing patriarchal, and sexist signs and codes (for example, gun as the totem in action films) actively participate in the construction of vigilantism, juvenile idiosyncracies, machismo, male voyeurism, sexual taboos like polygamy, indeed, the Manichean or, after Derrida, the logocentric order.

The images found in the lifestyle section of various newspapers are proofs of the aforementioned constructs. Though these ads are not film billboards, the difference is blurred because as what has been established, the still ads for print media and film billboards are mere reproductions of the layout.

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