

secure their rule in China. Similarly, the Qing administrative apparatus in China was also complex. Moreover, the frequent change of throne and an ad hoc approach to law brought about some changes in marriage regulations. Note, for instance, that the “problematic” levirate marriage was outlawed in 1330 after sixty years of implementation (pp. 7–8). Does this case represent a frequent change in marriage regulations?

It is also necessary to question the study’s adopted dichotomy between “Chinese law” (e.g. p. 5) versus “Mongol customary law” (e.g. p. 2) or “Khitans customary law” (p. 17). This misleading contrast recalls colonial legal notions such as “British law” versus “African customary law,” thus implying that Chinese law was developed and superior whereas Mongol and other steppe laws were customary (undeveloped) and inferior. This might also unconsciously support China’s traditional attitude towards the steppe: “civilized” versus “barbarian.” Furthermore, the widespread idea of “customary law” itself does not have a straightforward definition. It is believed that every “law” has its own system and cultural context, whether it is written or unwritten. Thus, clear definitions of “Chinese law” and “customary law” were necessary for this study. If the author has classified these two categories based on their status as written or unwritten, it is proper to use the term “custom” for Mongolian marriage practices of that time, as is occasionally used in this book (e.g. “Mongol marriage customs,” p. 90).

Critical comments must also be directed at the *Yuan dianzhang* text itself. It is unclear to what extent the *Yuan dianzhang* reflects historical realities. First, it is doubtful that only seventy-five marriage-related documents were preserved in a local office or in a region during a period of fifty-one years, as contained in Chapter 18 of the text. It is probable that there were many more such documents, but they were not included in the *Yuan dianzhang* “Marriage” chapter. Second, the text cannot provide accurate information about the number of cases that were handled locally and the number that were reported to higher bureaucratic institutions for rulings during the Yuan period. Thus, we cannot judge whether the Yuan administration worked effectively or not, based only on the cases from the *Yuan dianzhang*. Finally, the text itself does not explain how widely and frequently it was referred to in contemporary courts. In other words, the legal status and effect of the text in the Yuan judicial system is still unclear.

Lastly, several issues related to this book need further consideration. First, is it accurate to conclude that the *Yuan dianzhang* was compiled without any political intentions or prejudice towards the Mongols? Second, given the widespread practice of wife-selling in traditional China, did the Mongolian custom of levirate marriage really cause social and moral problems – i.e., those related to chastity – for Chinese society under Yuan rule? Finally, what do the Yuan marriage regulations mean for Chinese gender history? Despite these issues, however, this book is a strong and welcome addition to the fields of Chinese gender, social, and legal history, as well as of the Mongol Empire and Mongolian legal history.

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The End of National Cinema: Filipino Film at the Turn of the Century

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Patrick D. Flores

University of the Philippines – Diliman, Email: patrickdflores@yahoo.com

It is difficult to assess a scholar’s early effort that is guided by uncommon diligence. *The End of National Cinema: Filipino Film at the Turn of the Century* is Patrick Campos’s first full-length venture,

and in contrast to the heft of this particular work, his academic credentials are meager, as dramatized by the last page of the book itself. Here lies the risk in such an attempt: to write so copiously without the distance of time and reflection to shape the writing more sharply. Decisive claims, needless to say, deserve the seasons.

On the one hand, Campos proposes a conceptual space for an end of a national cinema. On the other, he strings disparate research on aspects and practitioners of this cinema, probably, and very vaguely so, to thematize both the “end” and the “turn” of a “national cinema,” which is, frustratingly, barely articulated. A gap exists between these two gestures at the outset, as the author does not seem to be as intensely engaged in the explication of the problematic of the former as he is remarkably earnest in the exemplification of the latter. This is where time and reflection might have intervened more meaningfully. Data and discourse might have been made to interact with more rigor and care had Campos been more attentive to the implications of both material and theory, more aware of a larger corpus of scholarship, more judicious in his citation of theoretical sources, and more open to speculation.

The introduction of the book implicitly sets a direction, although the coordinates of this direction are not so well mapped out. It suggests a historiography of the end of a national cinema through two seminal moments: the movement of national cinema towards whatever exceeds being national (i.e. regional, international, global, translocal, and so on) and a history of digital technology in film mingled with a rather cursory description of the “independent” cinema scene in Asia. The reader would be led to infer that the end of a national cinema is a co-incident of the “turn” towards an elsewhere, the digital, and the independent. Conversely, the “turning towards” signifies a “turning away” from a perceived norm or doxa. This is an inference that is never followed through with necessary insight, and if it were, it would likely reach an impasse of futile dichotomies.

The main problem of the book emerges from the disinclination of Campos to think through concepts and put in sufficient theoretical labor to complicate such categories as “end” and “national cinema.” Fundamentally, he fails to inflect this notion of the “end” both historiographically and philosophically. In his formulation, such an end is merely a terminus of a period, which is principally characterized in terms of mode of production and circulation. What might have been a discourse-specific transformation is thus reduced to a medium-specific transition, even as Campos posits that Philippine cinema had been much more than national even in an earlier time. If this were so, what is the end all about? The end of the discourse of the “end?” This is one part of the contention. The other part is the “national,” which is set up here heuristically, rather than deconstructively, negated rather than reconstructed, re-politicized, and unhinged from its dominant modernity. The author might have overinvested in the term and in the process underexplained its usefulness to intuit the complexity of the geopoetic disposition of Philippine cinema.

Put differently, the national might have overdetermined the locality of the cinema to the point that Campos is moved to assert: “the medium of motion picture has never had a significant moment of defined locality before nation, and its definition is thus coterminous with the formation of nation” (p. 12). If this national were, let us say, merely Tagalog or Manila-centric, how would we appreciate the cinema in the other languages that were contemporaneous with Tagalog cinema or those made beyond the pale of Manila? If this cinema were Philippine or Filipino, how would we demonstrate its national construction? How did it become national and why did it become national? The book hardly responds to these crucial questions. Instead, it lets the national overdetermine the multiple geographies and the plural localities, as well as the interlocutions in the realm of reception, that it paradoxically wishes to recover so that it can finally proclaim the self-fulfilling prophesy of the “end.” It may well be that this end is a non-event after all in light of a film in Tausug like “Zamboanga” (1937); the robust cinema of the “Visayas”; Manuel Conde’s 1950 “Genghis Khan” (with Tagalog and English superimposed for an international audience); or even films in Tagalog that on closer reading should not be, by default, conflated with the national in a strictly linear, sequential, and continental analysis. Alternatively, we can inquire into the political valence of the declaration of the end of the national. What does it mean to revoke or forsake the national in

the context of the other moments of the local that need not be, or even resist, the national? What is the afterlife of this critique of the national under the aegis of, let us say, the global, the archipelagic, or the hemispheric? In fact, to what degree can the national be transcended? A more thoroughgoing back and forth with the provocations of the film historian and filmmaker Nick Deocampo would have served this project well as it grapples with the means to historicize and materialize “national cinema” in the post-colony.

The fraught modernity of the national, therefore, demands a theoretical elaboration in relation to the cinema it calibrates, and vice versa. The end, for its part, requires an equivalent annotation, if it must reference the tension between the integrity and intelligence of the film act, on the one hand, and the ecology of its relations, on the other: the radical particularity of its proposition so that a film is an end on its own; and simultaneously its exceptional translatability so that it cannot be only on its own. If the end means an end to dependency, what would institute the “beginning” when the critique is largely institutional and oblivious to a potential instituent?

Campos suggests the many ways by which this book can be read. All told, it might be less cumbersome if the essays were read straightforwardly as fragments that unevenly touch on certain mystifications of the auteurist persona; conditions such as the thirdspace; commentaries on style like realism; and some notes on memory and haunting. The author is most instructive when he teases out strands of practices and initiations, surveying themes and tendencies, for instance, in the oeuvre of Mike de Leon and Kidlat Tahimik, or when he evaluates the political economy of an institution like Cinemalaya. He is less persuasive when he tries to dwell on material that entails more patient explication of ideas like “urban realism” or “filmic folklore.” He is quick to name things but quite unwilling to “stay with the trouble” of the consequences of naming. Doubtless, in this exercise the reader is initiated into the terrain of film in an incipient century; the experience, however, may ultimately not be so enlightening. At best, the author’s approach is symptomatic; at worst, it is just synoptic. For instance, the chapter on the feebly framed concept of a “rural cinema” rests on tired binarisms like the picturesque and the abject as if film were a reification of literary criteria and a thematization of literary devices. The materiality of film is never convincingly rendered, as Campos misses out on the lessons long conveyed by Petronilo Daroy’s materialist critique of film and Alice Guillermo’s insistence on the semiotic moment of the cinematic as opposed to the generally theatrical idealizations of the critics of the Filipino film in the seventies. One might surmise that since the author spends time trying to revise perspectives on film, the language and the modality of critique would inevitably modify. But still, he reverts to formulae as in this comment on the Enteng Kabisote films as “pathological substitutions” for folklore. He continues that the “line that connects folklore and popular culture ... has been severed by the commodification of community life” (p. 456). This kind of conclusion does not seem to move the needle.

How this *mélange* of essays speaks to the argument of the “end of national cinema” remains hazy till the end of the book. A discussion of the contexts in which these texts were written might have helped inform the reader about the academic situations of which they had been part. Or the author could have retroactively and reflexively framed these texts with the view of pursuing a shifting thesis of a shifting rubric like the “end of national cinema.” As it is, the spadework, as it were, does not come up to the level of groundwork.

Many of the problems of this book may be traced to the state of film history, theory, and criticism in the Philippines. Campos is strongly linked to the legacies and current propensities of film studies in the country. That film is confined to “film studies” is in and by itself a fundamental issue, largely transfixed on the thematization of its object as “art” or “culture” and its determination as “ideology.” And such a limit to the knowledge on film is sustained by the institutions to which Campos belongs in the present: the film institute at the national university and the organization of critics that hands out awards in a manner negligibly different from how the industry peddles its pabulum. It would be a tragedy if the likes of Campos were to be trapped in this institutional thinking and hence further fail to imagine an end – and a turn – in the study of film, along with the range of identifications and

sympathies that performs it. The best way perhaps to read this book is to treat it as a symptom of a disciplinary affliction – and we become interpreters of the malady, productively.

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Moral Politics in the Philippines: Inequality, Democracy and the Urban Poor

By Wataru Kusaka. Singapore and Sakyo-ku, Kyoto: National University of Singapore Press and Kyoto University Press, 2017. Pp. 351. ISBN 10: 9814722383; ISBN: 978-4814000661.

John Andrew G. Evangelista

University of the Philippines – Diliman, Email: andoisgatchalianevangelista@gmail.com

The Philippines' journey to democracy, like many other nation-states in the Global South, is filled with conflicts and tensions. These conflicts are broadly understood within the framework and context of clientelism and elite democracy. Substantial works on Philippine politics argue that the country's path to democratization contends with the perpetuation of elite rule that deploys various forms of patron–client relationships and, sometimes, violence to continually manipulate the outcomes of democratic processes rendering the participation of the masses and the middle class in state affairs less meaningful. Within these frameworks, there is an implied assumption in treating the masses or even the middle class as passive actors.

Kusaka's *Moral Politics in the Philippines* contributes in these current discussions by asserting that while class positions limit the agency of the impoverished class and the middle class to counter elite hegemony, they are not necessarily passive political actors. His work may well be situated within the long line of understanding Philippine politics from the vantage point of contested democracy that highlights how civil society engages the ruling elite in the quest for more profound forms of political participation. Although his assertion is not entirely novel, Kusaka uniquely contributes to the current debates by looking at how moral discourses – that is, discourses constructing who are essentially good and evil – play into Philippine politics.

In this book, Kusaka asks three important questions. First, he problematizes the ambiguous and contingent roles of both the masses and the middle class in the institution and deepening of democracy in the Philippines. He contextualizes these ambiguities and contingencies within the moralities broadly held by both classes of people. He, then, proceeds to inquire what types of moralities hasten and halt the consolidation of democracy in the country. Finally, by responding to these questions, he attempts to explain the volatile character of democratic institutions in highly stratified societies like the Philippines.

Kusaka frames his answer to these questions by looking at how two spheres – civic and mass – interact with each other. In his conceptualization, the civic sphere is the middle-class segment of civil society while the mass sphere is where the impoverished class generally resides. This division, he asserts, is not merely shaped by the capacity to produce and consume. More importantly, this division exposes differences in moralities broadly held by these respective spheres. While the middle class generally value modern values of efficiency, legality, and good governance, the most important value among the poor is survival.

Different moralities, as Kusaka illustrates, encounter each other in various contact zones in the pursuit of winning the hegemonic game within civil society. He foregrounds various historical moments when this division is temporarily ameliorated, that is, a moment of moral solidarity, and when it is