

Maricel's indie spirit

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she said. "Nakakabilib sila. Others were also more than willing to help, even the barangay leaders of places where we shot the film."

Last Supper No. 3 is based on true events that happened to Winston Acuyong, who is also the film's writer.

"It is a humorous look at the winding path our justice system takes," explained Velasco.

The film tells the story of an assistant production designer, Wilson Nanawa, who is tasked to look for a *Last Supper* art piece to use as a prop for a TV commercial. He finds three, but loses the one owned by another character, Gareth Pugeda. What happens next changes Wilson forever as he spends the next two years entangled in bureaucracy and red tape, even facing estafa and serious physical injury charges.

The film was shot for eight days around Metro Manila. Velasco said the challenge was to make the most of the limited time she had to make the movie. Rough cut versions of all full length entries should be submitted to the Cinemalaya festival committee on or before May 31.

"*Bawal magkamali*. We didn't have enough time and resources for re-shoots," Velasco said. "When I was editing, I had hoped to do things another way. But generally I was very happy with the outcome."

"*Last Supper No. 3* also features Joey Paras, Jovit Lorenzo, Beverly Salviejo, Debraliz Valasote, Alwin Uytingco, directors Mark Meily and Andoy Ranay, among others.

"After Cinemalaya, we also hope to compete in international festivals," Velasco declared.

Winners of the 5th Cinemalaya film fest will be announced in an awards ceremony on July 26 at the Cultural Center of the Philippines in Pasay. ■

IMMIGRANT LIVING: 101 AND BEYOND



MONETTE ADEVA MAGLAYA

(Part 2 of 2)

ONE British writer likens the Pacman to a mild-mannered Clark Kent with a boyish smile and who seems harmless in his suits and hats, that is, until he steps into the ring. When the bell rings, he morphs into Superman, a fighter that goes to war, sizes up his opponents, executes a game plan and demolishes them promptly with blazing speed, brutal power and pin-point accuracy.

Like Yoda who trained Luke Skywalker, Freddie Roach has transformed Pacquiao to become a complete fighter — lightning fast with his head, hands and feet and whose ferocity, aggression and impressive arsenal of boxing skills in the ring should give his challengers pause. He has learned well. The humble ones always do. Roach, whose slurred speech, belies a sharp mind claims, "He is my best work."

But above all that hype when the lights dim and when the silence descends, here's a fighter whose humility is humbling. Here is one who must deal with massive amounts of adulation, flattery and heady intoxication of fame and fortune and has managed, thus far, to remain centered on who he is and what his purpose is. "I'm just a fighter," he says, when asked about who he would like to do battle with next time, leaving that for his promoters to map out.

No ordinary fighter — this one. Few have the courage to wear their spirituality on their sleeves for fear of sanction in the ratings game, the mockery of the sophisticated, or the derision of the goddess. Devoutly Catholic, he makes no bones about where he draws his spiritual strength and purpose and shows it for all the world to see. He doesn't go through the motions of his spirituality just for show.

So does his mother Dionisia who chose to pray the rosary in the privacy of her hotel room. The fruit doesn't really fall far from the tree. Pacquiao meditates in the silence, makes the sign of the cross between bouts, wears his rosary before and during the fight, kisses the crucifix of the rosary which his handler is instructed to hold, kneels at his

Pacquiao and the Art of War

"If you know both yourself and your enemy, you can come out of hundreds of battles without danger."

— Sun Tzu, "The Art of War"

corner, and just before engaging his opponent, tunes out, for just a few seconds, the raucous crowd while apparently tuning in to a much higher frequency. The more telling aspect is the post-fight when he looks heavenward after each victory, goes to mass and never fails to ascribe his victories to God and the Filipino people.

It is this aspect of the man that resonates with most Filipinos who are no stranger to adversity. In a small way, we see a bit of ourselves in him and vicariously live through him. Through his knockout punches, we also mentally TKO all things we struggle with and glory in his victories. Those who were born and lived in the battered island nation understand this wellspring of deep spirituality completely and without question.

He ascribes his string of successes and of his being to God. The politically correct pundits and sports analysts on the national level, who must cater to the biggest demographic chunks, are loath to dwell on this aspect of the man. I imagine a few squirm in their seats whenever Pacquiao does all that. After all, boxing is rarely for the humble or the deeply spiritual. Boxing is filled with self-absorbed, self-promoting blowhards that form part of the entertainment, right along Floyd Mayweather Sr.'s bluster and braggadocio. All that taunting is just part of the script and the hype of HBO's 24/7 to ring up public interest and profits.

Pacquiao probably views his bouts as spiritual battles. He is living up to his name. Emmanuel means "God with us." Or that Pacquiao, spelled *Pakyaw* in the vernacular means wholesale. He trains relentlessly, wholeheartedly physically but his spiritual muscles get a workout as well. It is hard to stay focused and on target with all the distractions that buzz about him like bees to honey. This may just be the part where Pacquiao, the pupil, shows Roach, his mentor, about how to tap vast amounts of spiritual reserves.

To the victor goes the spoils of war. Manny has become an Armani suit-wearing money machine with millions of dollars still to be made even during the brutal recession. Ironically, the tougher the times, the higher the need for distraction. The next mega-fight night may involve a \$50 million prize purse, the biggest so far, with gruelling negotiations probably underway. Team Pacquiao has the upper hand and in the driver's seat. They will call the shots this fall.

No one should begrudge Manny Pacquiao his fame and fortune. We hope though that these do not corrode and change his core being overly much. The possibility he will throw his hat in the political arena is a little unsettling. We do hope he stays away from yet another blood sport— politics— where nearly everyone who dips his toes in its polluted waters, gets tainted somehow. His failed initial political bid should be a warning bell. Show business might be more fun, right along Mom Dionisia's alley. But in the natural progression of things and oftentimes, by osmosis from the company he keeps, the attraction of achieving political power may just be the next level. Sigh.

But what drives him aside from the obvious motivations? It is said that the Roman Emperor Constantine during the crucial Battle of Milvian Bridge in 312 looked up to the sun before the battle and saw a cross of light with the Greek words that meant, "By this sign, conquer." Constantine commanded his troops to adorn their shields with the Chi-Ro Christian symbol and from thereon, became victorious in every battle. Christian sources record that Constantine, heavily influenced by his deeply religious mother, St. Helena, adopted Christianity which became the dominant religion in the Roman Empire and much of the world up to today, ending 300 years of religious persecution by previous Roman emperors from Christ's death.

Okay, I know. I know. Boxing to Christianity — it may be too much of a stretch to draw a parallel or build a smooth segue. But it's fascinating to look back in the last two thousand years of recorded history and pick out discernible patterns in every battle fought in war and every other arena of human endeavor that has a dimension seemingly far above our minds to comprehend. After all, there's a cycle and a continuity to the human story in the larger sense that can be read in the micro-universe of the boxing arena.

Where does all that jaw-dropping power, speed, timing, accuracy and laser-like focus few could withstand come from? And from such a deceptively looking compact package many of his opponents underestimated to their detriment ... Such things only happen in the movies. But more than that, how does one account for humility, decency and generosity of spirit in the face of victory except in Rocky movies? Pacquiao's story might be that of a gladiator character set in a 15th century morality play, tenacious in battle yet humble and magnanimous in victory. No wonder many find themselves rooting for him.

Though a sequel is rarely better than the original, this is one story definitely worth following.

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