

philippine studies

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

Jeepney by Emmanuel Torres

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Philippine Studies vol. 32, no. 2 (1984) 237–239

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Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

has to do with credit relations within the community. Since no hacienda family receives a real living wage, they must be able to borrow or buy on credit a good deal of the time. These credit relations are handled completely by women, and thus the way a particular woman relates to the rest of the community is vital to her family's interests. Another corollary of women's managerial function is that the women have often played a rather radical, motivating role in mass actions and union organization (in this particular case, in alliance with certain radical nuns in the Bacolod area). Just as men won't ask for credit, they are hesitant to present any "demands" to the planter, whereas the women see both these actions as logical extensions of their household responsibilities. Besides, one woman remarked, she is just much better at talking than her husband is.

This book, then, offers some valuable insights into the working out of theories of women, economic participation, and status, in the very concrete context of a specific group of subsistence laborers on a sugar hacienda in Negros. But in addition to these contributions to theory, this book is most impressive for the picture it gives of the lives of a specific group of poor women. The actual photographs of the hacienda women, superbly done, complete the work.

Susan Evangelista

JEEPNEY. By Emmanuel Torres (photographs by Ed Santiago). Quezon City: GCF Books, 1979. 95 pages.

Social scientists have long been trying to piece together the component parts of the so-called Filipino identity. A common denominator in their studies is the recognition that a complete definition of the Filipino identity may be arrived at through a systematic analysis of the folk mind and its structures and processes, as they are manifested in cultural artifacts.

Of these artifacts, the jeepney is perhaps one of the most pervasive for within a short span of time, it has become an ubiquitous feature of the landscape from Basco to Jolo. In his book, *Jeepney*, noted poet and art critic Emmanuel Torres approaches the jeepney as his object of study in order to extract the various ways in which the folk have imaged themselves through this colorful artifact. It is not only the physical structure of the jeepney that is minutely examined. What Torres reveals are the values and assumptions beneath the riot of colors, gadgets, graffiti and mind-blowing designs. Excellent photographs of the jeepney taken by Ed Santiago help make the study a visual feast.

The work is divided into four sections. The first part contextualizes the growth of the jeepney from the GI jeep during the Liberation down to its

present form. Included are the triumphs and heartaches experienced by the "King of the Road." The second section zeroes in on the empire builders—the likes of Sarao and Francisco—the individuals responsible for the shape and structure that the jeepney has assumed for many years. The workings of the artists' minds and their creative imagination are explored in the chapter entitled "Folk Art" which deftly intersperses formal analysis with a running commentary on the jeepney as a reflection of the varied aspects of Philippine experience. Torres forcefully argues the point that the jeepney has been made to contain concretizations of such values and traits as gregariousness and *horror vacui*. The concluding section describes, with obvious relish, the cult of the macho which invariably revolves around the relationship between the driver and his jeepney. This intricate relationship is perhaps best embodied in the other details that fill the jeepney, seen by Torres as "ego boosters, a means of coping with the reality of daily hustle."

To read *Jeepney* is to allow one's self to be swept into the frenetic activities of both driver and commuter who have used the jeepney for practical and aesthetic reasons. In its history, the jeepney has provided the answer to some pressing needs—faster and more compact vehicles for the country's narrow roads servicing millions of commuters. More importantly, the jeepney has become "Home, Sweet Home," an extension of the Filipino home, an object on which much affection is showered, and a product of the lush inventiveness of the folk mind.

The jeepney, moreover, is a reflection of the changing mores, lifestyles and moods of the times. It has graduated from the simple jeep into a public utility vehicle which bears distinctly and unmistakably the imprint of the technological age. Complete with radios or tapes, with mag wheels and other paraphernalia of western technology, the jeepney exhibits the delightful fusion of the folk sensibility and the incursions of progress into the psyche.

Torres articulates these insights vividly and with élan, even as his verbal facility matches the richness and complexity of his material. Indeed, the style approximates the content, for example, in the periodic sentences studded with vivid details and impressions which come in swift succession in a rush of words. His style thus evokes what seems an inexhaustible wealth of folk artistry and technology that have gone into the making of the jeepney. In describing the jeepney's movement, Torres says:

As it plods through the black belch of a hundred exhaust pipes, clouds of dust, the blaze of noon or a gray monsoon downpour in downtown traffic, its lively colorism and swinging antennae, lightning rods, weather vanes, magic wands, plastic fringes, and glittering array of metal tack-ons seem to be saying: Relax *lang*.

It is quite fitting that the first comprehensive work on the jeepney has been written by somebody who views this ubiquitous artifact with depth and

understanding. Not only is there much visual excitement in the photographs. There is much joy and exhilaration in Torres' language. In its unique way, *Jeepney* has opened up new areas of study for those who perceive in indigenous artifacts structures of meaning which bind the community.

Soledad S. Reyes

JOURNEY TO MAJAYJAY. By Paul P. de la Gironiere. Translated by E. Aguilar Cruz. Manila: National Historical Institute, 1983. 61 pages.

Journey to Majayjay is as much the journey of the mind of a man certain of the nearness of death as it may be the unified account of several actual trips from Calauang to Majayjay in Laguna, the various episodes having been spliced together to appear like a single trip.

The French original was first published in Nantes, France, in 1862. The author muses philosophically about nature's inexorable cycle of life and death, of his "constant headaches" which convinced him he was "suffering from mortal ailment" (p. 59). He died three years after the publication of his book.

Although a Frenchman, he lived many years as a gentleman farmer in Laguna, and he was no stranger to the forests and rivers he has written about with lyrical affection. It is as an account of real trips and conversations on Philippine soil with real Filipinos in mid-nineteenth century that the book acquires historical value. He reports the poignant story of a woman tortured by *tulisanes* to force her to reveal the hiding place of her treasures while the neighbors watch helplessly. Finding what they came for, they depart with all the family jewelry, excepting those "most beautiful diamonds . . . ornamenting the vestments of the Christ . . ." which they spare because of reverence! (p. 41).

Arcos, Gironiere's servant and traveling companion, was once a *tulisan* himself, and he explains why. The *indio* boy after his twelfth year "takes turns with other youths of his age as a servant of the curate's household. . ." (p. 21). At eighteen, he is charged taxes, and must render "40 days of labor every year for the maintenance of the highways . . ." (p. 23). The rich pay three pesos and are exempted, "so the work is borne entirely by the poor" (*ibid*). Plus a plethora of other monetary collections, including payment for passes in order to be allowed to leave one's town. Then follow seven years of military service after which they "return to their homes without the enjoyment of any privilege whatsoever" (*ibid*).

Also, we may not smoke tobacco or take a little coconut wine to brace us up without having to pay six times as much as the government pays us for these commodities when it takes them from us (p. 23).