

Faceoff

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Film swaggers all pissed off all kissed off
Staggering while dragging a pair.
Has the grit of an *8 Mile* ripoff at kickoff
Midway a *Karate Kid* flair.

Despite the borrowed feel borrowed beat
We confront a whole other creature
With its own look its own meat its own heat
Pitched like a hundred-five fever

Old man meets young buck shit out of luck
Old will teach young some wisdom:
Words that stun as if head had been struck¹
Set to the young buck's rhythm

Cuz rap is no stranger to Philippine shores
We been battling for near a century²
The rhymes the pulse the lyrical wars
The fight to inflict verbal injury

But young buck too the old man fuel
Remind him of a past bad-scarred
The pains of living under Marcos rule
(The ghoul the cruel the red-tipped tool)
The ghosts whose memories die hard

All swept aside by the new reality
This “drug war” our mayor declared;
What’s two lives in a fascist totality
(Insanity bestiality gory immorality)
Deaths ’tween generations shared?

This be a new exciting young punk
Aureate glow hard-rapping tempo
But its soul’s straight out of ’70s funk
Out of Mike and Mario Ishma and Lino³

Film has its flaws can’t be denied⁴
But lands with a “FUCK YOU!” thud
Speaks truth to power to arrogant pride
To the lust to spill our blood



Fig. 1. Left to right: Ybes Bagadiong as Payaso, Abra as Hendrix, and Chai Fonacier as Betchai in *Respeto* (publicity still).

Acknowledgments

This review of *Respeto* (directed by Treb Monteras II, produced in 2017 by Dogzilla, Arkeofilms, Cinemalaya, CMB Film Services, and This Side Up; see Figure 1) was published in *Businessworld* on September 15, 2017. In the first stanza, the films mentioned are *8 Mile* (directed by Curtis Hanson, produced by Universal Pictures, 2002) and *The Karate Kid* (directed by John G. Avildsen, produced Columbia Pictures and Delphi II Productions, 1984).

Notes

1. Featuring samples from Bien Lumbera, Frank Rivera, Vim Nadera and other carnivora.
2. It's called *Balagtasan*, yo! (Extemporaneous debate performed in verse; named after 19th-century poet Francisco Balagtas.)
3. Not so much the 1970s as the '70s to '80s Martial Law films: Mike de Leon's *Batch '81* (MVP Pictures, 1982); Mario O'Hara's *Bagong Hari* (*The New King*, CineVentures, 1986); Ishmael Bernal's *Manila by Night* (Regal Films, 1982); and Lino Brocka's *Insiang* (Cinemanila Corp., 1976).
4. Would a man with a gun stop if confronted? Wasn't the man attempting multiple EJKs (Extra Judicial Killings) at the finale the wrong man?⁵
5. Meaning—those who plan to watch DON'T READ—should have been a cop not a drug dealer?⁶
6. Still a worthwhile film.