

## KOMIKS

The term “komiks” is derived from the English “comics,” which refers to an art form that emerged in the United States at the turn of the 20th century. Setting the comics apart from other art forms were a number of conventions that in time became the distinguishing features of the new form: illustrated frames depicting a set of characters, their actions read from left to right; balloons containing words that accompany the action of characters drawn according to the textual and visual message, such as round balloons for dialogue, exploding balloons for highly charged context, cloud balloons for thoughts, and the like; visualization of action, such as exploding lines for violent impact or light bulbs for sudden ideas; and calligraphic or emblematic designs that help differentiate the male or female heroes from the villains.

### History

The first komiks character in the Philippines was Kenkoy, whose name was a corruption of Francisco, a common name. Created by Antonio Velasquez initially with writer Romualdo Ramos, Kenkoy first appeared in 1929 in ***Lidayway*** magazine, then the most popular weekly, first as a filler composed of only four frames. Later, the adventures of Kenkoy and his friends became a full-page story in the same magazine. In this series, Velasquez used parody and caricature to depict Kenkoy, a man-about-town, a typical dandy, whose numerous encounters reflected the changes in values and mores effected by the American regime, including the phenomenon called “carabao English,” a local version of pidgin.

In the 1930s, the komiks section had grown to include the adventures of Saryong Albularyo (from *herbolario*, a village doctor who works with herbs and other traditional medicine), Goyo and Kikay, an amiable couple whose names typify the local folk; Lukas Malakas, a big-muscled, civic-spirited, clean-living, and good-looking fellow who helps people in distress; Huapelo, a stock figure of ridicule with racial undertones; and other characters whose zany antics tickled the readers’ funnybone. The language used was Manila-based Tagalog.

In its initial phase of development, the primary goal of the komiks was to purvey fun and laughter by regaling the readers of ***Lidayway*** with accounts of mistaken identities, coincidences, foibles and fumbles, all comic situations that eventually led to browbeating, fistfights, and arguments that were dazzling displays of humor and wit. In this sense, the komiks was risible reading recalling American slapstick and slap-thigh printed funnies.

By the 1920s, a new generation of Filipinos, exposed to American cultural fare, had emerged. In 1933, Francisco Reyes’ and Pedrito Reyes’ creation, ***Kulafu***, came out also in ***Lidayway***. Kulafu was clearly derived from the phenomenally successful character created by Edgar Rice Burroughs, Tarzan, a white man

brought up by apes in the dark, mysterious forests of Africa. In the local series, Kulafu was a hero who fought his numerous battles with people and nature amidst the country's mountain ranges.

A radical change in the format of the komiks took place after World War II. Instead of inhabiting the pages of *Liwayway*, the komiks as supplement was transformed into an independent magazine. The earliest venture, which proved to be short-lived, was *Halakhak Komiks*, 1946. Although it attracted the fledgling industry's biggest names, such as Francisco Reyes, Francisco Coching, Jose Zabala Santos, Malang Santos, and Larry Alcala, it folded up after its 10th issue.

Undaunted, Don Ramon Roces, of the influential publishing family, decided to put out *Pilipino Komiks* in 1947. After the initial success of this venture, three other Roces publications came out: *Tagalog Klasiks*, 1949, *Hiwaga Komiks*, 1950, and *Espesyal Komiks*, 1952. These comprised the highly successful quartet of Ace Publications' komiks, which featured the country's leading writers and illustrators. In addition to those mentioned above, the most famous ones were Mars Ravelo, Alfredo Alcala, Nestor Redondo, Ben Alcantara, Jim Fernandez, Deo Gonzales, and many others. Other publishers followed suit in the 1950s and 1960s which saw the emergence of *Extra Komiks*, *Romansa Komiks*, *Lagim Komiks*, *Wakasan Komiks*, *Wow Komiks*, *United Komiks*, *Ravelo Komiks*, *Kampeon Komiks*, among others, most of which failed to survive the competition offered by the Roces-owned komiks magazines.

For the reading public used to traditional narratives like the *awit* and *korido*, *komedyang* and *sarswela*, and the popular novels and short stories of magazines, the newly formatted komiks appeared to be merely extensions of familiar reading fare. No longer a mere addition to the established weeklies, the komiks in these postwar years underwent several transformations even as various komiks writers played countless variations on the established formula that had attracted millions of readers and listeners before the birth of the komiks in 1929.

With this new format, a komiks magazine had the freedom to go beyond laughter and parody, to transcend the limitations imposed by being a mere supplement in terms of material and theme. There was now room for other experiences: family conflicts, jealousy and revenge, fantasy and adventure, romantic love, oppression and class conflict, excursions into both the nether and futuristic worlds, sports events, crime and punishment, and other aspects of actual as well as imagined lives.

The form taken could be that of a filler for the first and last pages of a magazine devoted to humorous episodes; a short story called *wakasan*, with a *wakas* or ending, for those who wanted the stories completed in one sitting; a serialized novel; or an ongoing series like *Kalabog en Bosyo* (Kalabog and Bosyo), with a completed episode every issue.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, another world of make-believe invaded the pages of the komiks. Famous stars appeared on the magazine covers; columns focusing on the goings-on in the film industry formed an important section of the komiks magazine. A magazine was even named *Superstar*, an obvious attempt to attract the millions of fans of Nora Aunor, the first actress in the country's movie history to be accorded "superstar" status.

In 1972, Ferdinand Marcos declared Martial Law and in its wake, new guidelines were devised by the Kapisanan ng mga Publisista at Patnugot ng mga Komiks-Magasin sa Pilipino (KPPKP) as an act of self-censorship, and as a response to the directive from the government-controlled press bureau. The komiks had by the 1970s spun out of control even as the stories and the series dealt with corruption, criminality, sexual passion, varied forms of perversion, and the many faces of poverty in a language that was racy and raunchy and illustrated with such verve and vigor.

The new guidelines prohibited most of the "errors" of the pre-Martial Law days: nudity, cuss words, sex orgies, political corruption, crooked cops, clerics in love, among others. The result was a komiks world become antiseptic and dull, because the energy that flowed into the stories simply disappeared.

However, this developmental thrust could not be sustained for a venture as commercial as the komiks. Eventually, the writers renewed their creative activity and dealt with the most horrifying creatures from the country's legends or imitated popular Hollywood movies such as *Jaws* and *The Exorcist*. By the mid-1970s, the komiks was in its usual element as it took the public by the hand into a world of mayhem, blood and gore, fantasy, thrill and the many forms of vicarious pleasure.

The komiks as it evolved provided more than just occasional humor and lighthearted fun. In the 1970s and 1980s, komiks stories by Elena Patron, Gilda Olvidado, and Nerissa Cabral explored melodramatic stories of love, which became immediately popular, inspiring film versions by major directors and companies. The serial novel even insinuated itself in the country's newspapers and tabloids, which presented make-believe stories side by side with hard news and opinion columns.

### **Content, Form, and Function**

In search of materials for their komiks stories, the first generations of komiks writer Pedrito Reyes, Clodualdo del Mundo, Francisco V. Coching, Pablo Gomez, Mars Ravelo, Fred Carillo, Jose Zabala Santo—could easily go back in time. From the 19th and early 20th centuries came the colorful narratives of love and adventure, of handsome princes and beautiful damsels in distress, of *indios* (native) courageously fighting the *conquistadores*. From the preceding decades came the series of mournful stories of unrequited love, of persecuted maidens, of

children caught in a crossfire of intrigue and crime, of faithlessness and eternal love. They could also create local characters inspired by American counterparts, like Tarzan, Archie, Nancy and Sluggo, Mutt and Jeff, the Katzenjammer kids, and Dick Tracy. From the deep collective unconscious emerged terrifying images of preternatural forces and horrible creatures from the worst nightmares. The present also provided useful ideas on changing mores and lifestyles, on tradition pitting itself against modernization, and on the worsening condition of society where various forces were battling it out for power.

Different devices and strategies are employed to convey these varied perceptions of the real and imagined world. Where the novel relies on the word, the komiks has to use an array of visual and verbal tools to communicate its meaning. Where description suffices in a short story, things must be acted out in the komiks with little or no ambiguity. For these visualizations, the komiks produced a group of competent illustrators, such as Elpidio Torres, Jesse Santos, Francisco Coching, Ading Gonzalez, Jim Fernandez, Federico Javinal, and Tony Velasquez, among others. In many cases, the writers were themselves the illustrators; thus, the writer had complete control over his material.

In a world created by the komiks writers and illustrators, it is easy to be overwhelmed by the creativity and imagination displayed by the creators, and lose sight of the patterns which have shaped this make-believe universe. Patterns do exist—formulas that have determined thousands of narratives and storylines and countless characters, some of whom have become part of the collective mind. These patterns, on the other hand, have been formed by what the writers understand as the function of the tales.

The komiks have served many purposes. For most people, they are entertainment fare that provides the reader temporary relief from the unbearable monotony or oppressiveness of life. For many, the komiks also serve to release deeply suppressed emotions—such as anger, hostility, and hatred—without inflicting damage to society. For many critics, the komiks is a site where the battles between good and evil are played out systematically, with the forces of light eventually gaining victory over the forces of darkness.

As a further proof of the komiks' usefulness, the komiks writers themselves have argued that because of the tremendous popularity of these colorful magazines, millions of Filipinos from Aparri to Tawi-Tawi have learned the national language. The Tagalog used in the komiks is the simple language of the marketplace, of the streets, of the home, and not the formal, elaborate language of Francisco Balagtas and Lope K. Santos. Another argument used in defense of the komiks points out that the komiks in the native language is a foil to more formal texts in English perceived as the language of the ruling class. Where the upper and middle classes have their higher-priced, imported reading fare or Philippine texts in English, the lower classes have their ubiquitous komiks answering their various needs—emotional, psychological, and cultural.

An art form selling simplifications of complex reality has indeed become a powerful institution in Philippine life. Its diverse influences on Philippine culture and consciousness have still to be assessed systematically, and its impact as a cultural artifact analyzed rigorously. Nevertheless, it is an incontrovertible fact that for more than 60 years, the komiks has been fascinating millions of readers who buy the colorful, relatively cheap magazines as some kind of weekly ritual that lightens the burden of daily existence.

### **Types of Komiks**

From the very beginning, the komiks have been perceived as the cheapest means for getting a good laugh. There are lighthearted fun and gaiety brought about by verbal witticisms. There is laughter provoked by the delineation of the foibles and weaknesses of the characters. The first serials in *Liwayway* were meant to make the readers laugh, and for this reason, the public was treated to the spectacle of a village herbal doctor dispensing all kinds of medicine for all kinds of sickness, including the dreaded disease of febrile passion; of a Chinese vendor in pigtails, speaking fractured Tagalog as he sold his wares; of perpetually warring couples; of young men with modish affectations, surviving through sheer grit. Getting into ridiculous and often batty situations and wriggling out of these predicaments constituted the stuff of most of the early serials, with the characters getting their comeuppance in the end.

Deo Gonzalez's lovable Saryong Albularyo and Tony Velasquez's *Kenkoy* and his cartoon friends—Talakitok, Nanong Pandak, Rosing, Ponyang Halobaybay, Sarhento (later Medyor) Dikyam, Mang Terong, and a host of memorable characters—would survive into the postwar years. They were eventually joined by such characters as Tipin, the modern girl from Pobres Park, Kalabog en Bosyo, the lovable and zany duo who got into exciting adventures; and such personalities as Betia, Rita Rits, Pompa, and Susanang Daldal.

Constituting a formidable group of funny characters are those who suffered from some physical or emotional defects. Kurdapya and Baby Bubut were female characters afflicted with a handicap—one was “ugly” by popular standards, the other simply refused to grow up (“bubut” means a stunted fruit). Bondying and Fefita Fofonggay, on the other hand, were male characters with similar “aberrations” the one an overgrown boy dressed in *mameluco*, the other a stereotype of the Filipino homosexual, and both finally transformed into “normal” males when fully roused by heterosexual feelings. These male and female characters were depicted as butts of society's jokes as they found themselves in many embarrassing situations. The ridicule and humiliation would end when the right man or woman came along. The series *Jack and Jill* is probably one of the clearest examples of the neat solution that love provides to characters confused about their sexual identities.

Comic relief through funny talk and slapstick was the focus in a number of cartoon creations like Jose Zabala Santos' *Popoy*, Menny Martin's *Pe, Ver, Milyo*, and *Mr. Pid*, Mars Ravelo's *Buhay Pilipino* (Philippine Life), L.P. Calixto's *Mga Kuwentong Barbero* (Tall Tales), Pat Reyes' *Kuwatog, Butsoy, Bokyo, Niknok*, and other long-running series. One magazine called *Funny Komiks* aims at children, and usually features children or animals as main characters, either in a series or in completed short stories.

Apart from the series or stories that provoke laughter, another category of texts utilizes characters and situations that are nonrealistic and fantastic. Where Kenkoy and Bondying appear as caricatures of real people, the characters in such series as *Darna*, a superwoman, *Dyesebel* (a mermaid), *Harimanok* (King Rooster), *Petrang Kabayo* (Petra the Horse), *Darko, Silveria, Pungkuy and the Magic Bilao* (Darko, Silveria, Pungkuy and the Magic winnowing tray), *Kapteyn Barbell* (Captain Barbell), *Karina Kariton* (Karina the Pushcart Girl), *Diyosa* (Goddess), *Super Balulang, Ada, The Hands, Mambo Dyambo* (Mumbo Jumbo), *Booma, Ang Panday* (Booma, The Blacksmith), and countless other tales inhabit a world looking only superficially Filipino, for it is a world where time stands still and the laws of nature and of logic are suspended indefinitely.

In such popular stories, sirens and nymphs fall in love with mortals; barrio lasses and village blacksmiths are gifted with supernatural powers; horses and roosters talk; magic bilao, fountain pens, swords, and pushcarts fly and zoom into the air of their own accord; mysterious hands stalk and murder innocent victims; vampires and other preternatural monsters haunt their prey; satyrs and other creatures sow terror. In this world teeming with characters from the most horrible nightmares and the most desirable dreams, readers follow with bated breath the spectacular adventures of Captain Makisig or Captain Manila; cross over into the phantasmagoric world of Dyesebel and Zuma; experience the death-defying love story of Maruja; follow the exploits of Mong and the Magic 5; or hurtle into the future while travelling with Zarex, Astrobal, and Jeric, the boy from Mars.

Although some of the characters are endowed with some realistic details (Darna is an ordinary girl from the barrio and Karina is a scavenger), they are eventually transformed into glorious creatures ready and willing to fight all kinds of enemies—people, nature, animals, and creatures from outer space. Darna symbolizes the Filipino woman as superhero, defender of the oppressed, fighter for some presumed ideal “Filipino way of life.” Yet, the inspiration was obviously not some local historical heroine but any of several pop-mythic icons—e.g., the Superman and Wonder Woman syndrome—imported from America. For generations, Darna and her kind were just about the only mode of female empowerment available to local imagination.

More than in the comedy series, this genre allows the imagination to wander freely in the vastness of what could be. Limitations and constraints imposed by natural laws are shattered as Clodualdo del Mundo, Jim Fernandez, Mars Ravelo, Pablo Gomez,

Hal Santiago, and others, continue to investigate both the mysterious past, with all its tales of the macabre, and the future, with all its uncertainties and promise of more technological advances.

In many stories the male or female hero, who is a defender of the poor and oppressed, miraculously receives a magical gift, which could be a charm or an amulet. The charm is given on the condition that it be used for the weak and the downtrodden. In the battle that ensues, the forces of good and evil face each other—the good human characters helped by the positive forces, the evil ones supported by destructive forces. Thus, in this elemental fight, even nature is divided into radically opposing forces as human beings are categorized into good and evil people.

The representation of personal conflicts appears in endless variety in stories which can be termed melodrama. The focus in such stories as *Roberta*, *Bittersweet*, *Pieta*, *Sinasamba Kita* (I Worship You), *Dapat Ka Bang Mahalin?* (Do You Deserve To Be Loved?), *Bukas Luluhod ang mga Tala* (Tomorrow the Stars Will Fall on Their Knees), Malvarosa, Gilda, Eva Fonda: 16, Nobody's Child, Bakekang, among the more popular series, is the individual and immediate family, the forces that conspire to bring about estrangement, suffering, and even death.

Mars Ravelo's tale of the persecuted child in *Roberta* is a clear indication of this very powerful trend in the komiks: the preoccupation with the pain and suffering of an innocent victim of cruelty and rapacity. This interest in situations revolving around family conflicts has been given numerous expressions. The plot can show the depth of a mother's love as in Malvarosa or *Kapatid Ko ang Aking Ina* (I Am My Mother's Sister), Bakekang, or *Wanted: Perfect Mother*; a young woman's struggle to eke out a living, as in *Eva Fonda: 16* or *Gilda*; the ebb and flow of romantic love as in *Bittersweet*, *Somewhere*, *Kung Mahawi Man ang Ulap* (If Ever the Clouds Part); the plight of an unwanted child, as in *Trudis Liit* (Little Trudis) and *Nobody's Child*; or a serious issue, such as homosexuality and its effects on the members of a family, as in *Tubog sa Ginto* (Dipped in Gold) and *Ang Tatay Kong Nanay* (My Father the Mother).

Although a popular genre from the very beginning, the melodrama attracted more readers in the 1970s with the entry into the scene of some of the most creative female writers: Elena Patron, Nerissa Cabral, and Gilda Olvidado. If the likes of Carlo Caparas and Jim Fernandez celebrate manhood and all the traits associated with the Filipino macho ideals, the female novelists focus on women as central characters: the faithful wife, the suffering mother, the torch singer, the grateful daughter, the other woman, and the experiences these women undergo in the process of defining themselves. In these stories usually rendered in realistic terms, the writers explore the complexities of familial relationship and delineate intensely powerful emotions that grip the different characters, particularly their desire for a person or for a goal in life. Nerissa Cabral's *Tinik sa Dibdib* (Thorn in the Chest)

is one of the best examples of a contemporary melodrama, which features a protagonist confronting life's many vicissitudes, symbolized by a deaf-mute sister, an uncaring mother, and a cruel stepfather, with whom she coexists in the already demeaning condition of material poverty.

For long treated as a medium suited to inferior intellects for its gross simplification, falsification, or distortion of reality, the komiks has assumed the role of social critic in some of its creations. In such stories as *Dirty Politician*, *Sumpain Ka Nawa!* (A Curse on You!), *El Vibora* (The Cobra), *Magnong Mandurukot* (Magno the Thief), *Tulisan* (Bandit), *Totoy Bato* (Rocky Totoy), *Angela Markado* (Angela the Marked One), among others, the writers succeed in reflecting the more sordid aspects of society. Featured are corrupt politicians, ruthless landlords, criminal syndicates, mulcting policemen, petty thieves, the arrogant rich, all of whom use power to victimize the slum dweller, job hunter, vendor, the innocent and provincial woman, the lowly employee, or the defenseless tenant.

In these stories, what stares the reader in the face is weakness and gloom as the characters continue to lead miserable lives in a decaying city or war-ravaged barrio. The clear delineation of the victim of social injustice seems to be the forte of a number of writers that include Carlo J. Caparas, Pablo Gomez, and Ramon Marcelino. These stories are a dramatic foil to the resplendence and charm of fantastic tales and lugubrious romances.

Aside from the comic, fantastic, and melodramatic, some komiks stories focus on action stories, much like those in the movies. Fast-paced action involves the male or female hero fighting a horde of enemies in a series of episodes that are unified, like the traditional epic, by the sheer presence of one protagonist. Included in this category are mystery stories such as *DI Trece*, the local version of Dick Tracy; adventure stories such as *Alyas Palos* (Alias the Eel) and *Ang Panday* (The Blacksmith); sports stories such as *Mong*, *Juan Tornado*, *Magic 5*, and *Brown Matador*; narratives dealing with the colonial past, such as *Barbaro* (Barbarian), *Indio* (The Native), *Limahong* (a Chinese pirate), *Guardias de la Torre* (The Guards of the Tower), and *Prinsesa Urduja* (Princess Urduja).

In the first decades of the komiks, the action stories penned by Francisco V. Coching, Francisco Reyes, and Clodualdo del Mundo, presented heroes that were ideally good. But over time, the nature of the protagonists gradually changed. Action stories highlighted people on the wrong side of the law, fugitives rebelling against, or escaping, an unjust and oppressive system. In the 1970s, the sports heroes became the favorite characters in a large number of stories of Carlo Caparas, Jim Fernandez, Teny Henson, among others.

The changing mores in the early 1970s gave birth to the sexually explicit *bomba* komiks. Simultaneous with the rise of the bomba movies, a number of komiks magazines, not produced by the established komiks publishers, came out and



presented a new view of sex and sexuality. The stories in these magazines, with names such as *Seksee*, *Barako*, *Bikini*, and *Toro*, featured themes dealing with love licit and illicit, seduction and adultery, prostitution, and various forms of sexual aberration.

The new breed of komiks magazines seemed to duplicate what films featuring Stella Suarez, Merle Fernandez, and other bomba stars, dared to make explicit—the pleasures and sensations of sexual love. The old komiks visualization of sexual love tended to dissolve into images of a passionate kiss, with accompanying acceptable moan balloons; or more euphemistically, into a view of waves symbolically lapping at the shore on a moonlit night; or into glimpses of the partners in bed covered in darkness and sheets. Now the stories in the bomba komiks literally show male and female characters in various stages of undress, cavorting playfully in bed; or in rape scenes, engaged in a fierce struggle showing a lot of flesh.

This revised view of love invariably generated widespread outrage, not the least from the legitimate publishers whose share of profits was decreasing. This type of reading disappeared soon after the declaration of Martial Law, but made a dramatic comeback in the 1980s, in the last years of the Martial Law regime. This time around, more magazines emerged and flourished with such naughty titles as *Hayop* (Bestial), *Bold*, *Lagablab* (Blaze), *Boobs*, and *Sakdal-Erotic* (Super Erotic). The last mentioned was a revival of a 1950s magazine that contained highly suggestive illustrations to accompany the spicy, often explicit text describing purported “true life” police stories about sexual crimes, such as rape and adultery. What the bomba komiks did in the 1960s, the succeeding crop duplicated as they continued to present a different view of sexuality and gender relations to the reading public.

Because of its popularity, the komiks has been used for “developmental” messages or outright political aims. In the 1950s, the komiks promoted the government’s anti-insurgency campaign especially in areas where the Huks (anti-Japanese guerrillas) were quite strong. In the 1960s and 1970s, the form was used by a number of government institutions, such as the Department of Health and the Population Control Institute. During the Martial Law period, the komiks became the outlets for stories selling the idea of the Green Revolution, birth control, the beautification of the “City of Man,” the decongestion of Metro Manila, and other messages. After Martial Law, the komiks were used to explain to the people the whys and wherefores of the country’s staggering debt to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and the horrendous implications of such indebtedness.

## **Komiks and the Movies**

One popular art form whose history is inextricably linked to the komiks is film.

Film producers from the 1950s to the 1990s have discovered how deeply the collective consciousness has been steeped in the komiks culture such that the popularity of any komiks story is a guarantee of the success of its film adaptations. Ever since the film industry started depending on this other highly visual medium, the komiks has been preparing the groundwork by presenting to the public a set of characters in a series of dramatic or comic situations, often reflecting themes already proven as box-office hits. The film producer buys the rights to the widely popular komiks story and magnifies the appeal of the komiks characters by casting whoever are the most popular, hence “bankable,” actors at the time the movie is made.

In the 1950s, the producers of the Big Three film companies— Sampaguita, LVN, and Premiere Productions —used a lot of komiks stories in their movies; in some cases, unknown actors and actresses were catapulted to stardom because they played the roles of characters who left their imprints on the public imagination. Tessie Agana starred in ***Roberta*** and became an instant hit; Lolita Rodriguez and Dolphy played the roles of Jack and Jill in the series of the same title and achieved instant success; Fred Montilla was the boy who refused to grow up in ***Bondying***; Rosa del Rosario first assumed the role of Darna; and Edna Luna became the first Dyesebel.

The three studios were later joined by Lea in making movies out of komiks series with other stars of the 1950s and 1960s. Memorable roles were assumed by Susan Roces in ***Maruja*** and ***Susanang Daldal*** (Talkative Susan); Boots Anson-Roa and Snooky Serna in ***Wanted: Perfect Mother***; Romeo Vasquez in ***Bobby***; Rita Gomez in ***Diyosa***; Bernard Bonnin in ***Alyas Palos***; and Chiquito in ***Kenkoy***. Other successful stories made into films included ***Ang Panday***, which later starred Fernando Poe Jr.; ***Barok*** (Caveman), Chiquito; ***Super Gee***, Nora Aunor; ***Alakdang Dagat*** (Scorpion of the Sea), Elizabeth Oropesa; ***Bukas, Luluhod ang mga Tala***, Sharon Cuneta; ***Sinasamba Kita***, Vilma Santos and Lorna Tolentino; ***Lilac***, Snooky Serna; ***Angela Markado***, Hilda Koronel; ***Bakekang***, Nora Aunor; ***Zuma***, Max Laurel; and ***Totoy Bato***, Fernando Poe Jr. Dolphy has starred in commercial successes that were first serialized; among his memorable roles were those of Fefita Fofonggay and Facifica Falaypay.

In the 1980s and until the 1990s, the most powerful producers have regularly mined the komiks magazines for material containing the ingredients for a successful (i.e., profitable) movie project. Regal, Viva, and Seiko Films—the Big Three of the present era—continue to adapt komiks stories deemed eminently “filmable,” which could use the talents of such personalities as Sharon Cuneta, Gabby Concepcion, Christopher de Leon, Lorna Tolentino, Maricel Soriano, among others. Komiks stories have been the basis for many of the films directed by Lino Brocka, Ishmael Bernal, Laurice Guillen, Jose Javier Reyes, Maria Saret, Celso Ad. Castillo, and other directors in the industry. Moreover, a number of famous scriptwriters and directors started out as komiks writers, among them Celso Ad. Castillo, Carlo J. Caparas, Boots Plata, Orlando R. Nadres, to name a

few.

A number of stories have also been filmed not once, but several times. Among them are *Darna*, *Dyesebel*, *Bondying*, *Jack and Jill*, *Gilda: Pasan Ko ang Daigdig* (Gilda: I Carry the World on My Shoulders), *Ang Panday*, and *Kenkoy*. Their popularity attests to their privileged positions in the hearts and minds of millions of komiks readers who find in them symbols, icons, or representations of basic emotions and forces. • S. Reyes

## References

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