BORROWED PLOTS, LOCAL STORIES:
Medieval Temporalities and 1950s Film Adaptations of Korido-based Komiks Stories[1]

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Abstract

This article examines three extant komiks series with extant film adaptations from the 1950s, namely: *Sohrab at Rustum, Haring Solomon at Reyna Sheba* and *Rodrigo de Villa*. The three stories were based on *koridos* or metrical romances which became popular in the Philippines during the Spanish era, more specifically the 19th century. The koridos also became the dominant source of komiks stories and their film adaptations in the 1950s. It is the contention of this paper that although these stories were borrowed plots from Europe and the Middle East during the colonial years, these have been localized first by the korido writers/singers, and later by the komiks creators and the filmmakers who either expand or condense the essential/original stories. Furthermore, it is the contention of this author that the three materials reflect a medievalist attitude current in the1950s, finding expressions in the values, ideals, themes, tropes and characterization of the heroes in the stories. Typical of medieval films however, the komiks-to-film adaptations appropriate the temporal mode as this has been expressed through the literary, dramatic and visual characteristics of both media.

Keywords: korido, komiks-to-film adaptation, medievalism, temporality, 1950s Philippine film industry, borrowed plots, local stories

Introduction

In the 1950s, both the komiks and the film industries in the Philippines reached a shared dynamic period, a so-called Golden Age. As intertwined industries, the 1950s became the launching pad for the busiest era in terms of komiks-to-film adaptations, with the source, i.e. komiks, serving as both "anterior text"[2] and "tunnel text"[3] for film adaptations.

A cursory look at extant komiks and extant film adaptations from the 1950s would reveal that a number of the source texts were drawn from the 19th century form called the *korido* or the metrical romance. Resil Mojares (1998) reports that the earliest romances were brought to the Philippines orally as early as the 16th century and were later popularized in the provinces. Although it "grew out of a craving for sophistication" (Lumbera, 1986, p. 16), the korido carried themes that belonged to an earlier time, the 16th century. Traditionally conceived as the beginning of the Renaissance in Europe, the 16th century may be considered as the start of modernity. Being a creation of the 16th century romance, the korido carried residual influences of medieval values and world views. Since the korido was the prime source of Filipino komiks stories in the 1950s, traces of the medievalist temperament have influenced the film adaptations in shades and echoes, if not in a more direct manner.

The medieval content of the korido had been made coherent with the doctrine of Christian faith which was pursued through the missionary zeal of the friars who came to the islands in the early period of Spanish colonization. The mass appeal of the korido was unmistakable at the onset. Also known by the labels "buhay" (life) and "historia"(story) by the Tagalogs (Mojares, 1998), native reception had been partly attributed to the "broad and encompassing" (Castillo and Medina, 1974, p.124) themes that the metrical romances espoused. Lumbera (1986) further affirms this:

> It was a medieval society the poets and the audience were looking at, but that did not make any difference to them. The ideals that the heroes of the ballads stood for—love, justice, loyalty, and faith—were timelessly appealing to a people who had the slightest contact with the world beyond the boundaries of the colony. (p.16)

Moreover, the medievalist tendency survived the period of colonization up until the post-war period as its worldview had infected

Philippine religious and cultural institutions in terms of symbols and values. Medievalism had become naturalized as values and as reference points in affirming the status quo. Popular forms such as the komiks and the film became instrumental in inscribing the said worldviews in the consciousness of the masses. In view of this, the following exemplars of komiks-to-film adaptation may be offered as sites by which to understand medievalism as this has been inscribed in the treatment of the temporal mode, in the iconography of the komiks and of film, and in invoking the collective significance of the heroes in the narrative.

Medieval Legacies in the Philippines

The Spaniards came to the Philippine shores in the 16th century when much of Europe was way past the Middle Ages. In fact, it was the spirit of the Renaissance that launched the European voyages in the new territories. Perceived through the Western rubric of calendrical time, the Philippines would appear to be a nation without a medieval period. With its pre-colonial history and literature wiped out due to invasion, natural destruction and the absence of a durable writing technology, the Philippines began its written history in the 16th century. The Filipino sense of time has been fractured and pre-conditioned by the historical periodization introduced by the colonizers. On account of this, the Filipino sense of the Western Middle Ages had been obscured in the sensibility of the people. It is possible that Filipinos could only have a sense of the "Middle Ages" through conceptions of time borrowed from the West.

To the Europeans, the Middle Ages may have existed as a precise time; that is, a historical linear time. The dates that cover the said period vary and are subject to debate. According to Cook and Herzman (1983), such a quandary about the exact coverage of the Middle Ages is a "testimony to the problem inherent in any attempt to classify the past with exactness" (p.xxi). What we have mostly are approximations. It could go from "the period stretching from the sixth century to the beginning of the twelfth century," as the previously-mentioned authors claim in their book *The Medieval World View: An Introduction (1983)*. Therefore, it may run from 14 A.D. up to 1375 A.D. It could also stretch up to the early Renaissance. In his *Philippine Studies* article titled "Influences of the European Middle Ages in the Philippines," an essay that attempts to map out how the European medieval influences have made inroads on Philippine social institutions from

the Spanish years up until the postcolonial period, David Keck (1996) offers the "fifth to the sixteenth century" as the coverage of the Middle Ages that can serve as indicator of the extent by which the transplantation of medieval institutions in the country has been carried out.

To a people whose orally-based tribal community had been interrupted by foreign invasion and colonial encounter, to sense reality in terms of calendrical time may not come as part of the natural order of things. Filipinos caught the medieval temperament in a fragmentary manner and they proved to be very good at re-interpreting it. Keck notes how scholars like Luis Weckman and John Leddy Phelan have observed how medieval institutions introduced by Spain endured in the Philippines. He concocts linguistic indicators by which medievalism operated in the aftermath of Spanish colonization through what he calls "a curious triple conceptual legacy of virtue, savagery, and parody" (p.449).

Although the Renaissance spirit was the one that drove the Spaniards towards the Philippine Islands, they set forth to build medieval institutions in the country to solidify their hold on the natives. In the four centuries of Spanish colonization, cultural foundations were established so that this so-called "medieval sensibility" would have a solid stronghold. Said medieval legacies include: "a theoretical common religious identity in Roman Catholicism and the idea of Christendom; Latin as the shared language of learned discourse; and similar feudal or manorial economic and political power structures" (Keck, 1996, p.449).

Through the influence of the colonial state and the Catholic Church, the institutions of medieval Europe were introduced into the native consciousness. They come in many forms. Keck opted to use the word "influences" because as he claims, the Middle Ages cannot be defined, only described. One of the avenues by which these medieval influences have found expressions in the native's way of life was through the korido. This literary form will prove to be effective in inscribing a medievalist attitude in their immediate hearers and readers.

Medievalism by way of adaptation

In popular media, medieval subjects are either dealt with in a time-bound sense or in a time-free sense. In his various reflections on the Middle Ages, Umberto Eco (1983) regards the era as a floating notion rather than

a fixed historical time. Humanity has been "dreaming the Middle Ages," says Eco (1983) ever since the world has entered the threshold of postmodernity. Eco considers it "as a quest for our roots" (p, 65). The pull of the past is a way to understand the present. Eco adds:

> But is dreaming of the Middle Ages really a typical contemporary or postmodern temptation? If it is true—and it is—that the Middle Ages turned us into Western animals, it is equally true that people started dreaming of the Middle Ages from the very beginning of the modern era. (p. 65)

But perhaps, dreaming the Middle Ages is both a conscious and an unconscious appropriation of colonial influences. And that is not to say it disparagingly. Soledad Reyes (2012) notes that the thread that unites the contemporary with the past, specifically the Graeco-Roman period and high Christianity of the medieval period, is nostalgia; which is a "state of mind" that "carries with it an idealization, a deep-seated desire to see the past through rose-colored glasses, and erect a structure of images, which constitute wish-fulfillment"(p.2).

The medievalist sensibility thrives through a particular literary form that straddled between the provisionality of the oral and the fixity of the written. The korido or the metrical romances were introduced in the country in the 16th century via Mexico. Lumbera (1986) has written that the literary form was brought to the country by Mexicans who intermarried with the natives. Although the *ilustrados* have found the metrical romances quite low by late 19th century standards of taste, the form remained popular until the 1930s. The reason was quite typical of romantic native sensibility.

This predilection for romance sustained an interest in works of adaptation. The format of the korido, which by the 1930s was giving way to mass media, saw a resurrection in the pages of magazines through the komiks format. Alhough the komiks renditions have been aimed for popular readership, the themes and form of the old versions of the romances survived the translations. Three of the extant komiks renditions of the koridos are *Sohrab at Rustum*, *Haring Solomon at Reyna Sheba* and *Rodrigo de Villa*. The first two were Middle Eastern in setting but were told through the style of the Western metrical romance. The third one, *Rodrigo de Villa*, retains the Spanish themes and values but has seen various emendations in the Philippines through the centuries.

Three Extant Texts

Three koridos from an earlier time found their way into the pages of *Liwayway Magazine* in komiks format. *Sohrab at Rustum* (1950) is a komiks story published in *Liwayway Magazine* between July 24, 1950 and December 25, 1950. It ran for twenty-three (23) weeks. It was adapted by Nemesio Caravana from a korido version of the Persian epic *Shahnameh* by Ferdowsi. The list prepared by Damiana Eugenio (1987) does not include a Philippine korido version of *Sohrab and Rustum*. However, a version for Philippine high school students prepared by Santiago and Enriquez (1972) closely resembles the komiks version.[4]

Although not a European epic, *Shahnameh* earned the interest of 19th century English poet and critic Matthew Arnold who came up with an English version of the narrative poem consisting of 892 lines of blank verse. In so far as Ferdowsi lived between 940 A.D. and 1021 A.D. (The Cultural Section, Embassy of Islamic Republic of Iran-Manila, Philippines, 2007), his work may be considered as medieval epic. While *Sohrab at Rustum*, an extract from *Shahnameh,* may not be of European provenance, it had been re-told using Western conventions of the medieval epic. The same influence is visible in the film version. Bettina Bildauser (2011) opines that a medieval film need not be about Europe alone. It can also be about the "medieval Orient," raising the possible "overlaps between medievalism and Orientalism" (p.15).

Dean Fansler, in his 1916 essay titled "Metrical Romances in the Philippines," confirms this overlap between Europe and Asia. In his classification of "Oriental Didactic Tales with Western Modification" (Early Journal Content; http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content), Fansler demonstrates the visible influence of Western Medieval ethos on what are purportedly Middle Eastern texts.

The same exception applies to the biblical story of Solomon and Sheba. The komiks series titled *Haring Solomon at Reyna Sheba* began its run at the *Liwayway* on November 27, 1950. After an installment of forty-one (41) chapters, the series finally ended on September 3, 1951. Written by Adriano P. Laudico and illustrated by Jesus F. Ramos, it is one of a series of stories based on a biblical character featured in the *Liwayway*.[5] The LVN film version, directed by Lamberto Avellana, starred Jaime de la Rosa as Haring Solomon and Mila del Sol as Reyna Sheba. The film's premiere took place on December 21, 1952 at Life Theater. The available copy at LVN is

incomplete. It does not have the opening credits anymore and the first one-third portion of the film. *Haring Solomon at Reyna Sheba*, the komiks story, is partly based on the Old Testament story of King Solomon and partially from the korido tradition. [6]

The story of Solomon and Sheba may have been re-cast by medieval writers for the consumption of readers during the Middle Ages. Traditionally perceived as a theocentric era, the Middle Ages were particularly focused on Biblical literature. As Cook and Herzman (1983) put it, the Bible "was far and away the most influential and important book for the Middle Ages" (p.3). The early Christian translations of the Bible were largely responsible for the inextricable link between the sensibility of the Judaeo-Christian period of antiquity and the medieval period. St. Jerome's translation became the standard Biblical text in the Middle Ages, which resulted to the Bible becoming a fountain of original themes, motifs and morals. For instance, Cook and Herzman (1983) note that "Old Testament literary works were favourite sources of wisdom in the Middle Ages and were frequently commented upon by medieval writers" (pp. 5-6).

By way of extension then, the story of Solomon and Sheba, though strictly belonging to the Old Testament, was re-circulated in the Middle Ages as part of the larger project to edify the beliefs and spirit of Christianity. In the 1950s, *Liwayway* magazine came up with a spate of Biblical stories and the story of Solomon and Sheba became part of the long tradition of harking back to memories of the korido and/or oral culture and of the Judaeo-Christian Biblical age as well. [7]

The continued interest in the biblical story in the 1950s may be ascribed to what Reyes (2012) calls "the nostalgia that drives us to return to the past—from the unparalleled glory of the Graeco-Roman period, to the ascendancy of the Christian faith in the medieval ages" (p.2). The generations of 19th century and 1950s korido enthusiasts were hardly concerned about the partly fictional elements of the Solomon and Sheba story. Any medieval material or form, as Keck (1996) has articulated, serves the purpose of being "a transmitter and modifier of classical beliefs and practices" (p. 452). The invocation of classical values was more priced than historical accuracy.

The only true medieval European material in the present investigation that has been re-articulated in another form is *Rodrigo de Villa*. The komiks version of the romance was one of the longest running series

in the 1950s. It began its sixty-seven (67)-chapter run in the *Liwayway* on January 1, 1951 and ended on April 7, 1952.

The komiks story *Rodrigo de Villa* was most probably based on a Spanish korido. Eugenio (1987) cites the ballad titled *Chronica del Famoso Cavallero Cid Ruydiez Campeador* and the drama titled *Guillen de Castro* as possible sources of the received story incidents Filipinos have been familiar with. Eugenio notes that the Rodrigo de Villa story is never known in the Philippines as *El Cid Campeador*, the title that is more popularly known worldwide. This confusion seemed to stem from the probability that the Philippine variant(s) may have been influenced by other sources. Eugenio adds:

> The Cid legend, therefore, seems to have come to the Philippines through a narrator who retold incidents recalled from the ballads, the Chronica, and the different dramatic and fictional treatments of the legend. These incidents the Philippine poet wove into a romance, modified the events to suit his purpose and audience, and filled the gaps in the story with imaginary and fantastic events (p.70).

The authorship of the Philippine version of the korido has been attributed to Jose de la Cruz or "Huseng Sisiw" who wrote a number of koridos that has been adapted from foreign sources (Mojares, 1998).

Rodrigo de Villa is an unusual text because it is a Spanish material that has been appropriated and indigenized by local writers. It was reconfigured to suit the taste of the Philippine audience who were oriented into medieval Catholicism in the 19th century.

Medieval film/Medieval film adaptation

A cursory survey of the films produced in the 1950s would reveal that a substantial number were based on koridos.[8] As already noted, the koridos heavily drew from medieval stories—or at least were medievalist in orientation. In Western cinema, the medieval film has almost constituted a separate category or a genre of its own. Similar to other genres, the medieval film has been prejudiced by certain misconceptions regarding its subjects and treatment of history. Bildauer (2011), in her book *Filming the Middle Ages*, explains this bias in connection with the generic category it represents. By

genre, she refers to "a cluster or corpus of films that share certain features and raise certain expectations because they are, to some extent, modelled on each other" (p.13). As a cluster of films, the medieval film has been unfairly associated with formulaic images and "carries with it connotations of populism and conservative ideologies" (p.13).

In a similar vein, the three films under scrutiny may be categorized as genre films and may bear some of the much derided formulaic features. However, they are offered here too as part of a longer tradition in Filipino adaptation practice.

Bildauer delineates the finer distinctions in the labels "films about the Middle Ages," "medievalist film," and "medieval film." The "films about Middle Ages" are limited to the historical period they cover. The medievalist film is problematic because as Bildauer points out, "medievalism" relies on a postulated strict break between the object of study or representation (the the Middle Ages) and the following period, the Renaissance. Arthurian stories written in the Middle Ages, for example, are medieval literature and those written afterwards are medievalist literature" (p.14). The label "medieval film" can be more accurate in capturing the idea of a narrative that draws inspiration from the Middle Ages while at the same unveiling an attitude that treats the Middle Ages as a means to interpret past and present eras.

The three films under scrutiny may be considered "medieval films" instead of "films about the Middle Ages" and "medievalist films." Although these films borrow materials from European and Oriental Middle Ages, they reflect local narrative culture in the 1950s. As a genre, the medieval film may be used interchangeably—at least in this study—with korido film or korido-komiks or Filipino medieval film adaptation.

Following Bildauer's framework, medieval films are predisposed to project multiple temporalities in the treatment of time. Said temporalities have wider implications on matters affecting translation of the material into another visual medium and the iconography of the heroic characters.

Mythical Time, Distant Lands: Temporalities in the Three Komiks-to-Film Adaptations

The 1950s were an interesting decade in Filipino filmmaking because they were hospitable to the historical material or its variants, such as the costume drama or period film. The three films in this investigation provided

an opportunity for the 50s generation to deal with older themes which date back to the colonial years and which serve as the sources of the medieval values that influenced the formation of national traits. In the succeeding discussions, examples of deploying temporalities through narrative and visual strategies are enumerated and described.

Korido-komiks stories that have been translated into films are reworkings of medieval materials that are inextricable from their conception of time. George Bluestone (1957) once said that in the novel, there are three tenses but the film has only one—the present tense or the tense of watching. Therefore, the film operates on a temporal plane. The pastness of the subject in a medieval romance could not have found a better ally than in the cinema. The temporal mode governs the pleasure that viewers derive from an adaptation of the korido-based komiks story. The idea of linear time is challenged by the temporality that inheres in the medium. In fact, there is no singular temporality because there have been many ways of approximating and rendering time. As Bliss Cua Lim (2009) says in her book *Translating Time: Cinema, the Fantastic, and the Temporal Critique*, it is possible to view film time by considering "the existence of multiple times that fail to coincide with the measured, uniform intervals quantified by clock and calendar" (p.2).

Medieval conception of time is non-linear and cyclical. This accounts for the predisposition of medieval men to look back at the past with nostalgia. Cook and Herzman claim that "the Middle Ages not only owed an enormous debt to the past—to its classical, Christian, and Germanic antecedents—but that it was in fact conscious of this debt as well… there is a constant backward glance to the achievements of the past" (p.xxiii). Eco (1983) calls this sort of nostalgia "a continuous return" to the past (p.65).

Therefore, if the medieval conception of time is non-linear, then, a medieval film reflects its ultimate expression. Bildauer (2011) claims that "cinema uses the Middle Ages to imagine alternative, non-linear perceptions of time that prefigure those of the recent past, especially the importance of the moment and a sense of the future as so short that it is perceived as already present"(p.25). The medieval films are rather avenues for the representation of the filmic, the grand, and the persistently present. Medieval films capture "moments rather than continuities" (p.25); therefore, linearity is evinced in favour of the momentous and multiple co-presences.

The Bildauer framework is exactly what the three adaptations have accomplished. These texts are set in a mythical, distant time and these were

practically disruptions from the normal and practical thought of the 1950s generation. The Middle Eastern setting of *Sohrab and Rustum* and *Haring Solomon at Reyna Sheba* is clearly identified as well as the Spanish setting of *Rodrigo de Villa*. Despite their basis in medieval works and in the koridos, the time and place were partly obscured by the minimal backstory and expository parts supplied.

Haring Solomon at Reyna Sheba and *Rodrigo de Villa* are both quasi-historical narratives, a commonality that has been established and enhanced through their respective settings. *Haring Solomon at Reyna Sheba*, for instance, is set in the time of King Solomon, son of King David, whose reign is told in *The Books of Kings* in the Old Testament. According to the Jerusalem Bible, Solomon ruled for 40 years. The komiks story mentions his temple-building projects in Jerusalem, which the Bible says he began on the fourth year of his reign. This was the time when the Queen of Sheba visited Solomon to ask him "difficult questions" and to bring him "immense riches" (I Kings, 10: 1-2).[9]

The imperial subtext in *Sohrab at Rustum* and *Haring Solomon at Reyna Sheba* and the feudal hierarchy in *Rodrigo de Villa* are "momentous" scenes in the films and they draw a temporal critique that is lodged in space—in the setting and the use of the mise-en-scene in the film versions.

Meanwhile, *Rodrigo de Villa* is set in medieval Castille and Granada. The overarching influence of medieval feudalism is evident in the social and economic arrangements that are in place. The king occupies the topmost position in the social hierarchy, followed by dukes and counts. Vassalage is both a system of political patronage and an economic culture. Both subtexts are visible in the komiks and the film.

These scenes belong to medieval Spain but they evoke a temporal mood that connotes the 1950s' own "medieval" social world consisting of the landed and the tenants, the powerful and the governed, and the emerging capitalist and labor classes of the then industrializing 1950s. The prevailing atmosphere in the countryside evokes the conventions of a pastoral romance—rustic, idyllic, remote. The mood is different in the court of the nobility. Gardens, fountains, high walls and impressive high castles serve as the physical backdrop to an exciting courtly life.

Meanwhile, while nobility finds its suitable terrain in the interiors of castles and palatial courts in *Rodrigo de Villa*, it is in the tavern where all kinds of social classes meet and interact. In hierarchical medieval society, the tavern serves as the great leveller of social positions. Because the tavern is

frequented by *espadas* from competing families, it is where the brawl becomes an ordinary happenstance. In consequence, the tavern becomes the public venue where soon-to-be-heroes may show their prowess in swordmanship.

The moments that represent the temporal mode in the three films are linked to the visual agencies of the media, namely: the conventions of the korido, the sequentiality of the komiks, and the iconography in the film. These agencies fit the highly visual requirements of the medieval film and reflect the outlook of the medieval age. Cook and Herzman (1983) claim that since medieval men believed in a world that they have inherited as pre-cast or "discovered in the past," the age is guided by "an iconography—symbolic code by which figures and events can be identified—that remains relatively constant" (p.xxi). Bildauer (2011) links this unique medieval attitude to the lesser reliance of medieval society on writing and its increased dependence on the visual. Such visuality finds an expression in the medieval film.

Sohrab at Rustum, the film, follows closely the structure of the komiks panels. [10] Both are located in space, the komiks panels and the film scenes reiterate the moments celebrated in the korido. The drawing styles of the komiks artists[11] are lush and are easily translatable into filmic mise-en-scene. Through the iconography suggested by the art works of Maning de Leon and Ben Alcantara, the film has been able to enliven the qualities of the film characters. Nemesio Caravana claims in the komiks version that it was his "sariling salin" (own interpretation) of the Philippine korido version.[12]

Figure 1: De Leon's and Alcantara's drawings in contrast

De Leon's drawings (left) in the first two issues feature characters and settings that are coarsely drawn. The images in one panel, for instance, are spilling onto subsequent panels because the borders are not so clearly defined. A dark mood envelops the characterization and the setting. Meanwhile, Alcantara's (right) drawings from the third issue onwards aspire to show more classical shapes. There is also closure in the projection of human anatomy and the backdrop by being more definite about panel encapsulation and transition.

This represents a temporal moment in that lengthy story of *Sohrab and Rustum* which in the original Persian is an epic.[13]

The first adventure of the hero is his formal introduction in the world of the romance and in the consciousness of the hearers/readers of the korido. Within the context of the medieval film, Bildauer (2014) calls this process "the birth of the leader from the collective" (p.151), a momentous occasion in the life of a mythical kingdom.

Figure 2: Introduction of the hero

The early scenes in the Alcantara sketches are translated into these scenes where Rustum battles the dragon.

Figure 3: The hero suffering perdition

The komiks and the film depict a critical moment in the hero's life as he is threatened to be abandoned and forgotten in a Persian prison.

In *Haring Solomon at Reyna Sheba,* the komiks artist drew from both the Biblical story and the korido. The moments on a temporal plane that have been selected pertain to the legendary stature of Solomon as king and the romance between him and Sheba. The opening splash in the komiks serves an expository function while the film resorts to the presentational and dramatic modes. [14]

Figure 4: Expository function of the *Haring Solomon at Reyna Sheba* splash page and filmic equivalent

This splash page summarizes Solomon's stature as king at the beginning of the story. Through four panels, Solomon's backstory is presented. The film can only present one backstory.

The opening panels dislodge the time element. Here, the past and the present, the historical and the quasi-historical, the Biblical and the secular, merge to project Solomon as popular hero.

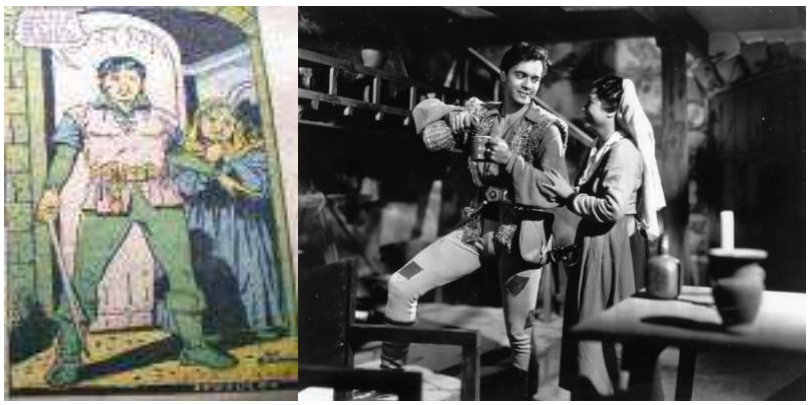
The female lead shares equal footing with the male lead in this frame. The mythical figure of Sheba is evinced in favor of what Eco (1983) calls "The Middle Ages of Romanticism" (p. 69). Characterization is carried out through a sort of a splash page. Sheba is portrayed as a woman of power and allure. The backstory in the komiks is replaced by exposition in the film. At the onset, the romance plot is emphasized in the film.

Figure 5: Scene in the *Haring Solomon at Reyna Sheba* fragment in which Sheba's backstory is elaborated

Similar to the Solomon backstory, Sheba's captures key moments in her queenship.

Of the three films that have survived, *Rodrigo de Villa* is the most fragmentary. The jumbled status of the scenes that have remained in the surviving copy has prevented a thorough comparison between the source text and the target text. However, the komiks also presents a key moment wherein the protagonist is yet to be established as a hero-warrior.

Figure 6: Rodrigo de Villa introduced to the community



The legend of Rodrigo de Villa begins as he starts to seek the identity of his true father.

The deployment of the temporal mode in the three stories is exemplified by the emphasis paid on momentous events that are part of the conventions of the medieval film. The entire plot is prepared for this sort of climactic highlights. Firstly, there is the prologue about the hero—who he is and how he became so adept in swordmanship and in combat. The scenes from *Rodrigo de Villa* (shown above) depict the hero's origins, and so are the scenes from *Sohrab at Rustum*.

Figure 7: The legend of Rustum (Rustum's legendary prowess in swordmanship is highlighted in the prologue of *Sohrab at Rustum*.)

If the protagonist is already a powerful man like Solomon, the highlight is placed on his ability to maintain peace and harmony in the kingdom and his prowess in physically taking charge of his people's safety.

Figure 8: Solomon as warrior

Projecting "moments" of Solomon's prowess in swordmanship transforms him a into quasi-historical figure in both Biblical and secular literatures.

Meanwhile, for Rodrigo de Villa, the key moment is tied to his pursuit of identity. The early life of Rodrigo is characterized by confusion as he tries to leave their village to seek his real father.

Figure 9: Rodrigo, before the adventures begin.

The feudal setting and circumstances forced Rodrigo to find his father.

Aside from the central hero, there is an assembly of characters belonging to different social classes. There are kings and princesses; there are generals and bold warriors. There are foot soldiers and ordinary vassals. Princesses seek their match in the fiercest warriors—the way Aristhea (the Persian princess) has set her eyes on Rustum.

Figure 10: Of nobles and commoners.

Princesses like Aristhea have set their eyes on the greatest warriors.

Part of the temporal vision is the existence of royal courts perennially at odds with each other. On one side of the world, a kingdom exists and poses a threat to the harmony and balance of the other. The Tartars here are a formidable enemy of the Persians. Their protracted war based on enmity and suspicion redounds to a series of momentous occasions that will culminate in a large-scale war.

Figure 11: Opposing kingdoms.

Romances always contain plots that feature warring kingdoms and star-crossed lovers.

Social classes in *Rodrigo de Villa* consist of Dukes and Infantas. They are a small network of people which wields and prescribes the momentous occasions in the epical story through their specific function in the narrative. A noble is not expected to marry down nor a noblewoman marry a fatherless commoner like Rodrigo. However, the medieval romance serves as a site where these kinds of social norms on marital arrangements may be breached or put to question.

Figure 12: Of courtship between equals.

The temporal plane is visited by noble men and the ladies of their dreams.

One of the most important conventions of the romance/epic is the depiction of large battles and single combats. This would require an assembly of characters and elaborate settings. The battle scenes are prolonged and the single combats—well-choreographed by 1950s standards—project a mood or atmosphere of adventure to enhance the conflict in an epical scale. In battle scenes, high-angle and low-angle shots are used to illustrate two levels of fighting.

Figure 13: Large battles and single combat (komiks and film treatment)

Large-scale wars are regular scenes in medieval romances.