To highlight individuals in momentous occasions, there is the single combat. For example, Sohrab goes on a quest to find his father. Unfortunately though, through the deployment of the mistaken identity motif, father and son fight and one of them gets killed.

Figure 14: Final confrontation.

From top left to right: Sohrab's campaign and the duel between Sohrab and Rustum.

To approximate the temporal plane in its most momentous occasions, the convention of the korido is invoked in the denouement of the stories. In *Sohrab at Rustum*, the death of Sohrab is presented in both a tragic and a triumphant note. In the final scene, Rustum carries the dead body of his son Sohrab with so much torment and regret.

A major "moment" in a medieval film is the preparation for the ultimate battle in a hero's lifetime. In the case of *Haring Solomon and Reyna Sheba*, the key moment selected is the rescue of Sheba and her son from their

abductors. Although fictitious, this detail serves a function by introducing a picture of Solomon as warrior, apart from his usual depiction as a wise judge and temple builder.

Figure 15: Impending wars as ultimate momentous occasions.

Heroes prepare for wars to fulfill their duty as nobility or as loyal servant to their monarch.

Meanwhile, every medieval film, like all other sub-genres of romances, is also the story of a Bildung—a man's coming of age. In the case of Rodrigo de Villa, his Bildung's story is linked to the discovery of his true identity.
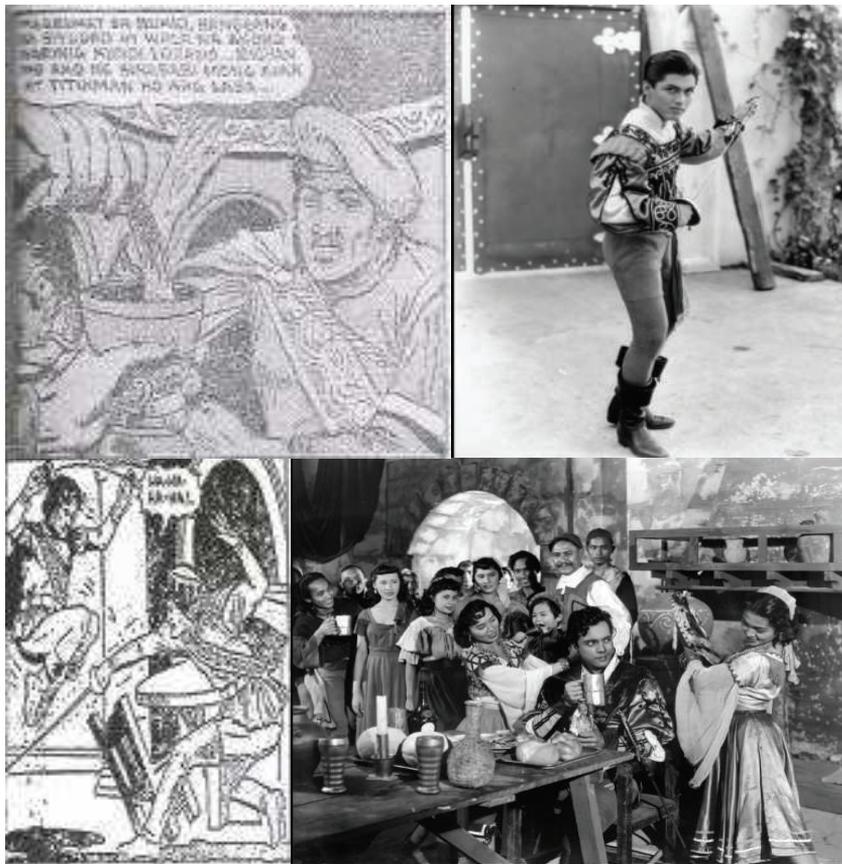
Figure 16: The journey to self-knowledge.

Heroes like Rodrigo de Villa embark to find their true identity.

Medieval temporality is propelled by selecting and depicting key moments from true events in the social world and melding these with the fictional. The said social world greatly aids in enhancing the character formation of the Bildung/hero. This trope is greatly assisted by a concept of hierarchy or a sense of order that is central to a culture devoted to duty and honor. Commoners and nobles therefore perform certain roles that affirm their status in the rigid medieval world. Placing the hero in this medieval social world set-up is tantamount to putting to a test his idea of collective values.

Figure 17: Feudal hierarchies and medieval social world of the Bildung.

Depiction of social class as part of spatial temporality.

Similar to epics and romances, the medieval film also deploys the motif of the eternal triangle. In *Sohrab at Rustum*, the triangle is played out by Rustum, Aristhea and Zimar.

Figure 18: The Eternal Triangle in the Romance Plot

Rustum and Aristhea in a one-sided love affair.

As in most historical romances, the hero, in an ironic twist of fate, will fall for the princess of a rival kingdom with which his own people had been engaged in a long-running bitter and violent war. The Persian Rustum here falls for the Tartar princess, Zimar, and true to form, their relationship is doomed from the very start.

Figure 19: Zimar captures Rustum's heart.

Ironically, the girl from the rival kingdom will steal the hero's heart.

Similar to *Sohrab at Rustum, Haring Solomon at Reyna Sheba* features its own interpretation of the eternal triangle motif. Solomon who is helplessly in love with Sheba is loved and cherished adoringly by the slave Fatima.

Figure 20: The Eternal Triangle in Haring Solomon

Fatima is counterpoint to Sheba.

Aside from the love quest, the hero is also in search of his true identity. For example, the half-Tartar prince Sohrab searches for his true father, the Persian Rustum. Similarly, Solomon searches for the true identity and intentions of his paramour, Sheba. Meanwhile, Rodrigo de Villa also searches for his long-lost father.

Figure 21: Identity Lost and Found

The quest for identity is an important ingredient in rendering a poignant story in a medieval film.

Meanwhile, there seems to be a compulsion for these medieval narratives to mix official histories with "creative" (anachronistic) histories. The more popular detail on Solomonic judgment, for instance, is juxtaposed with the historical meeting between the king and Sheba.

Figure 22: Temporal Biblical History

Scenes from the Bible are merged with fictional scenes in Haring Solomon at Reyna Sheba.

Furthermore, the Biblical accounts become functional in representing Solomon as a secular hero. Audiences are here obviously invited to consider the Bible as the backstory to the Solomon of myth.

Figure 23: Quasi-Historical Temporalities

The supporting characters too may be enlisted to propel subplots that may parallel the main plot. For example, the subordinate characters, such as Myras, Hadad and Tokor in *Haring Solomon at Reyna Sheba*, are fictional, and they have been added to provide a sort of dramatic support to the heroic exploits of the principal heroes. They add a temporal sense to the motifs, atmosphere, and dramatic events by aiding in expanding the essential story.

Subordinate characters are also fictional and they aid in projecting a temporal break to the narrative.

One example of expanding the essential story or the kernel story in *Haring Solomon at Reyna Sheba* is the introduction of quasi-historical figures, freely interpreting the Biblical story in order to insert their participation, and adding more fictional details without totally departing from the essential story.

Figure 24: Sheba in the scheme of things

Sheba is given more fictional space to enhance the quasi-historical image of Solomon.

Another way of deploying the temporal mode is choosing an ending that will celebrate—in a triumphalist way—the restoration of the kingdoms, the reunion of the lovers, the end of wars, and, more importantly, showing the heroes as immortal. This is the ultimate expression of medieval temporality.

Figure 25: Triumphalism and Temporality

Assemblies and musical scenes serve as a means of deploying a denouement to the stories.

Outside the universe of fictional narratives, the members of the production teams of the three films however have had a double-awareness of the whole enterprise; filmmaking being a make-believe world that is also serious work. The filmmaking process is inventive but it is also palpably real in the sense that production work will one day come to an end.

Figure 26: Breaking the Fourth Wall and the Temporal Break

Studio photos document the double-awareness between the fictional and the real; the staged and the documentary; the temporal and the linear.

Outside the fictional narratives, the political economy of cinema allows for the dream of the Middle Ages to perpetuate. Movie magazines promote the movies and the persona of the actors in a ploy to make the romance of the story get intertwined with the real. The Middle Ages of curiosity, of nostalgia, and of transition re-emerge in the consciousness of the adoring public as shown in the following movie write-ups and promotional materials.

Figure 27: Promoting the "medieval" film adaptation

Top from left, Rosal Rosal stars in Sohrab at Rustum; Jaime de la Rosa and Mila del Sol as Haring Solomon at Reyna Sheba; write-up on the supporting cast of Haring Solomon at Reyna Sheba; Gregorio Fernandez, director of Rodrigo de Villa; Mario Montenegro as Rodrigo de Villa; and promotional LVN poster which includes Rodrigo de Villa.

       The pictures above depict how the temporal and the actual can co-exist in the business of filmmaking. The medieval film is a temporal art, which means that it can occupy a sense of time and space on the moment of viewing. The production photos serve to complement the temporal state of fiction. However, as the copies of these medieval films are being rescued from extinction, another temporal lifetime is being made possible through old production photos and hidden archives that annotate their process of creation.

Our own little Middle Ages: Anachronism as/and Medievalism in Komiks-to-Film Adaptation

One of the most important legacies of the Middle Ages to cinema is a concept of time that is non-liner and/or cyclic. Bildhauer (2011) elaborates this idea:

> Medieval film has played a significant but, so far, totally overlooked role in this modernist, and later postmodern, critique of time. 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. (Or as *Camelot* [dir. Joshua Logan, 1967] and the Arthurian tradition have it: time becomes a 'brief shining moment that was Camelot, and Arthur a 'once and future king'.) In postulating such a non-linear sense of time for the Middle Ages, film draws on a historiographical tradition that maintains that medieval people already perceived time in just that way: as moments rather than continuities, and as living with a sense that their future was short. (pp. 25-26)

This is the reason for the cyclic treatment of time in the film epics and its temporality. The return to the past is a sort of nostalgia that is "a continuous return" (Eco, 1983, p. 65).

Any historical or quasi-historical material treated on film runs the risk of committing anachronism. A period piece commits anachronism when it deploys elements of film such as "costumes, props, dialogues, and outlooks that are intended to convey historical authenticity yet fail to denote the factual contours of medieval life"(Pugh and Weisl, 2014, p.286). Yet, this is the risk that all historical films take. Without such creative choices, the historical genre may not progress at all. Pugh and Weisl (2014), in their article "Movie Medievalism: Five (or Six) Ways of Viewing an Anachronism," say that there are five types of anachronism, namely: naïve anachronism, abusive anachronism; serendipitous anachronism; creative anachronism; and tragic anachronism. They have adopted Thomas Greene's definition of each anachronism in a film. Naïve anachronism, for instance, "put forth no pretense of historical authenticity" (p.286).

This has been exhibited in the three (3) films examined. The total disregard for the provenance of the story and the alterations made on the film versions reflect a kind of attitude that does not value the linearity of history or the veracity of historical events. Non-linearity and anachronism are resorted to because the creative act is driven by nostalgia, rather than by an academic or even aesthetic concern for the medieval material. As Pugh and Weisl contend:

> As historiographer have long observed, history is written not simply to record the past but to create a narrative of the past for consumption in the present, and the same is true for "medieval" films and their frequent use of anachronisms to impart messages about the past through the present. Furthermore, many people learn about the Middle Ages more from the movies than from history books, and subsequent "medieval" films build on the foundations of previous cinematic endeavours rather than on historical facts, and so these jointly ahistorical foundations to the Middle Ages create interpretive frameworks particularly conducive to anachronisms (p. 286).

In the examples provided above, anachronism has almost become a creative choice. It has become a means to an end. The positive use of anachronism may be invoked through these examples. Anachronism then may be both the boon and the bane of all representational art that is intertwined in the treatment of time. As Pugl and Weisl (2014) aver:

> Anachronism is inevitable in the use of contemporary technology and media to engage the past; the present makes impossible an unmediated relationship to the past, and so, in a very real sense, anachronism is the only true history, for anachronism cannot be elided in the writings of history. (p.285)

Cua Lim (2009) calls such scenario "the survival of the past, or the refusal of anachronisms" (p.14). This is the willing acceptance of the tension between the past as linear and measured by the calendar and clock and the notion of its co-existence with the present or non-linearity. To accomplish this refusal of anachronism, the films resort to the temporal plane as a break from historical continuity. This is carried out by highlighting momentous

events that are generally embedded in medieval narratives and these are deployed through the iconography in komiks and film.

Homi Bhabha once said that mimicry is a step towards indigenization and national literature. The koridos from Europe that were introduced during the Spanish era, serialized as komiks in *Liwayway* in the 1950s, and eventually translated into films in the 1950s were borrowed plots that evoked the local. The characters, mise-en-scene, iconography, and themes were vernacularized, localized, indigenized, contextualized and hybridized in order to make them appealing to the Filipino audience of the 1950s, a decade always touted as a period of nationalism. Translation takes place via imitation, borrowing, adaptation and appropriation. In the end, the proper word that may be used to refer to this process of translation is hybridization because though the materials are foreign, the contexts are unmistakably located in the national. Borrowed plots melded quite easily with the native— in what Filipinos refer to as "sariling salin" or own translation. The more important word is "own." It assumes that translation is a form of negotiation whose end result is a formation known as the nation.

These korido materials-turned-komiks series turned film adaptations represent a period of dynamic industry where colonial legacies from Medieval Europe were invoked as a form of referencing the contexts of the 1950s. The overt aim is to entertain but the deeper connection is to the psyche. Artists and consumers of popular culture have been nostalgic about an absent past of virtue, of savagery, and of romance. This was the period when medieval rigidities clashed with modern ironies. The 1950s popular artists took to viewing the past as a site where they could continually return to. In view of such, it may be appropriate to leave the discussion with Eco's (1983) playful definition of the Middle Ages as a temporary site to understand the perennial re-appearance of medievalism in adaptation practice:

> Our own, it has been said, will be an age of "permanent transition" for which new methods of adjustment will have to be employed. The problem will not so much be that of preserving the past scientifically as of developing hypotheses for the exploitation of disorder, entering into the logic of conflictuality. There will be born—it is already coming into existence—a culture of constant readjustment, fed on utopia. This is how medieval man invented the university, with the same carefree attitude that the vagabond clerks today

assume in destroying it, and perhaps transforming it. The Middle Ages preserved in its way the heritage of the past but not through hibernation, rather through a constant retranslation and reuse; it was an immense work of bricolage, balanced among nostalgia, hope, and despair. (p. 84)

Notes

[1] This is a revised version of an article based on two conference papers. The first source of the article was the paper titled "Borrowed Plots, Local Stories: Translating European Koridos into Komiks into Films," which was read at the *8th EuroSEAS Conference* held on August 11 to 15, 2015 at the University of Vienna in Austria. The second one was titled "Medieval Temporalities in 1950s Komiks-to-Film Adaptations," which was read at *SANDAAN: Philippine Cinema Centennial Conference* held on September 14-15, 2017 at the University of the Philippines-Diliman and the College of Saint Benilde. This article will be part of a forthcoming publication by the UP Press.

[2] A precursor text or a source text of a film adaptation.

[3] A transitory text that mediate in between a source text and its destination text. An example would be the discipline texts from universities that tackled the Vietnam War and these served as tunnel from the text (the war itself) to other texts (literature and film, for example). (Palmer, 1993).

[4] The *Liwayway* komiks series original of *Sohrab at Rustum* was illustrated by Maning P. de Leon for two installments and by Ben Alcantara from the third episode until the end of the series. It was perhaps one of the shortest komiks series published in the *Liwayway*. The LVN film adaptation premiered on November 21, 1950 at Life Theater while the komiks series was still running.

[5] Bible-based and Bible-inspired stories were regularly featured in the magazines in the 1950s and these have plots that take liberties at interpreting their canonical sources. Examples are "Dimas" (*Liwayway Magazine*), "Ang Tungkod ni Moises" (*Bulaklak Magazine*) and "Salapi ni Judas" (*Ilang-Ilang Magazine*).

[6] Eugenio (1987) in her book titled *Awit at Korido: Philippine Metrical Romances* identifies a number of existing versions of the Solomon story. Rendered in four different local languages, the Philippine versions of the Solomon story include the following:

308. SOLOMON (KING)

(Tag) Salita at buhaynang Haring Salomon na anac nang profeta at haring si DAVID. Manila: Imprenta de A-Nam and Co., 1901. 70 pp. 8. Valladolid.

(Pamp) Corrido qng bien ang querala nanning Aring SOLOMON aanac ning profeta at aringDAVID.Caduanang pangalimbag. Baculud: C.P. Byron. 1920. 72 pp. 7 sts./p.

(Bkl) Buhay na pinag-aguihan nin Hadeng Salomon naaquinin profetana hadeng siDAVID.Guiniboasin pina-imprentani Nicolas Arriate. Naga City: Cecilio Press, n.d. (2 parts) Pt. 1, 24, pp.9 sts/p; Pt. II, 33 pp. 9 sts./p.

(Hilig) Vida ni HARING SOLOMON. Mandurriao: Imprenta, Libreria y Encuadernacion, 1920. (2 parts).Pt.I, 32 pp. 33-60.(p.354)

The above entry identifies four Philippine version of the story told in Tagalog, Kapampangan, Bicolano and Hiligaynon languages.

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[7] One can hazard a number of conjectures why the medieval film became popular in the 1950s. One is that the film epic genre—a form that traces its roots from the medieval romance—was very popular in the 1950s because it had established a huge following in previous eras. Another is that the subject matter of the films drew heavily from previous forms that drew from stories imported from Europe or Oriental stories re-fashioned using European elements. Yet another conjecture may require a serious and longer investigation: Certain legacies of the European Middle Ages were all over Filipino narrative forms and have been localized and have melded successfully with indigenous forms.

[8] This article is part of a longer work that attempts to theorize on Filipino film adaptation. There were twelve extant komiks with extant film adaptations found. Of the twelve, four were based on koridos.

[9] In the komiks version of *Haring Solomon at Reyna Sheba*, the queen hails from Egypt and this may have been freely derived from the small footnote in the bible that mentions Solomon's marriage to the daughter of the pharaoh of Egypt. The film refers to Sheba as a land in Arabia but contemporary geographical sources locate it elsewhere in Ethiopia and Yemen. The film may probably be trying to be more "accurate" than the komiks story in changing Egypt to Arabia by using contemporary geography as reference.

The Jerusalem Bible reports that Solomon ruled between 970 and 931 B.C. During his reign, Israel engaged in commercial activities with Phoenicia and Arabia; therefore, the interest in Sheba. Furthermore, the Jerusalem Bible mentions in a footnote a number of details pertaining to Sheba's origin:

> The kingdom of Sheba was the S.W. [Southwestern] portion of the Arabian peninsula, but the queen mentioned ruled more probably over one of the Sabaean settlements of North Arabia. The Hebrew Bible distinguishes between the more usual Sheba (used here) and Seba which it associates more closely with Cush, or Ethiopia. (I Kings, 10:14, p. 433).

[10] The progression of the film plot parallels that of the komiks: The slaying of the dragon by Rustum of the Persians; Rustum's travel to the land of the Tartars to ask the king Aramid to pay tribute to the Persians; The wooing of Zimar, the Tartar princess; Rustum's return to Persia; The plot of the jealous Persian princess, Aristhea, to earn Rustum's love; Rustum's refusal to love Aristhea and his subsequent imprisonment; Rustum's escape and the love tryst with Zimar; The birth of Sohrab, Rustum's and Zimar's son; The second arrest of Rustum; Sohrab's coming of age and his offering of his services to the King Aramid; Sohrab's wooing of Lelila; Sohrab's search for his father to ask Lelila's hand in marriage; The single combat between father and son and the wounding of Sohrab; and finally the revelation of their true identities.

The minor details that may be considered departures from the komiks include the film prologue where Rustum's background, his unusual strength, and ability in swordmanship have only been dealt with in an expository manner.

[11] The film merges the drawing styles of the two artists responsible for the komiks illustration. De Leon's outlines are noticeably rugged and the treatment of scenes quite dark and raw. Alcantara's illustration, which begins in the 3rd chapter, has clearer borders and more defined outlines. The drawings of characters in Alcantara's sketch evoke playfulness and drama. In addition to projecting character types, the interior and exterior backdrops he designed help portray character motivations.

[12] The usual tropes of the korido are apparent in the komiks and film and these include the following: warring kingdoms; helpless women to be rescued; the hero gaining superhuman strength through some magical means; the siring of a child with a woman from a rival kingdom; the destructive wrath of a scorned princess; and, lost foundlings soon to be reunited with their parents. Some residual influences of the korido find their way to the komiks and the film version has provided analogies to these. The film captures the grand sweep of the precursor story version by assembling quite a number of characters, a move that is in keeping with the conventions of the epic genre.

13. *Sohrab at Rustum* is sometimes rendered in epical form. In 2007, The Cultural Section of the Embassy of Islamic Republic of Iran in Manila published the book titled *Anthology of selected Persian (Iran) classic literary works*, which carried the entire Ferdowsi epic.

[14] Unfortunately, almost one-third of the film version of *Haring Solomon at Reyna Sheba* is now lost. The fragment starts when Sheba is about to escape Israel with her lady-in-waiting, Myras. The portions of the film prior to this scene are no longer intact.

[15] In the film, the cunning and deceitful nature of Sheba is different from Mila del Sol's portrayal of the queen. Del Sol comes across as strong-willed and stubborn. The Sheba in the komiks comes off as playful, wily and dangerous.

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