

# THE ILLUSTRATED PRESS



Official Organ of the Kapisanan ng mga Publistista at mga Patnugot ng mga Komiks-Magasin sa Pilipino

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## Striving for relevance

# Illustrated magazines in the New Society

The most striking feature of present-day local komiks-magazines, compared to those before martial law, is the inclusion of information and educational materials in their otherwise all-illustrated contents.

Going through the pages of any issue, the reader will find articles on this and that government project, write-ups on this and that social amelioration campaign, and tips on family planning, proper nutrition, tree planting and the like.

Much of the "credit" for this welcome change from their purely entertainment orientation is due to the komiks-magazine publishers and editors. Where before they gave the readers what they wanted, now they also give the readers what they need to make them better and more responsible citizens.

Increasing use of these illustrated magazines, not to mention the emphasis on constructive values in the story themes.

With the Commission on Population and the Communications Foundation for Asia, the KPPKP sponsored recently a novelette contest on responsible parenthood. Some ten illustrated magazines took part. The contest was designed to boost and promote the family planning program. The winning writers and illustrators were awarded cash prizes and plaques.

The Commission on Population will reprint the winning entries; and one of the entries will be made into a 30-minute movie feature by the National Media Production Center. The reprints and the motion picture



ASIONG AKSAYA IN KPPKP MEMBERS' PUBLICATIONS

Also proper nutrition, social security, ecology, agrarian reform, family planning and information on labor relations.

will be used as motivational materials for family planning.

The KPPKP is also helping the komiks-magazine for every publication member carries the "Pitak Manggagawa"), a regular question-and-answer column prepared by the Institute of Labor and Manpower Services of the DOL.

Several illustrated magazines regularly carry information bulletins about the Social Security System for the benefit of SSS members. One of the magazines publishes a regular one-frame cartoon that keeps the public informed about SSS rules and regulations.

The First Lady's nutrition program is also earnestly supported by the illustrated magazines. Posters and articles on proper nutrition prepared by the Nutrition Communications Office of the National Media

Production Center are given the widest exposure. So are the information news items on agrarian reform, also coming from the NMP's Agrarian Reform Communication Unit.

This information and educational materials are in addition to the articles from the Bureau of National and Foreign Information regularly released for publication to the illustrated magazines. Dealing on vital government projects and programs, these BNFI releases give effective exposure and penetration in the rural areas through the illustrated magazines.

The information sections of komiks-magazines are not confined to government materials. Several magazines continue to solicit and accept materials from contributors. They are expected to widen the horizons of their readers important to his every day life. Or to wean him away from age-old superstitions, replacing them with new ideas and new values.

Komiks-magazines are now faced with the task of entertaining their readers, as well as informing and educating them at the same time. Considering that they are read mainly for entertainment, komiks-magazines expect from readers a certain amount of resistance to non-entertainment features.

The KPPKP publisher-members are determined, however, to make their publications relevant to the challenge of change. If they can do this, the illustrated magazines can claim their rightful place in the new social order.

## Why a KPPKP?



KPPKP MEMBERS DURING A MEETING. A tall order, but in unity, it can be done.

The Kapisanan ng mga Publistista at mga Patnugot ng mga Komiks-Magasin sa Pilipino (KPPKP) was formed in 1972, a few months after martial law was proclaimed.

It is not a new group. Or a new idea. As early as the mid-50s, komiks-magazine publishers had already organized themselves into a self-regulating body. It was known as the Association of Publishers and Editors of Philippine Comics-Magazines - or APEPCOM.

The APEPCOM was led by writer-cartoonist-publisher Tony Velasquez, then later by the late writer-critic Clodualdo del Mundo. Under their leadership, the Association drew up a "Golden Code" - a set of do's and don'ts - to guide their members. The idea was to produce clean, wholesome magazines to counteract the "bomba comics" which were then fast gaining ground and polluting the minds of the young.

Proclamation 1081 turned the tide in favor of the legitimate publishers and saved the komiks-magazine industry from collapse.

APEPCOM was resurrected, but this time, imbued with the spirit of intense nationalism pervading the New Society, the members opted for a Filipino name. They agreed that publishers of the illustrated magazines should unite - in competition - to maximize their participation in the herculean task of restructuring Philippine society.

As a result, the Kapisanan broadened the scope of the defunct APEPCOM's "Golden Code." A new set of guidelines (published elsewhere in this issue) was adopted to make the komiks-magazines not only purveyors of clean, wholesome entertainment, but also credible and effective disseminators of relevant information.

It is a little known fact that the first group in mass media to organize during martial law were the komiks-magazine publishers.

"Golden Code" as model for formulating the new guidelines for print media.

Now in its fifth year, the KPPKP is ever vigilant in seeing to it that their publications are not only entertaining but also relevant to the aims and objectives of the New Society.

It's a tall order, but in unity the members believe it can be done.

## Illustrated Komiks media regulates 7,000 islands itself

Some 44 different komiks-magazines being published by 12 KPPKP member-publishers are monitored weekly by a media evaluator employed by the Kapisanan.

The evaluator reads each issue from cover to cover to search for even the most minor infraction of the KPPKP guidelines. She evaluates the contents, placing special emphasis on the values projected by the stories.

The report of the evaluator is then forwarded to the Committee of Publishers of the KPPKP. Chaired by the Kapisanan president, the Committee studies the findings of the evaluator during its regular monthly meetings.

Infractions of the guidelines are classified as minor, grave, very grave and extremely grave. The infractions are dealt with by the Committee only after the offending party has given his side.

For the first violation of any given section of the guidelines, a minor infraction gets a warning from the Committee. A fine of P50 is slapped on the offender for a grave violation, P100 for a very grave violation, and P500 if the infraction is considered extremely grave. (Please turn to page 7)

From Batanes in the North to Jolo in the South, komiks-magazines are read by more Filipinos than any other printed medium.

It is not surprising. Some two million copies of 44 titles, by 12 publishers, are sold every week. They are dispatched by van, bus and train in Luzon and by ship and plane to Visayas and Mindanao, where readers of all ages await the next installment of their favorite komiks strips.

They are farmers, farm laborers, fishermen, miners, factory and office workers, government employees, proprietors, and people of every occupation and profession, including housewives and students. They are the nation's mass elite, gainfully employed, literate and intelligent.

### Mass Audience

An accurate count of their number is difficult, but a calculation can be made based on the actual circulation figures of all the komiks-magazines. It has been estimated that there are six readers for every copy bought. Two million (Please turn to page 3).

## Why the 'Illustrated Press'?

The press is made up of newspapers and periodicals whose function is to inform and entertain.

Our komiks-magazines now constitute a significant sector of the Philippine press. And what distinguishes them is their illustrations. This is their unique characteristic which sets them apart from other printed media.

Thus, the name - the illustrated press.

There was a time when the komiks-magazines were meant only to entertain. That was long years ago. Since then, they have slowly evolved into effective vehicles of information and education, especially for people in the rural areas.

This growing emphasis on the information function became more (Please turn to page 6)

## Changing images of heroes in local comics

by Karina Constantino-David

The heroes and heroines of comic short stories after the declaration of Martial Law are not confined to the ranks of the masses. Although the common tao continuously dominates the scene for heroism, the rich man now emerges as a hero from his previous role as villain. Also, the underlying conflict between classes does not appear.

The dominant preoccupation of the common man is still the problem of survival and escape from poverty. However, poverty is no longer portrayed as oppressive; now a justification or rationalization for the existence in the midst of poverty is possible and the poor are just as blessed as the rich.

The scene of success also shifts from the city to the barrio. The cry is for a return to a peaceful barrio life. Very much in line with the

Green Revolution program, the return to an agricultural community is portrayed as the solution to poverty.

### 1. Getting Ahead

a) As viewed 'by' heroes of the barrio.

The concept of the city as the scene of wealth and opportunity still remains. However, much more emphasis is given to the barrio as the new hope of the poor. Compared to pre-Martial Law stories, city life is presented in a negative way as a technique of showing the advantages of the barrio. Stories like "Ang Maabilidad at ang Matatnayan" show the hero, mesmerized by the glitter of city life, getting trapped by its life. (Please turn to page 6)

# The "KOMIKEROS"

## 1-The man who started it all

by Efen R. Abueg

### ANTONIO S. VELASQUEZ



Tony and Kenko



Tony Velasquez

When he "retired" a few years ago, he did not fade away as old soldiers do. He merely stepped to the sideline, still writing with the same vigor and zest his favorite komiks characters and subjects.

Even if he chooses to stop completely from indulging in his art form, he will always be remembered. For Antonio S. Velasquez is more than a cartoonist-writer. He is an institution.

Together with Don Ramon Roces, the pioneer komiks publisher, Tony, as he is fondly called, saw the phenomenon of komiks-magazines in this country. From a circulation of only 10,000 copies fortnightly in 1947, they have grown to their present peak of two million copies weekly. And they are still growing.

Much of the prestige and quality of their technology and techniques, can be traced to these two men. Don Ramon was the visionary. Tony was the transformer of that vision to reality.

Their collaboration was so successful that the komiks-magazines which started out as a much degraded, much maligned pulp magazine, has evolved and developed into a big industry employing the talents and craftsmanship of hundreds of creative writers, artists and technicians.

In fact, the komiks-magazines has become a force for good in the community and by helping the government in spreading to the countryside its projects on family planning, water and energy conservation, vegetable gardening and the like.

Tony began his career as a 17-year old employee of Banaag Press (located then at Commandante St., Sta. Cruz, Manila). He was later hired as an advertising illustrator of Lwayway in 1928. The vernacular magazine was edited by Severino Reyes of "Walang Sugat" fame.

It was at this time that Tony completed with honors a course in advertising layout techniques with the Federal School of Arts, a U.S. correspondence school. However, a career in advertising was not destined to be his lifetime calling.

In the late twenties, periodicals were still characterized by patriotic writings and heavy "romanticizing." Romualdo Ramos, advertising translator of Lwayway, thought it a good idea if the magazine could help make people laugh. Besides, it could be a circulation booster. He suggested to the editors that Lway-

way put out a cartoon. Velasquez would do the graphics and he would furnish the humor.

The partnership clicked but it did not last long due to the untimely death of Ramos. Velasquez did the strip solo.

"Mga Kabalutagan ni Kenko", a four-frame comic strip, was born. Its main character was a typical ukolek-wielding teenager of the period in London-style, balloon trousers. The strip was a hit with Lwayway readers. It soon occupied half a page or six frames. Not long after "Kenko" was given its due recognition—a full-page exposure. Composer Nicanor Abelardo was impressed, too. With notes drawn by Velasquez himself and the lyrics written by Jose Corazon de Jesus, Abelardo popularized a musical composition, the "Kenko Blues". Young people went a-crazy for Kenko. They imitated his Valentino hair, high-waisted trousers, swashbuckling posture and "bamboo English."

Decades later someone would write: Velasquez thus was able to record the entire era between wars in "Kenko". If his draughtmanship toward the end was too formal, his insight of that world never dulled. "Kenko" and his family, his neighbors and sweethearts, were all mirror of the manners and morals of a time completely gone by.

Tony soon picked out among Kenko's friends and sweethearts a typical outgoing woman of the time, and created another comic strip, "Ponyang Halabuyab". Ponyang was the complete opposite of Rosa, a Maria Clara-type woman whom Kenko was so much in love with and hell-bent in winning. His colleagues would also be bitten by the comic strip bug. Juan M. Perez created "Pamboy at Osang" and "Huwapelo Akong".

It is interesting to note that during this time, Pedro Reyes, son of Don Severino Reyes, together with artist Francisco Reyes, serialized a full-length illustrated adventure story entitled "Kulafu", a local Tarzan. Francisco V. Coching followed suit by creating "Marabini" and "Hagibis" which he himself illustrated.

The "strip" had thus taken on a new form and content. From pure humor it turned to adventure; from a one-page, one-episode strip complete in an issue, it became a two-page serialization. "Komiks" as it will be popularly called later was

ready to assimilate subjects and characters that were never touched upon before.

WORLD WAR II apparently aborted the transformation of the "strip" to the komiks we know of today. Japanese military authorities shut down all publications except the few which became their mouthpieces. Tony, an advertising illustrator in the Graphic, lost his job and tried to survive the war by taking odd jobs.

In 1945 after the war, Tony put up an advertising agency of his own, The Velasquez Advertising Agency. He was the first to enter the field. But he soon gave up the agency. Don Ramon Roces offered Tony to edit a komiks-magazine entirely illustrated and containing not just humor but adventure, detective and drama serials. The challenge was too tempting to turn down. Tony again joined Don Ramon and organized Ace Publications. The first issue of Pilipino Komiks came out in June, 1947. The initial print order was 10,000 copies fortnightly. The issue contained, among others, Francisco Coching's "Bertong Bata", Dany Velasquez's "Princess Urduga" (a detective thriller) and "Princesa Urduga" by Vicente Manansala. Among the pioneers were illustrators, aside from Coching and Manansala, Jesse Santos and Fred Carrillo, and cartoonists Larry Alcalá, J. Zabala Santos and Deo Gonzales.

The fully illustrated magazine was a hit. After a year, cash dividends were distributed to its stockholders. Three other komiks-magazines were subsequently put up: Tagalog Klasiks (1949), Hawazga Komiks (1950) and Espesyal Komiks (1952). The "strip" filled a need to make people laugh again and forget "the horrible nightmare" of the Japanese occupation.

Only Abelardo was the only person responsible for the phenomenal growth of komiks-magazines. Clodualdo del Mundo, a critic and editor, had his share of glory. Lwayway gave its readers adventure, mystery and drama and paved the way for the acceptance of komiks as popular reading material for the masses. Mari Ravallo, too, of "Rita" fame became one of the best komiks writers.

Tony was not content, however, with the success of the komiks. He felt a sense of responsibility to the komiks readers. With Clodualdo del Mundo and other pioneers of the industry, he organized the Association of Publishers and Editors of Philippine Comics Magazine (APEPCOM) to promote the moral welfare of the komiks-reading public by publishing only "clean, wholesome, entertaining and educational strips." The members of the Association practiced not only self-censorship but also exchange censorship—an arrangement whereby a komiks publication called the attention of another publication for infractions of the rules and guidelines of the APEPCOM.

In 1952, Tony organized Graphic Arts Service, Inc. putting out four more komiks-magazines: Aliwan, Holiday, Pioneer and Pinoy, and a movie magazine, Kislap. All these magazines are now household names in the country.

Tony can rest on his laurels and retire secure in the knowledge that he has contributed much to establishing an institution. And yet he continues to work.

This time, however, he has no deadline to beat, no need printing to worry about and no slow-poke illustrators to contend with. Though his friends and associates miss him, his achievement will live on like the komiks which always will be among us. ●

## "Paano ba ginagawa ang komiks?"

# HERE'S HOW

ART and technology go hand in hand in producing a komiks magazine. The practitioners of the art — writers and illustrators — are a distinct breed. Products of the school of hard knocks, they are keenly observant and extraordinarily imaginative.

Komiks-magazine writers rely much on the encyclopedia and other information sources for story materials. It is not surprising that not a few writers are as much at home with down-to-earth subjects as with out-of-this-world themes.

Our top-ranking illustrators can compare with the best in the world. Many pioneer komiks-magazine illustrators — Redondo, Alcalá, Carrillo, Santos, to name a few — now work for leading comic-book pub-

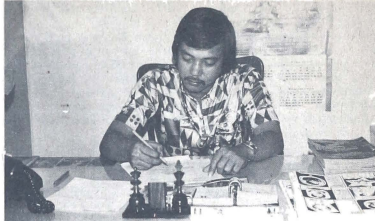
lishers in the United States and Europe. They offer stiff competition to foreign illustrators. This is surprising, considering that most illustrators seldom had formal schooling in commercial arts.

Most komiks-magazines are printed by offset presses that are capable of four-color impressions in a single run. Sophisticated electronic machines do the color-separation work for the covers, mostly with movie stars as subjects. Highly skilled craftsmen take over from the electronic gadgets for the conventional four-color processing of line drawing.

On this page, The Illustrated Press presents a photo essay on how a komiks-magazine is produced.



The story line is conceived and hatched in the imagination of the writer. Hazy at first, it gradually takes form as the experienced writer produces frame after frame of the story on his typewriter.



The komiks script is copytyped by the editor, ever mindful of the KPPKC guidelines and the competition. The story must not only be entertaining but also relevant to the times we live in. In some cases, editor and writer collaborate on the story line for nobelas, in the belief (and rightly so) that two heads are better than one.



The edited script goes to the illustrators for the art work. Using ink and brush, the artist translates into line drawings the ideas of the scriptwriter. Veteran illustrators can speedily interpret the script into drawings using only the captions (or narrations) and dialogues. But writers usually give illustration guides or instructions for the benefit of the less experienced.

## KPPKP slates seminar

A seminar-workshop aimed at making the illustrated magazine more relevant to the times has been agreed upon by the Publishers Committee of the KPPKP during one of its regular meetings.

The seminar-workshop will be held early next year. Editor-members of the Kapisanan are expected to participate. Resource persons shall come from the PCPM and government and academic sectors.

## Ravelo joins KPPKP

Mars Ravelo, one of the Philippines renowned komiks-magazine novelists, recently joined the KPPKP in his capacity as publisher and editor of RAR Publications.

Ravelo's company publishes the *Weekly Bulaklak at Paruparo*, *Mars Ravelo Komiks-Magasin*, *Teenworld Magazine* and *Kampeon Komiks-Magasin*.

### KPPKP

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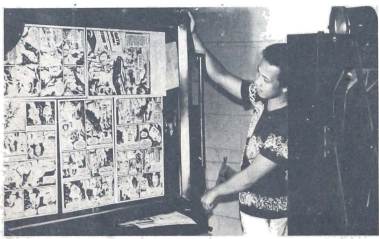
Damian S. Velasquez

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The text for the captions and dialogues are hand-printed on the original by the lettering-artist. The original then goes to the proofreader who checks typographical errors, and afterwards to the retoucher for the finishing touches. Then, back again to the editor for the final once-over.



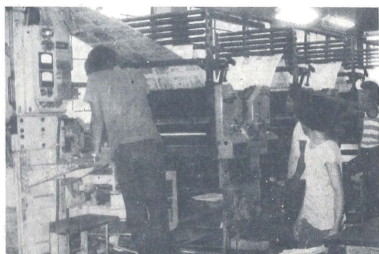
The camera-ready material goes to the printer where the originals, measuring 10" x 16", are reduced by the camera to komiks-sized negatives, IBM-typeset text of articles pasted on layout sheets and accompanying photographs also go through the same procedure.



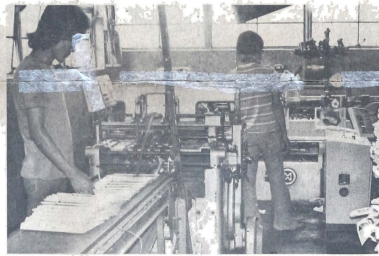
The negatives go to the stripping department. Here they are laid out in flats. Against the lights under the stripping table glass, the stripper deftly cuts through the golden rod to apply this and that type of screen for the desired colors, or carefully erases unwanted lines or retouches imperfectly reproduced letters and images.



The flats end up in the plate-making section, where skilled technicians transfer the negative prints into positives on aluminum plates, again through the magic of the printing press camera and chemicals.



The aluminum plates are wrapped around the plate cylinders for the actual press run. Komiks-magazines are printed by modern offset presses, as the one pictured here, which are capable of four-color impressions in a single run at 18,000 impressions an hour.



The printed pages come out of the press already folded. They are fed into an automatic stitching machine with a three-blade trimmer. Printers have to use high-speed modern presses to produce a combined circulation of some 2,000,000 copies weekly.

## KOMIKS BRIDGING

(From Page 1)

copies multiplied by six readers give 12 million Filipinos, who read komiks-magazines regularly.

The number is really much more if those who borrow or rent their copy are counted. They will bring the total up to 16 million readers. Compared to the population of 44 million, 16 million readers represent a diffusion rate of 1 to 4. That puts the komiks-magazine in the category of a truly mass medium.

### Readership Profile

A recent survey reveals some startling facts about the komiks-magazine reader. He is an adult, married, with a high school or college education. And he is more than not a female, which means there are more female than male readers. This is because housewives who hold the purse and decide what to buy for the family make up 17% of the

readership.

### Lifestyle of Readers

It is not true, then, that komiks-magazines are read only by children and teenagers. Out of every 100 readers interviewed by the survey, only 40 are 19 years of age or below; 60 are adults.

The survey also shows that they belong to socio-economic classes that follow closely the class segmentation of the population. This is visually described by a pyramid, where 4% are found in AB Homes, at the apex of the pyramid, followed by C Homes and D Homes with 38% and 41% respectively, and finally the E Homes with 17% forming the base of the pyramid.

As to the lifestyle of komiks-magazine readers, it has been found that 54% rent or lease their dwelling places, 40% own their homes, 79% have radios, 64% have TV sets, 47% have refrigerators and 13% own cars or jeeps.

While komiks-magazine readers are not affluent, they spend P1.7 million weekly or P88.4 million a year on komiks-magazines. This is a worthwhile subject to look into by

marketers interested in reaching the mass market.

However, all these statistics and figures can be boiled down to one simple conclusion; that the komiks-magazine is here to stay as part and parcel of the Filipino home and family.

### Reasons for Appeal

What are the reasons for the popular appeal of the komiks-magazine?

First of all, it is cheap at 85 centavos a copy, cheaper than seeing a movie or buying a pack of cigarettes. Secondly, it is visual and illustrated, easy to read and understand, even for those who have only a nodding acquaintance with the Filipino language. Third, it is in color and in a size handy to hold and convenient to read. Fourth, it is often times for most Filipinos, especially in the rural areas, the only source of entertainment. And of course, it is the easiest method of gaining knowledge and information about science, philosophy, sex, fashions or any new idea about modern life.

The komiks-magazine is, more-

over, a creator of advertising wants.

It plants in the minds of its readers new wants, new desires, new consumption requirements. The entire range of accessories and cosmetics, belts, bags and shoes are implanted in them. It stimulates mass consumption, and, thereby, mass production and a yearning for a higher standard of living.

### Unifying Force

Although it is true that the daily newspapers are the vehicles of news and information in the big cities and towns, they do not reach the large rural areas and barrios outside the poblaciones. Only the komiks-magazines do. Because they come out weekly, they have all the time to travel long distances and reach every nook and corner of the countryside.

In a nation such as the Philippines with diverse cultures and different dialects, the komiks-magazine has served as the unifying force, the communication link, of the people in 7,000 islands. Their reading of the komiks-magazines has brought them to an awareness of a national identity through the enjoyment and

appreciation of a common art form.

### New Role

That is why government agencies now realize the importance of komiks-magazines as an effective medium for mass communication. Whether it is a national campaign for family planning or against pollution, the komiks-magazines are here to lend their support to inform and educate the people.

It is for this reason that the komiks-magazines have since departed from the old form of pure komiks. Their illustrations are now decent and wholesome, and in their stories justice and good always emerge victorious in the end. But that is not all. There are now pages in every issue devoted to the latest news, edited and written in simple language, and to feature articles on how to plant corn or how to use fertilizer in a vegetable patch.

A keen observer of the Philippine scene recently said, "Komiks-magazines are no longer funny." In a true sense, he is correct, for today the komiks-magazines have assumed a new role, a new responsibility, by participating in the serious business of nation-building. ●

# A new breed of illustrated magazines

One thing about our local illustrated magazines is that most of them have English titles: Pioneer, Holiday, Movie Specials, Modern Kayumangsi, Love Story, Heart Throbs, Romantic and Superstar.

Only a few have Filipino titles: Hiwaga, Pilipino, Wakasan, Aliwan, Tagalog and Kidlat.

Some titles have Spanish origin: Espesyal, Diamante, and Kampeon.

One even sounds Frenchy: 'Lamor.

But all of them have something in common — besides the fact that they are all illustrated — they strive to communicate in a clear, simple and direct way, using whichever

language is more understood by the readers.

That is why we encounter now and then English words in the novels and short stories, especially in the feature articles about motion pictures and movie stars.

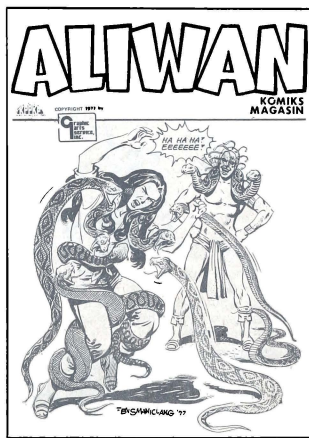
Long before our educational system began using two languages in schools, our magazines were already using English and Spanish in their text. As a matter of fact, Kenko, the first comic strip character, uses "bay gali" (by golly) as his favorite expression.

The titles of the first komiks magazines, however, were in Pilipino (or Tagalog, if you please): Pilipino Komiks, Tagalog Klasiks and Hiwaga Komiks. But publishers in their

desire to reach and attract more readers, started using English titles which could be understood (and remembered) easily in the non-Tagalog regions. Hence, the titles like Superstar, Holiday, Short Stories, Lovelife, etc.

The English titles and bilingualism, however, do not detract from the nationalist character of the magazines. Most of their storylines are about the Filipino and his way of life. Even in Western-oriented themes or situations (for example, a serial featuring an astronaut) the hero is a Filipino.

On this spread, *The Illustrated Press* presents some titles of KPPKP publisher-members. We will feature the other titles in succeeding issues.



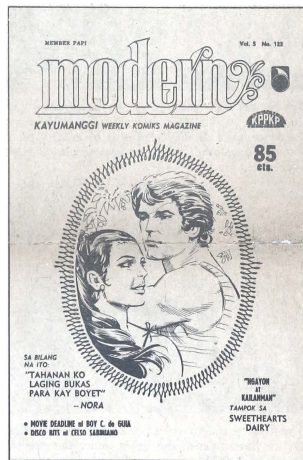
Clean, wholesome, challengingly stimulating.



Consistently dynamic movie articles and illustrated novels.



Accentuates only the positive to help in the molding of character of the youths.



Gives break to deserving new writers and illustrators.

## Directory of KPPKP members

The Kapisanan ng mga Publalista at mga Patnugot ng mga Komiks-Magasin sa Pilipino (KPPKP) is composed of publishers and editors representing twelve publishing companies.

The Illustrated Press is published monthly by the Kapisanan ng mga Publalista at mga Patnugot ng mga Komiks-Magasin sa Pilipino (KPPKP) with editorial offices at 105 Don A. Rocas Ave., Quezon City, R.R. Marcelino, editor.

PCPM Certificate of Registration No. 967

**ACE PUBLICATIONS, INCORPORATED**, 105 Don A. Rocas Avenue, Quezon City, Francisco C. Zamora, General Manager; Ramon R. Marcelino, Editor-in-Chief; Jose R. Martinez, Editor, *Pogi Star Cine-magazine* and *Hapi-Hapi Weekly Komex Magazine*; Rino Fernan Silvera, Editor, *Bondyng Weekly Movie Specials*.

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**ADVENTURES ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINES, INC.**, 28 Scout Reyes, Quezon City, Damian S. Velasquez, Manager and Managing Editor, *Love Story Illustrated Weekly Magazine*.

**ATLAS PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC.**, 54 Don A. Rocas Avenue, Quezon City, Ramon R. Davila, Executive Vice-President and General Manager; Pol Santos, Editor, *TSS Komiks Weekly* and *Linguhang Hiwaga Komiks Magazine*; Ruben R. Marcelino, Editor, *Linguhang Darna Komiks*; Ed C. Plaza, Editor, *Tagalog Klasiks Weekly* and *Pilipino Komiks Weekly*; Zoila T. Meneses, Editor, *Weekly Kidlat Superkomix* and *Linguhang Espesyal Komiks*.

**BADIAO PUBLICATIONS**, 678 Sales St., Sta. Cruz, Manila, Rading Mina Sabater, Editor, *Puro Wakas Komiks Magazine*.

**EL DORADO PUBLISHING HOUSE, INC.**, 2131 Dr. Manuel Carreon St., Sta. Ana, Manila, Tito G. Sincio, Managing Editor; Rico Bello Omagap, Editor, *Modern Kayumangsi Weekly Komiks* and *Love Weekly Komiks Magazine*.

**ENA PUBLISHING HOUSE**, 1817 Sisa St., Sampaloc, Manila, Manuel Luna, Editor; *Exorcist* and *Teens Showbiz Entertainment Magazine*; Dante Almarino, Editor, *Pilipino Weekly Entertainment Magazine*.

**GRAPHIC ARTS SERVICE, INC.**, 70 18th Ave., Murphy, O. C., Alfredo R. Guerrero, Vice-President; C. P. Paguio, Editor-in-Chief; Joe Lad Santos, Editor, *Pinyoy Klasiks Weekly Magazine*; Fernando A. Toquero, Editor, *Holiday Komiks Magazine*; D. G. Dumaraso, Editor, *Aliwan Komiks Magazine*; Pablo Reyna Libiran, Editor, *Pinyoy Komiks Magazine*; J. Pepito Marquez, Editor, *Teens Weekly Komiks Magazine*; Geronimo R. Reyes, Editor, *Pioneer Komiks Magazine*.

**GMS PUBLISHING CORP.**, 69 P. Florentino St., Quezon City, Mrs. Leticia M. Santiago, Director; Lauro M. Nunag, Editor, *Diamante Komiks Magazine*; Rosita Sirilan, Editor, *Ligaya Komiks Magazine*; Ricardo M. de Luna, Editor, *Short Stories Komiks*, *Lamor Komiks Magazine*, *Sampaguita Komiks Magazine*.

**MAPALAD PUBLISHING CORP.**, 1404 España, Manila, Miss Eloisa Miranda, Director; Lauro M. Nunag, Editor, *Sweetheart Komiks Magazine*; Marty Gee Aragon, Editor, *Wakasan Komiks Magazine*.

**R. A. R. PUBLISHING HOUSE**, 2214 Int. 5, Advincula St. Harrison, Passy City, Mars Ravelo, Publisher and Managing Editor, *Bulaklak Weekly Magazine*; *Weekly Kampeon Komiks*; *Weekly Mars Ravelo Komiks*; Nene Rigoso, Senior Editor, *Teen World Magazine*.

**SOLLER PRESS AND PUBLISHING HOUSE INC.**, 45 E. Jacinto St., E. Rodriguez Sr. Blvd., Quezon City, January A. Soller, Sr., Publisher, Franklin R. Cabaluna, Editor-in-Chief, Isagani A. Sarmiento, Managing Editor, *Wow Komiks-Magasin*, *Romantic Klasiks Magazine*.

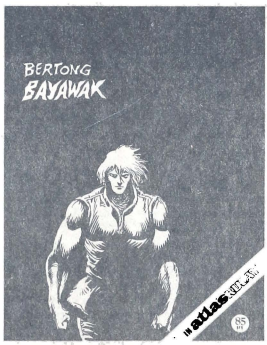
COMPARED TO THE WEEKLY  
**movie specials**  
 IN FULL COLOR  
 B.L.G. 371 OKTUBRE 2, 1977



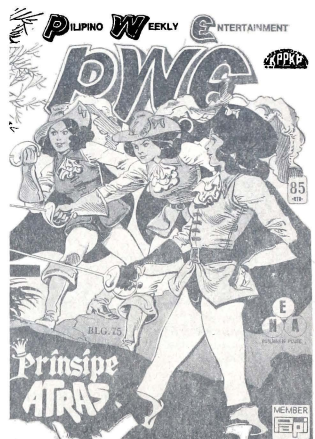
**NORA as BAKEKANG...**

Relevant entertainment through movie articles and illustrated novels.

**Pilipino Komiks**  
 B.L.G. 108 NOV. 19, 1977



"Providing entertainment and education to a growing nation."

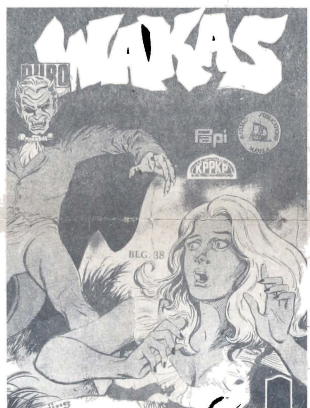


Specializes in entertainingly different short stories and informative articles.

**Weekend Superstar**  
 DE-KOLON  
 B.L.G. 441 HUYO 22, 1977



Quality entertainment with its illustrated stories and serials and interesting movie articles.



Publishes short stories and information materials.



Retains coated paper cover to give readers their money's worth.

# What's in a name-komiks or illustrated magazine?

Many people still think that our komiks-magazines are meant for children. They are not.

For who does not remember Mutt & Jeff, Popeye and Tarzan, Or Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck — their favorite comic strips when they were kids.

This perhaps explains why people — and they are a few — expect the same humorous cartoon strips in our komiks-magazines. Instead, they find a different breed of characters. Creatures of pure fantasy such as Anak ni Zuma, Dama, Hari-manok, Astrobal and Exorcis. And down-to-earth fiction personalities such as Bakekang, Batute and Dabiana.

Our komiks-magazines are not really intended for children. They started off as a reading pleasure for adults, and they have remained so for the last three decades.

Even Kenko, our first local cartoon strip, is a caricature of the young Filipino adult. And it was

published as a regular feature in Liwayway, a magazine for the more mature Filipino audience.

When Pilipino Komiks came out in 1947, it became clear that our komiks-magazines would evolve differently from the foreign comic books. The first issue carried Kenko as one of its main attractions. Also DI-13, a detective story, and Princess Urduja, a historical novel.

Pilipino Komiks was an immediate success. And it spawned the first generation of komiks-magazines: Tagalog Klasiks in 1949, Hiwaga Komiks in 1950 and Espesyal Komiks in 1952.

Here, then, are some of the differences between our komiks-magazines and their foreign counterparts.

Foreign comic books usually serialize the exploits of a single hero. The entire issue is devoted to him. In fact, the comic books took on the name of their hero — such as Superman Comics and Batman

Comics.

On the other hand, our komiks-magazines have no less than six to seven different serials in a single issue, and each serial has its own storyline and hero.

There is therefore no end to the storyline in foreign comic books. It is one continuing serialization of, say, Superman or Captain Marvel, in issue after issue. This is not the case, however, with our komiks-magazines. A story runs only for as many installments as will hold the interest of the readers. Sooner or later, the story will have to end, and an entirely new story with a new hero will take its place.

In other words, our komiks-magazines are nothing more than fiction or story magazines. The only difference is that in the komiks-magazines the characters are depicted and the storyline is unfolded in frame after frame of illustrations. The komiks-magazines are in truth compilations of stories in

pictures or illustrated stories. And the magazines are really and truly illustrated fiction magazines.

While a foreign comic book hero may have fantastic powers (Superman) or may wear a colorful costume (Batman), it is not always so with our local komiks hero. He may have superhuman powers or he may be just the opposite — an ordinary human being with all his faults and shortcomings.

Moreover, the storyline in foreign comic books is frequently limited to crime and violence. In our komiks-magazines, the plot is in the whole range of human experience.

Very often, the foreign comic books play up fantastic adventures in the realm of futuristic science and technology. Our komiks-magazines, however, draw the inspiration of their stories from more mundane sources: from Philippine folklore, legends, myths and historical traditions. At the same time, the other stories can be as modern and

real as today's true-to-life drama of ordinary men and women.

Still another difference is that our komiks-magazines are not exclusively made up of cartoon strips. They also contain pages of stories, write-ups and pictures of movie stars. And lately, they have added news columns about current events and serious feature articles on family planning, water conservation, gardening, ethics and what have you.

Thus, it has become very obvious that our komiks-magazines are not comic strips intended to be only amusing, humorous and funny. Nor are they comic books with storylines of only a sensational or violent nature.

They are magazines, no doubt, but not komiks for children. They are illustrated fiction magazines meant to entertain our adult readers. And even if children do read these illustrated magazines, they will benefit from their clean, wholesome storylines, and the eventual victory of good over evil. ●

# KPPKP guidelines

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

- 1- No material that will bring hatred or contempt, or incite disaffection towards the government as well as the various instrumentalities under it shall be published.
- 2- No material that will influence the conduct or attitude of the public in a manner likely to be prejudicial to the defense of the country, or the efficient conduct of military operations shall be published.
- 3- No material that will prejudice the Philippines' relations abroad shall be published.
- 4- No material that will bring into agitation or hatred the laws of the country shall be published.
- 5- No material that will prejudice the President of the Philippines and the office he represents shall be published. This will also be true to visiting dignitaries.
- 6- Profanity, obscenity, smut and vulgarity are forbidden. From time to time, words which have been acceptable acquire undesirable meanings and publishers and/or editors should refrain from using such words.
- 7- Racial or nationality types shall not be presented in such a manner as to ridicule the race or nationality.
- 8- Attack on religious faiths is not allowed. Reverence should mark any mention of God, His attributes and powers. When religious rites are included in either the illustrated or textual material, the rites should be accurately presented. The office of minister, priest, or rabbi shall not be presented in such a manner as to ridicule or impair its dignity.
- 9- Respect should be maintained for the sanctity of marriage and the value of the home.
- 10- When references is made of mental or physical afflictions and deformities, special precautions must be taken to avoid ridiculing sufferers from such ailments and offending them or members of their families.

- 11- Mental or physical perversion shall not be depicted unless to generate sympathy or if such is essential in plot development or character delineation.
- 12- Law enforcement shall be upheld and, except when essential to the plot, officers of the law shall be portrayed with respect and dignity.
- 13- Legal, medical and other professional advice, diagnosis and treatment is permitted only in conformity with law and recognized ethical and professional standards.
- 14- Criminality shall be presented as undesirable. The condoning of crime and the treatment of the commission of crime in a frivolous, cynical or callous manner is prohibited. The presentation of crime in such detail as to invite imitation is likewise prohibited.
- 15- Illicit sex relations, when essential to the plot, should be emphasized as immoral. Characters engaging in such relations should always end up as paying for his or her immorality one way or the other.
- 16- Drunkenness and drunkards should be treated as deplorable. In no instance must the consumption of liquor be presented as part of the Filipino way of life.
- 17- Drug addiction shall be treated as a vicious habit and is allowable as story subject only when the intent is to help in the general campaign against it.
- 18- Materials pertaining to fortune-telling, occultism, astrology, phrenology, palm-reading, numerology, mindreading, character reading, and the like are not allowed when presented for the purpose of fostering belief in them.
- 19- Suicide shall not be justified as an acceptable solution for human problems.
- 20- Cigarette smoking shall not be presented as a habit desirable and worthy of emulation by the young.
- 21- The so-called "society page" is prohibited. If a "society" happening must be published, the emphasis and focus should be only on its social relevance.

## CHANGING IMAGES

(From page 1)

complexity and ending up as a thief. The hero in this story visited his brother who had chosen to stay in the barrio and he envied the peaceful and happy life of a farmer. The realization came too late because he was followed and caught by the police.

The barrio is also portrayed as not only a place of simple living but also the scene which offers the most opportunity.

Coupled with the moral for barrio folk to stay in the province is the corollary theme that wealth (associated with the city) is not all there is in life. In fact the poor at times are luckier.

The most significant themes that emerge in this category are that getting ahead, for heroes of the barrio, can be found in the rural area itself without the need to migrate to the city. It is either because the simple, peaceful life in the barrio is something one should be contented with or because the opportunities for success lie in the barrio. This theme is one of the dominant programs stressed by the government today.

### b) As viewed by heroes of the slum

For desperate heroes of the slum, two alternative themes regularly emerge. The first stresses the same point as the previous category—that the barrio, not the city, offers the most opportunities. The heroes of the slum who choose to go back to the barrio are seldom disappointed. In fact, they achieve the ideal life, far from the turbulence of the slum, by raising animals and planting vegetables.

The second alternative is for the hero to stay in the slum. However, not all success stories appear. Rather, the heroes are encouraged to be content with what they have. The virtue extolled in such stories are those of optimism, perseverance, faith in God, sacrifice and the ability to withstand the pressures of poverty. Thus, there is no easy way to success in the city and the hero is made to accept his station in life without envy for the rich.

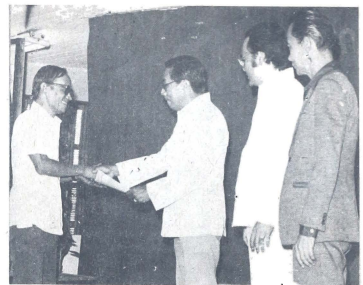
### c) As viewed by heroes of the underworld

As explicitly stated in Resolution No. 1 of the KPPKP, no stories with underworld characters as heroes were found in the sample.

### d) As viewed by heroes of the upper class

Unlike the pre-Martial Law stories where members of the upper class are never treated as heroes but in secondary role as villains, post-Martial Law stories show them as being imbued with altruistic motives. They are portrayed as kindhearted friends of the common *tao*, charitable and civic-minded. They are the kind of people who are always willing to give alms to beggars of Quiapo and whose factories provide a source of livelihood for the less fortunate.

In addition, two other themes emerge: that wealth is a responsibility and that the romantic returns to the barrio. The former is exemplified by stories which show the rich hero working his way up from the bottom even in his own business and the rich sharing his profits with others. The latter theme shows heroes with stable jobs going back to the countryside either because of its peaceful life or because of the desire to help others.



APPRECIATION FOR KPPKP COOPERATION

KPPKP president R. R. Marcelino receives DPI-IV certificate of appreciation from Mr. Sol L. Villa of the National Press Club and PAPI, as DPI-IV director Ricardo V. Serrano and Mr. Liberato Marinas look on. The Kapisanan is also recipient of similar gestures of appreciation from the Bureau of National and Foreign Information of the DPI, the Institute of Labor and Manpower Services of the Dept. of Labor, the NMPC's Agrarian Reform Communications Unit and Nutrition Communications Office, the Commission on Population, the Communications Foundation for Asia, the Philippine Cancer Society and other civic groups, for the cooperation being extended to them by the illustrated magazine industry.

## 2. Love and Marriage

In general, the stories in this category remain the same as those before the declaration of Martial Law. Comic writers still persist with the romantic notion that love and marriage can bridge the gap of social inequality between the rich and poor.

The prospect of marrying a rich man is not much of a problem for the poor heroine. She is easily accepted into the ranks of the rich if she is virtuous, modest, simple, beautiful and has the makings of a good wife. However, another trend is also apparent. Having been used to the western standards of beauty, the heroine is usually torned by the realization that she is too small, too dark or that her nose is too flat. The stories, however, often end with the theme that people would take her and love her for what she is.

For the poor man, the love of a rich girl and his acceptance by her family is no problem as long as he works hard and proves that he deserves the admiration of all through his goodness or his talents.

Finally, the going back to barrio theme also appears showing the rich girl impressed by a man working with his hands and not simply by white collar profession.

## 3. Solving a Family Problem

Compared to pre-Martial Law stories, problems remain the same—husband-wife relations, delinquent children and maintaining the family honor. However, the solutions to these problems differ in many instances.

While stories of the nagging and domineering wife appear occasionally, the stories revolving around husband-wife relations show more of the sacrificing and hardworking wife who patiently tries to correct the situation. The moral that seems to hold these stories together is the importance of trust in one's mate and sacrifice.

Delinquent children still occupy the center of plots except that most of the solutions are specifically related to programs of the New Society.

Finally, the theme of upholding family honor while remaining as a family in the post-Martial Law stories is given a new twist. This is done by introducing advice from a government official, faith in the legal process and in government bodies as well as finding honor

within the bounds of poverty.

## 4. Altruism

In the pre-Martial Law stories, altruism was portrayed mainly by heroes of the underworld while the rich served as convenient villain figures. In the samples of post-Martial Law stories, new types of altruistic heroes are introduced. The underworld character is replaced by the members of the upper class and the government functionary. The motivations of these new heroes are universalistic. They are imbued with a strong "sense of duty," willingly sacrificing their individualistic needs for the benefit of others.

## 5. Other Concerns

Pre-Martial Law stories grouped under the category revolved around the movie fans or sex. Although this is a residual category, it is under this heading that post-Martial Law changes are very apparent.

The function of comics as the medium of transmitting information and acceptance of government programs is shown in "Ang Baboy ni Bobby" where the major concern of the young hero was to get a piglet from the government's green revolution program. The value of scouting was extolled in "Tumulog na Magtiis" where a poor farmer consented to the desire of his son to become a boy scout because he witnessed the heroism of boy scouts.

The concern with portraying the barrio and its people as worthy of respect and admiration is shown in "Silig Ang Kinaianisan Mo". In this story the heroine looked down upon the barriofolk and avoided having any social relations with them. However, she later experienced their kindness and became involved in barrio projects.

Finally, the struggle between classes which figured quite prominently in pre-Martial Law stories is dropped in favor of cooperative relationship between the classes behind government programs. In "Pagkamatat" for instance, the rich landlord, realizing the justice of land reform, was convinced to sell his lands to the farmers.

(These are excerpts from the author's paper prepared for the Research Seminar in Comparative Popular Culture entitled "Heroes: East and West", held from July 8 to August 2, 1974 at the East-West Communication Institute, Honolulu, Hawaii.)

## WHY THE ILLUSTRATED

(From page 1)

evident after the declaration of martial law. Today komiks magazines allocate an increasing amount of space to development news—rice growing, tree planting,

family planning, child care and nutrition, energy conservation, health, community projects and the like.

It is this difference in contents from the foreign comic books that makes our komiks magazines unique. They should not be called "komiks" anymore. They should be called "the illustrated magazines."

And they are in a class by themselves: The Illustrated Press. ●

# Philippine Council for Print Media GUIDELINES

The Philippine Council for Print Media has given the publisher the responsibility of enforcing self-discipline among his staff. The publisher is expected to set up rules to govern the internal workings of his organization in order to achieve this objective.

## FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND THE JOURNALIST

Journalists should uphold the basic right of press freedom. Unfortunately, the greatest drawback of the profession is not the lack of effort, but mediocrity. It is the mediocre journalist who fails to balance right with concomitant responsibility. He camouflages his shortcomings with untruths, innuendoes, sensationalism or licentious discussions. His irresponsible exercise of press freedom opens the way for government to intervene in order to protect the rights of others and the public. The journalists, therefore, should improve himself constantly and remember at all times his responsibilities as a member of a free press.

## THE BOUNDS OF FREEDOM

Press freedom is bounded by certain laws:

- Label and defamation
- Rules on "sub-judicial" litigation
- Obscenity and bad taste
- Invasion of privacy
- National security

A sense of responsibility is the first step towards press freedom.

## CREDIBILITY

A high degree of credibility should be the cherished objective of every journalist. The following factors contribute towards this end:

## Integrity

Factual reporting and balanced

comments on facts measure a journalist's independence. Bias diminishes the truth and is usually caused by pressure, outside or inside the publication. The responsible journalist should resist pressure.

## Integrity

Integrity, i.e., honest, upright, and fair dealing, helps boost credibility. Every journalist should work to achieve this for the benefit of the profession.

## Competence

Mediocrity having been previously cited, ability, and skill should go hand in hand with independence and integrity.

## A GENERAL STATEMENT

In order to elevate the standards of excellence in editorial reporting, the print media shall:

### A. Consider national security.

B. Hold public welfare paramount to the personal and/or selfish interests of an individual or a group.

### C. Enlighten and instruct the public on vital issues.

D. Report news accurately, truthfully and impartially, as free from bias as possible.

E. Disseminate important news items expeditiously.

F. Cover world and local news developments as comprehensively as possible.

G. Interpret and analyze news objectively and fairly, without suppressing or distorting relevant facts.

### H. Maintain editorial dignity.

I. Avoid typographical errors, mistakements of facts or opinions. Whenever this happens, the proper correction should be made promptly.

ly, fully, clearly, and conspicuously.

J. Allow the publication of legal, medical, and other professional advice. Such advice shall conform to existing laws, as well as recognized ethical and professional standards.

K. Endeavor to promote more intelligent readership.

L. In sex crimes, publications should not print the names and pictures of victims. Details that would help to identify the victims should be deleted.

M. Sordid details accompanying crime, and offensive descriptions of the human body should be avoided. This rule also applies to pictures.

N. Names and pictures of minors involved in crimes, except in exceptional cases, should be withheld. A minor is less than 18 years of age.

O. Recognize the individual's right to his reputation and integrity. Reports and comments on anyone's private life that tend to harm his reputation should not be published, unless it serves public interest. This should be distinguished from mere public curiosity.

P. Give individuals concerned an opportunity to reply to charges against their reputation or moral character made in a publication, preferably in the same issue reporting the charges.

Q. Give space and prominence as far as practicable to warranted denials, refutations or responses equal to that of the original statement.

R. Use headlines that reflect faithfully the contents of the story. Race, color, and creed should be avoided in headlines and manner of news presentation, unless these are relevant to the story itself.

### S. Avoid sensationalism.

# Illustrated magazines

## The key to a new world of fact, fun and fantasy

Books are of many kinds. Some are weighty and often boring. Some are light and always enlightening. Komiks-magazines or illustrated magazines are different. They are so popular the world over that they represent an altogether new field in publishing arts.

Long years ago, komiks-magazines were meant for the kids. They have come a long way since then. Do you know it's adults, well settled in life, happily married, who patronize komiks-magazines in a big way? A recent survey shows that 60% of those who read komiks are adults of 20 years or older. There are also more female (53%) than male readers. And 30% are household heads and housewives.

In the Philippines, some two million copies of these illustrated magazines sell every week. Over 16 million Filipinos read them. Or one-fourth of the total population. Illustrated magazines are clean, wholesome entertainment. At 85 centavos a copy, they are unbeatable as a source of joy and relaxation. They have visual impact. They radiate color and cheer. They impart knowledge, without demanding too much in the way of a stem idiom.

In the bargain, believe it or not, it is the illustrated magazines which have entire societies into the 20th century, as it were. Modern ideas, modern lifestyles, modern moods and modes are introduced without painful or violent change.

### What else?

The new and silent spread of science — be it growing corn, keeping fit or planning a family. Komiks-magazines remove illiteracy, fast and sure! For if you can read komiks-magazines, you can't be illiterate. If you enjoy komiks-magazines, you can't be abnormal.

People who enjoy reading komiks-magazines so much that 70% of those interviewed said that they read all the contents, while another

22% read from 1/2 to 3/4 of the magazine.

Some 44 titles come out every week. They are dispatched by van, bus and train. Luzon and by ship and plane to the Visayas and Mindanao.

Readers buy their copies from newstands, sidewalk magazine vendors, newsboys and sari-sari stores. A big number of readers resort to borrowing or renting their copies, the fact among the print media in the Philippines, the komiks-magazines has the highest rate of pass-along readership. This pass-along audience has been estimated at four million.

In fact, komiks-magazines are read by more Filipinos than any other printed media. They have become truly a mass medium that has penetrated to the farthest corners of the country.

Statistics show that the five regions of the Philippines with the most magazines are Metro Manila, Southern Luzon, Central Luzon, the Bicol Region and Cagayan Valley in that order. The next five regions are Western Visayas, Southern Mindanao, the Ilocos Region, Northern Mindanao and Eastern Visayas.

It's time that marketers of products and services take a look at the komiks-magazines as an effective medium for their advertising and promotion messages. Up to now the potential of the market has not been tapped or properly exploited.

This is the time when advertising practitioners have stuck to the general display advertisements. For the illustrated magazines, different art form may have to be designed or created. To be truly effective, the advertisements must be better laid out in illustrated strips.

Whatever it is, the illustrated magazines still remain the surest and easiest way to reach the great majority of our people. ●

# FOREIGN COMICS AND THE FILIPINO

## Or, can Superman & Co. contribute to our Society?

The American comic book industry has a long list of crime fighters, like Superman, Batman and Robin, Captain Marvel, Captain America, Wonder Woman, The Spectre and The Shadow, to name a very few. And the story-lines in which they move have one thing in common: they are only super heroes like them can solve.

While the situations introduced in the story-lines of foreign comic books do occur in human life, the solutions to the problems presented require superhuman feats. As a result, the law-enforcement arm of the government play only supporting roles — so much so that in the end, there seems no need for policemen at all.

With such an orientation, can we say that Superman and Company are relevant to our New Society?

Entertainment — which is what the comic book was originally intended for — should not become a total escape. It should be a re-creation, a renewal, a form of regeneration by gathering fresh values from the old. Entertainment should be a recharging of the mind to cope with the daily grind of living.

Comic books about real problems being solved by actual heroes deal with unreality. They are, therefore,

irrelevant and escapist.

Can such irrelevant and escapist comic books benefit Filipino society? Publishers of local komiks-magazines don't think so. This is the reason for the preponderance of realistic stories in our illustrated medium. Crime stories are a rarity. Even sex and violence are toned down to the minimum. And in crime stories, there is always that quality of trust and esteem for our law-enforcers.

Contents in the illustrated magazine stories center mostly on human problems within the family, the community, or the individual himself. For after all, these are the real battles in everyday life against ourselves, against others, and even against nature. This fact is more frightening than fiction, and yet we do not wish that super heroes existed to wage these battles for us. Rather, we would want these problems dealt with and solved by real human beings.

The local komiks-magazines reveal that Filipino writers deal with reality. Even occasional copycats of Superman delineate real, human drama. What the local komiks-magazines want to say is there is no human problem that has no solution. They emphasize the fact that in spite of it and sometimes precisely because of, the trials and tribulations that start in the womb and end in the tomb, life is still worth living. ●

# ILLUSTRATED MEDIA

(From Page 1)

Should an editor violate the same section of the guidelines for the second time, a minor infraction is fined ₱50. A grave infraction is slapped a ₱100 fine, a very grave one, ₱500, and a one-issue suspension of the komiks-magazine if the violation is extremely grave.

For the third violation of same section of the guidelines, a ₱100 fine is imposed on a minor violation, ₱500 for a grave infraction, and a one-issue suspension of the komiks-magazine if the infraction is very grave. The extreme penalty of expulsion is imposed if the third violation is classified as extremely grave.

So far, the extreme penalty has not been imposed on any member. This indicates that the members have adhered closely to the guidelines, they realize that although a recent survey shows that the adults among komiks-magazine readers far outnumber children (40 per cent ages 19 or younger and 60 per cent are 20 years or older), the contents of their publications should be so prepared and edited as to make them fit for young, impressionable minds.

As a self-regulating body, the KPPKC has had the official recognition of the Philippine Council for Print Media since May, 1975. ●



A giant meteor hurtles toward the earth, endangering a teeming metropolis. Reporter Clark Kent disrobes and, as Superman, streaks in to space faster than a bullet, meets the meteor head-on and blasts it into smithereens.

Once more, the world is saved by the man of steel.

The clown prince of crime,

Joker, commits a crime leaving, intentionally, a figurative calling card. The police commissioner sends out the secret bat-signal. In no time at all, Batman and Robin are in their Batmobile pursuing the wily criminal. The pursuit ends with Joker leaving in the clink and the daring duo once more proving that crime does not pay.

# Komiks-Magazines are no longer funny



An American tourist to our Fiesta Islands curiously leafed through a local komiks-magazine and remarked, "Hey, this is no funnies!"

We probably did not know that back home in good old USA, the Walt Disney style of comic books went out of fashion years ago. He was right, though, about local komiks-magazines. They are no longer funny.

The word "komiks" (or comics if you please) to describe our komiks-magazines has become a misnomer.

It is true that the komiks-magazines started out as imitations of American comic books. American comic strips such as Popeye, Mutt & Jeff, Dagwood and the Katzenjammer Kids found their duplicates in Popoy, Nanong Pandak, Talakotok and Kenkey.

But somewhere along the way, the likes of Roberta and Healtis Dulaan Darna, appeared on the scene. And what was once a portfolio of wit and humor became a book of serious human drama.

From then on, komiks-magazines

passed on from children to adult reading fare. A recent survey reveals that 60 per cent of komiks-magazine readers are adults. The remaining 40 per cent belongs to the age group of 19 years or younger.

For the komiks-magazine as it has evolved today is nothing more than another version of the prose novel, the once-upon-a-time favorite of Filipino adults. Only this time it is illustrated form.

It has enjoyed instant success, because it gives the common man the kind of entertainment he needs and can afford. The fast pace of living and earning his keep has given him less time for reading. The illustrated stories have proved easy on his harried schedule and on his pocketbook.

This partly explains the charisma of such memorable komiks characters as Ravelo's Roberta, del Mundo's Prinsipe Amante, Gomez's Kardapya, Coching's Barbaro, Plaza's Dabiana, Fernandez' Anak ni Zuma, Gamboa's Fabiosa, Yandoc's Kukulkan, Patron's Beta, Roman's Bertong Bayawak and Waples' Bakaekang, to mention

only a few.

Notwithstanding criticism from the literati, these characters are not caricatures. They are faithful illustrations of the common man. They embody his hopes, dreams and aspirations, even his failings and frustrations.

They mirror the times we live in, its sentiments and longings, its nuances, and of course its humor, too.

That is why, notwithstanding again objections from "concerned" literary stalwarts, the characters in most of the komiks-serials (or *nobelas* as komiks-magazine aficionados call them) are relevant to the times. Even if every now and then, superficially and intentionally exaggerated.

And it is also not coincidental that most for a purpose that in most nobelas, messages of vital importance to the well-being of the reader are imparted. Even if, again, those messages are translated in fine nuances to be detected by the reader.

Thus, we find in komiks-magazines messages on family planning, ecology, energy conservation, etc. These subjects are covered by the komiks-magazines because they are problems that form part and parcel of the reader's daily life.

There is still of course, some laughter in the pages of komiks-magazines. Aklat's *Kalabog*, En Boyso and Velasquez' *Kenkey* are very much around. But the latter in his kakenkoyan spins off soft-soft messages on how to plant corn or use fertilizer.

Do readers miss the funnies? Judging from the ever-mounting popularity of the komiks-magazines, they don't. They certainly enjoy what they read. ●

## KPPKP SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

- 1) Nudity, or even near nudity, is prohibited.
- 2) Emphasis on, and exaggeration of, the delicate parts of the human anatomy is prohibited, whether in illustrations or in photographs.
- 3) Kissing and embracing should be depicted with extreme good taste. The sex act is totally prohibited.
- 4) The preliminaries of rape should be depicted in extreme good taste. The rape act itself is prohibited. And it should always be emphasized that rape is a most heinous crime.
- 5) Sex perverts and sex perversions are prohibited as subjects in stories and articles.
- 6) Never justify nor glorify prostitution. If prostitution must be depicted, it should be with extreme care and with the aim in view of condemning it.
- 7) Sexually arousing words and dialogues are prohibited.
- 8) The crime of incest, whether it is the main subject of, or incidental to, the plot, is totally prohibited.
- 9) Do not portray any member of the clergy as being involved in sex affairs.
- 10) Indulging in sex orgies is a deplorable practice. Do not depict, hint at, or even mention it.
- 11) Do not depict nor even mention government officials, peace officers and the like as sex offenders.
- 12) If love between the very old and the very young must be depicted, extreme care should be exercised to

avoid vulgarity.

- 13) Sex offenders should always end up as paying for his or her crime.
- 14) Venereal diseases are allowed to be mentioned in short stories, novels or articles, provided that the purpose is to help eradicate them and/or to depict them as extremely dangerous to human health.
- 15) Cuss words must be minimized in stories, novels and articles. Only in extreme cases is the use of cuss words allowed. Cuss words which may be used are: *gago, tangaw, walanghina, hudas, ulol, patris, putragis, bastos, tolo, damuho, damontres, diyantre, limatik, lintok, baboy, harot, talipandas, kalyehang, hampasapa, lintak, tinamaan ng lintak, slembang, kiri, anak ka ng tatay mo (never ino or nanay) kuneho (but never associated with human sexual drive), saragate, impakto, and diyablo.*
- 16) Do not use in any short story, novel or article vulgar terms such as *tarantado, animal, pindoho, kabiti, kerida, bagway, hidad, kwokong, lase, and the like* which may have harmless actual translations but which may have acquired repulsive meanings.
- 17) To denote extramarital affairs, the words *kulasis, "number two" or "number three," whatever may be the case, are allowed.*
- 18) Direct presentation of sadism, brutality and extreme violence is not allowed.
- 19) Minimize the use of deadly weapons in short stories, novels or articles. Depiction of deadly weapons should not be emphasized.
- 20) Minimize the publication of stories that deal with crime and

- criminals. If crimes and criminals must be made as subjects of short stories, novels or articles, in no instance must crime be glorified and criminals left un punished.
- 21) If the revenge angle is extremely important to the story, it must be emphasized that taking the law into one's own hands is in itself a crime.
- 22) The presentation of horrifying creatures must be toned down if not entirely avoided. If such creatures must be made subjects of short stories, novels or articles, the short stories, novels or articles must be prefaced by a foreword of the editor stating that such creatures are only pignments of the imagination or based on superstitious beliefs and do not exist in real life.
- 23) Science fiction stories must always rely on scientific facts and accepted theories. The "fiction" in "science-fiction" does not give the writer license to deviate from accepted facts and theories. As much as possible, stories of this type must aim to inform or teach readers about the sciences.
- 24) If members of the cultural minority must be made subjects of short stories, novels or articles, extreme care must be exercised so as not to put them in a bad light. It must always be emphasized that they are also Filipinos.
- 25) Stories that deal with the military and military operations, even if they are during past wars, must have the approval of the Office for Civil Relations, General Headquarters, Armed Forces of the Philippines. Otherwise, they shall be deemed as having violated the guidelines. ●

## Relevant entertainment

# The Bidas

The *bidas* — the heroes and heroines — who make the illustrated magazines the colorful medium that they are today are a motley group. He could be a simple, kindhearted, "magnububok" like Simplicio Sampera. Or a complex, unfathomable character like Bertong Bayawak. He could be an eerie creature spewed up by a mysterious past, like Zuma or Kukulkan. Or a handsome futuristic creation like Oscar, the astronaut.

There are heroes created by extra-imaginative writers to take advantage of fads and/or contemporary events. Juan Tomado, for example, was thought of by its creator when the "Thrill in Manila" was still in the negotiations stage.

When Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier did their thing at the Coliseum, Tomado (billed in the novel as the only Filipino heavyweight boxer) was already a "living character" insofar as the readers were



concerned. So much so that when the author threw him into the ring with the champion (who was supposedly drawn with a striking resemblance to Ali) readers avidly followed the bout, rooting for the Filipino.

The other bad heroes may not have been pitted by their authors against real-life champions, but they were so created to best those champions. The reader sees in the Golden Grandmaster, for instance, a chessplayer who could easily beat the Karpovs and the Fischers. In the "King of the Road", a cycling ace can put to shame the Arzallas and the Sumaldes.

Most of the *bidas*, however, are of the down-to-earth variety. There is Elias, in the novel "Buhay na Lupa," a simple farmer who is caught in the turmoil of the revolt against Spain. And Pedring, the illiterate but ambitious provinciano who dreamed of freedom from the bondage of ignorance, in "Itaga Mo Sa Bato." In the novel "SiLadras," the author delves with compassion on the lot of the so-called third sex and comes out with a convincing drama of gay people.

Heroines, on the other hand, are mostly prototypes of the typical Filipino — virtuous, a one-man woman, desirable. Although of late,

the more aggressive type (An influence of women's lib?) is surely gaining popularity among readers. Roma Amor, Fabiosa, Pia and Malosa. Another heroine which seems to attract readers is the abnormal type. Dabiana, Bakaekang, Beta, Dilwariv are among them.

And then there is the super-girl type. Darna is the original Filipino crime-fighter. Super Gee followed. But no third super-girl seems in sight. This is due to the fact that crime-stories are rare in local komiks-magazines. And if there are stories involving crime, the writers let the police authorities do the solving, not the super-humans.

The fad today seems to be the fantastic type of *bidas*. The snake-haired Zuma and Kukulkan are in this category. So are Herras, Badman, Gabriel Arkanhell, Babiang Pusa and Bubonika — all created to bring the reader to the realm of fantasy and make him forget the harsh realities of life if only for a few minutes. But even with fantasy-oriented story-lines, the reader can discern in the unfolding of events real-life happenings. For the Filipino komiks-magazine writer is basically down-to-earth. At every opportunity, he injects truth and reality. Even in the comedy series, "Bulol and Tangak", he puts in subliminal messages on ecology, sportsmanship, etc.

And of course, there are the child heroes and heroines. Children make up a sizable portion of the readership of illustrated magazines. Naturally, *bidas* from their age group have to be written about. Thus, we have Jeric, the boy from Mars. Niño, who is paired with a local version of Tarzan. Britanico, the bald-headed boy genius. Ding-Dong, a cute five-year old thrown by the writer into a danger-fraught islet. And Alonca, a pitiful girl with the facial features of a mouse.

Every now and then, non-human bidas crop up. There's Harimanok, coined from *sarimanok* obviously, featuring a super-labayo's exploits in and out of the *rueda*. Gustavo, on the other hand, is a "batayong bobo." Dolsky is a talking dolphin. A piranha and a dikya are not *bidas* in the strict sense of the word, but they play little roles in two other popular novels.

In foreign comic books, the heroes and heroines are either crime-fighters or creatures from the dark past or the imagined future. On the other hand, local komiks-magazines have a wide assortment of *bidas*. This is because the Filipino reader is a very hard customer to please. He wants variety. And variety he gets from the purveyors of illustrated entertainment. ●