KOMEDI
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A komedi is a film that aims to make people laugh. In the komedi film, characters are placed in a series of
ludicrous situations to incite laughter from the viewers. There are three types of komedi: the romantic, the
slapstick, and the social satire.

The romantic comedy is a love story with its complement of humor, music, and songs. Its plot usually
consists of a series of amorous situations focusing on mistaken identity, chance encounters, and use of disguises.
The romantic comedy tradition in Filipino cinema is traced to Vicente Salumbides’s first silent film, Miracles of
Love, 1925. The hero, a young doctor, falls in love with the picture of a coed on a magazine cover. He seeks her out at
her family home and is mistaken for a domestic servant applying for a job. After a series of funny incidents, the
doctor and coed fall in love and elope, bringing the entire household after them on a merry chase before they finally
wind up before a justice of the place to get married. Another silent film in this genre is Ang Tatlong Hambog
(The Three Braggarts), 1926. Three men courting the same girl show up for a date. One arrives in his flashy car, another shows up in a calesa (horse-drawn carriage), and the third one makes his appearance astride a carabao. In
the end, the girl chooses the farm boy, showing the period’s preference for country life. The couple later indulge in the
“first kiss” in Philippine movies.

Other examples of the romantic comedy are the Carmen Rosales–Oscar Moreno tandem in Si, Si,
Señorito (Yes, Yes, My Lord), 1947; the Pancho Magalona–Tita Duran comedy Buhay Filipino (Filipino Life), 1952;
the Nida Blanca–Nestor de Villa starrers Waray-Waray, 1954, Handang Matodas (Ready to Die), 1956, and My
Serenade, 1961; and the Gloria Romero–Luis Gonzales romantic comedies Despatsadora (Saleslady), 1955, and
Vacacionista (The Tourist), 1956.

The earliest recorded Filipino slapstick comedy was Enchong, Ang Medicong Laway (Enchong, The Spit
Doctor), 1915. Both a comedy and a commentary on the medical profession, it reflects the superstitions of rural
folk, who have more faith in quack doctors than in men of science. In the slapstick comedy film, one source of
laughter is a person’s psychological or physical defect. Susan Rocos is an incurable chatterbox in Susanang
Daldal (Susan the Chatterbox), 1962. Matutina of the John en Marsha series has a shrill, high-pitched voice.
More often, the defect is physical, as in the case of the
toothless Chichay or Rene Requestas, the cross-eyed Pablo Virtuoso, the big-mouthed Carding of the Reycard
Duet, the bag-eyed Doro de los Ojos, the toothpick-thin Palito, the dour-faced Billy “Surot” Vizcarra, the bald
Pugo and Togo, or the “thin-and-fat” Bayani and Soto.

In Tansan vs Tarsan, 1963, Dolphy, pitted against Vic Vargas, is pitifully asthmatic. The source of laughter in
slapstick comedy can also come from uncouth manners and boorish behavior of well-meaning characters. Efren
Reyes’s unwillingness to take a bath makes him the laughingstock of society in Pedro Penduko, 1954.

In another form of slapstick comedy, the characters featured are considered an “abnormal” object of fun
because they go against the predominant views of society. Dolphy in Jack and Jill, 1954, Rosterick Paulate
in Kumander Gringa (Commander Gringa), 1987, and Joey de Leon in Barbie, 1989, portray homosexual or
effeminate characters.

Still another form of slapstick derives from toilet humor, as seen in some films of Tito, Vic and Joey,
including The Long Ranger, 1989, with Rene Requestas, where the characters make fun of excretory functions.
Some of the early bodabil stage artists rose to fame as masters of slapstick in the Filipino comedy film. Even before the Pacific War, comedians Pugo and Togo already starred in their own film, *Ang Utos ng Hari Hindi Mababale* (A King's Command Is Final), 1941. 

The postwar period saw Lopito becoming a full star in *Kenkoy*, 1950, while Tolindoy and Chichay came into their own as *Gorio at Tekla* (Gorio and Tekla), 1953. Other comedians did not have star-billing status but their unforgettable performances have lived on in their films. Gregorio Ticman was outstanding as the sabungero (cockfight aficionado) in *Texas: Ang Manok na Nagsasalita* (Texas: The Talking Rooster), 1952, who gambled away his wife and children’s future and later became the picture of contrition, and as the tough military sergeant who made a man out of Fred Montilla in *Bondying*, 1954.

The influence of foreign films on local comedy pictures with slapstick cannot be discounted. Canuplin was the local version of Hollywood’s Charlie Chaplin in the early 1930s, while Laurel and Hardy, and Abbott and Costello have spawned a number of thin-and-fat comedy duos from Bayani and Soto, Pugo and Togo, Pugak and Tugak, to Dolphy and Panchito. The Lone Ranger and his sidekick Tonto, or Tarzan and his chimpanzee Cheetah, have found their counterparts in Joey de Leon and Rene Requestas or the Reycard Duet. The Three Stooges inspired the comedy trio of Tito, Vic and Joey who made a number of films before Tito Sotto broke away from the team to enter politics. Among their films are *Give Me Five*, 1985; *Horsey-Horsey*, 1985; *Send in the Clowns*, 1986; and *Shoot That Ball*, 1987.


In the 2000s, comedians made comedy hits, like Ai-Ai de las Alas in *Tanging Ina* (The One and Only Mom), 2003, and Eugene Domingo in *Kimmy Dora*, 2009. Other known comedians are Pokwang, who starred in *Super Inday and the Golden Bibe*, 2010, and *My Illegal Wife*, 2014, and
Rufa Mae Quinto who became famous for her role in Booba, 2001. Actors Vhong Navarro and Vice Ganda gained popularity with the films Mr. Suave, 2003, and Praybeyt Benjamin, 2011, respectively. Child actress Rhyzza Mae Dizon, who rose to prominence in 2012, starred in the film My Little Bossings, 2013, paired with child actor Bimby Yap. Among the comedy films of this period are Pera o Bayong (Cash or Basket), 2000; Pinay Pie, 2003; Bcuz of U, Okay Ka Fairy Ko: Enteng Kabisote, The Legend (You’re Okay, My Fairy: Enteng Kabisote, The Legend); Lastikman (Plastic Man), and Otso Otso Pamela-mela Wan, 2004; D’Anothers and So Happy Together, 2005; Binibining K (Miss K), Manay Po! (I Am Gay!), and Mourning Girls, 2006; Agent X-44, Ang Cute ng Ina Mo (Your Mother Is So Cute), Angels, Apat Dapat, Dapat Apat (It Must Be Four, Four Must It Be), My Kuya’s Wedding (My Older Brother’s Wedding), 2007; Iiskul Bukol 20 Years After: Ungasis and Escaleras Adventure, 2008; Ang Darling Kong Aswang (My Darling Aswang), BFF: Best Friends Forever, OMG (Oh My Girl), and Status: Single, 2009; Father Jejemon and Mamarazzi, 2010; The Adventures of Purezza: Queen of the Riles and Pak! Pak! My Dr. Kwak!, 2011; Moron 5 and the Crying Lady, Boy Pick Up: The Movie, Kimmy Dora and the Temple of Kiymee (Kimmy Dora and the Temple of Nonsense), D’ Kilabots Pogi Brothers, Weh?! (The Notorious Handsome Brothers, Really?), and Sisterakas, 2012; Coming Soon, Bromance: My Brother’s Romance, Instant Mommy, Raketeros (Racketeers), Momzillas, Bingoleras, and My Little Bossings, 2013; The Amazing Praybeyt Benjamin and Moron 5.2: The Transformation, 2014; Espesyal Kopol (Special Couple) and Pamilyang Love Love (Family Love Love), 2015.

The third type of comedy is the social satire, where humor is used in order to expose and criticize anomalies or abuses in society, whether economic, political, religious, or social. Manuel Conde’s witty portrayal of the bumbling, stumbling, simple-minded folk hero Juan Tamad in the Juan Tamad series exemplifies social satire. These include Si Juan Tamad (Lazy Juan), 1947, Juan Tamad Goes to Congress, 1959, Juan Tamad Goes to Society, 1960, Si Juan Tamad at si Juan Masipag sa Pulitikang Walang Hanggan (Lazy Juan and Industrious Juan in Never-Ending Politics), 1963, Juan Tamad Junior, 1980, and Juan Tamad, 1993. His son Jun Urbano later picked up from where his father left off, with his own Mongolian Barbecue, 1991. Another film in this genre, which was popular in the early 1950s, was Kuwentong Kutsero (The Rig Driver’s Tale). In recent years, Ded Na si Lolo (Grandpa Is Dead), 2009, satirized the different local beliefs and superstitions about dying, wakes, and burials.