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## The Supernatural in Contemporary Philippine Horror Films

Dennis Primne Corbita<sup>1</sup> & Maria Luisa S. Saministrado, PhD<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Instructor of English, Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan, Cagayan de Oro, Misamis Oriental, Philippines

<sup>2</sup>Professor of English, Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan, Cagayan de Oro, Misamis Oriental, Philippines

**Corresponding Author:** Dr Maria Luisa S. Saministrado, E-mail: msaministrado@gmail.com

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### ABSTRACT

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This study examined the supernatural characters in the selected Filipino horror films from 2004-2009 and how their character traits, appearance, wants and desires enhanced the development of the plot through their actions. It explored as well different Filipino cultural practices portrayed in the films. Using the New Criticism Approach, the films were viewed several times to familiarize the researchers with the scenes, observe the supernatural characters' description, and re-mark key statements to further substantiate the analysis done in the paper. The study found out that there are seven different supernatural characters present in the films. They are the ghosts, aswang, tiyanak, engkanto, demonyo, manananggal, and mangkukulam. The ghosts generally appeared with pale faces and dark smudges around their eyes. Although some engkantos looked connatural with the ghosts because of the similarity of their looks, they had reasons possessing pretty faces to lure the human characters. The tiyanaks, contrary to typical child demon, grew from babies to young children. They were kids aged nine to ten years old and they played outside in broad day light. The aswangs, on the other hand, remained in their human forms with sharp teeth. Unlike the archetypal aswang, the aswang in the movies acted on revenge for having been scorned at. The demons were greatly feared since they bring death to anyone they meet. The manananggal, who could sew his torso and the lower part of his body, refused to kill innocent people. Instead, he became a vigilante protecting the innocent and attacking and killing the bad folks. Two different characteristics of mangkukulam were portrayed in the films; the first type is a good mangkukulam who sought change and does not practice evil sorcery while the second type practiced black magic. The evil mangkukulams were typically the same. The study revealed that the supernatural characters' desires and their actions propelled the plot. The main characters and protagonists oppose the forces of these supernatural characters mainly for survival and instinct. It has also been found out that the films reflect the strong affinity of the Filipinos towards superstitious beliefs.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Movies have become one of the pastime activities of people around the world. Every now and then, new movies are produced and brought to the theatres worldwide. In the Philippines, watching movies gets hold of the attention of the audience from children, teenagers and adults. Students either flock to movie houses during their free time or buy DVDs and watch them at home.

In literature classes, it is observed that students are more eager to watch literature in movie adaptations than discuss the literature itself in a typical classroom setting. It is the intention of this study to further advocate the incorporation of movies in English classes.

Literature and all its forms include not only that of what is written on the pages of a book, but also what is readily provided for to the audience by popular media. Literature is not only about short stories, poetry, or novels. Like

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novel, film has structure or plot, narration, theme, and characterization; like poem, film makes use figures of speech; and like drama or a stage play, film has staging, dialogue, gesture and movement. With these similarities, film is considered a literary art form as well. Pulverness, in his article for the British Council of Arts on *Literature Matters 32: Film and Literature - Two Ways of Telling* claims that the English poet and art critic Herbert Read in 1945 sheds light on the controversy between literature and film by stating his own definition:

If you asked me to give you the most distinctive quality of good writing, I would give it to you in one word: VISUAL. Reduce the art of writing to its fundamentals, and you come to this single aim: to convey images by means of words. But to convey images. To make the mind see... That is the definition of good literature... It is also a definition of the ideal film. (Pulverness p.3)

However, when one says literature, it comes as to no surprise to expect depth of meaning and purpose. What is literature for, per se, without the significance of having a reason for being but to describe or portray man in its entirety? This is where the study would like to clarify and improve. For whatever it is worth, film and all its varied classifications and genre, play an important part of the society's culture and development.

The book of Gilberto Perez, *The Material Ghost* (1998), explains briefly the similarity of a narrator with the camera. It elucidates the power of the camera that can be compared to that of a storyteller. Perez in comparing film as an art with literature mentions: "Like the words of a narrator, the camera mediates between us and the world. But the camera is much more direct than words: its mediation is peculiarly immediate" (64). Although Perez establishes the similarity of literary and cinematic art, he readily points out that film is more instantaneous in terms of its effect on the audience that is buoyed up by the fast-paced presentation of visual elements in its narrative style.

Arguments on the issues regarding film as part of literature has been clearly corroborated in the theses of Leoncio P Deriada's *Cinema as Literature* and of Cathelyn Caina-Adajar's *The Themes in the Selected Youth-Oriented Filipino Films of the 1990s*.

Nowadays, the Filipino horror genre in films has started to pick up a trend from the year 2004 to 2009. It is observed in an online source that in the 1990s, the production of horror films declined. However, there is at least one horror film made every year from 2004 up to 2009. Filipino horror films evolve into a genre of its own by incorporating more of the culture and traditions of the Philippines into its plot structure.

The youth of today prefer the fast-paced lifestyle, mirroring their taste even for their movie viewing preferences. Although the entertainment of sitting down for a two-hour flick is fleeting, these young people receive the same satisfaction with that of reading a good book. This is evident in the trend of literary film adaptations such as: Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1992) ; J.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings Trilogy* (2001) an epic children's novel about ancient kingdoms of elves, dwarves and warriors; J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter Series*" (2000) that chronicles the adventures of a young powerful orphaned wizard; Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1994) that tells the tale of an American aristocratic vampire left forgotten by time; and Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* (2008) a love story between a beautiful human lass and a dashing young vampire.

This fad among teenagers and young adults has also reached the Philippines. Filipinos are not only enchanted with foreign fantasy films but they are also pleased with the quality films produced in the Philippines. In fact, Filipino films have been warmly enjoyed by the audience.

Adaptations are also employed in the movies like: Mar's Ravelo's comic heroines, the evil-fighting *Darna* (1951) and *Dyesebel*, the mermaid who wanted to become human for love (1978); Carlo J. Caparas' *Ang Panday* the blacksmith who created a magical sword that fights off underworld monsters (1980); and Jose De La Cruz's, *Ibong Adarna* the magical singing bird that bears the cure for a king's illness (1941). With the reinvention of Filipino supernatural heroes and mythological creatures of the dark, the young audience is captivated by these Philippine movies if not for the story itself, but for the need to fill a curiosity on vague characters that have been heard oftentimes. This is where Filipino supernatural creatures have been revived and reintroduced through the horror films for the younger generations who might not have heard of stories about "*aswangs, manananggals,*

*mangkukulam, or engkantos*” to name a few. Although the Philippine supernatural characters of the dark often play villain or minor roles, their part suggests the rich cultural heritage of the Filipinos.

### **Conceptual Framework**

This study is anchored on the concept of character analysis found in Thomas Monsell’s *Elements of Literature – Annotated Teacher’s Edition: Fourth Course* (1993). The concept states that to entirely extract the character’s full meaning, depth and purpose it is necessary to look into the character’s trait, appearance, what character wants, how character changes, key statements about character, key actions, and what others think of character (76). Among all these components, the character’s appearance, wants and purpose and actions are particularly examined. To fully understand these, the following components are individually discussed.

The **summary of character traits** is the way the character in the film is presented to the audience. This is usually what the director of the movie wants his viewers to see.

The **appearance** of the character in the film describes how s/he is physically seen by the audience. This includes the visual effects and images flashed in the film since how the character looks in the movie plays an integral role in the horror film genre’s delivery of its theme.

The description of the character’s motivation or **what the character wants** also plays an integral part in its analysis. This aspect aids in determining the justification of the character’s actions and reactions to the circumstances of the plot wherein he/she finds himself in. This would explain every minute detail presented about and in relation to the character.

The phase wherein the character evolves in the plot is **how the character changes**. This is the portrayal of whether a character falls under the category of a round or flat character. Questions like: “Does the character have a change of heart at the end of the plot?” Or “Does he continue to be way he was from the beginning of the story?” This is also an important part in the analysis since it will determine, in one way or another, the effect that the complications or the conflict has on the character in question.

The crucial dialogue made by the character within the story is the **key statements about the character**. These are the words that the character actually delivers in the movie. What the character says often reveals to the audience, the conflict that is going on inside of him.

The **key actions** made by the character in the movie are also worth mentioning in the analysis of the character. These include vital acts made by the character, including his/her accomplishments or defeats in the story.

**What others think of the character** includes statements made by other characters in the film of story about the mythological character analyzed. These statements are intended to give clearer description of the characters as well as his purpose and wants.

With regard to the analysis of the supernatural characters in the selected Filipino Horror Films from 2004 to 2009, the writer utilized the Formalistic method of literary criticism for the elements of the film. Furthermore, Monsell’s concept of character analysis in short story is used in the study as basis for character analysis in film. These integral features of the character become the salient foundation for evaluating the supernatural personalities in the selected horror films.

DiYanni in his book *Literature: Reading Fiction, Poetry, and Drama* (2001) explicitly points out how the aim should not draw attention to the historical and biographical details of a literary work for art. Rather, the center of any formalistic literary criticism should be in the work itself that stands as a unified whole, with all of its ideas and details closely and relevantly linked with each other. Describing further the method in his Overview of Formalist

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Criticism, DiYanni states that formalists emphasize the form of a literary work to determine its meaning, highlighting on literary elements such as character, plot, diction, setting, structure, imagery, and point of view (p.381).

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study looked into the supernatural characters found in the selected Filipino supernatural films for a span of five years or from 2004 to 2009. To entirely analyze the characters of this study, the following questions were discussed:

1. What supernatural characters are portrayed in the selected films? How are they described? How do they deal with the human characters in the story?
2. How do these supernatural characters enhance the development of the plot?
3. What Filipino cultural practices are reflected in the selected horror films?

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is designed to help out students in their course works for Humanities and Literary Criticism classes. Significantly, this study heightens the students' appreciation and understanding of Philippine Mythology and Folklore.

The literary and film connections enhance the discussions in classes of Media Studies and Philippine Literature. It can be linked to other varied topics from folklore to popular culture. The study on the supernatural characters can deepen their insights on the minor characters in movies and books. It can also promote a sense of nationalism in students. As pointed out by Gaudencio Aquino (1992) in his introduction to *Philippine Myths and Legends* that:

The colonial system in the past neglected Philippine folklore for a long time. The advent of nationalism, however, has altered the course of events. There is now a growing realization among an increasing number of Filipinos that we have our own folklores, legends and myths which not only make enjoyable reading but also have a distinctive quality and flavor that is uniquely Filipino.

Moreover, this study can interest movie aficionados to be more selective in their standards for movies. In realizing the elements of films like the characters to watch out for in the horror movies that they view, the movie goers are able to develop appreciation for the art not just for the fantastic visual effects, but also for the literary elements and devices that they find. Literature and film share the same elements and devices in so many ways like theme, plot, setting, symbolisms, foreshadowing, flashback, irony, point of view and more specifically in the characters.

This study is also significant to the faculty of the Department of English Language and Literature (DELL) in such a way that teachers can incorporate values from Filipino horror movies in the literature classes. The horror films in the Philippines have assimilated Filipino values. Most of the values in the study of selected films are about relationships, traditions and culture. This will be an opportunity to fully explore the avenues of appreciating film and be generally integrated as literature in class discussions. In this study, teachers are inspired to delve discussions not limited in the realms of books but also the silver screen. The books help enhance the learners' cognitive and emotional capacities but supplementing film adaptations or movies in classes further reveals the vivid interpretations of words. Film intensifies the viewer's imagination which a reader may inadequately grasp.

This study is not only beneficial to teachers or literature students but to the general audience as well. The public can learn to see the significance of Filipino horror movies in terms of the characters' wants and needs, the role of the supernatural characters in the development of the plot, and the cultural practices evident in the films.

### **Scope and Delimitations of the Study**

The selected Filipino horror movies included in this study were specifically chosen for the presence of mythological characters or creatures. The study delved with limitations into the themes and other elements of literature or film and

did not explore on the aspect of cinematography. This study is limited to identifying and analyzing the supernatural characters of the selected films. The researchers also confined the study on the availability of the DVD copies in the market and on the relevance of the supernatural in the films. Furthermore, the study is restricted only to the ten horror movies listed below (according to year) as follows:

<p><b>1. Feng Shui</b> (2004)                      Starring: Kris Aquino                      Directed by: Chito Roño                      Produced by: Star Cinema</p>	<p><b>6. Tiyanaks</b> (2007)                      Starring: Rica Peralejo, Jennylyn Mercado, Mark Herras and JC De Vera                      Directed by: Mark Reyes                      Produced by: Regal Films</p>
<p><b>2. Spirit of the Glass</b> (2004)                      Starring: Rica Peralejo, Marvin Agustin, Dingdong Dantes                      Directed by: Jose Javier Reyes                      Produced by: Octoarts Films</p>	<p><b>7. Mag-ingat Ka Sa . . . Kulam</b> (2008)                      Starring: Judy Ann Santos, Dennis Trillo                      Directed by: Jun Lana                      Produced by: Regal Films</p>
<p><b>3. Dilim</b> (2005) Starring: Rica Peralejo, Emilio Garcia, Mario Magallona                      Directed by: Topel Lee                      Produced by: CINEMAONE Originals</p>	<p><b>8. Shake Rattle &amp; Roll X</b> (2008)                      Starring: Marian Rivera, Roxanne Guinoo, Kim Chiu, Gerald Anderson                      Directed by: Mike Tuviera and Topel Lee                      Produced by: Regal Films</p>
<p><b>4. Pamahiin</b> (2006) Starring: Dennis Trillo, Iya Villania, Marian Rivera, Paolo Contis                      Directed by: Rahyan Carlos                      Produced by: Regal Films</p>	<p><b>9. Pssst...T2 / Tenement 2</b> (2009)                      Starring: Maricel Soriano                      Directed by: Chito Roño                      Produced by: Star Cinema</p>
<p><b>5. Sukob</b> (2006)                      Starring: Kris Aquino, Claudine Barretto                      Directed by: Chito Roño                      Produced by: Star Cinema</p>	<p><b>10. Sundo</b> (2009)                      Starring: Robin Padilla, Sunshine Dizon, Katrina Halili, Rhian Ramos                      Directed by: Topel Lee                      Produced by: GMA Films</p>

In addition, the study is confined to determining and examining the primary supernatural characters which greatly affect the plot. Also, since all the movies are in Filipino language, there is a need for translation to English. Translation is needed for the analyses in the study. The characters' portrayals, appearances and dealings with the human characters are the focus of the discussion in the first problem. The actions of these personalities in the films as well as the conflicts that encourage the movement of the plot is the focal point of problem two. The third problem covers the dominant Filipino cultural practices found in the selected movies.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms are operationally defined for a better understanding of the study.

**Antihero.** S/he is a protagonist lacking in one or more of the usual attributes of a traditional hero (bravery, skills, dealism, and sense of purpose). The Antihero is an ordinary, inglorious twentieth-century citizen (Kennedy and Gioia 62).

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**Aswang (or Asuwang).** The corpse-eating *aswangs* are ghouls. They look like normal human beings in the day and live in ordinary houses. They steal corpse and change it to animals as they take it home. (Ramos 48).

**Bagua.** This term is an architectural charm hung outside the door by Chinese people. In the movie Feng Shui, it is a charm that bears good and bad luck.

**Enkantada/Engkanto.** Their names in Spanish mean “the enchanted ones.” They are tall, straight, and brown-haired. The *enkantada* seduces young male villagers while the *engkanto* seduces the pretty village girls. Both become ugly and dark after people marry them (Ramos 38). This refers to mythological characters that live in the woods. They look like human beings but with pointed ears. They seduce men and women in the nearby villages.

**Folklore.** This refers to the traditional beliefs, myths, tales, and practices of a people, transmitted orally (The Heritage Dictionary of the English Language).

**New Criticism Approach.** This refers to a method of analyzing and critiquing a literary work with a focus on form and meaning. In this approach, the elements of literature such as the character, theme, and plot are examined.

**Kapre.** This giant supernatural character has a furry body holding a gigantic cigarette. He lives in huge trees. He is nonaggressive and quiet.

**Manananggal.** Her name means that she can drop off part of her body. Many Visayans call her *wakwak*. Others say her head and her stomach fly out at night while some say all of her upper body flies out. She flies with her arms which she turns into wings. She perches on a roof and sucks the viscera of those in the house (Ramos 89).

**Mangkukulam.** This term refers to the mythological characters mostly women that live in tiny huts at the outskirts of the villages. They are feared by the common people because of their ability to cause intense headaches, tumors, pain and all sorts of nasty things to people with the use of dolls (Ramos 101).

**Multo.** This is the Filipino translation of “ghost”. They are spirits of dead people haunting the living ones. In this study, this term is taken collectively and the multos and ghosts are interchangeably used.

**Mythological characters.** This refers to a fictitious persona in the movies. They are other living beings who live in the surroundings usually the trees, bushes, or anywhere in the forest. Mythological is interchangeably used with supernatural in this study.

**Spirit of the Glass:** This is a game played with a Ouija board and a glass to call forth spirits and/or souls; the board has answers and the glass serves as the tool for spirits to answer the conjurers’ questions.

**Sukob.** This term refers to the curse when siblings marry in the same year or when one marries after one’s relatives have died. In this movie, Sukob specifically refers to a wedding curse.

**Sundo.** This term refers to the harbinger. It is also the title of the film and specifically refers to the harbinger of death.

**Tiyanaks.** They are evil creatures that disguise themselves as cute babies to lure victims into their traps. When they catch the attention and sympathy of their prey, they suddenly transform into monsters.

**Transformation.** This refers to a process in which a person, animal, or thing changes its form to disguise himself or itself. More specifically, this refers to the change that the mythological characters undergo as they deal with humans.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study has utilized several sources in the process of analyzing the characters in the selected films. The references for this research are supplemented with various studies both local and foreign. Three masters’ theses, numerous

books on local and foreign discussions about film and literature, and several articles about horror films and Philippine mythical creatures in the internet are examined. Here are the summaries of related literature and studies.

### **Related Literature**

Roberts (2003) *Writing about Literature* and Books of Anderson et al. (1993) *Elements of Literature Annotated Teacher's edition* agree on the necessity of analyzing the characters in film through its extraction from the elements of the plot, theme and setting to disclose the character's full meaning and potential. To uncover and determine the character, there are precepts to meticulously consider like extracting the dialogues of the supernatural characters from the film, observing how the supernatural changes through their key statements, gathering essential events to bring out what each supernatural character wants and considering what the other characters think about the supernatural characters in the film. Drawing a distinction between the characters' potential and quality is not solely based on the appearance or the sloppiness of his actions but even beyond the circumstances presented in the plot.

Similarly, Anderson et al (1993) discusses the standards in determining the character's outstanding trait. Though Roberts reveals the precepts to provide a larger picture of the explanation, Anderson et al has extracted the essentials of analyzing a character and summarized it in seven parts. These have been presented in the conceptual framework.

Another important related literature that enforces the analysis of the study is Boggs and Petrie's (1999) *The Art of Watching Films*. The book is similar to Anderson's but they have delineated the characterization in analyzing a film. Boggs has mentioned useful points in the case of analyzing characters in film as art. The study though is not primarily discussing the characters in film as art but could help in understanding supernatural characters' behavior in film.

The descriptions of the characters in short stories and novels are revealed in the development of the story and chapters. Boggs and Petrie have presented essentials on developing characterization. There are eight suggested aspects of a character mentioned. The following are namely: Characterization Through Appearance, Characterization Through Dialogue, Characterization Through External Action, Characterization Through Internal action, Characterization Through Reactions of Other Characters, Characterization Through Contrast: Dramatic Foils, Characterization Through Caricature and Leitmotif.

Boggs and Petrie illuminate the significance of analysis in the book which would aid in the appreciation of studying and analyzing films. Their insight on film analysis proposes the interconnectedness of the elements in the horror film which would prompt this study to consider other elements and not just merely focus on the characters. Boggs and Petrie claim that the analysis does not kill the appreciation for the object under study but rather aids in the unraveling of the mystery of its meaning. It is not about breaking it down into each part's function to destroy. But rather it is to recognize the beauty in its integration as whole and thereby reshape concepts beyond the surface of aesthetics.

Like literature, analysis is required to fully understand and appreciate the emotional and intellectual pleasures of a film. Not only highlighting the pleasures that the audience get but also analytically evaluating its subject and content. According to Boggs and Petrie:

To assume that analysis destroys the beautiful, however, is to assume that physicians who have carefully studied the human body—its bone and muscle structure, its circulatory and nervous systems, and all its many organs—are no longer awed by the miracle of life, warm, vibrant, and pulsing with energy. Film analysis does not work with parts that are dead, nor does it kill. Film analysis takes place only in the mind.  
(7)

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In this study, the horror genre of Filipino films has been chosen to highlight the allure of the supernatural by twentieth century society who only have very little, if not close to nothing, in their level of awareness on traditional beliefs such as folklore.

Maximo Ramos, author of *The Creatures of Midnight*, gives the researcher insights on the definition of Filipino mythological characters, such as the *aswang*, *balbal*, *engkanto*, *tiyanak*, and other creatures. The book provides an overview of these characters characteristics, such as what they thought to look like, what they do, or who they victimize. And since the book compiles these creatures according to their categories and to the names they are most commonly known across the different regions and dialects in the Philippines, the profiling of the creatures found in the movies have become easier to make.

On the other hand, Francisco Demetrio S.J., chief compiler and editor of the *Encyclopedia on Philippine Folk Beliefs and Customs* (1991), catalogues the superstitious beliefs of Filipinos that go hand in hand with the mythological creatures that Ramos defines in his book. Demetrio also offers valuable insights on how these creatures are perceived by Filipinos. He believes that when man lets down his guard and biases, he regresses to a time when he is not bounded by reason and judgment based on the scientifically explainable. Father Demetrio mentions in the introduction of his study that:

We know from experience that when logic is lulled for a while, when consciousness is dull and ordinary waking attention is low then the mythic depths of the imagination seem to come to play. Then fantasy and day dreaming happen unbidden. The images dormant in the subconscious surface and the person is shuttled back to the earliest experience of his personal life and also, as Jung teaches, to the earliest experiences of the entire human race. Jung calls this the unconscious whose images or archetypes or innate models or blue prints of personality periodically make their reappearance on the plane of the conscious. (viii)

Demetrio's statement has made this paper all the more relevant when it comes to film viewing. Deviating from the progression of the conscious minds would mean that the audience is actually agreeing on the themes or messages of the film that they are viewing without prejudice.

Horror film genre has continuously fascinated and enthralled the Filipino audience. According to Gerry Plaza, in his article in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, "...horror films have kept frightened audiences sitting at the edge of their seats, horrified and yet entertained despite the health risks." (par 2) Recent Filipino films like *Tenement 2* (2009), *Sundo* (2009), *Shake Rattle and Roll X* (2008), and *Mag-ingat Ka Sa...Kulam* (2008), are among the top grossing films to date, a major feat considering the slump in the global economy because of the recession. But even before these recent top grossing horror films, noted film critic Noel Vera writes that this genre in Filipino Horror movies would not have been the same without the pioneering attempts of Filipino directors Gerardo De Leon and Lino Brocka.

De Leon initiates the Filipino horror flick genre with his first movie, *Terror is a Man* (1959) an adaptation of H.G. Wells' *Island of Dr. Moreau* and followed it up with several others such as *Kulay ng Dugo* (*Blood is the Color of the Night*) in 1966 and then *Dugo ng Vampira* (*Blood of Vampires*) in 1971. According to Noel Vera the films made by De Leon are "...worth seeing for the lovely visuals and seething subtext of incestuous passion" (par 4).

Another noteworthy Filipino director cited by Vera is more well-known in the field of Philippine Cinema. Unknown to most, Lino Brocka also jumpstarted the horror genre in the country through his horror films entitled *Gabi ng Lagi*" (*Night of Horror*) in 1960 and *Gumising Ka, Maruja* (*Wake Up, Maruja*) in 1978.

Gradually, the country's horror genre began to pick up with a style of its own that is now fast becoming known globally. Rico Ilarde—now recently tagged as the Horror Director for Filipino Movies—is known for his past works such as *Dugong Birhen* (*Blood of the Virgin*, 1999), *Babaing Putik* (*Woman of Mud*, 2001), *Sa Ilalim ng Cogon* (*Under the Cogon Grass*, 2005). According to an online source, Ilarde won the top prize for the *Rojo Sangre*



Film Festival in Buenos Aires, Argentina and now his most recent flick, *Villa Estrella* (2009) is also topping the charts a week after it opened in local theaters.

Hopefully, local talents like Ilarde can still salvage the negative trend on the quality of Filipino horror movies since it is not one of the most famous film genres when it comes to the movie critics. According to a critic, the Filipino horror film genre is known for three predominant characteristics: 1) huge helpings of comedy; 2) cheap computer generated imagery (CGI) effects; and 3) poorly made prosthetics (Vera par 8). Another critic, Nestor Torre, also a newspaper columnist, comments that “the worst movies in this genre...are those that use manipulation, especially those slasher flicks that are always predictable. You would see a pattern, say gory killings every 10 minutes.” Nevertheless, Torre has his homegrown choices for horror flicks that gave the critic more or less the kind of effect searched for in this genre. Especially mentioned are *Tiyanak* (1988) by Peque Gallaga, *Frigidaire* directed by Ishmael Bernal – from *Shake Rattle and Roll 1* in 1984 (Torre 6).

#### **Related Studies** There are three related studies us

ed in this study: Deriada’s *Cinema as Literature* (1970), Adajar’s *Themes in Selected youth-oriented Filipino Films of the 1990s* (1999) and Binongo’s *A Thematic Analysis of R. Akugatawa’s and N. Joaquin’s Supernatural Stories: A Comparative Study* (1991). The three theses shape this study’s content and concept.

The thesis of Leoncio Deriada in 1970 *Cinema as Literature* and of Cathelyn Adajar (1999) *Themes in Selected youth-oriented Filipino Films of the 1990s* have materialized the concept of this study; Deriada has established Cinema as literature, while the latter has introduced the use of thematic analysis in the films. This thesis is a hopeful breakthrough of analyzing characters in the narrative films. Deriada has enlightened the discussion on film and literature significantly on his formulation of criteria for film evaluation and explanation of finding unity in the movie. He further justifies the element of Unity, which can be achieved when the story (main, plot, sub-plot), narrative devices (suspense, climax, denouement) and technical aspects (photography, editing, and montage, sound and music) are blended accordingly to make it a whole. Owing to the fact that Deriada has established film as literature, it is not the writer’s point to further discuss it in detail and to prove it. Ad

ajar paves the way to the realization of this study. She has deliberately discussed the element of theme in her masters’ thesis. Her stimulating and in-depth appreciation for film as a literary art and discussion of the themes in some youth-oriented films encourages the writer to study the other elements of the narrative films, specifically the character. The relevance of her study about the themes in the film buoys up the imagination of the writer to delve into character analysis on a deeper and more consequential intensity. Adajar anchors on the formalistic approach to analyze the themes in the films. It is also related to this study because it analyzes the characters in the horror films using effectively the formalistic approach.

Binongo’s thesis reveals a lot of relevant terms in supplementing the study. Her analyses of the supernatural stories help define important operational terms used in this study and employed in the shaping or drawing out of the characters’ essence in the film.

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The terminologies are taken from various sections in Binongo's thesis to help out the research's operational terms. In the discussions on *Akugatawa's Use of Supernatural Elements*, she propounds on some terms on supernatural elements that would be significant in the progress, and states that "to use grotesque supernatural element as a style of fiction, one has to remember that it departs from the natural into the absurd, the comic, or the caricature" (Binongo 38). Binongo's and this study are similar in relation to of supernatural elements in Literature. Although Binongo focuses on the supernatural themes in the short stories, this study centers on the supernatural characters in the films. The only difference is predominantly on the elements and genre used. Binongo tackles on the themes but the elements imbibed in her analyses provide description and interpretation of the supernatural characters in this study.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The study used the New Criticism approach where interpretation, analysis, and evaluation center on the literary work itself (form and meaning) to determine its value or literary greatness. In this study, the literary work, always considered by the new critics as a "timeless, autonomous (self-sufficient) verbal object" (Tyson, p.137) refers to film. Tyson further claims that advocates of New Criticism "believed that a single best, or most accurate, interpretation of each text could be discovered that best represents the text itself: that best explains what the text means and how the text produces that meaning, in other words, that best explains its organic unity." (148). With the New Criticism approach in mind, this study considered Character as the essential element of literature.

Among hundreds of Philippine scary movies, a set of ten horror movies was carefully selected. Then several viewings of the films were done. First viewing was for appreciation. The second was done for familiarization of the scenes and characters. The third was for pointing out the characters and details for question one. The fourth viewing was done to extract important dialogues and scenes that reflect the description and key actions of the supernatural characters.

Then, the ten horror movies were viewed several times extracting descriptions of supernatural characters, dialogues by and about the supernatural characters, the symbolisms, the changes that happen to the character and the other essential aspects of the supernatural characters, conflict and symbols found in the movies. Lastly, interplay of these elements to enhance the plot and the characterization of these mythological characters were discussed.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Problem 1:** What Supernatural characters are portrayed in the selected Filipino horror films? How are they described? How do they deal with the human characters in the story?

There are seven supernatural characters employed in the selected Filipino horror films. They are as follows: multo, mangkukulam, manananggal, engkanto, tiyanak, aswang, and demon. These characters have creatively meshed with the main characters in the selected horror films. Though these characters, most of the time, play the minor roles, they interestingly direct the course of the plot and sometimes the other elements of a story.

#### Multo

The multos, widely known as ghosts, persist in the six selected Filipino horror films out of the ten. These multos have appeared quite a lot in the six films but comported significantly with the story as a whole. All throughout the six movies, the similitude of the multos in terms of the appearance is firm and dependable by definition. Their physical appearance is the substantive indicator that delineates them from the other supernatural characters.

An online source defines *multo* as the Tagalog word for ghost, comes from the Spanish word *muerto*, which means "dead". The multos in the six Filipino horror films bear the same characteristic and shape out ghostly with their distinct look. These are the movies that contain multos or ghost: *Pamahiin*, *Shake, Rattle and Roll X*, *Spirit of the Glass*, *Feng Shui*, *Sundo*, and *Sukob*.

Though the supernatural characters have overlapped characteristics in terms of their appearances but they differ in the roles that they portray like multos in the lives of the human. In most cases, these multos haunt the human characters to either warn them of forthcoming danger or to fetch souls of their beloved.

There are three pre-eminent multos in the film *Pamahiin*: Damian, Becca and a little girl. Damian emerges as the first multo in the film after his suicide. The horrid suicide by hanging himself on the ceiling is the fundamental point of his sinisterly features. Damian appears in the story with black smudges and emitting blood around his eyes. He wears white long sleeves and slacks similarly worn by the deceased in the funeral. These oddities of his appearance add on to the suspense in the film. In his succeeding appearances, he frequently comes into sight in unanticipated places. An instance is in the running car, where he shows up freaky outside the driver's door and looking in. Damian's taciturn apparitions in the movie make his real deed mysterious. He never speaks or communicates in any form but through clueless and strange apparitions. He is depicted as reserved and at the same time freakish. Damian's evil look has deluded viewers that he is the bad ghost.

Becca's appearance is not similar to Damian's presentation of his outside appearance. She comes out with this angelic and innocent face. Her voice is soft and convincing. She is the lover of Damian in the movie but her heart is for Noah. In the first scenes, she deceives Noah that she is still human and alive. She wears white ensembles and *baro't saya*, a common clothing of conservative Filipinas in the Philippines. In the later part in the scenes, Becca's true color is discovered. Also, Becca's transformation as the innocent-looking appearance to a ghostly one takes place when the truth about what really happened to her is revealed.

The third ghost, the little girl, is a victim in the story. She wears white dress with a hole in her chest because her heart is taken out by Becca's mother, the mangkukulam. The poor girl's heart serves as a sacrificial offering to conjure the spirit of Becca. To elucidate the purpose of the girl's heart, Belinda proudly recounts:

Kailangan ng sakripisyo. Buhay para sa buhay na ninakaw sa anak ko. Puso para sa puso na ginutay-gutay ni Damian. Sa pamamagitan nito nabuhay muli and aking anak. Hindi ako binigo. Nagbalik si Rebecca.

*(A sacrifice is necessary. Life for the life that he took away from my daughter. A heart for the heart that he torn. Through this, my daughter has come to life. I wasn't disappointed. Becca came back.)*

The girl's untimely death results to her mother's purpose to look for justice. The girl is completely out of the circle in the characters, from the main characters and the friends-turned-to-ghosts which is Becca. The girl's death becomes the point of intersection which is the link that connects the main characters, the friends-turned-to-ghosts and Becca's mother. This is evident when the girl's ghost said "ako ang dahilan" (*I am the cause*).

The second movie that has multos or ghosts is the *Shake, Rattle, and Roll*'s second episode entitled "Class Picture". The ghost in the movie is a nun. Sister Belonia is a demented ghost that has cursed the class picture hoping to complete her class picture, "Pinangako ko kang sister na mabubuo ko ang klase ko" (*I promised Sister to complete my class*). She is a very strict nun that abuses her students. She has committed suicide and comes back to complete the picture.

Sister Belonia is a conservative spinster that disciplines students the way she wants to. She thinks that her intentions are good for the kids. She rants: "Walang nakakaunawa sa akin. ang gusto ko lang naman ay matuto ang mga bata kagaya ng pagkakatuto ko kay mama at papa pero anong nangyari ngayon? Ako ang mali, ako pa ang tatanggalin sa San Selino." (*Nobody understands me. I only want the children to learn the way I learned from my mother and father but what is happening now? It seems that I am wrong, and I will be kicked out from San Selino.*)

Sister Belonia is first sensed in the movie invisibly chasing one girl and whipping her calf. She scratches the walls, and causes cabinet doors to open. Also, she places the cursed class picture in different places to lure students from looking it. An instance is in a scene wherein the picture is pinned on the board and suddenly disappears. She has an

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unlikely way of disciplining her students. In a scene from the movie, she ties the girl student on the chair and whips her. There is an occasion also where she amputates a student. She ends up killing her three students who eventually are missing from the class picture.

A very untypical ghost in all of the seven horror films is the *Spirit of The Glass*. The ghost in the movie is not presented scary and blood-stained but instead neat in appearance. The ghost's appearance reflects his personality in the movie. He seeks justice for his death and comes back for his ill-fated love. This is the third movie of the six. The ghost in the movie is Dante. He is called forth because of the *Spirit of the Glass game* played by the youngsters in the movie. Dante, as a ghost is not archetypal of his appearance. He looks clean and wears monochromatic white garments, from polo shirt to belt, pants and shoes. Drue, one of the characters in the movie describes him as “nakaputi yung damit naka tuck-in, naka gel pero iba yung buhok” (*He wears white tucked-in clothes and he wears gel on his hair. His hair is different.*). His ghostly features are manifested in the clothing he wears, all white and not ghostly. But the only instance he appears gruesome in the bathroom half-naked and wounded face.

Another character that traces the shape of a ghost or multo is Lotus Feet in the movie *Feng Shui*. She plays the role of a soul taker. One character in the movie explains why the ghost plays the role of a soul's taker. According to the Feng Shui master:

...sumumpa si babae sa salamin ng Bagua bago siya namatay. At ang sumpa ay kumuha ng kaluluwa sa sinumang makakita ng sarili niya sa salamin.

*(The girl vowed before she died. The curse was to take souls of whoever sees himself in the mirror of the bagua.)*

Her retribution pays the sweetest and at the same time dreadful in luring her victims to the charm of the bagua. She avenges her death through the luxury that the bagua brings but coupled with misfortunes. The soul taker also known in the story as Lotus Feet has distinctive features of a Chinese woman. She has square pale face and chinky eyes. Her vesture is topped with flamboyant and flowing white sleeves that make her personality ancient or old-fashioned.

There are seven human characters in this movie. They are Romano, Isabel, Louella, Baste, Eric, Lumen and Kristina. Romano, a soldier, has just recovered from a coma. As he gets back to his normal life, he is consternated from seeing ghosts beside dying people. At one time, he travels to Manila with his blind sister Isabel in the hope to seek doctor's help. They are riding a van with some friends like Louella and Baste. There are also other people taking the trip with them. One of them, Lumen, is a neighbor on her way to Manila for her husband's wake. Another passenger is Eric, who is the nephew of Lumen. Then, a sexy passenger Kristina takes the ride after the group finds her in the road to Manila.

There are eight ghosts in the movie. The ghosts in the movies are presented as harbingers of death. In most of the scenes in the movie, the ghosts appear with a repugnant in expression. The wan faces and bleary-eyed expressions sew up the shuddery effect to the movie.

Each of the passengers has corresponding ghost characters which are harbingers. Each of the ghosts are said to be dead relatives of the passengers. The first six ghosts are seen at the beginning of the movie while the characters are travelling to Manila. The first ghost is an old man believed to be Baste's grandfather. He wears a white long-sleeved shirt and a necklace with a tooth pendant. He looks pale, wrinkled and has gray hair.

The second ghost is Lumen's husband. He is seen in the first few scenes in the movie also. As the passengers travel to Manila, they are prompted with road accident. The ghost, then, blurredly approaches Romano near the van. He wears a barong. His pale face has dark smudges around his eyes. His distinctive feature is a scar on his right hand.

The third ghost is Eric's friend. He is seen in the same scene in the road accident. He is seen limping as he walks toward Romano and in another occasion, he is seen holding crutches. He wears black pants and dark shirt. Towards the middle of the movies, he has revealed himself hanging on the ceiling to Romano in a clinic.

The fourth ghost is Kristina's twin sister. The same instance at the road accident, she appears together with the rest of the ghosts. Kristina does not know about the existence of the twin sister until the later part of the scene. The said ghost has appeared to Romano through the window of Kristina's house. She wears a dirty white sleeveless blouse and has a long messy hair.

The fifth ghost is a baby. Although it is not seen tangibly in the scenes, its cry is heard in the road accident scene where the other ghosts have appeared. Another occurrence of its presence is in the room at some hotel with Romano and Isabel. The baby's impressions in the events are soon discovered in the later part of the movie. The existence of the ghost baby is implied to be Louella's unborn child.

The sixth ghost is the mother of Romano and Isabel. There is no substantial expression manifested on her face. Her first glimpse is also at that road accident near the van. She, then, appears in the hotel room scene as she traverses with a white dress. Her role has manifested clearly as she comes into sight to usher the soul of Isabel.

Interestingly, the movie presents a twist towards the end of the movie. Here, the human characters Romano and Isabel become ghost harbingers themselves. Isabel dies and becomes a herald of death for Romano while the latter soon dies and fetches Louella.

The three characters, Louella, Isabel and Romano continue to struggle against death but they soon find out that death is inevitable. Isabel dies and becomes a herald for Romano. Unaware of his sister's demise and in an attempt to save her, Romano goes after his sister, now a ghost. He soon discovers that it is Death, disguising as his sister that he is chasing. He dies and becomes Louella's fetch.

When Isabel and her brother Romano become ghosts, they have not transformed into a ghostly-like appearance. Isabel still wears a black dress and her hair covers much of her face. Romano has not changed also; In fact, he thinks he has evaded death in the end. The only clue that proves his death is when Louella appears in the scene looking at his floating dead body.

Sukob is the last movie that employs multo or ghost. The ghost's name is Helen. She is the childhood friend of the main character, Joy. Helen has the curse when she gets married the same year her dad dies. Helen appears to be an insignificant ghost character in the movie because she is mistaken to be the ghost that brings the curse to Joy's wedding. Her face is silvery and pale. It is covered with a long veil which matches up her wedding gown ensemble.

### **Mangkukulam**

Another supernatural character that appears in the selected Filipino horror films is the mangkukulam. This supernatural character appears in two movies, *Pamahiin* and *Mag-ingat Ka sa Kulam*. They play the minor roles as a conjurer and mother; while the latter, as a plain witch. According to Ramos, a mangkukulam looks plain and mostly women. Most of them live in tiny huts at the outskirts of villages. People are afraid to speak to them and occasionally avoid them if they can. They can cause intense headaches, tumors, and pain by a wish or by pricking their doll. They do not look people in the eye. An image of a person is said to be upside down in their eyes. They also pass on their witchcraft to their children (1958).

In the movie, *Pamahiin*, the mangkukulam is portrayed as a mother and conjurer of Becca. She lives in a remote place at the foot of the mountain. She has dolls and other witchcraft paraphernalia in her house. She practices witchcraft and performs ritual incantations. In a scene with her daughter, she is heard delivering such words: "Alinsunod sa kahilingan namin, sa ngalan ni Ibaki, Walang lalaking iiwan sayo, Walang lalaking hindi iibig sayo." (*Grant our request, in the name of Ibaki. No man will leave you. Men will love you.*) She is, as well, presented as a mother who seeks justice for her daughter's demise and wants to be reunited with her. She is further seen in the movie saying, "Kung walang kukuha ng katarungan para sa anak ko, ako ang kukuha ng katarungan sa sarili kong anak... magbabalik na muli siya sa akin" (*If no one can give justice for my daughter, then I will be the one to seek*

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*justice for my own daughter*). She calls upon the devil to realize her intimate desire—revenge for her daughter’s death.

In a scene, she is seen saying, “Tinatawag ko kayo mga sugo ng kadiliman sa ngalan ng naghatol sa inyo sa impyerno. Inaalay namin ang mga ito upang matamo na ang pinakamimithing bertud.” ( *I call upon the servants of darkness in the name of those who judged you in hell. We offer these to achieve our innermost desire*). Belinda’s dialogues in the movie depict a strong power in her, making her think she is invulnerable. The power she possesses has driven her to become the despicable character. Belinda, as the mangkukulam, is responsible for the nefarious crimes which make the story evolve and the other characters react in domino effect. Belinda’s character as mangkukulam and mother makes her powerful and yet at the same time vulnerable. Though she holds the power she, cannot separate herself as also a mother.

There are three mangkukulam in the movie *Mag-ingat ka sa Kulam*: the mother, the twin sisters, Maria and Mira. Like the mangkukulam in *Pamahiin*, the mother here practices witchcraft also. The mother wants her twin daughters to learn about their craft but Mira refuses to be like one. In a flashback scene, the mother is speaking in hushed tone, “Ero ero asardo, Ero ero somero”. While the other twin sister, Maria mimics the chanting, Mira keeps herself quiet. Then the mother continues, “Mira bakit di ka sumusunod?” (*Mira, Why don’t you repeat after me?*) Mira replies “Ayoko po inay. Ayoko pong kamuhian ako ng tao gaya ng trato nila sa inyo.” ( *I don’t want to. I don’t want people to despise me like the way they do to you.* )

Maria portrays the role of a practicing mangkukulam. She has a messed-up look and a long wavy hair with gray streaks. Also, she has an awful face, pale and grubby. When her mother has died, she has inherited a book of spells and becomes crazy always carrying a voodoo doll with her. Her twin sister, Mila, sends her to an asylum to cure her insanity but she feels that her sister wants to get rid of her. As a result, Maria avails herself with sorcery against her sister, Mira. Her incantation has successfully swapped her soul and her sister’s.

Mira, on the other hand is the twin sister of Maria. She opts not to stay with their mangkukulam mother and leaves home to reject her practices. Mira is a successful professional but she has hang ups in her life. She is married to Paul but has a lover. Also, she keeps the secret of her real bloodline. She is apprehensive about telling her husband that she comes from a mangkukulam family.

### **Manananggal**

The third supernatural character is the manananggal. The manananggal character is portrayed by Eman also known as Dilim. He is characterized as the protector of the civilians. He can often be noted as a vigilante. He is somehow the hero of the people. He has masculine feature, somber expression and inferior personality. His physical appearance in human form can be distinguishable to a typical man who wears dark-colored shirts and jeans.

Most of the time in the scenes, he holds a brown leather jacket. He is seen once in the transformed creature as manananggal. He has grotesque and ludicrous appearance in his transformation. Eman is shown as the manananggal with a sewn torso and waistline. He has a long claw-like metallic nails and a giant bat wings on his back. He does hunt for food but his victims are criminals.

### **Engkanto**

In *Tenement 2* or *T2*, the dominant mythical creature is the engkanto which is the fourth of the characters in this analysis. engkanto has the ability to shift from being an engkanto to being a human. The engkantos are immortal. According to Rita, one of the characters, engkantos cannot die. She empathically says, “Hindi pwedeng mamatay ang

ina ni Angelie. Walang kamatayan ang mga engkanto. Si Angelie ay anak ng isang mortal na tao at engkanto.”  
*(Angelie’s mother cannot die. The engkantos are immortal. Angelie is a daughter of a mortal and of an engkanto.)*  
Basically, they resemble a normal person but once they have completed their mission, they return to their original

form. In their real form, the engkantos are shown as having silvery and whey-faced expressions. Ramos has elaborated the definition that engkantada or engkanto means “the enchanted ones” in Spanish. They are blond and mythical people. Also, they are tall and straight. The engkantada, refers to the female gender, seduces young male villagers while the engkantado seduces the pretty village girls. Their ugly appearances shall only be revealed after they marry a human (38).

The lady engkantos in T2 wear white dresses. They have long straight hair and are covered with a wimple on their head. The male engkantos, too, wear white long-sleeved shirts paired white pants. Although this is so typical of an engkanto, there are times that they wear black coats and ties to visit Angelie. One occasion, these engkantos are presented as though they are ghosts. One of the engkantos in T2 is a shape shifter. He is referred to as Doming. He transforms from human form to a creature. He can be considered as an associate of the engkantos. He also assists in the carrying out the engkanto’s plan. He also transforms as a big bat, boar and alien-like creature.

Other than the shape shifting ability of the engkantos, they can also imitate a person’s voice. It is clearly shown in the middle part of the movie wherein an engkanto imitates Elias’ voice and pretends to be him while talking to Claire outside the door. The engkanto is successfully able to convince Claire when the impersonator said to her, “Claire, naboboring ako. Lalabas lang ako sandali o iinom lang ako ng konte dun sa may videoke.” *(Claire, I’m bored. I’ll just go out for a drink at a videoke store. )*. Claire believes that it is indeed Elias who spoke to her.

These engkantos are referred to as evil. According to Angelie, you have to look into the eyes of a person to tell if he is good-natured or ill-natured. If the image turns upside down in their eyes, then that person is evil or bad. Angelie further explicates that saying audibly “engkanto” makes the engkanto draw near to them.

Sabi nga ni papa tingnan ko raw sila sa mata para malaman ko kung bad sila o good. Sabi ni papa pag baligtad ka sa mga mata nila, ibig sabihin bad sila.

*(My Papa told me that I should look at them in their eyes to know whether they are good or bad. Papa said that if I appear inverted in their eyes; it means that they are bad.)*

Huwag na po ninyo ipaulit sa akin ang pangalan nila, mas lalo po silang lalapit

*(Please don’t make me say their name again. It will attract them to draw close)*

The engkantos are strong-willed beings. They manipulate their subjects to win them if not convinced. They insinuate in the manner of bedazzling their subjects while asleep. There are two occurrences in the movie when they would entice Angelie to go with them: The first event is in the Ferry boat’s cargo area with Clair and the second event is when Claire finds lollipops in Angelie’s feet. When Claire probed Ferry boat incident, Angelie says:

Angelie: wala akong naaalalang babae. Naalala ko lang nanaginip ako may sinusundan akong paru-paro

Angelie: ang alam ko lang natutulog ako, pag gising niyo sa akin may hawak na akong lollipop”

*(Angelie: I don’t remember a woman there. The only thing I remembered was I was following a butterfly.*

*Angelie: I was sleeping and when you woke me up, I had a lollipop in my hand. )*

The second setting is in the bedroom of the engkanto where Angelie is found unconscious standing in the bed with her right hand in the air. The engkantos, again, lure temptation to the victim; lollipops are laid in Angelie’s feet. She is tempted for the second time but Claire comes just right on time to wake her. Angelie asserts:

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“Wag niyo akong iiwan ate Claire. Yung paru-paro, pinapasunod po ako. Tumagos po kami sa mga dingding ng kwarto dito. Hanggang sa makarating kami sa napakagandang lugar, lahat po magagara. Napakayaman nila. May narinig po akong boses ng babae, sabi niya sasama na raw ako sa kanya. Naalala ko ang pangako ko kay papa na hindi ako sasama.”

*(Don't leave me ate Claire. The butterfly wants me to follow. We passed through the wall of this room. Until we reached to that beautiful place, everything's extravagant. They are so rich. I heard a woman's voice saying to go with them. Then, I remember that papa told me not to go with them.)*

The engkantos are also depicted as pretty individuals with pointed ears in *Shake, Rattle and Roll*. The female engkantos wear white-flowing attire while the male ones are half-naked with sash-like drapery wrapped around the shoulder to waist. All throughout the movie, their attires are unvarying except the queen engkantada, Acacia who is known to the engkantos as the goddess of beauty. She has the power to transform herself into a human being. In her engkanto appearance, she wears white and sexy dress. She can float in the air and very powerful. She has the voice that can seduce any man to do her orders. Nieves describes her as follows: “Si Acacia ang reyna ng mga engkanto, ang pinaka-makapangyarihan sa kagubatan. Isa siyang diyosa ng kagandahan. Ang lahat ng mga lalaking pakikitaan niya ay siguradong mabibighani sa kagandahan niya. Ang boses niya ay makakahikayat na sundin mo ang ano mang inutos niya. *(Acacia is the queen of the engkantos, the most beautiful and powerful in the woods. She is the goddess of beauty. Whoever sees her will be mesmerized by her beauty. Her voice can seduce anyone to do her requests. )*

In a scene wherein she whispers to Celso, a human character, across the gentle wind to cut a Balete-like tree inhabited by a couple. Acacia is the nemesis of Nieves. She bewitches Adonis, the husband of Nieves; the abduction of Adonis marks the alliance of the engkanto and Nieves against Acacia.

### **Tiyanaks**

Tiyanak as the fifth mythical character is in the movie, *Tiyanaks*. In the film, three tiyanaks are shown, two boys and one girl. Unlike the other tiyanak movies which employ babies, the tiyanak characters here have become young kids. They come out in bright daylight, play in the bushes and converse with humans. They are capable of transforming into a monstrous being other than their human form. Though these creatures or characters bear those innocent looks, they are capable of hurting people. The tiyanaks are cunning. They put up a helpless face to outsmart their prey and so that people will help them. Earl, a professor in the movie explains:

Naniniwala sila na ang mga tao ay maawain sa mga bata at ginagamit nila ang awang ito para mambiktima.

Nilalagay nila ang mga sarili nila sa lugar o sitwasyon para maawa ang mga tao, saka sila umaatake.

*(They believe that the people are compassionate to children. They use this to trick their victims. They put themselves in pitiful situations so people will pity them. Once people will pity them, that is the time that they attack.)*

One prevailing characteristic, seen in the movie, is their boldly resistance to holy water. The holy water burns the skin of the tiyanak. Another claim is that the tiyanaks believe that they cannot go to heaven if not baptized. Sheila says:

“Sinaliksik naming ni Earl ang mga pinag ugatan ng mga tiyanaks. Nalaman namin na maraming batang namatay sa dating bahay ampunan na yun. May isang batang nahulog sa ilog, may nawala sa kagubatan at may nasunog. Ang mga espiritu ng mga batang ito ay ang mga nasumpa na nagiging tiyanak.”

*(Earl and I researched the beginnings of the Tiyanaks. We found out that there were children who died in that old orphanage: One drowned in the river, Another got lost and was never found in the woods. And still another died in a fire. The souls of these children were cursed and became tiyanaks.)*



The girl tiyanak is very adorable and naive. She wears white dress and her hair is a little bit messy. Her innocence and helpless appearance draw compassion to her prey. She uses these to lure her victims. “Tulungan niyo po ako (*Please help me*)”, she says. She changes into a green hideous tiyanak with root-like hair. Her hair is smeared with moss and tiny leaves. She has green eyes that glow when there is a prey.

The first boy tiyanak, when transformed, has the ability to fly. His frizzy hair is brushed upwards which displays the veins on his forehead. He gnarls in front of his prey with his sharp teeth. On the other hand, the second boy tiyanak looks like twigs with tiny branches tangled together. The twig-like manifestations are seen in his body and in the strands of his hair.

Although these tiyanaks look different from each other, they only have one intention: to kill. The girl tiyanak show more aggressiveness in attacking people. She is the first one to attack Bryan and Hans in the river. Their attack though does not elevate until they saw that Biboy, their playmate, has found a new friend, Sheila. The tiyanaks tell Biboy:

Boy tiyanak: ayaw na naming makipaglaro sa inyo. (*We do not want to play with you anymore*)

Tiyanak: Doon ka nalang makipaglaro sa mga bago mong kaibigan.

(*Why don't you go play with your new friends.*)

Girl Tiyanak: Sabi mo kami mga kaibigan mo. Sabihin mo sa mga kaibigan mo lagot sila sa amin.

(*You said we are your friends. Tell your friends to be careful.*)

This conversation starts the absolute strike and killing of the characters. The girl tiyanak uses her innocent looking face to get the other characters' sympathy. With her bloody hands, she calls out to the teenagers, “Tulungan niyo po ako (*Please help me*). She is then brought into the house where she sleeps peacefully only to wake up killing the people inside the house.

The boy tiyanak, like the girl, pretends that he is hurt. He lies on the road facedown. When Kerwin riding his bike comes along the road, the boy groans and asks for help. He says, “Tulungan niyo ako.” (*Help me.*) In hope of saving the boy, Kerwin approaches the boy but he is attacked and killed. The boy deceives his prey in believing that he is hurt. This is a typical action of a tiyanak.

In the next scene, Earl, Sheila's boyfriend professor sees Kerwin dead on the road. The boy mimic's Sheila's voice, “Earl...Earl...nandito ako” (*Earl...earl...I'm over here.*) He fakes Sheila's voice to draw Earl to his position, where he can better attack the professor. The tiyanaks then attacks and punches Earl. In addition to these actions, the tiyanaks assault the human characters in a lot of ways. The girl tiyanak jumps towards Christian. She metamorphoses as a child to a tiyanak under the table just before she attacks Christian. She kills Mildred. The flying tiyanak seizes Cindy and yet puts her down later in the scene. Surprisingly, this tiyanak did not harm Cindy.

### **Aswang**

Another supernatural character that fosters the Filipino culture is the noted creature of the night, the aswangs. This supernatural character is presented in the *Shake, Rattle and Roll X* in the “Emergency” episode. They are characterized to be living placidly in the woods. Their appearances have adapted the human form. Humans cannot see the real monstrous form but can be revealed in the mirror's reflection. These aswangs are capable to attack. They can even attack without having to transform to their true form. They have extendible tongues that could stretch to reach the target. They are also strong and can jump as high as the hospital roof. Towards the end, the aswangs' real form is seen. They have the infernal looks. They have root-like hair, sharp teeth, and dark circles around their eyes. There is one aswang that has spikes on his back and shoulders. The aswangs in the movie are afraid of saline water or holy water because it could burn their skin.

## Demon

There are two demons in the selected Filipino horror films. One demon is seen in the movie, *Sukob*. She plays the little girl who brings wedding symbols and death to the blood-relatives of the cursed. She delivers wedding symbols like veil, candle, cord, and wedding arrhae; the wedding symbols signify death of a family or beloved. The demon appears with dried-flower headdress, veil, and antiquated white dress. Her face and hands are charcoaled black.

The second demon is found in *Sundo* and is known as the Death Demon or “kamatayan” for Filipinos. He fetches the souls of dead people. He is portrayed in the movie wearing black ragged and flowing clothes. He also appears in moments when a person dies.

The table below presents the supernatural characters in the selected Filipino films from 2004 to 2009.

Table 1. Supernatural characters’ descriptions and dealings with human characters in the films.

Supernatural Character	Movies where they Appear	Description	Dealings with Human Characters
Muldo	<b><i>Pamahiin</i></b>		
	Damian	Evil-looking Pale face with black smudges around his eyes He wears white barong long sleeves.	He frequently appears in unexpected places and does nothing to the other human characters.
	Becca	She is innocent-looking. She looks angelic yet has an evil heart. In her ghost form, she has a pale face with blood dripping down her eyes.	She pretends in her human form to deceive Damian. She kills the other characters in the story.
	Little Girl	She wears white dress with a hole in the chest.	She asks help from Eileen and in return help Eileen by giving signs or clues on how to get her heart.
	<b><i>Shake Rattle and Roll</i></b>		
	Sister Belonia	She wears a nun clothing. She speaks Spanish and often heard angry in the scenes. She appears pale and spinster looking.	She kills the students who complained about her behavior. She comes back to collect new students to complete her class picture.
	<b><i>Spirit of the Glass</i></b>		
	Dante	He wears monochromatic white and old-fashioned clothes. He is neat in his appearance.	He follows the human characters in the story who conjured him with the Quija board
	<b><i>Feng Shui</i></b>		
	She is a typical Chinese woman.	She has hexed the Bagua to make anyone experience the	

	Lotus Feet	<p>She has chinky eyes and pale face. Her face is square and broad.</p> <p>Her vesture is topped with flamboyant and flowing white sleeves.</p> <p>She has bound feet that produce tick-tock footsteps that signal the coming of death.</p>	<p>fortunes that it brings and at end take the souls of the unfortunates.</p>
	<b>Sundo</b>	<p>The ghosts in the movie appear shadowy and pale. They traverse or float in the scenes.</p>	<p>He comes to fetch the souls of the dying.</p>
	<b>Sukob</b>		
	Helen	<p>She wears wedding gown with a very long veil covering her face.</p> <p>Silvery pale face</p>	
Manananggal	<b>Dilim</b>		
		<p>He has a sulky face and he does not smile.</p> <p>He has a masculine structure.</p>	<p>He attacks and literally devours criminals</p> <p>He protects innocent people especially those he loves.</p>
	Eman	<p>He wears dark colored shirt and jeans.</p>	
	<b>T2</b>		
Engkanto		<p>They have a pale and sickly appearance. They always wear luxurious clothes. Most of the time their clothes are in white.</p> <p>One Engkanto in the movie can shape-shift into an animal.</p> <p>They can imitate a person's voice.</p> <p>They are considered evil and can be detected if a person looks into their eyes.</p>	<p>They manipulate the human character in the story to bring Angelie close to them.</p>
	<b>Shake Rattle and Roll</b>		
		<p>She is hailed as the goddess of beauty. She has a voice that could mesmerize anyone.</p> <p>She is beautiful. She can float and she wears white ensemble in the movie</p>	<p>She befriends Nieves in the movie to find out why Adonis fell in love with Nieves.</p> <p>She mesmerizes people with her voice to fulfill her wants.</p>

Tiyanak	<b>Tiyanak</b>	<p>There are three tiyanaks:</p> <p>The flying tiyanak is a winged creature. His face has protruding veins that makes him look old.</p> <p>The girl tiyanak initially looks very innocent with her angelic face and white dress though her hair is messy. In tiyanak form, she has long root like mossy hair with tiny leaves sticking on it. Her green eyes glows.</p> <p>The wood tiyanak's body looks like it's made of twigs lumped and twisted together to make up his body.</p>	<p>They kill if they want to.</p> <p>Pretend that they are helpless and needing help</p> <p>They play with their victims. Mimic other people's voices</p>
Aswang	<b>Shake Rattle and Roll</b>	<p>Human form yet able to transform into a creature.</p> <p>In their aswang form, they are furious and monstrous.</p> <p>Their skins are hard as steel but vulnerable to a stingray's tail.</p> <p>In the transformation, they have root-like hair, sharp teeth and dark circles around their eyes.</p> <p>They are afraid of the holy water and saline water.</p>	<p>The aswang couple is provoked when a human attacks the wife. As a result, they call their clan to avenge the mishap and killed the people in the hospital.</p>
Demon	<b>Sukob</b>	<p>She is a little girl. She has a black face and wears a dirty white dress.</p>	<p>She never interacted with any person. She only appears to give the wedding symbol.</p>
	<b>Sundo</b>	<p>He didn't show his face; it's covered with black cloth.</p> <p>He wears black garment.</p>	<p>He comes to fetch the souls of the dying.</p>

The supernatural characters, although feared by other characters, are presented connatural with the humans. They feel pain, remorse, love and revenge. These feelings enable the supernatural characters to act concordance to their desire. They exist or come back to life either to revenge or avenge, sometimes their existence brings out the theme and sometimes reminds the long-lost Filipino tradition. When they are mocked and scorned like the aswang in *Shake Rattle and Roll X*, they avenge themselves. Same is true with Dante in *Spirit of the Glass*, he comes back to life for his lover and seeks answers of his queries. Most of the time, these supernatural characters have scary features but they exist for a purpose and not just to simply scare the audience.

**Problem 2:** How do these supernatural characters enhance the development of the plot?

The course of the plot development in the study of the selected Filipino horror films has been enhanced by the supernatural characters' presence in movies. Essentially, the desires and actions of these supernatural creatures have propelled the exciting flow of the story and their visual representations their horrid and infernal look can deepen one's appreciation of the film.

### **Pamahiin**

Damian, Becca, and little girl are the ghosts in the movie *Pamahiin*. The roles of the two ghosts Damian and Becca have intensified the plot development by their ironic presentation and conflict. In relation to the ironic presentation of the supernatural characters, it is clearly unfolded in the first part of the movie. Damian is introduced hanging himself on the ceiling. After this incident, it is believed that he is unfolded in the succeeding scenes as a ghost. His apparitions in the scenes are startling because of the facial make ups or effects. He shows up in unexpected places like in the reflection of the mirror, floating outside a running car, and hiding behind the curtains. On the other hand, Becca is brought into the scene with angelic and innocent face. She comes off in the early scenes as a normal human form. She converses with Noah and rides off in the car with him. She acts normally like any ordinary human characters in the film until the last part of the movie. This leaves off the impression to the audience that Damian is the antagonist and Becca as mysterious.

Noah is the third person that completes the circle of their friendship. He is believed to be the so-called rival of Damian over Becca. He treasures Becca as a friend and not a hint of intimacy is shown. Eventually, the true nature of Becca as the ghost that troubles the human characters is revealed when she almost killed Eileen. During the face off with Eileen, Becca retells the incidents. Becca discloses how she killed the other human characters in the story.

The conflict in the story starts to heat up when Damian starts to show up in eccentric places and random moments. One occasion was at the wake. He has jolted Eileen when he peeks quickly at her from the coffin. Another instance of his bizarre action is floating outside a running car and at the same time looking inside at Eileen. His appearances makes Noah think that Damian must be up to something and that he has something to do about it. Along this scene, Becca is appearing in the picture. She meets with Noah and confesses her secret feelings for Noah. Noah then assumes that Damian wants Becca.

The central conflict is Damian giving warning to his friend, Noah and Becca avenging for her death and grudges. The mystery of each scenes delay the unearthing of the conflict. The conflict is presented partially in the film. The story progresses as the conflict is not revealed.

Though the little girl is the victim, she has contributed to the development of the plot. Her soul couldn't rest because of her heart which was taken out by Becca's mother to conjure Becca's soul and to take revenge. Her heart is the key ingredient in bringing Becca to life. So, the girl's participation in the movie has helped in finding the resolution of the story. It could be tracked in her first encounter with Eileen which directed events to the right track -- like the blood print on the ceilings. It reads "Ako ang dahilan. Si Inay" (*I am the cause...my mom*). The plot slopes down when the little girl has finally taken back her heart and Becca, gone.

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In the movie, the presence of the mangkukulam is shown side-by-side in the scenes of Becca and Noah. The mangkukulam, named Belinda, is the prime mover of the incidents. She has performed a ritual to conjure the life of her daughter, Becca which she has clearly said to Noah in their conversation:

Binuhos ko ang lahat ng lakas ko para maibalik si Rebecca para makapaghigante siya sa lahat ng taong umapi sa amin. (*I gave all my strength to bring back Rebecca to life so she can avenge us against the people who persecuted us.*)

Belinda has interestingly served its purpose in the development of the plot. Summoning her dead daughter causes the turmoil in the lives of the human characters in the story. Revenge is undeniably sweet for her in the beginning but in the end it is fruitless. Her comeuppance unfolds naturally when she lost the heart used for the sacrifice from the hands of Noah.

### **Shake, Rattle and Roll X**

The movie *Shake Rattle and Roll X* has three episodes. These are *Emergency*, *Class Picture* and *Nieves*. In *Emergency*, the Aswang's strong desire to retaliate and avenge his wife and child prompts the movement of the plot. Moreover, his strong sentiment against the humans for their insolence exacerbates his and the other aswang's ardent desire to kill. The leader aswang talks to the clan:

mga           Nanatili tayo sa dilim ngunit silay nangahas. Pinili natin ang mamuhay sa kubli ng kagubatan ngunit ang  
hindi       mangmang nilang kaisipan ay hindi tayo maintindihan. Hindi lang sila ang may karapatang mabuhay at  
              lang sila ang may kakayahang pumatay.

Pintay ng mga tao ang aking anak at sinaktan ang aking kabiyak. Hali kayo mga kapatid ko making. Ang kalapastangan na ginawa ng mga tao sa aking pamilya ay kalapastangan din sa ating lipi. Mamamatay ang mga tao. Ngayong gabi, ipaghihiganti natin an gating lahi.

*(We live in the darkness but they dared. We chose to live hidden in the woods but their ignorant minds cannot understand us. They are not the only ones who have the right to live. They are not the only ones who are capable of killing. They killed my child and hurt my wife. Come my brothers and listen. The irreverent disrespect of the people towards my family is also disrespect to our kind. Many will die. Tonight, we will avenge our race.)*

The desire to avenge steers the aswangs to retaliate and kill the people at the hospital. Also, the aswangs' manner of killing people adds the mystery of suspense in plot development. The conflict in the film is vividly employed in the opening scene. To elucidate the first scene, the leader aswang runs after his wife who was also chased by a man trying to kill her. A nurse finds his pregnant wife on the road wounded and is brought to the hospital. The father aswang went to the hospital to save his wife. He kills the janitor and smashes the machine that controls the electricity. Then, the people in the hospital begin to panic. Hence, the aswang are able to go in and started killing the people. This action makes the other characters more terrified.

The aswangs jump onto humans and suck their blood. These aswangs extend their tongues to catch evading preys. This act intensifies further the plot since the people do not have a way to save themselves from the attacks of the Aswangs. At the height of the attacks, the aswang couple comes to face off with Jay and his girlfriend Doctor Sarah. Here, the climax escalates when the aswang couple transformed to their original form.

The ghost of Sister Belonia in the second episode of *Shake Rattle and Roll X* is a demented nun who has put a curse on her class picture. Her unfinished business on the said desire compounded with her idiosyncrasies reinforces the plot. The conflict of Sister Belonia against herself sets her to put a curse on the class picture which in turn mobilizes the plot to its exposition and rising action. She says to Joy:

“Ikaw nalang ang kailangang ko para makumpleto ang litrato. Halika na. Kumpletuhin mo ang litrato ko para makabalik ako sa San Selino. Pinangako ko okay Sister na mabubuo ko ang klase ko.” (*You are the last one I need to complete my class picture. Come! Complete my class picture so I can return to San Selino. I promised Sister that I will complete my class*)

Belonia’s curse has effectively employed her desire to get the children to complete the picture but eventually it has seized to end when the human characters persistence to survive. The human characters’ bond of friendship to fight against Sister Belonia has aided to put an end of her evil desire.

In Nieves, the third episode of Shake Rattle and Roll X, Acacia’s jealousy and anxiety over the man she cannot possess frames the onset of the plot. Her first step on commanding Celso to cut a specific tree activates the movement of the plot. In doing so, the way of life of the engkantos and other beings is disrupted. Hence, these beings come to the village and create a commotion and predicament of the villagers. The series of problems brought about by one action mark the development of the action that led to the confrontation and duel of Nieves and Acacia, the queen of the engkantos.

### **Spirit of the Glass**

The medium says:

“Hindi siya makabalik sa kanyang pinangalingan dahil iniwan niyong nakabukas ang pintuan. Kaya nga kailangan niyo siyang harapin. Hindi matatahimik ang kaluluwang yan dahil marami pa siyang gusting linawin at isatuwid.”

*(He cannot return to where he came from because you left the door open. Face him. His soul will not rest because he has a lot of things to clarify and straighten out.)*

In Spirit of the Glass, Dante is a lost soul that has been called forth by the youngsters in the movie. Dante, appears in the scene through Quija board saying “Bumalik ka na!” (Come back!). This incident scares the youngsters who go back to Manila. Unknowingly, they do not know that Dante mistakes Kelly as his lover, Auring. Dante’s desire to look for his lover led him to find the answers of his murder. His adamant search and yearning have brought him to follow the youngsters to Manila and almost everywhere; showing up in several occasions like in ladies’ rest room where Cecille is freshening up and in Myra’s bathroom where he holds her wrist. His soul has gone awry.

In another instance, he exposes himself to the other characters in the film and to the point that his obsession escalated that he had to lie beside Kelly in bed. The group is now then in the state of fear and tumult which led them to seek advice from a medium, which in turn opens the climax of the story. The group’s discourse with the medium has clarified the problem and sets off the sincere help that they extend to the ghost, Dante.

### **Feng Shui**

Lotus Feet’s desire is to fulfill the curse she hexes on the bagua. The sequence of events in the movie manifests on the tragedies that bagua can do. In the case of the bagua, an ironic symbolism is a supplemental element. The bagua brings luck to whoever possesses it but is also coupled with misfortunes. After every tragedy, Lotus Feet comes to collect the souls of the dying. Lotus Feet’s hex on the bagua presents irony in the plot. The bagua, believed to bring good luck to its owner also brings grave danger to anyone especially to Joy’s family.

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The other characters in the film too have differing idea about the bagua. Lola Biring tells Joy, “Bagua ang tawag ng mga intsik dito. Pantaboy ng malas. Pinaliliit nito ang mga ispiritu para hindi tayo maapektuhan.” (*The Chinese calls this bagua to drive away bad luck. This shrinks the spirits so that they cannot harm us.*) However, the Feng Shui expert in the movie that Joy and her friends consulted said, “Sumumpa si babae sa salamin ng bagua bago siya namatay at ang sumpa ay ang kumuha ng kaluluwa ng sinumang makakita sa sarili sa salamin.” (*The woman made a curse in the bagua before she died. The curse is to take the souls of anyone who sees himself in the mirror of the bagua.*)

### **Sundo**

“Ayon sa lumang paniniwala at maraming karanasan ng mga taong namatayan, ang isang taong naghihingalo ay kadalasang may nakikitang mga kaluluwa ng mga mahal sa buhay na pumanaw na. Lahat ng mga tao ay may kaluluwang sasalubong pagdating ng takdang panahon”

(*According to an old belief and several experiences of people whose relatives have died, a person on the verge of dying usually sees the spirit of a relative or friend who has died. Everybody has a spirit to accompany him/her at the appointed time.*)

This quotation is flashed on screen before the story is unfolded. The quotation features the way the supernatural character is presented. The supernatural character in *Sundo* is the Death demon. At the onset of the plot, it seems that the ghosts are the ones taking the souls of the dying people. Ironically, it is revealed that the ghosts are mere harbinger of the death demon coming to take the soul of the dying man.

Although the story begins with Romano waking from coma and seeing ghosts, the story further unfolds and creates tension when the seven characters are able to cheat death. While they travel to Manila from Baguio, Romano saves them from sure death with a twist of fate. He dreams of their accident and tells Baste to stop. They have delayed their death but not stop it. Here then starts the supernatural character’s move to take each one of them.

Romano first sees the six companion ghosts around their van when they stop and evaded certain death. This first time causes Romano to act in a stranger way. He never tells his friends but Death starts his collection.

Romano sees the six ghosts and Death minutes before his friends die. One by one his friends die but just before his friends die, Romano sees again one of the ghosts he saw around the van. And the characters learn that the ghosts Romano sees are the character’s dead relatives, loved one, and friends. They are their “sundo” who are also harbingers to their death in the near future. This new awareness drives the remaining characters Baste, Louella, Isabel and Romano to make actions to beat death if not to escape it.

No matter what they do, the characters still end up dying. The ghost that Romano sees and also the heralds of death appear several seconds before one of the characters dies. For instance, Romano sees the ghost of Eric’s friend and his crutches seconds before Eric is accidentally electrocuted and dies.

Romano, specifically, strives to protect and save his sister from Death. In the hotel where they stay, the remaining characters die with a little twist. Louella kills Isabel in hope to save herself. Meanwhile, Romano tries to go after Isabel going up to the roof. He realizes that he is after Death himself. Death’s insistent and consistent manifestations to the characters shove the latter to protect themselves and avoid demise. The characters’ resistance to the stimulation of Death creates a conflict that pushes the plot to move to its turning point.

Romano fights with Death and they both fall into the pool. When he comes out of the pool, he sees Louella. She tells him: “Lumayo ka sa akin. Nag alay na ako ng buhay.” (*Stay away from me. I have already offered a life.*) Romano is confused so he turns to the pool and sees his body floating. Seeing his body, he comprehends that he is Louella’s “sundo”. His effort to save his sister and Louella from Death proves to be futile against Death.

### **Sukob**



In *Sukob*, the ghost of Helen was able to clarify to Sandy that it was not her who is responsible for Sandy's predicament and that her wedding is also cursed. The ghost of Helen is briefly introduced in this scene. It may seem insignificant, but Helen is able to unfold the real conflict of the film. She informs Sandy that her wedding is also cursed. Helen emphasizes:

"Hindi ako Sandy. Hindi ako ang may kasalanan. Kung hindi ako nakaligatas, wala ka ring kawala. Sukob din ang kasal mo." (*It is not me Sandy. I have nothing to do with what is happening. If I didn't make, you too will not make it. Your wedding is cursed.*)

The primary supernatural character found in the movie is the demon child who carries out the task of taking away the lives of the cursed people and replacing their bodies with wedding symbols of Sandy and Diana. Thus, the conflict between the human characters Sandy and Diana and the demon child commences.

The deliberate killing of the other relatives and friends of Sandy and Diana marks the rise of action that led to the development of the story towards its turning point. Unexpectedly, the demon child stimulates events so that Sandy and Diana meet. Upon their meeting, the turning point begins to surge. So much more when the demon child kills the old medium that the sisters are seeking help from. The demon runs after them and is led to the church tower. By the time the demon offers the aras to Diana's womb, Sandy takes it away and sacrifices her life by jumping out from the window.

## **Tenement 2**

In *T2*, the engkantos' manipulation of circumstances to accomplish their mission is distinguishable. First, they prevent Claire and Elias from going back home by blocking the road with a very huge tree lying across the road. Since the car cannot pass, Claire and Elias decide to sleep over in one of the orphanages near the area. Whilst in the orphanage, Claire learns that a nine-year-old girl named Angelie is going back with them to Manila. Angelie is usually visited by engkantos luring her with toys, beautiful places and lollipops. Angelie says, "Tumagos po kami sa mga dingding ng kwarto ditto hanggat sa makarating kami sa napakagandang lugar. Lahat po magara. Napakayaman nila." (*We pass through the walls of the rooms here until we arrived in a very beautiful place. Everything was ostentatious. They live in opulence.*)

In this movie, the engkantos are in control of all the circumstances. They wangle situations that end up Claire bringing Angelie to Tenement 2 where the engkantos live.

## **Tiyanaks**

In *Tiyanaks*, the supernatural characters' envious dispositions towards Biboy instigate their aggression towards the human characters. When the tiyanaks see the warm care that Sheila gives to Biboy, they refuse to play with the boy. The statement by the girl Tiyanak, "Sabihin mo sa mga bago mong kaibigan lagot sila sa amin" (*Tell your new friends to watch out for us.*) is the rising action of the plot.

The *Tiyanaks* then begins attacking the young people in the house. The girl tiyanak drowns Bryan and Hans while they swim in the river. When the other characters look for their two friends, the girl tiyanak pretends to be wounded. Her angelic and innocent face captures the other young characters' sympathy and has brought her home. The tiyanaks

typically use human beings' sympathetic and helpful heart towards children to lure their victims into taking them home and attack the humans. Professor Earl, Sheila's boyfriend, lectures:

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“Nananatili sila dito sa lupa sa paniniwalang hindi sila makaka akyat sa langit hanggat hindi sila nabababasan at napakilala sa Diyos. Naniniwala sila na ang mga tao ay maawain sa mga bata at ginagamit nila ang gawing ito para mambiktima, Nilalagay nila ang mga sarili nila sa mga lugar o sitwasyon para maawa ang mga tao sa kanila, at kapag naawa na ang mga tao, saka sila umaatake.”

*(They remain here on earth in the belief that they cannot go to heaven unless they are baptized. They believe that the humans are sympathetic and merciful towards children. They use this mercy to get victims. They put themselves in situations that will draw out mercy from people. Once the people take pity on them, they attack.)*

Evidently, one of the boy tiyanaks kill the driver, Mang Gaston, and leaves him under a tree. The death of Mang Gaston hinders the other characters to leave the place and for the reason that their car is also broken. The plot rises as the girl tiyanak starts to kill everyone in the house. The other two tiyanaks, on the other hand, attack the people outside. From a distant road near the house, one tiyanak pretends to be hurt lying on the ground. Kerwin, one of Sheila’s friends, stops his motorcycle to help the boy. As Kerwin approaches near the boy, the boy then attacks him. The three tiyanaks simultaneously attack everyone in the house chasing them outside. The human characters struggle for their survival from the tiyanaks. Sheila, Christian, Earl, and Rina run to evade the tiyanaks and try to fight back. Eventually, they use holy water to kill the tiyanaks. The death of the three tiyanaks mark the resolution and the four characters including Biboy have survived.

### **Mag-ingat Ka sa Kulam**

Maria, one of the mangkukulams in the movie *Mag-ingat ka sa Kulam*, directs her attention to cursing her twin sister Mira and switching her soul with hers. Maria’s envy and hatred to her twin sister foster and magnify the thrilling twist of the movie that further augmented the climax. Ironically, Maria became a victim of her own curse. After performing the curse and has successful she ends up in an accident in Mira’s body. She then suffers from amnesia after the car accident. She believes that she was Mira and tries to make it up to her husband and blind daughter, Sophie.

Everything seems to be at place until Maria remembers that she has succeeded with the curse and is now living the life of Mira. The conflict began to rise towards the climax when she transforms to her original form, a Mangkukulam and by the time that Paul has seen the video that Mira left. Mira, however, left instructions as to how to defeat Maria. Although she despises her witch ancestry and tries to evade becoming a witch, she still ends up using her knowledge of witchcraft to defeat her sister. Her character, short as it may seem, aided in the defeat of her evil sister.

### **Dilim**

A typical manananggal is able to detach its torso from his/her lower body. However, Eman, also known as Dilim in the movie *Dilim*, is a contrast. He detests his being. He narrates at the beginning of the film:

“Ang buhay daw ay isang pagpapala. Pero papaano kung sa halip na pagpapala ay sumpa. Kung pwedi lang sanang baguhin ang pinagdaanan ko. Kung pwedi lang sanang baguhin ang tadhana...”

*(Life they say is a blessing but what if it’s not a blessing and a curse. If I could only change what I have gone through. If only I could change my destiny...).*

His desire to change his destiny stirs the onset of the plot. And so, when he first appears, he is first presented as a vigilante saving a man from the robbers. This act makes him very contrasting to a typical manananggal who attacks people. In his efforts not to be completely a creature, he attacks only the criminals and gets his meals from them. One time, he attacks two groups of gangsters buying and selling guns in a warehouse.

The story then proceeds when Eman killed the brother of the most feared gang leader. To catch Eman and avenge his brother's death, Brasko kidnapped Elisa and Tisoy. The plot heightens while Brasko and Eman fight. Eman's true identity and form are exposed to all the characters in the story. Reluctantly, Eman then has to use his wings to save Elisa who has fallen from the building. In the end, Eman, though still possessing the curse of being a manananggal, chooses to fight that curse and has chosen to be human.

**Problem 3:** What Filipino cultural practices are reflected in the selected horror films?

Literature reflects the society's people and their norms. Hence, movies too, manifest evidence of the way of life of a certain culture. Filipino practices and culture are visually present in all of the selected Filipino horror films. Several Filipino practices in clothing, and especially in religion are explicitly revealed in the selected movies.

The most prominent Filipino practice found in most of the selected horror movies is the strong affinity of the Filipino people towards superstitious beliefs. Although the Philippines has a diverse culture with its different tribes all over its archipelago, the superstitious beliefs regarded by Filipinos are more or less similar. The other cultural practices are also recognized.

Most of these superstitious beliefs are manifested in *Pamahiin* which is also the Tagalog translation of superstitious beliefs. Majority of the beliefs shown in this movie are related to death and funeral. One of them is the view that a tear should not fall into the coffin. In the movie, a girl is pulled away when she cries bending towards the coffin. Demetrio explains that dropping tears on the coffin gives the soul of the dead a hard time (qtd. Gerlock n.d.:168). In most cases, traditional Filipinos do not come near to the dead's coffin when they cry because it is believed the dead person is going to have a hard time travelling to the other world. So, it is expected that the friends or relatives of the dead should not shed a tear on the dead man's coffin.

In *Pamahiin*, Amelia reminds Noah and Eileen not to go home directly from Damian's wake. "Huwag kayong didiretso sa bahay", Amelia says (*Do not go home immediately*). Do not go home directly after the funeral service so that the spirit of the dead person will not follow you to your house.

Another is the view that pregnant women should not be allowed at the wake of a relative. A woman is seen wailing in the beginning shouting, "BItiwan niyo ako, gusto kong Makita ang kapatid ko", (*Let me go, I want to see my sister*) she wails. Still another is the thought that a widow should not switch clothes during the wake of her husband or else she will marry right away. Two ladies talk, "Di ba bawal magpalit ng damit ang byuda? Kapag nagpalit ka ng damit habang nakaburol pa, makakapag asawa ka agad! (It is a taboo for widows to change clothes while the husband is still not yet buried or else you will re marry immediately.)

It is believed and common among Filipinos that a black cat is a bad omen. In *Pamahiin* specifically, a black cat passes in front of the car. Noah, Eileen, and Amelia are jolted from their seats and at the same time making the sign of the cross. Demetrio notes that meeting a black cat is bad luck (334). This belief according to Demetrio is also known to the inhabitants of Bukidnon and Misamis Oriental in region 10 (434).

Another belief is the supposition that a black butterfly means that someone will die. At the opening of *Pamahiin*, a black butterfly is seen flying around the lawn of a house. Furthermore, just before Damian dies, a black butterfly perches on the window sill where Damian is preparing. Still in another occasion, three black butterflies fly towards Eileen and Amelia in the garden of their house while the two are talking. Later in the movie, Amelia dies and Eileen almost dies. Demetrio affirms this belief among Filipinos means that a black butterfly's entry into the house augurs death (333).

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One superstitious belief found in *Sukob* is the crowing of roosters. Demetrio cites that crowing of roosters mean death (438). In the movie, it is shown that while Diana was hanging her washed clothes, she hears the crowing of the roosters of her lost presumed to be dead husband. She then sees her husband going into the forest. Diana's cousins follow her. One of her cousins is hit by a bus and dies.

Also this movie exposes the belief that when a person's head is missing in his photo, he soon dies. That is why Diana's cousin seeing her head missing in the wedding pictures asks her, "Ate, ako naba ang susunod na mamamatay?" (*Ate, am I the next to die?*) WikiPilipinas further explains that if a person appears to be without a head, that person will soon die. It is one of the Filipinos' superstitious beliefs.

Likewise in *Sukob*, the idea that engaged couples should not travel is mentioned. According to the belief, engaged couples should avoid travelling before their wedding day to avoid accidents (seasite.niu.edu, com). Sandy's mother reminds Dale, "Huwag ka munang lalabas ha, bukas na yung kasal niyo." (*Do not go out of the house. Your wedding is tomorrow.*)

It is unlucky for two relatives to be married within the same year. To remedy the situation, the relative who marries later in the year should pass through the church's backstairs on the day of the wedding. Joya's mother says, "Malas din ang magpakasal ang magkapatid na sukob sa taon." (*It is also bad luck for siblings to marry in the same year.*)

Additionally, one of the Filipinos' superstitious beliefs that the appearance of a ghost often means an omen or portent of death is the dominant idea in the movie *Sundo*.

"Ayon sa lumang paniniwala at maraming karanasan ng mga taong namatayan, ang isang taong naghihingalo ay kadalasang may nakikitang mga kaluluwa ng mga mahal sa buhay na pumanaw na. Lahat ng mga tao ay may kaluluwang sasalubong pagdating ng takdang panahon"

(According to an old belief and several experiences of people whose relatives have died, a person on the verge of dying usually sees the spirit of a relative or friend who has died. Everybody has a spirit to accompany him/her at the appointed time.

Obviously, this is explicitly shown in the movie every time Romano's friend dies. And also, an old woman mumbles in Lumen's wake, "Lahat tayo may sundo..Lahat tayo may sundo." (*We all have companions when we die*).

In *Shake rattle and Roll X*'s third movie a manananggal is portrayed to fly over the house of a pregnant woman. The manananggal tries to eat the unborn child but is saved by Nieves. It is believed that pregnant women are favorite victims of aswangs (Demetrio 193).

The movies *Spirit of the Glass*, *Pamahiin*, and *Sukob* manifest the Filipino notion that murdered people's souls haunt their murderer (Demetrio 527). Dante's murder in *Spirit of the Glass* is hidden and no one really knows who the murderer is. He comes out to seek help from the other characters in the movie thus exposing the truth behind his disappearance early on in the film. In *Pamahiin*, Becca comes back to life to avenge her murder and the contempt that she and her mother receive from the townspeople. Belinda says, "Binuhos ko ang lahat ng lakas ko para maibalik si Rebecca, para makapaghiganti siya sa lahat ng taong umapi sa amin." (*I gave all my strength to bring Becca back so she can have revenge against those people who persecuted us.*) Then in *Feng Shui*, the demon ghost, Lotus Feet, curses the bagua to take vengeance when she is left alone to die in her house.

Also distinct in the films are Filipinos' high regard for others. This entails Filipinos, represented by the characters in the movies, helping friends, neighbors, and even people whom they have just met. An example is the movie *Feng Shui*. Joy's kids are always seen playing with their neighbor's son. Then, in one scene, Joy goes to her neighbor for protection while she and her children are waiting for her friend to fetch them. When their neighbor's son meets an accident, Joy donated her blood. She tells Thelma on the phone, "Thelma, di na ako nakatanggi. Buhay na ng bata and nakasalalay." (*Thelma, I could not say no. The life of the kid is at stake.*) What Demetrio mentions is affirmed, "High value is attached to neighborliness" (220). Indeed, Filipinos' compassion extends to even risking ones' life to save others.

In another movie *Sukob*, Joy is adamant to know what happened to her childhood friend and neighbor. She becomes restless to know the facts. She consistently asks around how her childhood friend died. She becomes worried of her friend's plight and fate.

Still another is Claire in *T2* is portrayed as a very helpful person. Although she has no child of her own, she volunteers in helping orphans find foster parents and family. Claire says, "Mas gusto kong maraming matulungang bata kaysa sa isa lang." (*I would rather help many children than adopt one my own.*) Moreover, in *Sukob*, Joy. Even in *Tiyanak*, human beings' compassion towards children is emphasized when Sheila refuses to kill Biboy who is thought to be a *tiyanak*.

In terms of clothing, *Barong* and *Baro's Saya*, the traditional clothes of Filipinos are, shown. A *Barong* is an embroidered formal garment of the male Filipinos while a *Baro't saya* is literally translated as blouse and skirt worn by females. Usually, these costumes are worn during special occasions like weddings, and formal gatherings. In the movies, a *barong* is commonly worn by the ghost. In the case of *Damian*, the ghost in *Pamahiin*, he is seen wearing the *Barong* as his death clothes. Also one ghost in *Sundo*, the husband of *Lumen* wears *Barong*. *Barong* is a *Becca*, when first seen in the movie, wears *baro't saya*. *Baro't saya* is one of the traditional dresses of Filipino women. However, in one instance in *Sukob*, the grooms are seen wearing *Barongs* in their wedding.

Also very prominent in the selected horror movies is the strong inclination of the Filipinos towards religious practices. That is, belief in God or someone greater and omnipotent. Hence, the belief and dependence on sacred images and prayers to ward off evil spirits are emphasized.

Since all the movies are horror movies containing scary creatures threatening the lives of the other characters, the faith of these horrified characters are manifested through their prayers and actions. In *Shake Rattle and Roll X* for example, the human characters realize that only Holy water can burn and kill the monsters attacking them. The priest then climbs up the reservoir and blesses the water which flows through the sprinklers of the hospital. Moreover, the movie *Tiyanaks* shows that only Holy water can kill the *tiyanaks*.

Filipinos adhere to feast in honor of the Saints (Demetrio, 1991). Filipinos are fond of celebrations. Whether festive or a small gathering, the saints are honored to bring blessings. Usually a small community has its own saint and they specify a day to honor him. In *Sukob*, one of these feasts is exemplified. *Taong Putik Festival* is a celebration dedicated to St John the Baptist. In this celebration the People of *Nueva Ecija* cover themselves with banana or dried coconut leaves.

In *Tiyanaks*, the common belief that God is dead during Holy week especially during Good Friday and Black Saturday is explicitly said in the lines "Patay na araw. Patay and Diyos bakit kung saan-saan kayo gumagala." (*It's Black Saturday. God is dead, why do you roam anywhere.*) It is regarded in the Filipino culture that the devils and spirits are alive. This is a fact contributed in Demetrio's book by an anonymous in *Mambajao, Camiguin*. He states, "During the Holy Week one should not go out because accidents are likely to happen. It is at this time that the devils and spirits are very active." (Demetrio, 1991, p.654)

In *Feng Shui*, a priest blesses Joy's house to drive away the bad spirits residing. This is another common belief among Filipinos. Haunted houses are blessed to drive the evil spirits away (Demetrio, 1991). True enough, it is Joy's belief that the spirits will leave their house once it is blessed by a priest.

In *Mag-ingat ka sa Kulam*, dried palm leaves are used to drive away evil spirits. "Doon sa aming probinsiya nakasanayan na naming gumamit ng palaspas pambungaw ng masasamang ispiritu." (*It is a practice in our province to use dried palm leaves to drive away evil spirits.*)

Another religious practice is the pious reverence towards Holy week. *Spirit of the Glass* for instance, shows two men doing penance for their sins. Also, a woman chanting the *Pabasa* "debosyon ng mga tao pag Holy Week" (*It is a people's religious vow during Holy week*), *Drue* says.

Moreover, the movie *Tiyanaks* presents a house full of sacred images and Biboy is seen holding a rosary. The rosary burns the hand of one of the tiyanaks when he tries to grab Biboy. The sculptures are said to protect the whole house from evil. Then, tiyanaks cannot step onto the vicinity of the cemetery since the land is sprinkled with Holy water.

In *Dilim*, Eman is constantly seen at the church's doorstep. One time, the priest invites him to go into the church but he refuses. The priest explains that God welcomes everybody regardless of their nature. This shows the Christians strong belief that everyone is welcome in God's dwelling.

The selected horror films do not merely entertain but show some cultural practices and beliefs of the Filipino people. They reflect how Filipinos live and what they believe in. Moreover, it is interesting to see these practices and beliefs that have been forgotten by most Filipinos and watching these horror movies refreshes the memory of how rich Filipinos culture is.

The table below shows the summary of the different Filipino practices presented in the Filipino horror films.

Table 2. Summary of the Filipino Practices portrayed in the selected films.

MOVIES	SUPERSTITIOUS BELIEFS/ PRACTICES
PAMAHIIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Black cat is a bad omen.</li> <li>○ Black butterfly augurs death.</li> <li>○ Bathing while the wake of a relative is still going on is not good.</li> <li>○ Pregnant women should not visit a wake.</li> <li>○ Widows must not change clothes at the wake of their husband/wife or else they will marry right away.</li> <li>○ It is taboo to go home directly from a funeral or wake.</li> <li>○ Filipinos wear Baro't saya and Barong.</li> </ul>
SUKOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Siblings must not marry at the same year.</li> <li>○ One must not proceed with marriage if a relative has died.</li> <li>○ Couples about to marry must not go out.</li> <li>○ The groom must not see the bride the day before the wedding day.</li> <li>○ Crowing of roosters mean death.</li> <li>○ Filipinos have great faith in God.</li> <li>○ Filipinos have high regard for neighbors.</li> <li>○ Filipinos are compassionate and helpful.</li> <li>○ Feast in honor of the Saints.</li> <li>○ When a person sees someone headless, that someone will die soon.</li> </ul>
DILIM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Filipinos have strong faith in God.</li> </ul>
SPIRIT OF THE GLASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Spirits who are murdered come back to seek justice.</li> </ul>
FENG SHUI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Agua brings good luck.</li> <li>○ Haunted houses are blessed to drive the evil spirits away.</li> </ul>
T2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Compassion for others especially children.</li> <li>○ Filipinos value family.</li> <li>○ Filipinos love drinking, singing, or bonding with friends</li> </ul>
SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The belief and faith in supernatural characters</li> </ul>
TIYANAK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Keeping the Holy Week: Flagellants and Pabasa</li> <li>○ God is dead on Black Saturday.</li> <li>○ Children must be baptized.</li> <li>○ Holy rosary wards off evil spirits.</li> </ul>
MAG INGAT KA SA KULAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Filipinos value family.</li> <li>○ Dried pal leaves drive evil spirits away.</li> </ul>
SUNDO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The soul of a dying person is fetched by his/her friend or relative after s/he dies.</li> <li>○ The belief on Death Demon (kamatayan)</li> </ul>

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|--|--------------------------|
|  | ○ Filipinos wear barong. |
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The selected films indeed exhibit different Filipino practices. Most of them show that Filipinos, no matter how modern they are, still hold their hopes over the superstitious beliefs. However, it is noticeable that though ironic because of their unfounded beliefs, Filipinos have yet a greater faith on a supreme being. Take for instance the human characters in *Tiyanak*. Their ways of warding off the *tiyanak* are symbols of faith like holy water and the cross. Although they believed that God is dead on Black Saturday, they still have faith that the symbols can save them.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The study on the supernatural characters in the ten selected horror films has enriched literature and has cultivated the appreciation of Filipino films. The thorough scrutiny of the characters gives us a clearer concept on how Filipinos perceive these supernatural characters. The characters present in the movies are ghosts, *Engkanto*, *Mangkukulam*, *aswang*, *Demons*, *Manananggal* and *Tiyanaks*. Furthermore, these characters' desires launch the conflict of the stories. Through their actions, the plots of the movies progress to bring out the climax and then the denouement. In most of the movies, the main characters and protagonists oppose the forces of these supernatural characters mainly for survival and instinct. This opposition creates the conflict. Not only do these movies highlight the supernatural characters, but

also the most common strong affinity of Filipinos to superstitious beliefs. The movies, too, feature several conventional cultural practices prevalent in the society.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Dennis Primne Corbita, MA**, is an Instructor in American English Language and Literature to multi-cultural students in Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan, Philippines. He obtained his undergraduate degree, AB-English Language and Literature and as well as his, Masters of Arts in English at Xavier University – Ateneo de Cagayan. He published a co-authored textbook on humanities, "Art in a capsule" and "Art Appreciation" used in the same university and various schools in the country. He has been teaching English language and literature since 2007 to the present. He has taught Speech Communication, Shakespearean poetry, Business English, Term paper writing, and Art appreciation. In 2017, He finished a 120-hour TESOL certification from the American Tesol Institute. Currently, He is finishing his academic units in Doctor of Philosophy in Education at the same university.

**Maria Luisa S. Saministrado, PhD**, is Professor of American English Language and Literature at Xavier University- Ateneo de Cagayan (XU-Ateneo). She earned the degrees PhD in English (2015) from the University of Newcastle, Australia, PhD in Educational Management (2005) from Xavier University, MA in English (XU-Ateneo), and AB Philosophy and English, cum laude (XU-Ateneo). She is a former Chair of the XU English Department, and Director of English Communication Development Institute (ECDI). Currently, she serves as the Graduate School English Program Coordinator and teaches in the Graduate and Undergraduate English Programs. She has written articles in peer-refereed journals (local and international) and published several textbooks for use by university students. She received the XU Publication Award for her co-authored 2017 published textbook, *Reading and Writing*. Her international book publications are *The Naturalistic Novel: Female Victimhood, Suicide and Spirituality and The last Months*, currently available at the Amazon website. She conducted seminars and trainings in Critical Thinking and Writing and Literary Naturalism. Her interests are in the field of literary criticism and naturalism and critical thinking and writing. She teaches *History* and *Origins of the English Language, The Philippine Novel, Teaching English as a Second Language, Linguistics, Structure of English, and The Asian Novel* in the graduate school and *Purposive Communication, Language Research, Business English, Phonology, and Tradition of Fiction* in the undergraduate program of XU. Her 2019 published textbook, *Purposive Communication*, is used by three universities in the region.

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