

PHILIPPINE VAMPIRES & OTHER MYTHOLOGICAL CREATURES



Documentary on supernatural creatures in Philippine folk beliefs. English language. Audience: 14+

Terms of use:

The documentary can be streamed **for free** from my YouTube channel in 4K resolution (Google Chrome browser). If you want to download an .mp4 file with 2160 p, 1440p or 1080p resolution for offline presentation, I can make it available for you on my private server; please contact me via my website www.vampvault.jimdofree.com (also in case you want to download this script).

This [documentary](#) was created for academic and educational, non-commercial purposes only. **You are not allowed to use, present and/or distribute this documentary commercially, or to shorten or otherwise change it.** Every public screening should be free of charge for the viewers and only take place in private, academic or educational settings. Charging an entrance fee automatically makes the presenter liable for copyright infringements, regarding the rights of the creator of this video and the rights of other artists/producers whose materials have been included in this video under the [“Fair Use” doctrine](#). Copyright 2020-2021: Hans Corneel de Roos.

By viewing the documentary, you agree to these conditions.

Technical data:

Length: 76:00 minutes

Video format: Full color, 30 fps, 4 K (3840 x 2160 pixels); also runs as Full HD (1920 x 1080 pixels), 720p, etc. on YouTube. Only the Google Chrome browser has the option to display 4K.

Encoder: [H.264 \(AVC\)](#) | Bit rate of the file uploaded to YouTube: 60,000 kbps

Audio format: Stereo | Encoder: [AAC](#) | Bit rate: 320 kbps | Sample Rate: 48 KHz

File format: .mp4 | File size of the file uploaded to YouTube: c. 25 Gb.

Video editing software: Wondershare Filmora X v.10.0.0.90 | Voice-overs: Speechelo (Blaster Suite)

Camera for dramatic intro and interviews: Vivo Y 20i V2032 smartphone; 1080p@30fps.

Production period: 10 October – 9 December 2020, with further edits in March and April 2021.

Contact: You can use the contact form on my website www.vampvault.jimdofree.com

— THE SCRIPT —

Here follows the full transcript of the presentation of the documentary, including the English subtitles of the interviews and my comments on the scenes from *Kumander Bawang*.¹ It may serve as an aide for viewers who possibly missed out on some of the spoken text or the subtitles.² It also may help to better understand and memorize the content of the whole movie, as it can be consulted anytime without streaming the video again. For further reading, I added links (single source) and footnotes (multiple sources). The PDF file can be downloaded to print hand-outs for courses and classrooms, or to be consulted on-screen. The file and its content are protected by copyright laws.

Munich/Cebu,
Hans Corneel de Roos

Status: 11 April 2021. All links were live as of this date.

Free download:

www.powersofdarkness.com/video/PhilVampScript.pdf

0:00 | Dramatic intro

0:38 | Title, terms of use, contact

1:07 | (Section 1) | INTRODUCTION

Hello, this is Hans. I've been a *Dracula* scholar for ten years, and I am one of the co-founders of the [Children of the Night Dracula Conferences](#). Since the end of 2017, I am living on a small island in the Philippines.

Together with Richie and Jane, I will tell you all about Philippine vampires. Because not only the people in Eastern Europe believed in bloodsucking monsters... the people in the Pacific Region did as well... and they still do!

The majority of Filipinos are convinced that such monsters exist. And they are even scarier than their [European counterparts](#)!

In order to fly, the so-called Manananggal³ can cut themselves in half. They have a very long, hollow tongue, with which they can suck blood, or get to your intestines. And they even target babies!

In this video, we have included some interviews with local people and translated them for you. This way, you can hear first-hand how the belief in vampires and other monsters dominates local life.

2:16 | But before we go into any details, let's hear what Professor van Helsing had to say about vampires:

“For, let me tell you, he is known everywhere that men have been. In old Greece, in old Rome; he flourish in Germany all over, in France, in India, even in the Chernosese; and in China, so far from us in all ways, there even is he, and the peoples fear him at this day.”⁴

1 Texts that are displayed as images (manuscript by Juan de Plasencia, meaning of Sanskrit “deva,” etc.) are not included.

2 With the support of this script, this video can also be enjoyed by hearing-impaired persons.

3 In [Tagalog](#) and Bisaya, the language of the [Visayas](#), nouns do not have a separate plural form; the plural is formed by inserting “mga” (“many”) between article and noun: “ang iro” = “the dog” | “ang mga iro” = “the dogs.” In some (but not all) cases, I have added a final “s” to mark the plural: “Manananggals,” “Kapres,” “Aswangs,” “Sigbins,” etc.

4 Bram Stoker, [Dracula](#) (London: Constable, 1897), Chapter 18.

What van Helsing calls the “Chernosesse” in fact is the “Chersonese” or “[The Golden Chersonese](#),” an old name for the [Malaysian Peninsula](#), that was already known to the ancient Greeks. And with Malaysia and China, we are already very near to the [Philippines](#).

2:55 | During the sixteenth century, the Philippines were conquered by Spain, ruled by [King Philip II](#). Philip was a son of [Charles V](#), who ruled the Habsburg Empire, that also included the Netherlands, Germany and Austria. It was after the year 1700 that Habsburg officers were confronted with the [vampire beliefs circulating in Serbia](#). The best-known cases are that of [Petar Blagojević](#) from Kieselova, and that of [Sava Savanović](#). The local people believed that these men had not really died. Instead, they would have harassed and bitten the villagers, and infected them with illness.

But already 200 years earlier, [Ferdinand de Magellan](#), after crossing the Atlantic and then the Pacific Ocean, discovered the Philippine Islands, and faced the very same kind of popular beliefs.

3:49 | When he arrived there, the Filipinos believed in ghosts, demons, white women, witches, vampires, weredogs, goblins, giants, elves and mermaids. They also knew serpents and dragons, and creatures that we would call centaurs and unicorns. They believed that such entities could interact with humans and threaten their lives. In this respect, the Philippine natives were not much different from the Serbians or other medieval people in Eastern Europe, who equally believed in such harmful beings and tried to destroy them. Additionally, the Filipinos worshipped their own [deities](#) and a whole range of powerful spirits from the earth, the air and the water.

4:34 | Magellan tried to convert the Filipinos to Catholicism, and at the start, he was successful: At Easter Sunday of the year 1521, the [first Christian mass](#) was celebrated in the Philippines. But when Magellan proceeded to [Cebu](#) and tried to negotiate with [Lapu-Lapu](#), the chieftain of [Mactan](#), his troops were attacked by Lapu-Lapu’s warriors and Magellan was [killed](#)—an event dramatically depicted in these images. Only the [ship Victoria](#) managed to return to Spain, loaded with [spices from Indonesia](#).

5:09 | After Magellan’s death, Spanish explorers left the Philippines alone for almost 45 years.⁵ It was [Miguel López de Legazpi](#), finally, who managed to close a blood pact with [Sikatuna](#), the chieftain of Bohol, in 1565.⁶ After creating settlements on Cebu and Bohol, the Spaniards occupied the whole of the Philippine islands, established colonial rule, had the local population gradually converted to Christianity, and [pushed back against Islam](#), that had been introduced by Arab traders and invaders.

5:45 | [Today, around 80% of the Filipinos are Roman Catholic](#). The remaining 20% mainly belong to various Christian groups and movements. Only in Mindanao, some regions are dominated by Muslims. But although the Filipinos have abandoned their former gods, they still firmly believe in the same ghosts and supernatural creatures they believed in 500 years ago. Especially the Catholics foster these ideas, next to their Christian creed.

6:19 | To understand the wide variety of Philippine popular beliefs, we should know that the Philippines are made up of more than [8,000 islands](#), with [more than 140 different ethnicities, and over 180 native languages](#). Especially in [the days of Magellan and Legazpi](#), these different tribes hardly had any contact with each other. That is why every region and ethnic group used to have its own mythology. The [Compendium of Creatures & Mythical Beings from Philippine Folklore & Mythology](#) lists more than 260 different supernatural species; there are too many to discuss them all here. We will merely present a handful, to give you an impression, and then focus on the

5 By the [Treaty of Zaragoza \(1529\)](#), Charles V had ceded the Philippines to Portugal; [Philip II aimed to reconquer them](#).

6 In [The Bohol Chronicle of 29 March 2015](#), Jes B. Tirol claims that the blood pact between Legazpi and chief Sigala on 28 March 1565, three days after the treaty with Sikatuna, was the more important of the two.

bloodsucking kind, the Aswang. Because all these creatures originate from the Philippines, most of the illustration we will showcase were created by Filipino artists.

After that, we will show the interviews, and try to put them in context. At the end of this documentary, we will discuss some scenes from the Philippine movie [Kumander Bawang](#), or *Commander Garlic*.

7:23 | (Section 2) | THE ORIGINS OF PHILIPPINE MYTHOLOGY: ANIMISM

The mythology of the pre-colonial Philippines was based on animism.⁷ Animism is a widespread system of beliefs in tribal societies all over the world. In these close-knit communities, people believe that everything in nature not only has a physical, but also a spiritual side. This means that even inanimate objects possess a soul, and are connected to the rest of the world. Animals, mountains, forest, lakes and oceans can have a life and will of their own, and can act and communicate.⁸ The old gods of Greece represented such forces of nature, until these [chthonic gods](#) were replaced by the more modern and rational [Olympians](#), headed by Zeus. In Jewish religion, there only was a single god, and this [monotheistic](#) principle was passed on to Christianity. The Catholic Church therefore strived to [suppress all remnants of pagan polytheism](#), and especially tried to eradicate the earlier idolization of the natural elements and the powers they might possess.

8:30 | Even the forces of Evil were monopolized. [Martin Luther claimed that witches and sorcerers derived their power solely from the Devil](#). The Philippines, however, already had a long tradition of animism, influenced by beliefs from Malaysia, [India](#) and [China](#), before the island group was occupied by Spain. Its Christian creed is only 500 years old. Perhaps, this explains why the old beliefs are still so very alive here, and traditional rituals are still performed to celebrate the richness of nature.

9:07 | Today, the old mythological figures are picked up by young artists who are fascinated by these fantastic creatures, and give them new life in [fantasy illustrations, comix and video games](#). Especially during the last decades, mythological characters from the Philippines have been featured in national and [international](#) TV and movie productions.

9:32 | (Section 3) | PHILIPPINE MYTHICAL CREATURES – AND WHERE TO FIND THEM

9:36 | Anggitay

The female centaur you just saw here is called an [“Anggitay.”](#) Like the [centaurides](#) from Greek mythology, they have a human upper body, but from the waist down, they look like a horse. They are supposed to live in the woods, especially in [Santo Tomas](#) in the Province of Batangas, not far from the capital Manila. They are often depicted with a single horn on their forehead, like unicorns. It is said that they are attracted to gemstones. In some stories, they even form hordes, to rob other creatures from their jewelry.

10:06 | Tikbalang

The male counterpart of this Philippine centauride is said to be the [Tikbalang](#). He has the head and hooves of a horse, but a human body with very long, bony limbs. He also lives stealthily in the forests and mountains and distracts travelers from their path. He is incredibly strong, so it is better not to engage in a fight with him. If you manage to tear out some of his hair, however, or the spikes he has in his neck, he will become your servant for the rest of your life.

7 McKenzie Perkins, [“What Is Animism.”](#) *Learning Religions*, updated 5 April 2019; Wikipedia, [Animism](#).

8 Paolo Miguel Vicerra and Jem R. Javier, [“Tabi-Tabi Po: Situating the Narrative of Supernatural in the Context of the Philippines Community Development.”](#) *Manusya: Journal of Humanities Regular* 16 (2), 2013; Jordan Clark, [“Animism—Understanding Philippine Mythology.”](#) *The Aswang Project*, 13 March 2016; Wikipedia, [Religion in Pre-colonial Philippines](#) | [Souls in Filipino cultures](#).

10:36 | Diwata

In the forests and mountains, we also find the [Diwata](#). For the Tagalog people, Diwata are fairies. In the central part of the Philippines however, they represent ancestor spirits. The word comes from the Sanskrit word "[deva](#)," meaning god-like being. The Latin word "Deus" and the English word "divine" come from the same root. The most famous of the Diwata is [Maria Makiling](#), from [Mount Makiling](#) in [Laguna](#). She is believed to be a benevolent guardian spirit, stopping storms, earthquakes and rain floods. The name "Maria" was probably added by the Spaniards, to give the good fairy a more Christian appeal.

11:15 | Kapre

Less elegant than the Diwata are the [Kapres](#). They are giants and prefer to live in big trees, such as the balete or mango trees, where they smoke giant cigars or joints from unspecified herbs. They are said to be lazy, but love to play pranks on people and confuse them with unexplainable noises. They also can befriend humans, especially females. When they have developed a [romantic interest in a woman](#), they tend to follow her for the rest of their lives. The word "Kapre" is derived from the Arabic, originally meaning non-believer, and later used for black people. It is a cognate of the word "kaffer."⁹ The Spanish invaders used it to describe the [Negrito people](#) of the Philippines.

12:07 | Bungisgnis

Another kind of giants are the [Bungisgnis](#). They can be compared to the [Cyclops](#) from Greek mythology, because they only have one eye that sits in the middle of their forehead. And like the cyclops [Polyphemus](#) that we know from the [Odyssey](#), this Philippine giant loves livestock. He also loves to laugh, and his teeth are always showing, with big fangs on both sides. His name is derived from the Cebuano word for "smile."¹⁰ Although he is very strong, he quickly panicks and can easily be tricked by smarter creatures, such as the monkey.

12:41 | Kurita

As we can easily see, the [Kurita](#) is a spider-like monster with many limbs. It was described in the Philippine folklore [tale about Sulayman and Indarapatra](#). According to this story, it could live on land, but also in the sea. But its favorite hunting ground was the mountain where the rattan grew. He was a terrible enemy and he wreaked havoc in the villages until Sulayman killed him with his sword.

13:12 | Minokawa

This giant bird that looks like a dragon is called the [Minokawa](#). It was said to be as big as the Island of [Bohol](#), or the island of [Negros](#). According to myth, it had a beak and claws of steel. His eyes were mirrors, and each single feather was a sharp sword. One night, before the dawn of time, the Minokawa swallowed the moon. The people began to scream. Then the bird peeped down to see what the noise was, and opened his mouth. But as soon as he opened his beak, the moon sprang out and ran away. Because it is so big, the Minokawa also could swallow the whole earth, or even the sun. This would explain the solar eclipses the people were afraid of.

13:55 | Sarimanok

A more friendly bird is known as the [Sarimanok](#). Its name consists of two parts: "[Sari](#)" is a multi-colored dress or garment, while "[manok](#)" is a chicken or rooster. The Sarimanok is revered by the Moro people¹¹ from [Mindanao](#) and is widely presented in their artwork, rituals, dances and festivals.

9 Also written "kaffir." See Wikipedia, [Kaffir](#).

10 "[Ngisi](#)" = "to smile" or "to grin." The same word is used in Tagalog. Tagalog "[ngisngis](#)" = "to smile," "to show one's teeth," "to giggle." Some Cebuano [dictionaries](#) give "pallid," but my Cebuano-speaking family doesn't know this meaning.

11 Moro people: also called Maranao people ("people of the lake"). The Moros migrated to Mindanao from nearby Malaysia, and in the majority are Muslims. They violently resisted Spanish and US colonialism and Christianization. See "[The Moro People of the Philippines: The 400 Year Struggle for Independence](#)," *Amaliah*, 8 Febr. 2021; Abad Macabanding, "[A Glimpse of Maranao Culture](#)," *Fillmore County Journal*, 20 Nov. 2017; Wikipedia, [Maranao People](#); N.N., "[The 22nd Infantry and the Moros – Introduction](#)."

The Moros believe that the Sarimanok will bring them good fortune and a bountiful harvest. Since the fourteenth century, most of the Moros are Muslims, and for them, the bird represents the [giant rooster that the prophet Muhammad saw when he entered the first heaven](#). But there also are pre-Islamic tales, in which the Sarimanok is the totem animal of the Moros.¹² In one variant, the rooster was an enchanted prince, who appeared at the eighteenth birthday of the beautiful princess Sari, declared that he had been watching over her all her life, and flew away with her. In another variant, he brought Rajah Indarapatra to the moon, because Indarapatra had fallen in love with the moon goddess.

15:04 | Bakunawa

Like the Minokawa bird we discussed before, the [Bakunawa](#) is a creature that threatens to swallow the moon. And like in the case of the Minokawa, the old Filipinos used to make a lot of noise with pans and pots to stop the Bakunawa from doing so, and urge him to spit out the moon again. This way, they explained lunar eclipses. The name is derived from the words “baku,” meaning curved, and “sawa,” for large snake or serpent. The Bakunawa actually belongs to the gods, and it was said that he has already swallowed six of the seven moons created by the supreme god, [Bathala](#), thus becoming his eternal enemy.

15:43 | Berberoka

Another creature that can swallow and spit is the [Berberoka](#). This monster lives in swamps, ponds or rivers, and it is targeting fishermen, which it prefer to eats alive. First, the Berberoko sucks in the water, and when the fish come to the surface, or land on the dry riverbed, it waits till the fishermen arrive and start collecting the fish. Then, it hoses the water over the people and swallows them. It is mostly depicted as an ogre, camouflaged with greenery or rock-like skin, but there are also variants that look more like a water nymph.

16:20 | Sirena and Siokoy

[Sirenas](#) are the Philippine variant of the mermaid, known all over south-east Asia. They can be malicious, when they lure seamen to the rocks with their beautiful, hypnotizing songs. The male counterpart, the [Siokoy](#), are related to the Berberoka and hunt people to eat them. The Sirenas, however, can also be friendly guardian spirits, taking care of the waters they live in. In the fairy tale of the [King of Binalatongan](#), the ruler fell in love with a mermaid girl and married her.

16:54 | (Section 4) | THE ASWANG

The creatures we discussed till now are familiar to all Filipinos. But none of them are as widely feared as the [Aswang](#). This name refers to a whole group of mostly female shapeshifters, that are lurking in the dark, may be sitting on your rooftop, or hiding behind your house. And all of them are evil. For all virtues which the Filipinos value, the Aswang are the vicious counterpart. The vampires and Manananggal we mentioned before also belong to this group.

The Aswang are especially well-known in the region of the [Visayas](#), southern parts of [Luzon](#) and parts of [Mindanao](#). The “home of the Aswang” is said to be the province of [Capiz](#). Every year, an [Aswang Festival](#) is celebrated there.

17:38 | The name “Aswang” is often said to be a combination of two words: “[Asin](#)” means salt, and “[bawang](#)” means “garlic.” These are two things that the Aswangs fear, and that can be used to repel and fight them. Others say that the term “Aswang” originated from the Filipino word “asawang,” meaning “dog”—because the beasts sometimes take the form of dogs. A third association is with the

12 The Moros believe that they descend from the son of [Rajah Indarapatra](#). According to [myth](#), this son had a brother, who could not be seen. Together, they choose the Sarimanok as their [totem](#) animal, it was said, as the Sarimanok also had an invisible twin spirit, called Inikadowa, that allowed people to get support from the spirit world.

evil god [Aswang](#), the rival of the good god [Gugurang](#), worshipped in the [Bicol region](#), south-east of [Manila](#) and north of Cebu and Panay.¹³

18:10 | Whatever is true, we can find the description of the Aswang already in a manuscript written by a Franciscan missionary in the year 1589. In his book on the customs of the Tagalog people, [Juan de Plasencia](#) wrote:

“The eighth class of servants of the Devil they called Aswang, which is equivalent to sorcerer; they say that they have seen it fly, and that it murdered men and ate their flesh. This was among the [Visayan](#) people; among the [Tagalogs](#) these creatures are not known.”

18:40 | Category 1: Mangkukulam (witches)

The Aswang can be categorized in five groups. The most humanlike are the [Mangkukulam](#), or [witches](#). They live among the ordinary people. They may seem a bit odd or shy, but there is nothing really suspicious about them. At night, they will show their true face, however, and practice black magic. When they manage to obtain one of your personal items, they will use it to curse you. In this sense, their magic is related to the [voodoo](#) rituals from Africa and the Caribbean.

19:14 | Category 2: Bal-bal (ghouls)

While the witches will harm their victims from a distance, all other Aswang species attack physically, and feed on blood, carrion, or viscera. The [Bal-bal](#) or [ghouls](#), for example, are zombie-like creatures that feed on corpses. They usually hide near cemeteries where they dig up the freshly buried bodies in the night. For this purpose, they have strong, long claws and teeth. After feasting on the corpse, they will leave the trunk of a banana tree in the coffin to trick the people visiting the grave. During a funeral, you can recognize the Bal-bal in the crowd by its compulsive yawning.

19:51 | Category 3: Weredogs

As there are no wolves in the Philippines, the local equivalent of the werewolf is the weredog. In some regions, this creature also takes the shape of a cat or a pig. The weredog attacks people who are on the road during the night, especially pregnant women. If a woman lets her hair hang loose, this increases her chance to become a victim. In medieval Europe, by the way, a woman [wearing her hair loose](#) was said to be a witch. During the day, weredogs appear as normal people, especially as peddlers or traveling workers; they do not settle in human communities.

20:33 | Category 4: Wak-wak & Tik-tik (Aswang birds)

Some of the Aswang can fly, by turning into giant birds. The [Wak-wak](#) is said to be such a flying monster, and so are the [Tik-tik](#) and the [Ek-ek](#). These names are derived from the sound they make while they approach. It is said that the softer the sound, the nearer the attacker is. The Wak-wak usually land on the roof, and can stretch their long tongues through the leaves to reach their victim. They prey on full-grown human beings, but especially target babies, or even fetuses.

21:05 | Category 5: Vampires

Now, at last we arrive at the vampire kind. Even here, we can distinguish different shapes and strategies.

21:14 | Mandurugo

The [Mandurugo](#) from the northern Philippines appears as an attractive girl, and will marry an unsuspecting young man. At night, she will stick out her hollow, pointed tongue, and suck some of the blood from her husband while he is sleeping. Over time, her lover will get weaker, and eventually dies.

13 Others claim that “Aswang” comes from the Sanskrit “asura” (demon), or from “suwang” (Malay)/“suanggi”(Moluccan). See Jordan Clark, [“Etymology of Aswang: Where Did the Word Come From?”](#) *The Aswang Project*, 2 Oct. 2019.

21:33 | Amalanhig

The [Amalanhig](#) has the closest resemblance to what we would call the classical European [vampire](#). They rise from their graves and chase humans to bite their neck and suck their blood. But there also is a variant that tickles its victim to death. Because the Amalanhig, after resting in the ground, have stiff bodies, the best way to escape them is to run zig-zag lines, or climb into a tree. Besides, they are afraid of water.

22:01 | Manananggal

The [Manananggal](#), finally, are the viscera-suckers we mentioned earlier. During the day, they look like attractive women, but in the night, they can separate their upper body from their pelvis and legs, grow big leathery wings, and fly through the air, their intestines still dangling from their bellies. If they don't catch their victim outside, in full flight, they will land on the roof of a house, like the Wak-wak, and stick in their tongue.

Unlike the European vampires, they do not use their teeth, and their tongue is tubular, not pointy like that of the Mandurugo.

Because of their nightmarish appearance, they are the most frightening of all Aswang, and their terrifying reputation has spread across the borders of the Philippines. There is a way to ward them off, however, by searching the lower body they have left behind. If you rub it with salt or crushed garlic, or with other strong spices, it cannot unite with the upper body anymore, and the Manananggal is trapped in its monstrous shape.

23:01 | Special variants

Because the folklore of the Philippines is so rich, there also are Aswang variants that do not exactly fit in these categories:

23:04 | Berbalang

One of them are the [Berbalang](#), who were said to live on a small island in the Sulu Sea, very close to Malaysia. They are basically ghouls who are used to open graves and eat the flesh of corpses... but as you can see here, they can grow wings like bats, like the Manananggal, so that they also can raid the houses of humans.

23:29 | Kubot

The [Kubot](#) have long, thick hair that can turn into tentacles. With these, they can squeeze their victim's innards out. The Kubot hide in the dark and grab unsuspecting people. These monsters were the subject of the movie [Kubot: The Aswang Chronicles 2](#).

23:50 | Tiyanak

Even babies can be Aswang creatures. When the mother dies during childbirth, the newborn can turn into a [Tiyanak](#). It lives in the jungle and will lead travelers astray, or it will cry to attract them. When the victim picks up the toddler, it will turn into its monster form and attack.

24:08 | Sigbin

Last but not least, some Aswang own a [Sigbin](#), which looks like a crossbreed of a dog, a goat, a hare and a kangaroo.¹⁴ It has very big ears, with which it can clap, like a pair of hands. It walks backwards, with its head lowered between its hind legs. It can become invisible, and suck the blood of victims from their shadows. During the Holy Week, while Christ is tortured and crucified, the Sigbins are said to leave their lair to hunt children and take out their hearts, from which they make amulets. It is also rumored that some rich people keep a Sigbin in a clay jar; owning such an animal will bring them fortune in business.

14 In other accounts, a Sigbin, Sigben or Segben is believed to act like a weredog, one of the five Aswang categories.

24:54 | (Section 5) | THE INTERVIEWS

Now that we have learned something about the looks and the behavior of Filipino monsters, it is time to step outside and talk with our neighbors and other local people. These short interviews were conducted by Jane and Jiven, with basically three questions. One, what do you know about the Aswang and other mythical figures? Two, do you believe in such supernatural creatures? And three, did you ever see or hear one of them? We used the language of the central Philippines, [Bisaya](#), or the local dialect, and give you the translation in the subtitles.

25:39 | INTERVIEW WITH DODONG MARFA (50+)

Dodong is a carpenter in his early fifties. Together with his wife, Wilma, he lives on a lot next to the path to our house. Both of them have assisted on our construction site while we were building.

Jane: What do you know about monsters, Kuya [= Uncle. In the Philippines, Uncle, Aunt, Grandfather etc. are used as courtesy forms.]

Dodong: One night, my wife and I went to the sea to catch fish. While we were walking home I noticed someone was following us, and when I turned around I saw a huge man. He was very dark and his hair was long and curly, and his eyes were red.

Jane: Was he in the sea?

Dodong: No, he was on the road, there is a breadfruit tree. When I saw him I stopped and looked at him. He was also looking at me and all of a sudden I felt scared. I said to myself, "It is such a huge man, it is not a normal human like us." Then I realized maybe this is what they call an Agta [local name for Kapre] because he was not talking and he was so hairy. That time I really got scared. Then I told my wife Wilma what I saw. She asked me if I was not scared, I said, "Of course I was scared, but I did not tell you, because you might run away and stumble on the path."

Jane: So, you really believe in such creatures, Kuya [Uncle]?

Dodong: Yes, I really believe in Kapres because I already saw one, but as far as the Aswangs go, I never encountered them.

Jane: So, you haven't seen a half-body [= Manananggal]?

Dodong: No, I have not seen one! Only the Agta [= Kapre].

27:32 | INTERVIEW WITH VICENTA ESCAÑA (45)

Vicenta is the mother of Jiven, Jane's boyfriend. Together with her husband Gaspar, she has four children. To generate additional income for the family, she operates a small sari-sari store at the front of their house. She is 45

Jane: Hi, Ate [= Aunt], do you believe in monsters?

Vicenta: Uhm, no!

Jane: Umm, no? But DO you have some experience with them?

Vicenta: Yes, but I only had an experience with a Black Lady. Yes, a Black Lady.

Jane: So, you met a Black Lady?

Vicenta: I was walking one night and I saw a woman on the way and she was black.

Jane: (laughs)

Vicenta: I said good evening to her and walked past her. Then, when I turned around she disappeared.

Jane: Black Lady? Where did you see her?

Vicenta: Yes, it was a Black Lady because she was wearing something like a veil and it was all black. It was a Black Lady or a kalag [= ghost], and she was floating in the air.

Jane: Where did you see her?

Vicenta: At my place in Lawis [= Madridejos], where I lived before.

Jane: But you don't really believe in the Aswang?

Vicenta: I don't believe in the Aswang because I never saw any.

Jane: Like Kuya Elmar – I mean, Kuya Dodong –he said he won't believe in Aswang, but he saw what we call a Kapre.

Vicenta: Yes, Kapre...

Jane: Did you also see one?

Vicenta: Yes, a Kapre. I already saw a Kapre before, at the house in the mountains, at the back of the kitchen. It was so hairy and his nails were long. He tried to grab me through the window.

Jane: Scary!

Vicenta: That's all what I experienced.

29:54 | INTERVIEW WITH GASPAR ESCAÑA (47)

Gaspar is Jiven's father. For most of the year 2020, he has been working in a piggery in Madrideojos, around 10 miles from our village. But since August, he is operating a motor tricycle for passenger transport. He is 47 years old.

Jane: Good afternoon, Kuya. I just want to ask you if you believe in monsters?

Gaspar: Yes, I believe in monsters.

Jane: Can you tell us about your experiences?

Gaspar: My first experience here in our place was that I saw a white... white... At that time I was checking the chicken, and it passed in front of me.

Jane: What was that?

Gaspar: The tall man. And my second experience was that I saw an... um... what we call a floating fireball... we call it Santilmo [= St Elmo's Fire]... and there are many of us who saw it.

Jane: But do you believe in monsters that are flying?

Gaspar: Yes, I also believe in flying monsters.

Jane: Do you also believe in the Manananggals? And do you have any experience with them?

Gaspar: Yes, I believe that Manananggals exist also, but I don't have any direct experience.

Jane: What else did you see, Kuya?

Gaspar: I also saw big dogs. When we were young, we saw weredogs.

Jane: It was not a Sigbin?

Gaspar: No, there is no Sigbin here in our place. Only weredogs, and it was my first time to encounter such a dog. It is higher than a corn plant and bigger than humans. And I also had an experience at the cemetery... because our former house was just near the cemetery. I has an experience... I saw a ghost, like a human shape.

Jane: We can see a ghost, Kuya?

Gaspar: Yes, we can see it. It was heading back (to the grave).

32:09 | INTERVIEW WITH CONSTANTIA PASILAN DESIERTO (102)

Constantia is the grandmother of Jomar, a friend of Jane and Jiven. She is 102 years old and still walks around the house without a stick. Because she does not speak Cebuano (Bisaya), this short interview was conducted by Jiven in the dialect of our island.

Jiven: Good Afternoon, Lola [= Grandmother]. We have some questions for you about monsters. What did you know about the Aswang? Or did you encounter any of them before? Do you believe in them?

Constantia: Yes, I used to believe in them.

Jiven: What is your experience?

Constantia: I believed in the Aswang and that they are caused by the black demon, haha!

Jiven: What was your experience in the past? What have you seen about the Aswang when you were young?

Constantia: I didn't see anything, except this Aswang. Because I was only staying at home, and not going out.

Jiven: As you said to Jane before, you saw something jumping on the roof. What was that?

Constantia: Ah, yes, on the roof. I heard a whizzing sound, and jumping on the roof.

Jiven: What kind of Aswang did you see?

Constantia: It was black! Because the Aswang is black!

Jiven: Aha, black... Is that house still there?

Constantia: Oh yes, it was the house of my family.

Jiven: So, you were living in that house?

Constantia: Yes, earlier, we were staying in Bais City near Dumaguete [on Negros], because my husband was working there, but after a month, we came back to Obo-ob again, because this is our home village.

Jiven: So, on Negros, in Bais City on Negros, there was no Aswang?

Constantia: No, it was Dumaguete...

Jiven: Aha, Dumaguete...

Constantia: Yes, in Dumaguete...

Jiven: And, did you have any such experience there, Lola?

Constantia: No, I was just staying there, but I saw nothing... Haha!

34:11 | INTERVIEW WITH MERLINDA TIONGZON (53)

Merlinda, 53 years old, is the neighbor of the mother-in-law of Rhieza, our household helper. Merlinda lives in Combado, on the other side of the highway.

Jane: Good afternoon, Ate [= Aunt]. My name is Jane, and I have some questions for you, Ate. In the past, maybe you've already heard about the monsters or Aswangs; do you believe in them?

Merlinda: Yes, I do.

Jane: Do you have any experience with them?

Merlinda: No! But my husband had an experience before with an Agta [= Kapre]. He saw it near the mango tree. Our house was on the other side before, and our children were still small at that time. Sometimes, my husband would go out and would come home late in the night. One night, he was banging at our house door and I asked him what happened. He said he saw an Agta [= Kapre] at the mango tree and the Kapre was banging him around, so he cried for help.

Jane: But he still managed to come home?

Merlinda: Yes, he was still able to come home, but he was already crawling because he couldn't get up anymore. He said the Kapre was on his path while he was passing. Because that day my husband's Uncle had been burning the dry leaves near the mango tree and perhaps, the Kapre thought that my husband had done it, so the Kapre took revenge on my husband.

Jane: But it was not really your husband who had burned the dry leaves?

Merlinda: No, it was his Uncle.

Jane: What is an Agta [Kapre], Ate?

Merlinda: They said it is a big dark man. I have not seen it, but according to the people who encountered it, it is a big man.

Jane: You have not seen an Aswang or a Manananggal?

Merlinda: No, I've never seen any, I only heard about it from other people. That was the story of my husband, that he was really attacked by an Agta. We even gave him warm water to drink to bring him around, because he couldn't move his arms anymore, but he didn't have any scratches. The next day he was very weak.

Jane: Was he still okay at that time?

Merlinda: Yes, he was still okay. The mother of Dindin [= Rhieza's husband] heard some banging sound near the mango tree during that night.

Jane: It was that loud?

Merlinda: Yes, they heard it even that night, although there was a disco in the nearby barangay [village]. They heard that banging sound, very loud, near the mango tree, and it took time before it stopped. It was actually my husband being beaten by the Agta.

37:29 | INTERVIEW WITH JULIE "MIGUEL" ESCAÑA (38)

Julie "Miguel" Escaña is Jiven's uncle and lives in Ticad. At the time this interview, he was visiting the house of Jiven's family in Obo-ob.

Jiven: Good afternoon, Kuya. Do you believe in Aswangs?

Miguel: Yes, I really believe in them.

Jiven: What is your experience with such creatures?

Miguel: Hmmm. In the place where I used to live in Kampindoy, I have experienced a lot, such as a Santilmo [= St. Elmo's fire, a floating fire ball] and a White Lady. That was what I saw. No matter where I go, even here in your place, there are always some things I notice.

Jiven: With the Aswang, what is your experience?

Miguel: We just saw a creature transform into a big dog, I don't know whether it was an Aswang or a Hamok [local name for Kubot] or whatever. That's what I saw in the place where I lived, in Kampindoy (Barangay Sillon); I experienced a lot like Goblins and many things more.

Jiven: And with the White Lady, what was your experience?

Miguel: Um, we just would feel scared and like... the point is, they will appear suddenly, you have no idea when to expect them. Of course, you will be shocked and get scared and these creatures, we cannot control WHEN they appear, wherever you are, they can suddenly turn up.

Jiven: How about the Hamok [= Kubot], what was your experience?

Miguel: Do you know about the bamboo, it will bow down and block your way, that is a sign that there is a Hamok [Kubot] around and their hair will go inside in your nose, ears and other parts of your body.

Jiven: Where did you experience or see that?

Miguel: Do you know in Tangkong, where the plaza for the fiesta is, there is a road that slopes down. The Hamok [= Kubot] lived at Nr. 1, and that place was so scary.

Jiven: How about the Duende [Goblins]?

Miguel: Um, their are small, my boy.

Jiven: But did you really see them?

Miguel: Yes, in Owen Mercado's place in Puso Village, and at our house in Ticad, right? There was a Goblin's house. Of course, I could feel it, just like my brothers, and that's it, but that's what I experienced. Hamok [= Kubot]...

40:33 | INTERVIEW WITH PAULA PARADELA (55)

Paula lives in Obo-ob and operates a simple eatery for fish and seafood along the coastal road. She is 55 years old.

Jane: Good morning, Ate [= Aunt, courtesy form].

Paula: Good morning, too.

Jane: I am Jane. Um, I have a question for you, Ate. Do you believe in Aswang creatures, Ate?

Paula: Um, yes, I believe in them.

Jane: Do you have any experience with them?

Paula: Umm, my father told me about the time when I was born. He told me that there was also someone who was born at the same time as I.

Jane: Who was that?

Paula: Umm, not someone like us. My father said it was an Agta [= Kapre].

Jane: An Agta?

Paula: Yes. And then...

Jane: Only at your (place)?

Paula: Yes, only, um, there. We have two mango trees. Perhaps, when my mother was pregnant with me, there also was an Agta that was pregnant. When I gave birth, I mean when my mother was giving birth to me, the Agta also gave birth.

Jane: So, you were both born at the same time.

Paula: Yes, we were born at the same time. Then, because we were born at the same time, when I cried, they also heard someone cry at the mango tree.

Jane: Hala! [shocked]

Paula: Umm, yes like that. Then the midwife was shocked because she also saw a Hamok [= local word for Kubot].

Jane: Hmm.

Paula: Then, when I was already older, that was the time that the Agta and I started our friendship.

Jane: Ah, you were friends?

Paula: Um, yes. His name was Polin.

Jane: Hala!

Paula: Yes, he was called Polin. And that time, he was helping my father... My father used to climb the coconut tree to produce tuba [= coconut wine]. When my father would get to the coconuts to fetch the juice, Polin would also help my father climb the tree and get to the coconuts. That is why...

Jane: He was not like the others, Ate, who are not good? He was a good man?

Paula: Yes, he was good.

Jane: Wow! How cool was that!

Paula: Umm. He even told my father hat one night I was lighting a torch. Do you know how to make a torch from coconut leaves? When you fold the leaves, you can use them to make a light.

Jane: Um, yes.

Paula: One evening, my mother asked me to buy sugar in the store and it was already dark. Then while I was walking, I said "Good evening, Polin" to him and he answered me with "Uhhh."

Jane: Aha, he also talked, Ate?

Paula: Yes, he knew how to talk. Haha! Then, when I was walking back home, he was sitting on the well that had been hit by a tornado. The owner had just started to rebuild it, that's why it was still low.

Jane: Yes.

Paula: But Polin was sitting there so comfortably.

Jane: He must have been big.

Paula: Yes, he was a big man. Then while I was walking, he just said "Uhhmm," and I got scared because, of course, he is still an Agta.

Jane: Um. It is so scary!

Paula: I turned the torch towards him. Later, he told my father what had happened because he and my father were friends.

Jane: Hmm.

Paula: When Polin told my father, my father talked to me and said, "Don't be like that, because you know that you both were born at the same time. With that, my father and I were already okay. Polin would ask tuba (coconut wine) from my father, he would ask for a whole gallon, I mean for a "sawd."

Jane: Hmm.

Paula: Have you seen what a "sawd" is?

Jane: Please, tell me.

Paula: It is a piece of bamboo that you will cut in half.

Jane: Aha, yes, I know.

Paula: Yes, you can use it for collecting the juice from the coconut.

Jane: Hmm.

Paula: Polin would ask for one “sawd,” and he could drink it all.

Jane: Hala uy.

Paula: Umm, he could drink it like he was drinking from a glass. Polin had a technique so that my father could collect more juice for tuba, so he would help my father.

Jane: He really helped your father?

Paula: Yes, he would help. And from the day I was born until I was twelve, he was always around.

Jane: And now, Ate? He is already gone?

Paula: Umm, he is not there anymore. But then when my father died, um, yes when my father died, Polin showed himself to me one more time.

Jane: But, that was the last time?

Paula: Yes, that really was the last time. After that, he never showed up anymore.

44:52 | (Section 6) | CONCLUSIONS & PERSPECTIVE

From these interviews, we learn that the people of our island seem to be especially familiar with the **Kapre**. Five out of the seven persons we interviewed had met one, or had a partner that did so. The other supernatural beings were weredogs, or a Black Lady.

45:07 | The **Black Lady** is a more frightening variant of the **White Lady or “kaperosa,”** often believed to be the ghost of a woman who has killed herself for grief, after being betrayed by her husband or fiancée. And Constantia indeed reported on seeing a black Aswang on her roof, although she believes that such creatures don’t exist anymore.

45:29 | We can also see that most interviewed persons remain doubtful about apparitions they haven’t experienced themselves, or that haven’t been reported to them by a trusted witness. In previous centuries however, when rural communities were still more isolated, and modern science and medicine were unknown to the local tribes, people probably were less skeptical.

45:51 | The Spanish missionary we mentioned before, **Juan de Plasencia**, would not believe that the Filipino natives had actually seen witches, who were flying around, separated from their lower bodies, and eating human flesh. In his book on the customs of the Tagalogs, he wrote that such perceptions must be illusions, presented by the Devil. For the existence of the Devil however, he had no more evidence than the natives had for the existence of Aswang creatures.

Moreover, de Plasencia believed that Mary was a virgin when she gave birth to Jesus, and that her son survived death on the cross and ascended to heaven – ideas that most Westerners now share with the large majority of Filipinos, but that are not more rational than believing in flying demons or Kapres.

46:37 | As far as **perception** is concerned, Paula’s report about her friendship with a Kapre over a period of twelve years is remarkable. Her story cannot be the result of a single furtive glance during a dark night.

To explain such experiences, some scholars point to influences from other countries. Since the year 3,000 BC, groups of **Malaysians have migrated to the Philippines**, and brought their popular myths with them. The Malaysian counterpart of the Manananggal is the **Penanggalan**, which basically is a flying head, with the lungs and inner organs still attached to it. The Manananggal can well be derived from this Penanggalan. But this only shifts the question, because now we must ask, how did the *Malaysians* arrive at such beliefs?

47:23 | It seems logical that **animist ideas** have laid the groundwork for such perceptions. Like today, bad things would happen in primitive societies, seemingly without reason. A healthy person would suddenly get sick. A woman might have a miscarriage, or the baby was stillborn. One year, there might be too much rain, while another year might bring a draught, so that the harvest would fail.

The human species tends to look for explanations, and in absence of fact-based science, people would blame ghosts and spirits, or suspect neighbors with bad intentions and magical powers.¹⁵

48:04 | There is evidence, however, that the **Spanish colonists would instrumentalize such beliefs to divide and rule**. Many villages had a midwife or female doctor, a so-called “**babaylan**,” who also knew how to communicate with the spirits. To discredit such female leaders and convert the population to Catholicism, the Spaniards would spread scary stories about such babaylan and portray them as evil demons. Especially in the province of Capiz, where women led a revolt against Spanish rule, the invaders accused these women of being Aswang. This might explain why Capiz is said to be the home of the Aswang, and why these creatures were mostly believed to be female.¹⁶

48:44 | In their human form, the Mandurugo and the Mahnnanangle were said to be **young, beautiful and seductive**. Like in Europe, where witches were accused of having [sex with the Devil](#), the Spanish priests condemned female lust, that would help women gain power over men—a favorite theme of late nineteenth-century European painting, as we can see here.

The frightening stories about seductive Aswang women invented by the Spaniards also served the suppression and domestication of such alleged **female sexual power**, and of the **liberal sexual practices of the pre-colonial Philippines**, that focused on the woman’s pleasure. Before the Spaniards arrived, neither remaining a virgin nor having too many children were valued. Polygamy was widespread, but women were free to choose their own partner and to divorce when they wanted. They also could own land and do business in their own name.¹⁷

49:43 | Due to the influence of Spanish Catholicism, the roles of the babaylan healer, of the [princess-warrior](#) and of the independent Filipina woman were gradually replaced by the ideal of **María Clara**, a devout and submissive character from a famous Philippine novel from the year 1887.¹⁸ While María Clara became a role model for young Filipina women at the end of the nineteenth century, the image of the seductive, malicious sorceress and bloodsucker served as its terrifying counterpart.¹⁹ Further Catholic imagery was mixed with the descriptions of the Aswang, so that the flying monsters came to be understood as [Fallen Angels](#).

50:26 | Still another explanation why Capiz became the center of the Aswang folklore is, that in this region, a special form of **Parkinson disease** was prominent,²⁰ that causes the patients to twist their bodies, stick out their tongues, and salivate. Such people were easily accused of being an Aswang.

15 The perception of natural disasters is largely colored by religious beliefs. See Neil Ian Parker, *Religious Approaches to Disaster Reporting*, MA Thesis, Royal Roads, 2019, and Caleb M. Call, *Viewing a World of Disaster through the Eyes of Faith*, Graduate Thesis, Iowa State, 2012. Unlike Christianity or Islam, animism assumes a multitude of spiritual agents.

16 Babaylans could also be men who behaved like women (“asogs”). During the period 1580-90, Babaylans on Panay also revolted against Muslim invasions. See Job de Leon, “[Jruander: Why Do Filipinos Still Believe in Aswang?](#),” *GMA News*, 1 Aug. 2012; Ronica Valdeavilla, “[Aswang: The Terrifying Vampire Ghouls of the Philippines](#),” *Culture Trip*, 30 Oct. 2018; Ian Pike, “[Babaylan: The Ancient Witches of Tribal Philippines](#),” *Hub Pages*, updated on July 11, 2020; Jordan Clark, “[Panay’s Babaylan: The Male Takeover](#),” *The Aswang Project*, 4 Dec. 2019; Roel Hoang Manipon, “[When We Were Babaylan](#),” *Daily Tribune*, 1 Febr. 2021; S. Lily Mendoza, “[Back from the Crocodiles Belly: Christian Formation Meets Indigenous Resurrection](#),” *HTS Theologies Studies/Theological Studies* 73(3) | “[B\(e\)aring the Babaylan: Body Memory, Colonial Wounding, and Return to Indigenous Wildness](#)” | “[Babaylan Healing and Indigenous ‘Religion’ at the Crossroads](#).”

17 See Jay Israel De Leon, “[Penis Piercing and the Status of Women in Pre-colonial Visayan Societies](#),” *Medium*, 12 May 2020; Kirsten Mendoza, “[A Pre-Colonial Take on the 2018 Filipino Pro-Woman Bill](#),” *The Rambling*, 26 Jan. 2019; Adrienne Dianne Isabelle R. Saldua, “[The Role of Women from Pre-Hispanic to Spanish Era](#),” *Tonks*, 22 Febr. 2012; Wikipedia, [Sexuality in the Philippines](#) | [Women in the Philippines](#).

18 *Noli Me Tángere*, by José Rizal, the national hero of the Philippines. [Full English text on Gutenberg.org](#).

19 See Zea Asis, “[Why It’s Time To Rewrite María Clara & Our Filipina Story](#),” *Cambio & Co*; Wikipedia, [María Clara](#); Jacqueline Arias, “[‘María Clara’ Is not Always the Best Definition of Filipinas](#),” *Preen.ph*, 9 August 2019.

20 [X-linked recessive inheritance](#) or Panay dystonia, after the island of Panay. Local name for the disease: lubag.

Today, medical science is pushing back such beliefs, but just as important is the influence of [urbanization and the mass media](#). In 2010, 55% of the Filipino population still lived in rural areas, but this is quickly changing, because the cities offer better education, more jobs, and a more advanced technology.

51:06 | The rapid [growth of the population](#) supports this trend: not everyone inherits a piece of land big enough to farm, so that more and more people are dependent on jobs in the city. And when the houses are built more closely to each other, and lit with strong neon lights, there are no more dark corners for monsters to hide.

51:27 | But while the authentic folk beliefs are slowly paling, the [Philippine mass media](#) are trying to exploit this traditional material, flooding the screen and the Internet with [monster dramas](#) and sensation-seeking documentaries. The scenes you are about to see now are part of a family drama released in October 2020, in which a mentally confused woman is falsely accused of being an Aswang.

51:52 | Wish Ko Lang (GMA) feature of 17 October 2020

The story is probably based on [an event that took place in Magpet in North Cotabato](#), near Davao City on Mindanao, in November 2019. A 75-year old widow who was mentally ill, was killed by villagers who believed that she was an Aswang. She was found by her daughter with 16 stab wounds.

55:15 | One Mindanao/GMA Regional TV news of 21 November 2019

57:11 | This incident demonstrates that the old beliefs are not only the subject of folklore festivals, but still play a role in daily life.²¹

57:21 | The dramas shown on Philippine TV contain a lot of loud shouting, crying and panic. A trend in the opposite direction is to commercialize supernatural creatures for [children's books](#) and movies, presenting them as harmless and cuddly little monsters.

57:37 | A combination of horror and children's movie is is Commander Garlic with Herbert Bautista from 1988. It is the classic of all Filipino vampire movies. To better understand its background and style, we will discuss some of its action scenes.

[58:24 | \(Section 7\) | Screenshots from KUMANDER BAWANG, with comments](#)

(Filmed from a PBO television broadcast on 12 October 2021 via Cignal Satellite Network; screenshots edited with PhotoShop)

Text of my comments (presented as subtitles):

[Strange things are happening in the region...]

[When two boys pick up a pair of girls for a ride...]

“Where would you like to go?”

“Oh, wherever you want!”

[... the innocent-looking co-eds suddenly turn into—European-style—vampires.]

[Harmful creatures attack the village of Matang Bato where our hero Tikboy lives.]

[Among them, we see midgets...]

[... and a voodoo magician.]

21 More than once, people who were believed to be Aswangs have been killed in the Philippines. An example: Edwin Fernandez, [“Father Shoots Daughter after Mistaking Her for ‘Aswang.’”](#) *Enquirer.net*, 30 May 2015. For an overview, see Jordan Clark, [“45 News Reports about the Aswang since 2001.”](#) *The Aswang Project*, 24 Sept. 2015.

[Their main target is this little girl. Born from an Aswang mother who chose to live as a human, the child has a special potential.]

[Tikboy stuffs his garlic bombs into the mouth of the monsters.]

[This renders the creatures helpless...] [... and blows them to pieces.]

[But the attackers are too many and too strong, and Tikboy is desperate.]

[Luckily, he remembers how the child's amulet can turn him into Kumander Bawang—like his father before.]

[In a flash of light, he transforms into a superhero.] [In a new outfit, he is ready to take on the fight.]

[The attackers are dumbfounded.] [The Kumander saves the little girl, and flies away with her.]

Kumander Bawang on a new mission. Per walkie-talkie, he is informed that the Aswangs are attacking again.]

[The population is panicking.] [Kumander Bawang arrives on the scene...] [... and engages in battle, using his garlic bombs.]

“Take that, vile creature!”

[The vampire woman explodes, leaving an outline of glowing ashes.]

[But still more monsters are stretching out their claws to the Kumander...] [... who jumps on a wall and throws a handful of garlic bombs.]

[The battle has not ended yet, though.]

[This vampire uses a machine gun. Much has changed since Polidori's times.] [But with a few acrobatic saltos, the Kumander surprises the villain, and stuffs a garlic bomb into his mouth—with the wellknown effect.]

[Another miscreant manages to put his fangs into Kumander Bawang's neck...] [... where his teeth remain stuck.] [He flees the scene like a “bayot,” an effeminized man. Bayots play an important role in Philippine popular culture, by the way.]

[Kumander Bawang's heroic deeds have reached the newspapers...] [... studied by a coven of aristocratic vampires, led by Conde Regalado. Is it a coincidence that these Über-Vampires look European? Or a post-colonial effect?]

[The Count is worried about the powers of the new hero...] [But one of his minions presents a magic bean that, once swallowed by the little Aswang-born girl, will turn her into a mighty evil princess!]

[The Count remains doubtful...] [... but the woman insists that the magic black bean will do its work.] [Traditionally, such a bean would turn into a black chick in the victim's stomach, causing him/her to transform into an Aswang.]

[Meanwhile, Tikboy's grandfather, a respected Aswang fighter in his younger years, leads his village in an all-out attack...] [In the Philippines, the village (barangay) is the basic unit of social

organization.²²] [These villagers with their torches look as if they are ready to slay Frankenstein’s monster. Borrowed imagery, or archetypal?]

[Now they have to face an attack by flying Manananggals...] [... that are feared even more than the other vampires...] [... who fight on the ground...] [... overpower their victims...] [... and suck their blood.]

[Kumander Bawang uses his new-found strength...] [... to kick some vampire “lobot”²³...]

[... while grandfather storms the coven’s lair...] [... and discovers the power of the Holy Cross...]

[... that seems to be an effective deterrent against the monsters.]

[The Filipinos already believed in bloodsucking monsters *before* the Spaniards arrived. Apparently, the Aswangs were christianized, too :-)] [For the vampires who have learned to fear the symbol of Christianity, its effect is similar to that of the garlic bombs.]

[Kumander Bawang lifts one of the misfits into the sky... and lets him fall to his death. An apt combination of Superman and Van Helsing.]

[The vampires led by Conde Regalado decide to start their own attack in their flying coffins.]

[The villagers fear for their lives and Kumander Bawang must jump to avoid the laser bolts fired from the coffins.]

[The Count arrives at the battlefield, mocking his opponent.] [He aims at him with his laser rays.]

[But in the end, Regalado, too, is overwhelmed—and eliminated by a garlic bomb.]

1:04:55 | (Section 8) | END CREDITS/LIST OF VISUAL SOURCES

1:10:00 | End



Jane, Gaira and Lilian

22 Barangays were already functioning long before the Spaniards arrived in the Philippines; the *conquistadores* imposed a superstructure of state and church administration. See Wikipedia: [Barangay State](#).

23 “Lobot” or “lubot”: Bisaya and Tagalog for “behind,” “butt,” “bum.”