



WADI WATKALULU

Alamankig

TRANSLATED BY
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BY WADI WATKALULU

Sudden Death

There was a legend about a cruel chieftain who upon learning the presence of the Spanish *Conquistadores* ordered his *babaylan* to work on something that could possibly defeat the enemies because of the superiority they have due to their firearms and cannons. Datu Mapintas told Isganan, the *baylana* that he would like a *bagani* elite which would be fearless before the enemies like they are incapable of pain or even dying.

Faced with such an enormous task, Isganan, the *babaylan* made a great offering to Sitan with a huge boar to seek the advice of the *Rajah han kalibutan* or the Prince of the World. The earth shook and branching lightning lit the sky as thunders rolled when underworld deity arrived.

_What is it this time, you lustful woman? Asking for a new lover again?

_Oh, prince, do not be too stern. I have to risk the anger of Kan Laon by slaying his prized boar for you. It is because of the order of Datu Mapintas who wanted me to make his elite warriors incapable of feeling pain or even death.

_Bah, what a tall order for a mere mortal like him. And what are you to be afraid of a mere mountain god like Kan Laon when he is just my subject? He is a mere lakan and I am Sultan of all. _lightning and thunder interspersed as he boasted, _ I will grant him his wish for you, my loyal subject but I will also teach him a lesson. Go, I will come tonight in your nightmare and everything I will tell you in that dream, you will have to do, or else the wish he had will never be fulfilled.

That night, the *baylana* had a terrible dream. It seemed that Sultan Sitan had indeed visited her for she felt ravished. She even had bite marks all over her body and she could not walk properly. But despite her weariness she took the black pearls Sitan left before dawn and they looked like the dung of goats. She had to force herself some grace as some *bagani* had been sent already to fetch her. One of them who had intimacy with her looked at her intently and jealously asked, _ Why do you walk strangely?

But all she did was stare at him and he kept quiet. In the large house of the *datu*, the *baganis* were waiting. When she arrived, Mapintas asked her right away if she had complied with his order and she simply nodded thinking of the ordeal she had just to have it accomplished. The Datu grinned and ordered the men to get out of the *hanggud nga balay* and assemble in the yard. Lined up in the yard, the *babaylan* asked them to have a pair each one and since the number was odd, she made the last group into a triad.

Then she gave each one of them a black pearl from the black cask and told them to wait for her signal. And to the great consternation of the Datu and all those present, when she shouted, "Now!", the *baganis* started fighting and hacking at each other until only one was left standing. Mapintas was fuming mad and drew his own *sundang* and *garanas*, _ Isganan,

what have you done why did the *bagani* kill each other?!

But Isganan simply approached him, took his garanas and went to the lone survivor. The crowd expected that Isganan will promote him either as the new *Datu* or give him a great reward but they were shocked anew when she stabbed him repeatedly until his life ebbed away. Mapintas convulsed in anger, and ran to attack her but she simply waved her hand after uttering some oration and the *datu* fell on his face on a corpse. Then she called on Sitan as he instructed, and suddenly the fallen men started moving in jolting and strange manner then stood up unmindful of their blades. The *Datu* ran back into his house before he could ask, _ What is the meaning of all these, *Baylana*?

_Just as you wished, *Datu* Mapintas . These men are no longer sentient to pain. Nor are they afraid of death anymore. At your bidding they shall attack the enemy and they have no more reason to be afraid. _Then she faced the recently risen and unto them declared, _ Brave warriors, now even if the enemies' blades and bullets hit you, you shall no longer recoil from pain. And you shall defy death itself for you are already dead!

_ They are already dead?!_ *Datu* Mapintas echoed her.

_ You saw them die hacking each other, didn't you? Only those who are decapitated and those whose hearts are struck couldn't be given life anew for their vital organs are hit, _ she explained, then turned to the so-called resurrected, _ Brave warriors, you are only going to follow the command of *Datu* Mapintas and myself. You are not only going to kill the enemy but drain them of their blood. Their blood will be your bloodline, your new life. If you don't suck fresh blood then you shall rot and decay.

Mapintas was just so happy to give them a few orders of formation and even a stirring message of not allowing invaders to trample the sacred shores of the island. Meantime, the *baylana* noticed the black serpents coming out of the mouth of those decapitated or heart-pierced, the little serpents seemed to be in search of new contagion having hatched within their original hosts. She had to warn the remaining onlookers, perhaps waiting to retrieve the bodies to stay clear lest they become the new infestation.

With new confidence in his unique *baganis* they set out from the beautiful mountain of Maripara where they made their temporary abode evading the *conquistadores*, this time to engage them in battle. But as fate would have it, the march of the undead found the camp of the *conquistadores* by the seashore of Silay empty and the *barque de guerra* somewhere else making war on the natives.

This is what Mapintas didn't like with these foreign intruders, they impose their strange faith unto the people of Buglas, the island that was cut off by the gods to be by itself. They even called the island, Negros, for they saw the *Atis* who were black-skinned. But they were not even the only people of the island and besides they lived in the hinterlands. These white people are so stupid in the eyes of Mapintas and Isganan as they carry with them a god who was impaled on a cross and so helpless so as even give a kick to a *bagani*. They say they come in peace and yet, they fire and blast the seaside villages, causing death and chaos so, how they even trust them?

And now, that he is already more powerful to engage them, they are gone! Then he noticed something the *Amalanhig* as now they are referred to by Isganan, because their movements are stiff like they were in the Javanese puppet show, *wayang kulit*, she saw visiting in Himamaya-an, were drooling. And though they were shown the wells, they wouldn't

drink from them as if water from them were dirty or toxic. Out in the sun during the march, their bodies wouldn't perspire and their skin still exhibiting the wound marks which caused their sudden death are now of ghastly pallor. And as they drooled, they looked longingly at the curious onlookers of the village wondering at the visage of such men. Datu Mapintas approached Isagan discreetly and whispered to her, _There is something terribly wrong, *baylana*. What are they thinking?

The priestess, herself worried at the turn of events because of the way Sitan manipulated them, confessed, _ I don't know, my dear Datu. I am myself worried of how things are. But whatever it is that Sitan would make them do, I'm praying that it wouldn't involve us. I don't like their hungry looks. *We are mahadlika*, we are not just fodder.

Then as they spoke, the Amalanhig begun to attack the people, serpentine tongues came out of their mouth as they hug each victim in a deadly embrace with the forks penetrating the nostrils and tickling them into a soundless laughter drawn perhaps by the endorphins within the dying body. Sitan is the worst evil, he could form an antithesis to the things that abide in nature.

A terrible thought came to Mapintas and Isagan. They were supposed to be patriots defending their country but now their folly has brought the worst nightmare to the people of Buglas. As it turned out, the wicked deceiving god had made a prank on their noble endeavor and had turned them instead into handlers of its miscreants: the living corpses. Now, their own people, shall turn against them; in fact, even the *Ati* could because Sitan, the Prince of the World had deceived them.

It was 1935, when Leoncia Lagrimas was visited by her sister, Agnes in Mahanlud, Sapi-an. She lived in the town of Jamindan where he met a man of worth from Capiz and told her that they are going to be married within six months. Leoncia herself is already married to Herminio Samirgal of Mambusao town. When she told her the joyful news, Leoncia herself was genuinely pleased along with their neighbor friend Genoveva Lasala, who is already married with one child. But when her sister told her that they will also settle in Mahanlud after the wedding, her mood changed. This is because it would mean that the lot and even the rice fields the Samirgals are presently enjoying will be divided, between her and sister as their parents' inheritance. It was quite a big property as their parents, uncommonly sole children and inheritors were neighbors.

_But I thought your would-be-husband is a man of means, why do you still have to come back here in Sapi-an? _ Leoncia asked her twin sister.

But it was Bebang, the neighbor who retorted, _ But don't you like us to be reunited? We were very happy together then as unmarried maidens. Now, it would be different as we are now all settled down.

_ I must remind you that even if it were by a matter of minutes, that I am the firstborn and the management of inheritance belongs to me. _ Leoncia said sternly, _ Besides, Agnes, the farm had been his only source of happiness since our only child died. Please don't take away his happiness, please.

Agnes and Bebang couldn't help but look awfully at each other before Agnes spoke, _ But *Mana*, ever since I worked in Jamindan, I never sought any share from the fruits of our inheritance. I am only asking to get my rightful share now. Rogelio is a man of means, yes, but as a Commonwealth employee, he would like to enjoy also the countryside and it

was me who suggested to him how wonderful our farm here is as it had been since our childhood and he is already excited.

_ A man of means and still greedy, _ Leoncia said, _ Why can't you just leave the property to us and we will give you a share of the produce? Besides, you can stay here for some vacation, once a year?

_Why, *Mana* Leoncia, I didn't expect this to be your reaction. I thought you would welcome the thought of us joining you here? _ Agnes stated. Genoveva surprised at the turn of the conversation abruptly asked to be excused as her child might wander far again if left unsupervised. She thought that the sisters should have a deeper talk only amongst themselves over such sensitive an issue.

And when she left, Leoncia remarked, _ You knew that when Herminio, Jr. died, he was inconsolable that if not for his farming and his drinking, he would no longer be in his elements. Taking care of the farm is his singular happiness now and intoxication his diversion. There are even times when he would go as far as Duenas in Iloilo for those drinking sprees.

_Yes, even I myself couldn't help wonder at what had happened. You said that there was a thin bamboo pole which was being used to get the mangoes, why did Junior have to climb the tree? You said his father had warned him about the brittleness of the mango branches and that you were both present there. Then it was a real tragedy when he climbed and fell.

_ Yes, your *Mano* Herminio was then busy trying to condition me for the night. That is why we both feel guilty over his fall. Before our son died, the boy said that there was a lighted mango fruit he was trying to reach and it shone very bright as it was already dusk. _ she recounted shedding tears. Agnes could only comfort her but actually, much of her tears was due to the fact that, she had offered Satan her own son in exchange for the powers she now possessed as she is both a poisoner and witch. Her only condition was that she was not going to stab her own son to death, hence, Sitan could get him the way he likes, using his cohorts, and that no one else would know about the agreement. She was looking forward to the fact that they can still have more children and therefore, she can enjoy best of both worlds, but although it seemed that he had grown more lustfully virile she couldn't feel anymore living flow from him. Perhaps it was because of his regular inebriation.

Bebang came back worried that there may be an altercation between the sisters but was relieved that Agnes was comforting Leoncia. She left them so that they can have more privacy. After sometime, Agnes mentioned that she had to leave because a *carretela* will be fetching her but Leoncia wouldn't allow her to leave unless she takes at least a drink of her sikwate. She claimed it would be best as she still had a long way to travel. And so, she obliged and waited for some time but when she glanced at her watch, a rare thing to wear during those times except that her fiancé has his means, the fetching time was nigh. And so, she abruptly arose and left and half running she yelled at Bebang that she was leaving. Bebang ran after her to reconsider as she would like to have supper with her but she replied that she couldn't even have time anymore for Leoncia's sikwate and ran.

Coming out of the kitchen with a glass of the concoction she found her gone. She went out and saw Bebang waving at her as she climbed up the horse-drawn rig with two large wheels. She waved back but her voice was inaudible. Just then, Herminio tapped Leoncia's shoulder to tell her he's home and went straight in. When Bebang turned back to her house with a smile as the rig turned invisible, Leoncia turned inside to find her husband finishing down the sikwate.

With a scream that surprised her man, she immediately toppled the glass from his hand and declared, _ That is not for you, Herminio! That drink is poisoned!

Bebang thought she heard noises near her neighbors but immediately went back to cooking while her child watched as Uldarico, her husband would be home soon. It was when Herminio convulsed dying when she realized she doesn't have the antidote and ran out to try have the carretela return. It was then that Bebang realized something was wrong and her newly-arrived husband was led by her to the neighbor's house. There they saw how Herminio died with his mouth frothing as Leoncia tried giving chase screaming furiously to catch Agnes' or the rig driver's attention as the darkness dislodged the dusk.

Upon Leoncia's return, the good Lasalas asked her what help they can give since Herminio had suddenly died. Leoncia's answer gave them more puzzles in their minds but they just can't say it. She categorically said that her husband Herminio is not dead but was just sleeping. She said that he had accidentally drank the concoction meant to give Agnes a deep slumber so that they could continue their very important talk. She dismissed them because she said after a few hours he would awaken. She being a known healer, too, in Sapi-an, they didn't find any reason to question her any more, then but they were simply wondering at the turn of events.

During the wee hours, Leoncia pulled the cadaver to her other hut where she housed a different altar. She lighted black candles and made use of sulphur as incense to call on her master imploring him to return him back to him alive. She saw the head of an ugly avian creature try to wiggle itself out of the corpse's mouth but she pushed it back in.

_No, _she said defiantly, _I don't want to be an aswang.

Now, she understood his renewed strength. He must have been afflicted in Duenas because that was when his behavior started to change. And that was the time also when in Mambusao some victims of the aswang had been discovered; his own hometown in which he was very familiar.

And then she added another request, _ Please stop him from being an aswang when he returns to me. We have witches and poisoners in the family who served you faithfully but no, I don't want any aswang among us. We work as one.

Reddish flashes of lightning sketched through the dark night sky and in the thunderclaps which followed, the witch knew that the answer was positive in spite of the fact that Herminio had an unfinished business of transferring his newly-acquired power to someone else, that a new slave can serve Satan in his place. Leoncia promised to help find a substitute but reiterated that she is already his maidservant and she no longer needed another power. With that promise, a deafening thunderclap was heard but not before the rolling head of red lightning lit up the Leoncia's sanctuary and a miniature thunderbolt went in to strike at Herminio's chest. Suddenly, he sat up and Leoncia overjoyed embraced him and kissed him passionately. He smiled like a lost puppy which had found a new master and started licking her face.

Unfinished Business

During the time of the *Conquistadores* when Negros was still called Panilongon or Buglas, *Datu* Mapintas and *Baylana* Isganan had unfinished business. They were responsible for their folly of bringing into existence the first *Alamanhig* which they contrived to fight off the foreign invaders but which plan actually backfired because instead, these undead were ravaging the very people they wanted to protect and draining them of their very blood.

Desperate, they left the monsters and tried to compose themselves by going back to Maripara. There they found the gentle *Ati* back in their village. When Mapintas and Isganan didn't show any hostility, they were even welcomed by them as it was the law given to them by *Lakan Laon*, *Harisaboqued* himself, that they should welcome all strangers especially those in need. And as their own shaman performed a ritual to appease the nature spirit, *Harisaboqued* himself appeared to address them.

_So, you are back in your senses! For why would you call the king of the underworld who is just pretending to be king of this world when he is not? _ the benign spirit of farming and livelihood asked, _ This is why he should never be trusted; because he will just leave you when you are already much deceived and suffering.

_Great Kan Laon, we acknowledge our blunder. But this time we have a great problem. He had turned our *Bagani* into *Alamanhig* and they are ravaging our own Bisayan people, _ said Isganan who found enough courage to speak.

_ I can only sympathize with you, *babaylan*. This is something I don't have the nature to deal with. My elements are used only for goodness' sake and I hate war and death. This is why I do not deal with the god of chaos and confusion for I have discovered his deception both for mortals and immortals. But in my stead, I'm going to send you those who I hope, can help, _ and with that he left leaving the smell of freshly-cut grass.

They were still in contemplation of what the words of *Kan Laon* meant when the two deities appeared to confront them, _ Just who do you think you are that you can disturb me from making my tally on the sacred tree on *Madyaas*? I am *Sidapa* who determines the length of life of each individual and this is the *devata*, *Pandaque*, who assists the soul on its journey to the underworld.

_ Our greetings to both of you, _ said Isganan, _ Our problem is the fact that our *Bagani* had been transformed by *Sitan* into *Alamanhig* which we can no longer control as they have an empty mind of their own. They are presently ravaging the *Bisayans* as blood-drinking monsters.

_Yes, they have all appeared in tally as already dead. You two, are truly responsible for their deaths, _*Sidapa* confirmed, _ There is nothing any more that I can do concerning this folly of yours. You do your best when you face *Makaako*

during the time of reckoning.

_Can't *Si Pandaque* do anything like giving them back their former souls? _asked the datu.

_You must be an *Alamanhit*, too because you are mindless! _ exclaimed *Pandaque*, _ I only deal with normal souls and not those who died under the spell of magic, especially evil sorcery. This is the doing of *Sitan*, and you want me, a *Diwata*, to interfere? Are you provoking a war between nature spirits and the fiery underworld? You must be out of your mind!

_ But I have good news for you. *Magwayen*, the goddess of the *Tubiganon*; the mermaid herself, said that there had been a mutiny against *Magellan*, the Portuguese by *Elcano* and his Spanish crew. Because of this, some were expelled from the ship and left marooned in some islets. This is confirmed by *Manunubo*, the sea spirit and they will soon be back at the encampment. With that, the *Alamanhit* can already engage with those expelled. They only have a handful of fishermen who rescued them and that would be easy for your immortal soldiers, _said *Sidapa* of *Madya-as*. And having given this vital information, they left; prompting the datu and the *bailana* to leave right away for the encampment with some *Ati* volunteers.

The *conquistadores* were happy to see the familiar shores of their encampment. There were only four of them which made it from the islets where, they were rescued by the fishermen. Eight of the fishermen who were unmarried volunteered to continue the adventure with them. *Sebastian Elcano*, ringleader of the mutineers is now captive of the mad Portuguese, *Fernao de Magalhães*. There will no longer be any harm coming from them because they were headed for *Sugbu* and *Bojol* for further exploration. This was a matter of unfinished business for the mad explorer.

Carefully, they entered the encampment making sure that there will be no surprise ambush as they readied themselves with steady gaze. They have no arquebush nor cutlass for everything was taken from them upon orders of the mad Portuguese. And having contented themselves that there was no danger, they sprawled themselves in a close circle to allow themselves the luxury of rest. Then, gradually as sleep set in, the undead suddenly encircled them and launched their stiff attack.

_What are these? _ *Ludovico*, the most seasoned sailor managed to ask as he parried the lunges and thrusts of the undead.

_They are not real men but are monsters!, _ *Balbagan*, the fisherman replied as if he really understood the *Castillan* language. _Run! We have no chance against them! They are so many!

And instinctively the *Castillans* obeyed his command but not before some of them have succumbed to the the monsters. Despite their stiff movements, the *alamanhig* were fast and so they have to run as fast as they could. They ran up a steep hill where they found some advantage but the pursuers did not let up. There was something in them so evil, whatever blow or hack the fishermen's *talibong* or *sundang* could give seem not to affect them but halt them only momentarily. Another one who stumbled and rolled down had been caught and they realized he was being drained of his blood by the human-shaped leeches. One of the *Spaniards* also stumbled and was caught by the mob but they let him alone and he ran to join them. Thus, they renewed their escape and downhill they crossed a stream with the undying at their heels.

Then, intuitively turning their heads to see if the enemy could still follow, they saw at least three who waded the stream screamed in hellish pain as immediately the parts of their body dampened by the gently running stream became

laden with worms and maggots fattened by their flesh as a terrible stench spread into the air. The other human leeches stopped suddenly when they saw their kind being consumed fast by the conquering worms of nature.

A sudden insight came to Balbagan and Ludovico and they asked the others to look for coconut shells or whatever could contain water and they got water from the stream. Then they rushed to the monster mob and doused the human leeches with the water. The effect was stunning, all the body parts doused by the water started to be contaminated by worms and some made very wet fell down mortally wounded. The monsters realized they were at a disadvantage and ran away from the water-dousers. All these were witnessed by the newly-arrived tandem of the *datu* and the *baylana* along with the *Atihan*.

_ By Lalahan, _ said Isaganan, _ You gentlemen have done very well, _ Then in discreet Bisayan she asked why they are with the foreigners.

_ They are not bad people. In fact, they were made enemies by their commander who is no longer here in Panilongon because they intend to go to Sugbu, _ Balbagan explained.

_ Hey, Santiago, you were caught by the monsters but they did not touch you. What happened there?! _ asked Ludovico, _ Don't tell me you have an amulet against them.

_ Not an amulet, Senor, but I wear a rosary and a brown scapular given by my mother, _ Santiago explained, _ These are church sacramentals.

Mapintas asked Balbagan what they were talking about and with signs and gestures as well as monosyllabic utterances, he asked Ludovico and he in turn asked Santiago to show them what he wore but to be careful not to give them. He also showed his own and Mapintas and the others especially Isaganan were greatly amazed at the powers of the God of the foreigners. Mapintas still couldn't understand why an impaled God could strike fear among the bloodsuckers. But this time, identifying himself to be a datu, he ordered that they seek water containers, even the *pananggot*, to be filled with water from the stream so that they can put an end to an unfinished business.

Herminio Samirgal used to be very popular among the unmarried ladies not only in Mambusao town but in the nearby bachelor haunts during his heydays. Almost every night as it was in the island of Panay there would be a fiesta dance and Herminio would be there dancing with the most beautiful ladies who would always consent to his invitation for he was the trivialized tall, dark and handsome guy of the Commonwealth days. No, he won't be visiting any of the churches for he found liturgical and devotional prayers boring and the procession only exciting if the lady that excites him is there. The Samirgals are only Catholic by name. His father in fact, Satyavan is known as a Bumbay (Mumbai) merchant who pioneered in Western Visayas and is a true-blooded Hindu who still believed in the gods of Bharat despite his already being given the Christian name of Tomas in the parish priest's remembrance of the Apostle Thomas' mission in the sub-continent of India along with Saint Bartholomew. It was in one of these fiestas when Herminio met Leoncia Lagrimas and her sister Agnes, chaperoned by Genoveva Tecson.

It was the flirtatious Leoncia who caught Herminio's attention as her walk was more of a dance and her lipstick was bloody red. It was Leoncia who would have more dates and more boyfriends which was unbecoming during the time when the Philippine Islands was a commonwealth of the American federation. And when it was already boring for Leoncia,

all she had to do was ask her twin sister Agnes, who was younger by some minutes, to disguise as herself, and break the thing gently to the poor boy, as chaperoned by Bebang Tecson. This was in fact, what happened to Uldarico Lasala or Ulding who almost took a decade to realize, while he worked in Manila as a *platero* in Sta. Cruz, that the real girl for him was in fact, Bebang.

But Leoncia fell in love with Herminio and just to ensure that he wouldn't make the mistake of just making her as one of his girls, she made the insurance of a *gayuma* (charm) which would definitely make him hers. Unfortunately, for Leoncia, Minyong as Herminio is fondly called by many ladies, was still very attractive to ladies from teenagers to those who could be old enough to be his mother. This is the reason why Unsiyang, as she called by those familiar to her, studied how to be a witch and a poisoner so that she can easily bewitch and poison anyone who would like to take Minyong away from her. However, having the real powers necessitate a great sacrifice and the only thing that the spirits would have, as a treasure close to her heart, was their only son. Convinced that they will still be given another bundle of joy, Unsiyang allowed the spirits to take their son in a manner that Minyong wouldn't notice. Hence, the accident of Junior falling down the mango tree.

But then after the accident, Unsiyang couldn't stop him from inebriating himself for he said he found consolation in drinking. He even asked if she would like to join him but as a poisoner, she knew how related to the real poison is liquor and she found it awkward to join men in their drinking bouts. But it was in this drinking bouts which she already tolerated that he was given the notorious saliva of Gimo, the alleged *aswang* of Duenas. Roxas City was still called Capiz then because of the famous bivalves that are made into different household items from windows to lamps and decors. And later, a province carved from Simsiman which became Panay was renamed Capiz as Capiznon is spoken there and Akean became Aklan because the Spaniards thought there were two islands. The former Hamtik became Antique and Irong-irong became Iloilo. The Ati in fact, called Panay by another name which is Anipay. Minyong's drinking sprees happened not only in Capiz and so, therefore, his monstrous contagion of an ugly spirit bird growing up within him couldn't just be localized in Capiz. Of the many places he visited outside Capiz the most notorious for the *aswang* phenomenon is Duenas which is already part of Iloilo and is site of the urban legend concerning the *Teniente del Barrio Gimo*. Even the witch Unsiyang couldn't divine where the contagion which transformed her husband came. Even today, because of the urban legend it is unfair to think that anyone from the Municipality of Duenas could be an *aswang*.

But Minyong indeed became an *aswang*, Unsiyang knew it. There would be nights when he would come before the break of dawn with his mouth bloodied but without any wound and the blood splattered on his shirt and some hair strands too. With tears in her eyes, she would ask him but he couldn't also answer for it seemed that he really didn't know what he was doing. It was some kind of sickness that made him do it; something that the creature inside him delight in doing and uses his body to do it. And suddenly, the frightful night came when he upon her queries would just smirk and say, _Why, it is really good to be an *aswang* because you have such powers that ordinary men don't have.

Thus, to validate her fears as it was unfinished business for a wife, she would wait for him to come home just before the break of dawn and realize to her utter despair that he would come home as nocturnal bird, a dog, a boar or even rolling home as a *sadok*. It was at this juncture when Minyong had started to deliberate as an *aswang* because he would now get

attracted to the smell of pregnant women and those whose life are ebbing away. It was at this point when Unsiyang started hating the soiled clothes she washed and just burned them with the fallen leaves. It was the time when she secretly wished he will change into something else as *lupa-non*, as long as it is not an *aswang*. And Sitan is a clever wish deity; he would listen to very secret desires of a slave to enslave her more.

Thus, when she started complaining of the deception on why her espouse would be resurrected like someone dull and stiff like a puppet, a thunderclap and lightning announced the coming of Sitan who addressed her thus: _ Why you, useless slave! You are supposed to give me a quota tax for enjoying the powers I have given you but you are inutile! You don't give me victim souls of those healed or poisoned. Now you demand from me again to return your husband to his former status. You are just so incredibly greedy!

_But you have made him into a mere big doll; a retard and handicapped!

_Bah! It wasn't me but you; you made him like that. He was doing well as an *aswang* until you poisoned him. Now, he's becoming an *Aramanhig* is because of your blunder! He hasn't transferred yet his power as an *aswang* and he had experienced sudden death because of your hatred and envy for your sister. Remember this very well, he is an *Aramanhig* because of your greed. It is never because of me because he still has an unfinished business!

With those words, he was gone; the great deceiver. It was good that outside the thunder was deafening as they argued or otherwise, the Lasalas would have understood the big bang theory. Weary from the realization, that she was again the cause of her own misfortune, she fainted as the *Maranhig* which resembled her husband came worried like a puppy and started licking her face so she would wake up the soonest for he was himself afraid of the thunder.

Pernicious Remains

It would have been easy to annihilate the *Alamanhig* but Sitan had to protect his own creation especially because those who believed in the real God had already arrived in the chosen archipelago. He therefore sent *Simuran* and *Siginaguran* from the underworld and *Linting Habughabog* who makes false lightning and thunder for him when he wants to frighten people, to gather them in small groups so that it will be easier to hide them. Then he sends *Burigadang Pada* to bribe greedy people so as to help the *Amaranhit* hide themselves in their properties. He gave the instruction to the goddess of those who would like themselves to be filthy rich that they should be fed regularly with human sacrifice victims. This he said would be easy by raiding defenseless villages. Hence, the menace of the human leeches remained. Through *Simuran* and *Siginarugan*, he added more powers to the miscreants by making them contagious. This means that anyone they have victimized would turn into *Maranhigs*, too. These events reached all the *Lupanons*, *Tubiganons*, *Kahanginans* and the *Kalayoans* of the whole archipelago. Therefore, all the nature spirits gathered on how these chaotic events started by Sitan would impact on them since the *Alamanhig* would qualify as an elemental belonging to the earth, the *Lupanon* but would be a natural enemy for the *Tubiganons*, the water elementals.

_ This is bound to happen, _ Dag-Ohoy, the powerful Bisayan spirit of the air, said, _ It is prophesied that men of the True God will arrive and defeat all evil spirits. Now, if you think you are not evil, then that is good, you don't need to be alarmed.

_ Then, it's a normal reaction for Sitan to be reactive since his evil deception and chaotic ways and means will be checked, _ said Gugurang, the fire god living in Mayon said, _ But he should have consulted us. The fact is that he never consulted Maako, Dios di Kaila, Pamulak Manobo, Laon or Bathala for any of his decisions manifests he wants to lord over them, too.

_ Don't be silly, he won't be the god of chaos if he will do that. Of course, he doesn't consult with anyone because he is prince of the world, _ opined mystic Mama Magwayen or *Dag-at*, the goddess of the sea.

_ Surely, the men of the True God have arrived and yet many of them are also evil. Let us make up our mind sooner but not later because I feel that even if we recognize this God, we will still be free to do evil as we can now see what these men are doing, _ said Aring Sinukuan, a giant *Lupanon* from Lusong who loves to teach people about metals and how to grow plants of value.

_ It's just that this new addition to the *Lupanon* couldn't possibly be good. We, elementals are nature spirits who

act and react naturally. The *Amaranhit* are retarded, they don't have the mental capacity to decide on how to do something good. They are also handicapped and yet they can do a lot of damage. They may victimize people who are our friends, _ said Macaptan or Dag-a, an earth god.

_Like Aring Sinukuan, I have devoted time and effort to teach people skills as Kabunyan wants me to do but now I fear that this new god might lead my people astray and fall into vice because you say they are allowed to use their free will. Now, if that is going to happen, I'd rather be with Sitan, _ declared Lumaweg, _ But if this god will support what good I have done to my people then I'll support him with all my might.

_ Like Kilat, my brother who is more flamy than me, there is something I don't like with these so-called men of the true god. They are in fact, imitating our natural powers and if these men will not stop, in generations to come, they may have more power to generate than the many thunderstorms we make put together, _said Kidul who is known elsewhere as *Dag-undong*.

_But I heard you put up the fireworks, whenever Sitan makes some drama in his appearances. Why do you boys patronize him? You are supposed to be umli not just *devatas* so why do you serve the creator of *busaw*? _ Lalahon, goddess of fertility and abundance said, _ Ghouls devastate mankind who are our allies, so why serve their creator? If you are really *Umli*, why help in damaging men? I even prayed to Maako to make the *Maranhig* more stinky to warn men they're around!

_Now, woman, don't you accuse my twin of serving Sitan. It must have been *Ribung Linti*, not us! Because that one works alone, too and is free- spirited. And he is not here, right now. _ Kilat or *Dagling Kisap* defended his twin, _ Also he's not here to defend himself. But yes, more stench will indeed warn humans!

_ Yes, my wife, it could be *Linting Habughabog* who might be hubog or intoxicated right now for he is also not present, _said *Harisabuqued* to the *Atis* and *Lakan Laon* to the *Binisaya*, _As for us, we'd rather serve the people so that if this god is indeed true then he will treat us well rather than abuse us.

Then there was a great thunderclap followed by lightning as soundwaves travel faster than light. Quick as a flash, *Habughabog*, who's still drunk presented his master, _ *Si Sitan*, Prince of the World and King of the Underworld and future Emperor of the Heavens!

_Wow! What pompous disorder!, _exclaimed *Diyan Masalanta*, goddess of love and benevolence among the by the river-dwellers (*Taga-Ilog*) or Tagalogs.

_Kan Laon was right, it was *Maglalasing* who patronized *Maglalason*, _ *Mingan*, wife of Aring Sinukuan whispered. She is the goddess of the shore-dwellers (*Taga-pampang*) or *Kapampangan*.

_The women here have tongues as sharp as the *talibong*. I shall see to it that someday your names will be preceded by the name of the mother of my nemesis and then you will remember how proud you were to have insulted me. _ Sitan said, flanked by *Simuran*, *Siginaguran*, *Habughabog* and *Magbabaya*, the Lord of the *Tagbusao*, _What is the meaning of this? You are gathered here just because of the presence of men pretending to be harbingers of the true god? How easy it is for you to be swayed by the very weak enemy...

_Weak enemy! You are the one who had to create warriors who are already dead! _exclaimed *Apolaki*, a war god, _And therefore, you do not trust the war gods of these islands?!

You come uninvited and the first thing you do is punish the women who just said the truth?! declared Lalahon.

_No, no, Apolaki. I do trust the war gods but it is because of this woman, this *babaylan*. She made me do it. _ explained Sitan.

_The *babaylan's* name must be Eve. _said Lalahon satirizing how Sitan explained himself, _How ironical since I thought you were the one supposed to tempt the woman. Or you must be Adam.

_ I now see that you are reading the scriptures from the other continents. That would explain your adamant behavior. And for your impertinence Lalahon, I will make people confused about your sexual identity such that people will not remember you as yourself but your husband's, _ Sitan swore.

_That's nothing, _said Mingan, _Our lives are intertwined with our men.

_And the same goes for you, too, Mingan. _ Sitan promised, _What is with you deities, have you forgotten what I told you. This so-called god is only the son of a woman while every one of us is a pure spirit!

_A pure spirit? Then why do you punish only the women? Are we men so pure for you or you only have muscles flexed against the women? _asked Manunubo, the spirit of the sea.

_As for you, Manunubo. I will see to it that you will be forgotten. I shall be the *Manunubok* who shall be more popular than you are. The worst thing for a god to happen is to be forgotten forever, _ said Sitan, _ Now, who among you would like to follow his example?

And finally, there was silence and Sitan was able to get their undivided attention as he spoke _ The time has come perhaps for us to be divided, disloyal deities who will never be divine. For have you forgotten that it was only me who created you by my word. In the past, your forbears, the *Nephilim*, they were punished for cavorting with the daughters of men; this god who you wanted to replace me with tried to purge our kind from the face of the earth so many times already, even commanding the genocide of our race with the likes of Saul who would rather keep the domesticated animals than spare our kind. Is this a just god who would like to annihilate us? Wouldn't he do it again? So, don't be hypocrites, we are in this together, we are of the same kind and it is your duty to seduce mankind to our side by pretending to be kind to them because we, pure spirits should reign over those who are only flesh and blood. And now, I would like the lords of the principalities who are loyal to me, speak.

Simuran spoke first and said _Why should we abandon our cause now? They are most likely to win in Armageddon as it is implied but these islands are most strategic. Our pantheons are firmly established here as we have combined the different belief systems here. The Chinese traders have brought contagious waters from the dragon's jaw and our local dragon, *Bakunawa* is just sleeping in its lair because our position here is very strong. The Hindu merchants have reinforced the people's belief in demons who are aplenty in Bharat and the people have received them well. I guarantee you, even if natives would accept the new god, their superstitions shall bring them back to us.

Next, Siginuguran spoke and said, _ Because of the Majapahit and Shri-Vishayan empires, a mixture of world religions came ashore. Which is why the people here know the *devatas* and the *busaw*, as well as the transmigration and reincarnation, as well as plenty of nature spirits inhabiting every land and water forms. You, the *Umlis* and the *Diwata* as well as the *Busao* are respected in these islands because of the teachings of the past religious leaders Sitan had caused to

journey here and therefore, you owe him such gratitude.

Sitan goaded Linting Habughabog to speak but he hesitated and instead drew a jug of liquor and declared, _ Cheers! Let everybody have a drink! _ Such that Sitan in his embarrassment kicked him and he folded over as his master exclaimed, _*Lintian kang Yawa ka!*

At least Linting's antics have provided comic relief to the already tense gathering of elementals of all the pantheons in the islands. But when Magbabaya spoke, the tension returned. He said, _ I, Magbabaya, Lord of the Tagbusao, swear before you all that I will overthrow this world if it will be retaken from my master who is already the Prince of this World. Let all the gods of war here now know that we shall not allow any place for the archenemy to rule in this world without any challenge or threat from us because the world rightly belongs to us. (an uneasy uproar is heard from the assembly) My Lord will allow you to think things over but better come up with a correct decision for no one here is really immortal! At the latest, with the grace of my Prince, the doctrine that there is only one god has come to these sacred shores. Thanks to our Arab minions your existence will be redefined equally so that all of mankind will continue to revere us. You are all worthy *jinns* under one god, and the rest will be ifrits who shall serve you. If any one here is lacking in fidelity he shall be demoted into an ifrit while those who will remain loyal shall still have the rank of the *umli* but they shall be called *jinns*.

And with that chilling message, Sitan's group left and a certain uncertainty grew within the fairy ranks. Meantime, two noblemen, *Si Ararao* and *Si Baynosa* came from *Bo-ol* to the encampment with their men. They have heard of what had happened to the bagani there of which some are their relatives. Among the warriors who accompanied the two noblemen was the young Katunao of the Kedatuan of Dapitan who will himself become a chieftain king as *Si Katuna* who will perform the *sandugo* (one blood) pact with Miguel Lopez de Legazpi. They did not find any more the whole lot of *Aramanhig* but killed a few by decapitation and stabbing the heart when no water was around. At least they have learned this from the people at the encampment both Spaniards and natives. And young Katunao experienced meeting foreigners who were at least, honorable.

Moreover, they participated in the manhunt of Mapintas and Isganan but the gentle Ati had given them refuge and even when the Maripara village was inspected they were not discovered because they were discreetly rubbed with damp black ash and bow quite low so as to make them appear as *Ati*. At least this was the testimony given by *Maripar*, great grandson of the *Ati* Chief *Silay-an*, who consulted *Harisaboqued* about the fugitives. He said *Lakan Laon* told them to forgive and give them a chance to atone for their sins. He told this story when he became a groom for the *Ati* princess in the neighboring large island of *Simsiman* halfway up the Madya-as. Today, this *Ati* disguise made by the refugees are unwittingly celebrated by the people of Aklan in their *Ati-atihan* festival in honor of the Santo Nino. The *Ati* of Maripara in Negros were as forgiving as children best exemplified by the Santo Nino.

Bebang Lasala had written Agnes what really transpired after she left. She said she had to put on some courage before she can do it but she and Ulding were sure that Minyong had died of poisoning because they both felt no more pulse and was no longer breathing, his mouth full of froth which could have easily blocked the passage of air. Somehow, she said, they were shocked to see him alive the next day as they volunteered to help in the wake. Lastly, she gave the caution to

Agnes that she should be careful as the *sikwate* poison was really intended for her and not for Minyong. After a week after receipt of the letter, Agnes came over for a visit. She was very clear on one concern so as not to agitate her twin sister; they will no longer live in the Lagrimas farm as he had changed his mind and said that they will just settle in the town of Capiz, which later became Roxas City, because the government office where he works was right there. With this, she at least gave her a wan smile, it lacked the sweetness but at least it was a smile. But when she asked to see Minyong as it will take some time before she came back, a scowl overshadowed her face and she said he was out in the farm on the far side. Just then, there were noises inside the room and Agnes instinctively ran to find it out herself. Leoncia who was ironing some clothes then with live coals couldn't prevent her and she saw for herself Minyong on the floor eating a live rat. The stench of the room was overpowering and she ran to the door for some air. Outside, also by her door was Bebang and they knowingly glanced at each other then she bolted out of the yard and raced to the *calesa* on the highway waiting just for her. Unsiyang ran after her but abruptly stopped by the door glancing knowingly at Bebang who immediately shut the door.

Now, she knew who the traitor was. That night while she was dry wiping away to lessen the stench from the muted Maranbig, she was already deliberating on how to deal with her painfully, for what she has done. Then for several nights a consistent dream came to her. It was Sitan promising her the return of her husband's faculties and capabilities as a man and every time she woke, she would light two candles, one black and the other red to appease her master. And gradually, Minyong's faculties indeed came back and she was just like what he was before at least, before the poisoning for he had returned to work on the farm. But it was not good for her former plan of revenge because he may not like it as he was no longer an *aswang* nor a *maranbig*. And something more fitting hatched in her mind. She will seduce Ulding who was her former lover and Minyong will catch them together, her cries will eventually rouse Bebang and as she comes into the house, she will be waiting. Of course, she will tell Minyong first, so that he will not believe she had been disloyal. She will convince him that Ulding Lasala had been ogling her with looks of indecent desire and she would like to put a stop to it. There's only one problem, what if he is still too decent to say no to the plan?

After a week or so, she noticed again familiar changes. But this time he even left at daytime. To her surprise, he does not shapeshift anymore. He came home as himself and without any supernatural phenomenon accompanying him. It's just that he said he's full and wouldn't eat anymore. To her great surprise, he easily acquiesced to her murderous plan against Ulding Lasala. He must have been silently jealous having a neighbor who once was Unsiyang's boyfriend and it angered him right away, the way his wife told her story to him.

Consequently, one full moon night while Bebang was busy preparing dinner, as Ulding would be tired and hungry, for it was harvest time, Unsiyang waited for him. And when he was approaching, she bared her breasts and licked her lips with her tongue drawing it out like a serpent. The vision was just too much for Ulding and pining for her at once, he tried to embrace her but parrying him, she instead led him to the backyard door of her house. She then allowed her some kisses and some pawing then she gave out a scream to remind herself not to enjoy it and followed through with terrible cries seeking help. At once, Minyong hiding by the door pounced on the weary farmer. He tried to fight him off but he was terribly strong and his strength seemed to drain as he saw the transformation of Minyong into a horrible monster. Meantime, Unsiyang lost no time in getting a dagger and waited for Bebang to enter and as she did, she stabbed her straight to the heart, saying, _

Traidora! _ perhaps more to herself.

When Unsiyang reentered the kitchen, she dropped the dagger for the sight that she saw was more shocking than her murder of her friend. There was a monster wearing the clothes of her husband eating the very innards of Ulding. Almost at the same time, Bebang's boy came by the backdoor and saw his father being eaten by a certain human-like beast, and fainted by the door.

_ Minyong! Minyong! Yawa ka! *Usa kang Busao!* _ Unsiyang screamed.

_ Yes, I am a *Busaw*. Sitan told me you prayed that my faculties be given back and he did. Now, I can deliberate my attacks better because I'm more powerful than the *aswang* I used to be. Now, I can just wait for the dead to be buried and eat it when there's no one there anymore. Now, I can exchange the cadaver with a banana stalk through an illusion and eat the remains somewhere. And I can also attack the living and relish both. That's why I'm so strong, I have plenty of nourishment. Thanks to you, my dear wife, for making me one.

Unsiyang suddenly lost her energy and sank on the floor, weeping like mad. Then, suddenly she remembered the boy which was the cause of her envy. She then turned to Minyong and ordered, _ *Busao*, go kill that boy. Eat his heart out! *Go, Busaw!*

The ghoul rose exposing the remains of Ulding, with his internal organs gone. Unsiyang waited for her most awaited act, the killing of an innocent boy so much alike their son. But suddenly, the monster stopped and he returned to his human shape in spite of Unsiyang's repeated orders.

_ I cant do it, _he said, _ He was just like our boy. I know now what happened to our boy. Sitan told me when he gave me the marching orders to join Magbabaya. Therefore, I will also not allow you to kill this boy!

Having said that, he took the boy and ran to the highway. Unsiyang followed insisting her pleasure but returning from the highway, Minyong gave her a great comeback slap and she reeled. In the morning, the constables were there with their lazy American officer scratching his crotch.

_ I won't be signing any reports mentioning monsters. You change what you have written or worst I'll have you both demoted, _the Filipino constables scratched their heads and explored each other's eyes for any clue of what else could be written, and then the thinker decided, _Just write it's a ritual killing. Say that the boy hid, ran away and was rescued by us as we happened to be passing by. Alright? (Of course, during the Commonwealth, everything that the American says is alright!)

Unsiyang awoke with the conversation between Minyong and the village chieftain of the Ati on Maripara. She couldn't believe that they could be that far away from Sapián.

_ I'm Kanlaonin, Chief of this village. *Harisaboqued* had already told me of your coming. We are willing to welcome you but for the most, only for a week. We will feed you whatever we have but I know you are *busaw*, I won't let you feed on my people. For surety, we will hold your wife away from you as per Kan Laon's instructions. The sharp weapons we hold sacred for killing our hunt may be used on your wife if you touch anyone of my people. I am sorry to say this but according to him you are both beasts and you came here because you are being hunted. Lalahon, his wife says, even if you don't see her, she is aiming right into your heart with her bow and arrow if you try to do something evil. She said some pernicious remains

would always arouse you to do evil but don't do it here.

_Yes, I will honor your wishes but please as refugees, allow us to evade being caught and I will always be indebted to you. Don't worry for most *aswangs* it's uncontrollable as in any sickness but with us, the *busao*, we can deliberate when it is only necessary to kill. And with the size of the man I ate, I could last a month. Besides I can also eat your food, that is, if is not so much for you. I revere the gods of these mountains so much, as a Negrense, tell them that, _ he said.

_I will, _ Kanlaonin said, _But in fact, she may be listening to you right now. So, just be a gentleman and honor your words.

On the third day of their stay, the constables came. The Ati scouts on the lower outskirts transmitted their presence through bird song. Thus, when they came, everything was well-prepared. Unsiyang was an old lady who is very bent and had curative leaves on parts of her countenance. White curly hair hung down her head band meant to ease the pain. Hidden on her sides are daggers for boars meant to be used if Minyong will not behave. Minyong is the old chieftain Palamara who is already deaf and blind with age. His face is lined with wrinkles and they are both black as the Atis are. Lalahon's make-up studio had finally found its place on the simple mountain people. Meantime, at nightfall, as he promised, Minyong and Unsiyang, the pernicious remains of an occult culture having shed off their disguises left for the other side of the mountain where the *Tagbusao* of Magbabaya waited.

This is the testimony of one the Ati scouts skilled in imitating bird songs. His name is Simsim and he was the prince chosen to go to Madya-as to be married there to a worthy Ati bride in the village halfway up the mystic mountain.

Today, this Ati disguise of the refugees are still unwittingly celebrated by the people of Aklan in their Ati-atihan festival in honor of the Santo Nino. Always marginalized, the Atis of the Madya-as remain childlike in their forgiving ways akin to the Holy Child. These are wonderful remains of cultures and traditions of the past. Not to be outdone, the people of Negros, when their sugar industry collapsed, disguised their loneliness by creating the Masskara Festival and won the crisis simply using smiles and their cheerful nature.

It is ironic that innocent people like the *Ati* would be the refuge of those who are really guilty. But greedy people are insensitive and there is sometimes no more guilt for them because the conscience had been eroded. In fact, Kan Laon and Lalahon had sent their *avatars* to test the people. They were Canla and Ona who had been both benevolent and generous to all. However, the people rather than showing gratitude to their kindness oppressed, maligned and maltreated them so much so, that Laon sent a clod of earth to hide them from their restless and pernicious evil. When the people of the earth have finally learned to be virtuous and good, that will be the day when Canla and Ona will rejoin the human race bring more blessings upon them. During that time too, the *Tagbusao* shall no longer have powers and shall be chastised forever for teaching and practicing evil.

Epilogue

It is not just clear why men and even spirits resort to politics. Politics can cause material loss, madness and even gory violence in the case of mankind. In the spirit world, one finds the same in *pamdiya*, which are the cause of material damage by initiating wars, *panaiyang*, fierce deities who cause loss of mental health and therefore, eventual madness and the *tagbusao*, which is murderous rampage which does not need any rationale. Ownership is important, too in the spirit world such as those spirits watching over hills, forests and mountains called the Tagbanua had also given their name to the people they adopted. But there are tagbanua spirits which just live in desolate places. And because ownership is important to the Bisayans, they either get their lands justly as in a purchase or barter or by the use of violence as in landgrabbing, which are accomplished nowadays, smoothly through politics. The Atis fortunately, are always marginalized to live near the abode of the gods.

Good for the *Ati*, their childlike forgiving nature makes God's nature their very home while the people of the lowlands continue to try making monstrous gains in the materials they develop and seek and end up desperate and bereft. These are the pernicious remains of what is called a great civilization.

On Boracay Island, one restaurant was already filled up by both local and foreign tourists. A couple comes in and sees that all tables are full. There is one table for four but only two are being used.

_Excuse me, _ said a lady with dark glasses, _ Is it alright, if we can join you? There's no more vacant table.

_Oh, sure with pleasure, _ said the man while her lady companion nodded, _ We also want to meet new friends.

_But you look familiar. Are you from here? _ The man accompanying the woman with sunglasses asked as he sat down, _ I'm Percy Datuin, I head the Bagani Security Agency in Antique and this is my friend, Dr. Shermaine Poderoso (She extends her hand for a handshake and sits down after Percy) who heads a Psychological Assessment Center in Roxas City. That is where I send my men for evaluation and she gives me discounts.

_That's a good one. No, were not from here, _ said the dark-complexioned man, _ I'm Hermie Samirgal and I'm proprietor of the *Funeraria Resurrecion* in Agusan in case you want to die there (Percival Datuin laughs) and this is Dr. Leah Lagrimas who is a practitioner of Alternative Medicine.

_Alternative Medicine? _ Shermaine expressed an inquiry.

_ I use accupunture, herbalism, *ayurveda* and the like, _ said Leah smiling.

_ Ah, yes, oriental medicine and natural healing, naturopathy, _ Dr. Poderoso acknowledged, _ That's good. Do

you know that I have an NC II in hilot massage?

_Which I have, too, _Leah giggles, _A kindred spirit then... (and they laugh)

_Is your husband a foreigner? Pakistani or Indian? _Sharmaine asked.

_No, I'm a local but my father is from Mumbai, _it was Hermie who replied, _Have you guys participated in the Ati-Atihan already?

_Oh, yes, and we found it liberating, _ said Percy Datuin.

_Yes, sort of finding freedom again, _said Hermie Samirgal.

_Then, let's join it again, _the ladies said almost like a chorus and there was laughter that took long before the waitress could ask.

It's just that some are afraid to die because they are not sure of being resurrected as promised by the God of Truth, Life and Resurrection. Some prefer to gamble being immortals but one tenacious truth remains, immortality has a beginning and therefore it must end. But why should Hermie Samirgal still be afraid of death when he had experienced it several times already, devoid of going through transmigration nor reincarnation?

GLOSSARY

A

Alamanhig _ human-form monster with characteristics of the mandurugo (vampire), leech monster of Western Visayas.
Amaranhig _ another term for Alamanhig
Amaranhit _ another term for Alamanhig
Anipay _ Ati word for the island of Negros.
Armageddon_ gathering of armies on the valley hills of Megiddo, for the final battle.
Aryurveda_ Hindu or Indian style of Alternative Medicine usually using herbs and oils.
Aswang _ shapeshifting monster of the Visayas which eats fetuses, and internal organs especially liver.
Ati _ race of dark-skinned people characterized also by short stature and curly hair, aeta or ita.
Atihan -pertaining to the Ati, the Ati people especially of Western Visayas.
Ati-atihan _ festival in honor of the Santo Nino, commemorating also the purchase of Panay.
Avatar _ a human representation of a deity.

B

Babaylan _ shaman, priestess
Bagani _ elite warrior of a certain banwa (place)
Bailana _ the same as babaylan
Bharat _ old name of India
Bakunawa_ dragon or large serpent of pre-colonial Philippines.
Barque de Guerra_ armed Spanish ship; Spanish ship with cannons.
Baylana _ same as babaylan
Bojol_ old name for Bohol.
Bo-ol_ same as Bojol.
Buglas_ ancient name of Negros
Bumbay _ a native of Bharat or India
Burigadang Pada _ goddess of greed, and of filthy wealth.
Busao _ also Busaw, a ghou, a senseless warrior on rampage.

C

Calesa _ a decorated rig used simply for transport.
Capiz_ old name of Roxas City, became the name of the new province of Panay.
Carretela _ a plain looking rig, for both passenger and baggages.
Commonwealth_ refers to the Philippine government under American rule.
Conquistadores _ Spanish conquerors

D

Datu- village chieftain
Devata_ Sanskrit for a lesser god

Diwata_ a fairy, elemental spirit

G

Gayuma _ charm to sexually attract a person.

Garanas_ a Visayan blade

H

Hamtik _ old name for Antique.

Hanggud nga Balay _ big house

Harisaboqued _ an avatar of Kan Laon to the Ati.

Hilot _ Filipino massage or chiropractic medicine.

I

Irong-irong _ old name for Iloilo.

Ifrit _ lesser spirit in the Muslim pantheon.

J

Jinn _ Muslim equivalent of umli or devata.

K

Kan- short for Lakan, a prince.

Kahanginan, Kahanginon _ spirits of the air, elementals of the air

Kalayo-an, Kalayo-on _ fire spirits, fire elementals

Kapampangan _ those who live on the shorelines, riverbanks; referring to Pampangos.

L

Lakan _ prince

Lupanon _ earth dwelling spirits, elementals of the land forms.

M

Madya-as _ highest mountain in Panay

Mahadlika _ noble, Maharlika

Mana _ elder sister, from hermana

Mano_ elder brother, from hermano

Maranhig _ amaranhig

Maria Makiling_ implied as the present identity of Diyan Masalanta as cursed by Sitan.

Maria Sinukuan _ implied as present identity of Mingan as cursed by Sitan.
Manunubok _ the tempter, the devil himself.
Maripara _ beautiful mountain between Silay and Kanlaon.

N

Nephilim _ fallen angel

P

Pananggot _ vessel for collecting tuba to be fermented into coconut wine or liquor.
Panilongon _ ancient name of Negros.
Platero _ one who works on silver and allied metals, a tinsmith.

R

Rajah han Kalibutan _ Prince of the World
Reincarnation _ process of rebirth in Buddhism to repay karmic debt incurred in past lives.

S

Sacramental _ something that sanctifies and protects from evil, i.e. rosary, crucifix when they are blessed, a sacred relic.
Sadok _ a wide-brimmed conical headgear, salakot in Tagalog.
Sandugo _ blood compact to make participants blood brothers, from tagalog isang dugo or one blood signifying unity.
Si _ an appellation for someone noble placed before his name; equivalent to magat or gat.
Sikwate _ a chocolate concoction with wine or liquor sometimes including egg.
Sitan _ Visayan version of the Malignant spirit, Satan himself.
Simsiman _ ancient name of Panay Island.
Sugbu _ ancient name of Cebu.
Sultan _ King
Sundang _ Visayan blade.

T

Taga-ilog _ those who dwell by the river, from where Tagalog is derived.
Tagbusao _ of senseless violence, from rage.
Talibong _ Visayan sharp weapon especially from Bohol.
Teniente del Barrio _ Spanish time equivalent of barangay captain.
Traidora _ female traitor
Transmigration _ Hindu belief of rebirth depending on one's karmic debt where one can progress

to a better person or retrogress even into a beast.

U

Umlí _ a higher being than a fairy, a deity.

y

Yawa ka, usa ka nga busaw! _ You demon, you are a ghoul!

Synopsis:

Using parallel stories for each chapter representing the ancient origins and later modern phenomena of the leech-like remains of the dead coming to life as monsters, the writer explores the mystery behind not only the alamanhig but the aswang and the busaw as well. The reader will walk through the Philippine pantheons of ancient gods and deities as the mysteries are unraveled first during the Spanish time and next, the American occupation. Consider in this story how the elemental spirits were themselves confused with the coming of Christianity to the islands and how Sitan tried to prepare against it.