

HORROR

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The **horror film** seeks to induce fear and terror in the audience. It features preternatural beings like vampires, ghosts, goblins, and imaginary monsters. The appeal of such material stems from the Filipino penchant for ghost stories, tales of the supernatural, and the unknown. These movies employ various techniques and motifs, from jump scares and the spectacle of the grotesque commonly associated with typical monster fare, to the manipulation of mood and audience expectations that psychological horror films are known for.

Horror films may be classified into several types: **straight horror** as in *Gabi ng Lagim* (Night of Terror), 1960, *Kababalaghan* (Uncanny), 1969, and *Halimaw* (Monster), 1986; **comedy horror** as in *Omeng Satanasia*, 1977, *Takbo, Bilis, Takbo!* (Run, Quickly, Run!), 1987, and *Katabi Ko'y Mamaw* (The Ghost Beside Me), 1990; **drama horror** as in *Itim (The Rites of May)*, 1976, *Haplos* (Caress), 1982, and *Vampira* (Vampire), 1994; and **sex horror** or **sexploitation films** as in *Ibulong Mo sa Hangin* (Whisper in the Wind), 1966, *Ang Batuta ni Dracula* (Dracula's Nightstick), 1971, and *Silip (Daughters of Eve)*, 1985.

Horror stories may be derived from local folklore, foreign movies, or *komiks* serials. Filipino folktales dealing with the supernatural provided the subject for Jose Nepomuceno's *Ang Manananggal* (The Viscera Sucker), 1927, and the first talking picture produced in the Philippines, *Ang Aswang* (The Aswang), 1933. The influence of foreign films like *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 1923, may be seen in *Dr. Kuba* (Dr Hunchback), 1933, and in movies with double-identity horror heroes or Jekyll-and-Hyde characters. Monster movies from Japan and the United States similarly inspired local filmmakers. Notable among them is Eddie Romero, with such movies as *Beast of the Yellow Night*, 1971, *The Twilight People*, 1972, and his Blood Island trilogy: *Brides of Blood*, 1968, *Mad Doctor of Blood Island*, 1968, and *Beast of Blood*, 1971. Other examples are Gerardo de Leon's *Terror Is a Man*, 1971, and Cirio Santiago's *Demon of Paradise*, 1987. Monstrous statues that come to life—as in *Mambo Dyambo*, 1955, where the inimitable Dolphy portrayed the *komiks* character invented by Mars Ravelo—have brought much horror-viewing pleasure to movie audiences. Movies like *Feng Shui*, 2004, and *TxT*, 2006, take their cue from other Asian horror films, with the latter inspired by stories that incorporate technology into the premise, such as the Japanese film *Ring*, 1998.

Some horror films make considerable use of special effects. In this regard, the work of Peque Gallaga and Lorenzo A. Reyes in the “Manananggal” (Viscera Sucker)



Gloria Romero and
Wilma Santos in
Romy Suzara's
Anak ng Aswang,
1973
(Cesar Hernando
Collection)



Lilia Cuntapay in *Shake, Rattle & Roll III*, 1991
(Photo courtesy of Vic Delotavo)

episode of *Shake, Rattle & Roll*, 1984, was so successful that the movie was followed by other Gallaga films: the two-part *Hiwaga sa Balete Drive (Mystery on Balete Drive)*, 1988; the full-length *Tiyanak (Changeling)*, 1988; *Shake, Rattle & Roll II*, 1990; *Shake, Rattle & Roll III*, 1991; and *Shake, Rattle & Roll IV*, 1992. In this genre, Gallaga has the distinction of being the most active, as well as the most successful, horror film practitioner in the country.

Shake, Rattle & Roll went on to become the most prolific movie franchise in the Philippines, spawning 11 more films from 1994 to 2014. Though some actors, such as Manilyn Reynes, Eugene Domingo, Janice de Belen, Tonton Gutierrez, and Carla Abellana, would appear in multiple installments, the series makes use of an anthology format, with each film telling three unrelated stories of protagonists plagued by various supernatural threats. Antagonists range from popular local and Western monsters like ghosts, vampires, and shapeshifters, to creatures unique to the particular segment in which they appear. *Magandang Hatinggabi (Good Midnight)*, 1998, and *Cinco (Five)*, 2010, also make use of the anthology format. *Pridyider (Fridge)*, 2012, is a full-length feature based on one of the segments from the first *Shake, Rattle & Roll* movie.

The segments of *Shake, Rattle & Roll XV*, 2014, were directed by Dondon Santos, Jerrold Tarog, and Perci Intalan. Some of the other directors who helmed segments from the series are Ishmael Bernal, Jose Javier Reyes, Topel Lee, Mike Tuviera, Zoren Legaspi, and Chito Roño. Roño is the only one to have directed all three stories in *Shake, Rattle & Roll Fourteen: The Invasion*, 2012.

Other successful horror films include the drama *Patayin Mo sa Sindak si Barbara (Kill Barbara with Fright)*, 1974, directed by Celso Ad. Castillo. Its story of an evil sister's ghost terrorizing a woman and her lover spawned a 1995 remake helmed by Chito Rono and a GMA Network miniseries in 2008. Roño himself would go on to direct other horror films, such as *Spirit Warriors*, 2000, *Spirit Warriors: The Shortcut*, 2003, *Feng Shui, Sukob (The Wedding Curse)*, 2006, and *Feng Shui 2*, 2014.

Sigaw (The Echo), 2004, and *The Road*, 2011, both directed by Yam Laranas, received some success locally and were released internationally, proving the seeming universal popularity of ghost stories in film. Philippine folkloric monsters are still a staple of the genre, as in the action-adventure films *Tiktik: The Aswang Chronicles*, 2012, and *Kubot: The Aswang Chronicles 2*, 2014. The independent film *Zombadings: Patayin sa Shokot si Remington (Remington and the Curse of the Zombadings)*, 2011, takes the zombie subgenre and provides it with a queer comedic twist, its title already a parody of another classic horror flick. ☀



Iza Calzado in *Sigaw*, 2004 (Photo courtesy of Yam Laranas)