From *Asog* to *Bakla*: Genealogical Analysis of the Philippine History to Diagnose the Roots of Homophobia

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Abstract:

Discrimination against Filipino LGBTQ people in the Philippines has various causes: culture, religion, power, or ideological differences. History plays a significant role in its development and reinforcement with the introduction of colonial beliefs into the Philippines. History has shown that they were once respected in society and had the freedom to practice their sexuality. The problem persists despite a few recent national and international milestones concerning the LGBTQ+ community. The transition of their societal status from celebrated to discriminated against raises the question: what happened? This study analyses how the problem existed and progressed by diagnosing the problem. Guided by Michel Foucault's Genealogy, this study identifies the origins of sex and gender discrimination in Filipino culture by reviewing research on Filipino LGBTQ people and history from the pre-colonial era to the 20th century. The discussion extends to the effects of society's prejudice, the devaluation of their once great stature, and the lack of research on Filipina lesbian people. The study discovered that homophobia in the Philippines is culturally engraved, vulnerable to western influences, and obliviously practiced. Moreover, the existence of the appropriation of the heterosexual mainstream was observed and seemed celebrated in Philippine society.

Keywords: Genealogy. LGBTQ. Philippines. History. Sex Discrimination. Gender Discrimination.

I. Introduction

The status of Filipino LGBTQ people in the Philippines has its ups and downs. At one point in history, the practice of diverse sexuality in the country was not frowned upon. The past events have changed how Filipinos think in every aspect of their lives, especially about the "appropriate" way to treat and deal with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender people, and queer people. Thus, this study aims to provide a map of how the Philippine society changed how they treat them over time by establishing that their perceptions had become influenced by significant historical events.

The need for a considerable amount of historical narration took inspiration from Michel Foucault's Genealogy. Foucault said we should "examine the emergence and the development of the present rules, practices, and institutions that claimed authority over us to diagnose the current situation" (Lončarević 2013, 70). Published documents and studies about Filipino LGBTQ people

were reviewed to determine the root of homophobia and sex and gender discrimination. This study summarizes the status of LGBTQ people in the Philippines from the pre-colonial era to the 20th century. This research considers that it is imperative to examine the evolutions that made such a society and how it is in the present to truly understand a culture's status. This study tries to disturb the existing conditions by laying down the characteristics of homophobia in the Philippines, as it maintains that diagnosing the problem in this context helps future researchers further examine today's societal situation of Filipino LGBTQ people and help provide feasible solutions to discrimination.

This study endeavored to use Filipino words for LGBTQ terminologies. It recognizes that some of it entail discriminatory connotations, but such utilization was not to encourage prejudice. The usages were maintained relative to the era being discussed, subject to transformation upon the changing of time. This is to maintain the chronological sequence of the historical progressions. Even though modern terms such as "homosexuality" were not used in the Philippines until the late 19th century (Brewer 1999), these are still used in the historical narration of the study due to the lack of Filipino translations of modern LGBTQ terminologies.

Finally, this study recognizes that it is impossible to give a comprehensive history of the state of the LGBTQ people in the country because of the lack of written documents. One of the country's colonizers, the Spaniards, halted the records for 300 years (Foe 2014). A limited number of accounts describe their esteemed stature in the past, while most existing accounts focus on the negative aspects. Lesbian history is also absent. However, the available ones were enough to prove that homophobia and sex and gender discrimination started to exist during colonization and were in different forms, such as words and religions, which are practiced until today.

II. Sexual Practices and Religions in the Pre-colonization and Spanish Era

Foucault states that diagnosing a problem entails figuring out the "contingent turns of history" that created the "system of thought" of the society that a researcher is investigating (Gutting and Oksala 2018, par. 27). This section details the transitions of a pre-colonial Philippine society to a Spanish-based society – which this study considers one of the most important "contingent turns of history" that affected the natives' way of life.

There was a time when gender identity and sexual orientation, under no circumstances, affected one's social status. Those with feminine gender expressions even held important roles in society. Many scholars focusing on gender studies in the country stated that the colonizers in the colonization years contributed to inculcating biased views about them (Hega and Evangelista 2017; Strom 2018; Scott 1992; Quintos 2012; Garcia 2004; UNDP, USAID 2014; UNDP, CHR 2018). Filipino women also suffered in this transition. During this time, women were known as *babaylan*. The *babaylan* held vital tasks in *barangay* or the local community, such as in the field of religion, astronomy, medicine, and agriculture. Native Filipinos practice animism as their religion wherein the *babaylan*, also known as shamans, communicate with spirits as a ritual for

various reasons such as fertility of crops, victory in battles, recovery from illness, or blessings for newlyweds. The *babaylan* were equal to *datu* or local rulers and worked side by side during important social activities. The roles and duties of *babaylan* were also performed by transgender people and gay men. In fact, some of the *babaylan* were *asog, bayoguin,* and *binabayi* - the traditional terms for gay men (Quintos 2012; UNDP, CHR 2018). They practiced cross-dressing and mannerisms similar to women, and same-sex marriages and sexual relations were ordinary. Because of the *babaylan*, the belief that spirits only listened to prayers uttered by women (UNDP, CHR 2018) and that femininity was the vehicle to the spirit world (Brewer 1999) were normalized. Thus, gay or transgender *babaylan* must wear feminine clothing during rituals as it was believed that "the spiritual potency was dependent on identification with the feminine - whether the biological sex was female or male" (ibid., 34). For Garcia, this practice was not just a matter of men playing dress-up but an emblematic of respect during this time (2004). Garcia added that this practice reflected both as a symbol of social acceptance by aligning them with Filipino women's esteemed status during the pre-colonial era and the idea of freedom to wear any type of clothing.

These practices were deemed normal until the arrival of Spaniards in the Philippines in 1521. Accounts have confirmed that the reaction of the Spaniards upon the sight of *babaylan* was confusion (Quintos 2012). In the accounts of historians Carlos Quirino and Mauro Garcia, one could easily mistake an *asog* as a woman because of the effeminate characteristics equipped with feminine clothing (1958 cited in ibid.). Francisco Alcina also claimed the same, saying that Spanish missionaries got confused by the *babaylan* they saw because of their extravagant clothing and mannerisms when observing the natives (1668 cited in Quintos 2012). They had difficulty pinpointing which one was male in a group of *babaylan* due to their clothing and mannerism. Spanish priest and historian Pedro Chirino compared a male shaman's long and braided hair to a feminine hairstyle (1604 cited in Brewer 1999). Apart from the confusion, Garcia (2004) stated that the Spaniards were surprised and threatened because esteemed community leaders possessed such characteristics, which were unusual to them.

The start of Spaniards' effort to take possession of the country between 1564 and 1565 had simultaneously brought and enforced Catholicism to the Filipinos.

> The Spaniards in most places simply showed themselves to the natives, and the religious, who accompanied them, persuaded the untutored savages to submit to the King of Spain, through whom they would obtain the two-fold blessing of civilization and Christianity (Coleman 1899, 13).

Boxing the Filipinos to Catholicism had resulted in oppression on both *babaylan* and *asog*. The Catholic Church considered itself the source of morality and believed that the natives were deeply influenced by demons and needed to purify their cultural beliefs (Gealogo 2010 cited in Hega and Evangelista 2017, 1; Quintos 2012).

> As long as the natives lived in their paganism, it was not known that they had fallen into the abominable sin against nature. But after the Spaniards had entered their country, through communication with them ... it has been communicated to them somewhat, both to men and to women. In this matter, it has been necessary to take action (Morga 1609, 130).

The Spanish priests demonized the *babaylan,* and confiscated the instruments used for their rituals while claiming that the devil was specifically attracted to women (Brewer 1999) and that they were performing black magic (Hega and Evangelista 2017). The *babaylan* were replaced by Spanish missionary priests as the source of religious power (Gin and Tuan 2015, 250). Filipino women's freedom to explore their sexuality was also suppressed as the Spaniards "took control of their bodies and libidos through practices like confessions" (Hega and Evangelista 2017, 1). Virginity was not a big deal back then (Garcia 2009), which contradicted the church's teaching of remaining pure before matrimony. Spanish historian Antonia De Morga expressed his thoughts on the natives' sexual interests, especially women, by describing them as "vicious" and "sensual" juxtaposed with the terms "their perverseness" and "lascivious methods of communication" (1609, 130). "Gender-crossers" suffered from ridicule and scorn in the hands of the Spaniards (Garcia 2013, 53). Same-sex acts and sexual practices that were once viewed as normal by natives were also demonized and labeled as sinful. Same-sex marriages were forbidden, cross-dressing habits disappeared, men were forbidden to commit sexual acts with fellow men, and any similar acts practiced by the *asog* were met with punishments (Quintos 2012). Similar to women, the *asog* went through the same policing (confession) because all the sinners had to go through the process of cleansing a man's sins (Rafael 1988 cited in ibid.). The country underwent an inquisition that put several gay men to death through execution while caught having intercourse with the same sex (Joaquin 2014; Berco 2008 cited in Foe 2014). Brewer claimed that the Spanish inquisition was so powerful that the *asog* who were married to women, while simultaneously engaged in same-sex relationships, abandoned the religious traditions of their ancestors for the privilege of heterosexual Hispano/Catholic masculinity and even gave evidence against their wives to help the Spaniards with their inquisitions (1999, 22).

The Spaniards also strictly regulated and labeled the natives' normal sexual practices sins. The natives had always viewed masturbation as a routine, and according to Quintos, "what comes out of it signifies the peak of ecstasy and gives meaning to one's personality" (2012, 162). However, Spanish Franciscan Friar Sebastian Totanes expressed that this act was not only viewed as a sin in the religion but got worse if something came out of one's body while performing it (1865 cited in Quintos 2012). Tomas Pinpin stated the same context as he narrated a friar's instruction to natives saying that same-sex sexual acts and intercourse with someone who was not their spouses were sinful (1910 cited in Quintos 2012). Before their arrival, concubinage among married men was normal (Morga 1609). However, these were also frowned upon by the religion and the friars. Converts were closely monitored to ensure they would not return to their old ways (Macdonald 2004).

The priests strongly believed that it was their duty to eradicate the earlier religious practices of the native Filipinos and to contain other religions before they spread. By the 1800s, Christian converted Filipinos were nearly 7 million (Coleman 1899).

> These Borneans... were already introducing their religion among the natives of Luzon, and were giving them instructions, ceremonies, and the form of observing their religion... Had the Spaniards' coming been delayed longer, that religion would have spread throughout the island, and even through the others, and it would have been difficult to extirpate it. The mercy of God checked it in time... and they were freed from it (Morga 1609, 134-135).

The Spaniards believed that if it were not for them, the natives would not be educated or transitioned into well-behaved members of society.

> It was a success to be proud of among a people who, when the missionaries came, had no religious worship, nor temple, nor priest, nor form of worship. They had but a hazy notion of a Deity, their sole religious ideas consisting of some imperfect notions of a hell and a heaven (Coleman 1899, 15).

The earlier beliefs of the natives neither focused on ethics nor defined socially acceptable actions; instead, it was more on maintaining life and seeking protection from tragedies through communication with supernatural beings (Macdonald 2004). Macdonald also said that the arrival of Catholicism introduced new ideas to the natives, such as Christian doctrines, articles of faith, morality, and the Ten Commandments. Hence, they were obligated to turn away from earlier sexual practices that violated the Ten Commandments. Particularly the sixth, "thou shalt not commit adultery," and the ninth, "thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife," and conform to moral and spiritual behaviors that were deemed acceptable by the Spanish missionaries (2004, 82-88). The amendments covered self-stimulation, concubinage, and same-sex practices, which were labeled as "gravely disordered action" and "acts of grave depravity" by the Catholic Church (The Holy See 1992, par. 17-22). This section emphasizes the aforementioned sexual practices because the Confessional manuscripts written by a Spanish friar showed his thoughts on it. Quintos (2012) argued that Fray Totanes gave emphasis and malice to sexual intercours in his line of questioning. Totanes, in his book *Arte de la Lengua Tagala, y Manual Tagalog para Auxilio de los Religiosos*, mentioned several times how carnal desires made them sinners (1865, 104-118):

> *356. Ylan caya ang manga pinacasalanan mo?* (How many have you sinned with)?
> *360. Camag anak mo caya siya?* (Was she your relative?)
> *376. ... toui mo siyang naquiquita at inaalala, ay pinagnasaan mo din siya?* (Do you have sexual desires every time you see and think of her?)

> *377. At dahelan sa gayong pagnanasa mo, mey guinaua ca baga sa sarili mong cataouan anomang mahalay na laro? At nilabasan caya ang catauan mo?* (And for such a desire, did you play dishonestly with your body? Did you ejaculate?)
> *379. Macailan canang inotosan nang manga Pareng pinag-compisalan mo nang pag hiualay mo sa caniya?* (In your confessions, how many times did the confessors ordered you to terminate your relationship with her?)
> *380. Ano caya ang bilin, at parusa nila sa iyo? Sabihin mo, nang matalastas co cun naguin tapat na gamot caya, cun dili sa gayong saquet nang caloloua mo.* (Did the confessors give penance? Say it so that I can decide whether or not the medicine was suitable for such a disease of your soul.)
> *384. Ano caya ang sucat mong ipagdahelan, cun pagisipan ca nang P.Dios gayong asal mong pusalian?* (What can you claim when God takes care of such a quagmire in which you live?)

Totanes later instructed the sinner to leave the house of his sexual partner, not meet with her alone unless in the presence of his soon-to-be in-laws, resist temptation, and remove himself from a situation that would trigger his sin. He then proceeded with his sermon, saying that *calibugan* (lust), *calupaan* (worldliness), and *mahalai* (lascivious) thoughts were influenced by demons (1865, 112-113):

> *407. Opan sa capoua mo lalaqui, cun sa capoua mo babaye may bocor na cahalayan ca?* (Could it be that with another man like you, or with another like your wife, you have committed some special dishonesty?)
> *408. Ano caya yaon? Nagsiping baga cayo ... ? Houag cang mahiyang magsaisai yayamang uala cang hiya sa paggagaua nion sa harapan nang P.Dios, at dito,y caharap mo din naman, at tinitingnan niya cun paano ang pagsasabi mo,t pagcocompisal.* (And what was that? Did you have intercourse? Do not be ashamed to explain it. Of course, you weren't ashamed to do it before God, who was there watching you, and also present right now watching how you say it and how you confess.)

During this era, a term that characterized someone with a high stature (*asog*) was downgraded into a term that caused negative perceptions of gay men (*bakla*). Garcia mentioned that Spanish machismo was responsible for this (2013). In *Vocabulario de la Lengua Tagala* by Juan de Noceda and Pedro de Sanlucar, *asog* was defined as *hermafrodit*o and with two genders (1860 cited in Quintos 2012). Furthermore, in *Vocabulario de la Lengua Bicol* by Marcos de Lisboa, it was defined as a "male who dresses, acts and thinks like a female" (1865 cited in Quintos 2012, 157). The term *bakla,* which would later be used to designate gay men in the Filipino language, was also defined in Noceda and Sanlucar's book bearing four definitions: "(1) an illusion to make a person appear beautiful and radiant; (2) pertaining to a change in and fear of an object; (3) the shift in interests to attain an object, and; (4) the '*bacla*' as a part of the skin that one is scratching" (Quintos 2012, 157).

These definitions can be interpreted as not degrading at all. However, Quintos argued that the devaluation started when the Spanish missionaries used the second meaning in describing *asog*

as cowards as they did not perform tasks that they believed were masculine standards (157). He stated that some of the first recorded documents of such an event are in Francisco Alcina's book *Historia de las Islas e Indios de Bisayas* (1668 cited in Quintos 2012). Quintos deduced that Alcina's rationale behind this was after noticing that the *asog* did not have tattoos like the other native men. At the time, having tattoos gave prominence to men and was perceived as a masculine characteristic because of the process and meaning attached to it. Tattoo inking involved throwing specific black powder over their bleeding, marked, and pricked skin surface (Morga 1609); and drawn elegantly on their entire bodies (Loarca 1909). Moreover, Spanish missionaries believed tattoos were a great tactic during local wars because the natives would be tattooed in proportion to their performance and positions in battle (Scott 1992). Former chiefs were also observed to have artistic tattoos on their bodies (ibid.). Tattooed natives were also excellent rowers and sailors (Morga 1609). These were some possible reasons why the Spaniards thought tattoos were one of the measurements of masculinity, and the lack of it inadvertently categorized the *asog* as "cowards." However, these tattooed men, called *Pintados*, did not gain their stature because of the tattoos but because of their positive attitudes. They were known to be "well-featured, of a good disposition, of better nature, and nobler in their actions" (Loarca 1909, 111). Spanish conquistador Loarca also described the *Pintados* men as a "courageous and warlike race" and very fond of their wives (117). Some Spaniards spoke highly of the *Pintados* that if we would follow this "tattoo logic," the native Filipino women should also be at the receiving end of such stature based on Morga's observations that Filipina women from Manila and Ilocos, and the female *Negritos*, *Igorrotes*, and from other independent tribes were also tattooed. But instead, negative descriptions were observed in these Spanish explorers' accounts; like Alcina's, which described the Visayan women – the *Visayas* was where the majority of the *Pintados* lived - as weak and delicate (Scott 1992), and Loarca's (1909) that depicted the *Pintados* women as beautiful but unchaste, extremely lewd, and did not hesitate to commit adultery.

This study takes that these beliefs were deeper than the "tattoo logic." It echoes what Garcia has said: it was an exhibition of machismo. Machismo is an exaggerated belief that men are physically and intellectually superior to women (Zimmerman 2000). The Spaniards' practices were patriarchal. Christianity emphasizes the binary gender. So when they arrived in the country and saw the sex and gender diversity and the matriarchal notion inherent in the Philippines, they got threatened and confused (UNDP, CHR 2018). The early sexual practices, sex and gender expressions, and matriarchy were threats to machismo. As a result, the Catholic religion as the dominant creed was imposed to ensure that women and the *asog* would remain restricted according to the rules of machismo. The decline in the number of *babaylan* and *asog* during this era, together with the unawareness that sex and gender equality started in the pre-colonial era, was proof that machismo was successfully imposed and integrated into the Filipinos' minds.

Other written documents that Quintos mentioned wherein weakness was attached to the term "*bacla*" was Gaspar Aquino de Belen's *Mahal na Passion ni Jesu Christong Panginoon natin na Tola*

(originally published 1703), wherein "*nabacla*" was used as spineless and synonymous to cowardice. The contemporary use of the term is discussed later in the subsequent sections.

The practices and beliefs during this era continued until the end of the Spanish regime. This section described an important contingent turn of history: the Filipino people's change in beliefs regarding sexual diversity and practices aligned with the strict religious rules as influenced by the colonizer. Following one of Foucault's ideas in Genealogy, "identifying a system of thought that resulted from contingent turns of history" (Gutting and Oksala 2018, par. 27), this section has established that the Filipinos started viewing sex and gender perceptions in a patriarchal and religious manner. However, this was only the beginning as a western country again colonized the Philippines: the United States of America. Like the Spaniards, the Americans also brought along a set of new beliefs to the natives.

III. The Introduction of Modern Sexuality: American Occupation and the 1900s

This section is an extension of identifying the system of thought that resulted from important turns in history. The American colonization is also considered an important event in the country that significantly affected the Filipino's way of thinking and life after the Spanish's influence.

After over 300 years of colonization, the Philippines declared its independence from Spain in 1898 after revolutions made by the *Katipunan* or KKK. The *Katipuneros* were comprised of middle-class rebels and Filipino priests who disagreed with the Spanish rulings. This was also the year when the first arrival of the Americans in the Philippines was recorded. The Americans introduced the government system to the Philippines through the Schurman Commission in 1899 and the Taft Commission in 1900. The Americans also opened the doors of education to women. The education system during the Spanish era gave more importance and priority to men while women were confined to religious and vocational teachings.

The Americans were responsible for introducing the modern notions on sexual relations among the Filipinos within its 50 years of influence in the country, which was different from the accustomed Spanish mores. Carale claimed that this happened due to the democratization, urbanization of the society, modernization of communication and transportation, and increased mobility the country experienced under the wings of their second colonizer (1970). Moreover, Carale specifically pointed out the modernization of the mass media because it had brought consciousness to the Filipinos on social revolutions that were happening in the world, including the topic of sex (344). Some Filipino gay men saw the media depictions of the US and realized it was freer to be gay in America as they were more liberated than in the Philippines. In Foe's study, some participants claimed that the media focus on America about talks on same-sex was one of the reasons why they gained ideas of what it was like to practice their sexuality in another place (2014). Garcia has mirrored the same notion and said that this era was responsible for implicating "homosexuality" to "sexualization" in their mental, behavioral, and personality aspects; while stating that these things were one of the products of the American education system and when

Americans "Americanized" the government and mass media (2013, 53-54). Garcia added that the birth of this specific sexual consciousness in this era resulted from promulgating and regulating sexuality by utilizing academic learning and the mass media (2004). Most of the resources used for this study tried to explain the evolution of same-sex behaviors and situations in the Philippines during and after American colonization. However, these studies only focused on the psychological and medical aspects while quickly jumping to the 1960s and Marcos dictatorship period in 1972. It was a challenge to trace and formulate solid historical accounts of the history of the Filipino LGBTQ+ people in other sectors during this era. The emphasis on the clinical facet of such may be attributed to the law's treatment of same-sex sexual activities as an illness. In the Penal Code of the Philippines, promulgated as early as 1932, "homosexuality" was not criminalized (Carale 1970, 351). Unless violence and intimidation were involved, it would be treated as a criminal act. However, it was treated as a disease:

> Homosexuality is another sexual activity which is unknown to the penal code of the Philippines. Happily that this is so. There is an unmistakable trend to regard unnatural sexual activities as diseases instead of treating them as criminal acts (ibid., 351).

Some studies claim that gay men were starting to get comfortable showing and practicing their sexuality in public at this time. In the 1950s, gay males in Tondo, Manila, although not openly shown, were already conducting gay beauty pageants and engaging in same-sex relationships (Lopez 2007 cited in Foe 2014). The male gay participants in Foe's study compared the living status of gay men in the Philippines and the US during the 1960s. One said that the Philippines was like a paradise for them as they felt the freedom to showcase their sexuality because being gay could never be a cause for imprisonment. Also, there were no laws against cross-dressing, and no police harassment or entrapment was operated against them. In America, these practices would lead to incarceration and claims of misconduct against law enforcers (Foe 2014).

Garcia stated that the discourses that entailed this phenomenon, and other modern notions introduced by Americans, such as feminism and psychology, were responsible for creating a "homo/hetero dichotomy" in the Philippine society (2013, 54). Consequently, bigotry seemed to align with such phenomena. In a study conducted by Sechrest and Olson in 1971, freedom of expression was observed in conveying same-sex sexual desires via sexual graffiti and invitations found engraved on the wall of the comfort rooms in four educational institutions in Manila. However, the frequency of hostility toward LGBTQ people and related activities on the inscriptions was likewise observed. In Hart's exploration of the Negros Island region provinces, cross-dressing among gay men was already observed in the 1960s (1968). However, unlike in Manila, one interviewee claimed that the police usually took cross-dressers to the police station, not for arrest but only to be reprimanded. They also experienced slight judgments and josh from the locals by being called names. However, no hostility nor violence was inflicted upon them. Despite this, they look forward to *fiestas* (local festivals), for these were the times they could

practice full-blown cross-dressing in hopes of finding potential sexual partners. However, the same research also discovered that same-sex intercourse was already being practiced and rampant among men secretly.

During the American occupation, writer Phifer described a typical night in Manila as frequented by "the throng of gay promenaders that had ranged the streets devoted at night to the business of pleasure instead of the pleasure of business" (1909, 26). The war gave birth to male prostitution in the country. Prostitution was a military necessity, as Bonnet claimed, and the arrival of American soldiers caused an "explosion of sexual services for the rest and recreation of the troops" (2017, 45-46). The war had also left everyone desperate for cash, as one male gay partaker in Foe's study revealed that he was already servicing American soldiers at sixteen for five dollars to support his family (2014). Poverty and prostitution gave way to the rise of call boys. Call boys are young boys who solicit money for sex. Aside from local gay men, their main targets were male gay tourists who mostly came from countries wherein homosexuality was illegal and young boys were unwilling to engage in same-sex intercourse (Mathews 1987). Call boys met most of their clientele from gay bars that proliferated in Manila in the late 1960s.

Both studies produced by Foe and Tan characterized gay men in this time as dignified, albeit from a different standpoint. Foe mentioned that his participants had great jobs at the time of the study, and construed that they strove harder to gain respect to compensate for their sexual orientation (2014). One respondent in his study, who came from the upper class, agreed with this, saying that gay men demonstrated greater intelligence than their bullies and did not allow them to be ridiculed. Meanwhile, Tan integrated sexuality with social classes as he explained that the 1960s was the time when gay men were considered "elite" – mostly comprised of middle to high-class "decent gay" men who studied in the US and some countries in Europe; and cross-dressing was "not daily-routinized *bakla* drag," (2001, 123-124). Both studies also attributed the emergence of societal gay acceptance to the former first lady Imelda Marcos because of her affection for beauty, arts, and cinema. Gay people were inspired by the former first lady's hairstyle, fashion, and taste.

As opposed to the elites, the low-income *bakla* was branded by Tan as the *parlorista* (2001). According to Tan, the main functions of the *parloristas*, or gay men working in beauty salons, were to entertain people during fiesta and service young boys who could not touch their girlfriends. Tan added that the proliferation of *parlorista* in the 1960s could be attributed to the economic problems in the country, which this study compares to the results of war during the American occupation and continued to persist until martial law years during the Marcos dictatorship era from 1972 to 1986. The term would later cage the *bakla* into this categorization. In this period, they were also boxed into female-oriented labors such as *tuba* vendors, *abaka* weavers, housemaids, and beauticians and manicurists (Hart 1968).

The notion that men will never fall in love with gay men if not for the money yielded in this era can be attributed to the business of male prostitution (Garcia 2009). However, Mathews (1987) discovered that some call boys developed feelings for their clients, became possessive at

times, and tend to make their relationship last for a considerable amount of time while simultaneously prolonging monetary and material benefits from their gay lovers. Although some of his subjects were gay call boys, some still identified as straight men because they claimed they only engaged in prostitution to support their families, education, and lifestyle. They also started very early in this business because the rate was valued on their youth and beauty. Mathews concluded that Filipino male prostitutes were the opposite of the western notions that all male prostitutes were gay people, exploited, and only the adults were willing to undertake same-sex sexual activities.

The preferred sexual partners of gay men, from the late 60s to 70s, were straight men. Sexual intercourse with a fellow *bakla* was taboo. As Tan suggested:

> A proper *bakla* would never have sex with another *bakla*, for that would have been tantamount to lesbianism. A *bakla* was a "girl," and "girls" go for "real men" (2001, 121).

However, this belief changed because of western influence. In the late 70s, gay men started seeking another gay man as their sexual partner. This behavior originated from middle-class gay men who picked up western notions from their experiences abroad (Tan 2001). Unfortunately, this practice started the AIDS pandemic in the country. The first case of AIDS in the Philippines was recorded in 1984 by a gay man who contracted the infection overseas (Manaloto et al. 1994). Ten years later, the country would have reported 459 HIV-I infections, 100 of which were diagnosed as AIDS (ibid.). AIDS had stigmatized gay men (Pettis 2004; Garcia 2009), and people would initially think that if a person is gay, he could be HIV positive. Despite these, the epidemic gave positive results regarding the development of gay rights activists and organizations at the beginning of the 1990s. Some of their primary goals included AIDS awareness and prevention campaigns. This development can be considered an achievement because the first attempt to create one, the *Kakasarian* in the 70s, only lasted a year because the members considered there was no need to fight for gay rights in the Philippines (Tan 2001). Student gay organizations, led by some universities in Manila, were also formed. In 1994, the Pro-Gay Philippines organized the first pride march in Manila to end discrimination against the LGBTQ people, march against the imposition of the Value Added Tax, and commemorate the 1969 Stonewall Riot in New York (Tan 2001; Evangelista 2017). Among the established groups in this era that still exist are ProGay Philippines and UP Babaylan, while the groups focusing on HIV-AIDS awareness and prevention are Remedios AIDS Foundation and Katlo.

This section explained how the American beliefs on sexual orientations had changed the Filipino's perceptions of the LGBTQ people into a more modern notion significantly different from the beliefs formulated in the Spanish era. The two sets of beliefs formed during these two eras should be noted because these can still be observed in the Philippines society today. Following Foucault's point of "identifying a system of thought that resulted from contingent turns of history" (Gutting and Oksala 2018, par. 27), this study proposes that the Filipinos'

current beliefs about the Filipino LGBTQ people were significantly influenced by their colonizers. This will be expounded in the discussion chapter.

IV. From *Asog* to *Bakla* – The Evolution (or Devaluation) of the Term

The historical narration in the previous section discovered that intersectionality among gay men in the American era occurred. This discovery opened up the discussion regarding the difference in gay men's attitudes and societal status throughout the years. Foucault stated that Genealogy requires searching for the processes of descent and emergence (Foucault 1984 cited in Garland 2014, 372) to understand further the transitions that occurred in society. This section will explain the transitions in the terminologies used on gay men, reflecting some Philippine society's thoughts on them.

Several terms were synonymous with *asog* during the early times (see Garcia 2013, 53). No accounts before the colonization stated that cowardice and being perplexed were unique to being an *asog*. Such grammatical evolution was observed during Spanish colonization, wherein the great *asog* became the weakling *bacla*. Aside from the early writings in the Spanish era mentioned earlier, Filipino literary writings during the American era had already adopted the term "*bakla*" to portray timidity. This was evident in the following books:

Patricio Mariano's translation of Jose Rizal's *El Filibusterismo* (1911, 102):

> *Ang sabi ko ngâ'y hindî tayo dapat mabaklá. Ang pagturò ng wikàng kastilà ay mangyayaring pahintulutan ng walâng anománg kapangãniban.*
> (Context: We should not be afraid for learning the Spanish language will be permitted without any threats.)

Agawan ng Dangal by Fausta Cortes (1914, 77):

> *Si Beteng ay parang iniinis. Nabakla tuloy na baka di na ngã sumipot ang komparsa.*
> (Context: Beteng got irritated and afraid that his associates might not show up.)

Jose Maria Rivera's *Cinematografo Dulang Tagalog* (1920, 11):

> *Ako'y may nakikilala*
> *Na isang binatang tangã,*
> *Na ang lahat ng makita*
> *Tinatakhan, nababakla*
> (Context: I met a young fool man who is at a loss and perplexed by everything he sees.)

However, in an English-Spanish-Tagalog dictionary authored by Sofronio G. Calderon (1915), "*bakla*" was never defined as coward, fear, or timidity; and had not defined "gay" in sex or gender-focused manner:

Affect, v. [aféct]	Affectation, n. [afectécien]
Conmover, afectar.	Afectacion.
Pumukaw, makabaklá.	*Pukaw, baklá.*
Emotion, n. [imócicœn]	Emotional, adj. [imócional]
Emocion, agitation del ánimo.	Concitativo.
Baklá, kabá, kutog; sigla; sikdó.	*Nakababaklá; nakakapagpasigla.*
Flurry, n. [flérri]	Gay, adj. [guey]
Ráfaga; agitacion, conmocion.	Alegre.
Kislap; baklá, kilíg.	*Masayá.*

American writers who published their books detailing their lives and experiences in the Philippines during the American occupation also used the word "gay" several times not to address the gay men but as an alternative to the words happy, merry, and colorful. Fee (1912) described the mountain waters in Romblon as gayly colored, Filipinos only use gay music at funerals, and girls in Escuela Municipal in Manila wore gayly dresses. Russel (1907) had described the jackets of the Moros as made of gay cotton and had the gayest of colors. Finally, Conger (1904) used the term "gayly" to describe colors used by Filipinos for coffins and the ornamental toothpicks used by the natives in a flower bouquet.

Eventually, the words transformed into different meanings. The Filipino term *bakla* is used to refer to gay men, while *tomboy* is for lesbian people. Aside from the different western influences due to multiple colonization, the changes in the meaning of *bakla* can be attributed to the difficulty of enacting sex and gender diversity within the passing of the centuries; along with the status downgrade of Filipino women; and when the Tagalog regions of Luzon had started using the term to correspond to the meaning in question (Garcia 2013; Garcia 2004). The elite status enjoyed by upper-class *bakla,* through identifying themselves as "gay" in the late 60s, also significantly changed in the 80s as the term downgraded because of the practices by the *parloristang bakla* (parlor gay) concerning overt cross-dressing practices and sexual desire, which made Tan (2001) assert that "gay" became synonymous with *bakla*, in which *bakla* means being entertaining, funny, and an outlet for male libidos. This phenomenon can explain why the term "gay" – from the American era's "merry" – turned into *bakla* in the Philippine setting. Sadly, these words encapsulate stigmata in the country. *Baklas* have constantly been subjected to jokes, teasing, and often called names (i.e., sissy) and ridiculed for their non-manly characteristics. On a typical day, while minding their own business, people would often shout "*bakla!*" or "*bayot!*"

at them in a derogatory manner (see Foe 2014; Hart 1968; Ceperiano et al. 2016). The *bakla* was also considered a shame to the family, a disease, and possessed some kind of evil spirit – which was influenced by the Catholic religion (see Ocampo 2014; Baytan 2000; Mathews 1987).

Modern terminologies and definitions, such as 'homosexuality' which referred to a person sexually attracted to the same sex, were introduced to the Philippines in the late nineteenth century (Brewer 1999), whereas the usage of gay and lesbian terms started in the 70s (Tan 2001). However, the definition of such terms is different in the Philippine context compared to western notions. The early belief in the Philippines was that sexuality was based on one's gendered behavior (Nadal and Corpus 2012; Garcia 2009). This description can be explained as an outsider's judgment of a person's sexual orientation because of their gender expression. For example, an effeminate male is considered *bakla*, while a female with a masculine appearance is considered a *tomboy*. Being *bakla* emphasizes the social role rather than sexual orientation (Mathews 1987). Unfortunately, the term "homosexual" had been directly linked only to *bakla*, with connotations that a homosexual is "a genitally male man whose identity is defined as a function of his sexual desire for other men" (Garcia 2004; Garcia 2013, 55) for such Garcia (2008) attributed to the lack of awareness and critical discourse on homosexuality during the early times. The sexual role, as a basis of sexuality in the Philippines, is apparent when a straight male is involved in sexual activity with a *bakla* to gain money or material things from them. The earlier belief mentioned in this paper, wherein *bakla* only seeks straight men as their sexual partner, echoes this argument as what Garcia had also explained: the notion of the urban and rural poor Filipino is that in the mentioned sexual activity, the only legitimate gay man is the *bakla* (2013).

Terminologies get challenging when other members of the LGBTQ community experience misgendering - often unintentional. This is because such terms are not included in the Filipino language. Before the terms "transgender" and "bisexual" entered into the Filipino lexicon, Filipinos had a binary thought that there were only *bakla* and *tomboy* (Tang and Poudel 2018, 13). The term *bakla* became the umbrella term (Mathews 1987; Mathews 1999) for people with same-sex sexual activities among men, transgender people, effeminate males, and boys who were less active in games and outdoor activities (Sechrest and Flores 1969 cited in Mathews 1987) and even non-sexual activities shared with a person of the same-sex (Mathews 1987, 66-67). Currently, the *bakla*-mindset of seeking only a straight man as a sexual partner had changed to pursuing a fellow *bakla* because of western influences. However, there is no Filipino term for this yet (Foe 2014). A bisexual man is called *silahis*, but the term is only often used on men (ibid.; Garcia 2009). There is still no formal Filipino term for a bisexual woman. Due to a lack of formal terms, the Society of Transsexual Women of the Philippines, in 2008, coined the term *transpinay* to designate a transgender woman, which soon paved the way for the coinage of its counterpart, *transpinoy,* which was being used by some transgender men (UNDP, CHR 2018).

The meanings of the discussed terminologies changed again as time progressed. Nowadays, being *bakla* is no longer being an effeminate man. It now mirrors a gay man's affection or sexual

desire towards the same sex. The same notion also relates to lesbian people, but the more appropriate terms would be lesbian or *lesbiyana*. In a nationwide survey conducted by UNDP and USAID (2014), it was discovered that gay men are okay to be called gay, *bakla*, *bading*, and in Mindanao – the southern area of the country – *bayot*, because they consider these words as a sign to their identities, universal and Americanized in nature, neutral, politically correct, and acceptable to all. Some even said they could overcome the adverse effects associated with the terms. However, *tomboys* preferred to steer away from the cultural reclamation by calling them lesbian, *lesbiyana*, and, in Visayas, *palakin-on*, instead. Their reasoning behind this is very similar to the rationale of the gay men, adding that the mentioned terms were non-discriminatory and had no other implications. Moreover, when I asked a couple of Filipino lesbian women about the proper usage of the terminologies, both said they preferred to be called 'lesbians.' According to them, a hint of discrimination and negative connotations are attached when addressed as *tomboy*. When asked about the difference between the terms lesbian and *lesbiyana*, they said the latter is more suitable for femmes in a relationship with lesbian people.

The *bakla* in the Philippines were able to create their own vocabulary with terminologies that only they could understand. In the 1960s, *swardspeak* (*gayspeak or baklese*) emerged. *Swardspeak* is a "subcultural lingo of urban gay men that uses elements from Tagalog, English, Spanish, and Japanese, as well as celebrities' names and trademark brands" (Ricordeau 2009 cited in UNDP, USAID 2014, 16). When discussing intimate conversions, the *bakla* often use the *swardspeak* lingo among themselves, for it is majorly comprised of extreme sexual terms (Alba 2006). *Swardspeak* became famous in the 1970s with the help of the media pioneered by *bakla* media professionals (Reyes 1977 cited in ibid.). It also made its way to other parts of the country, such as Cebu and Dumaguete in the Visayas, paving the way to the emergence of Visayan *swardspeak* in the late 70s (Hart and Hart 1990). It was just a matter of time before the term infected the Filipinos and had unconsciously made its way to the vernacular. Soon, *swardspeak* emerged into "gay lingo" in the 1990s and "*bekimon*" in the early 2010s, in which terminologies were continuously updated. Some examples of *swardspeak* that Filipinos use until now are anaconda (a snake, *ahas* in Tagalog, refers to a person who took away someone's lover), Sharon Stone (*shabu* – a slang term for drug methamphetamine), Tom Jones (hungry; derived from the last syllable of its Tagalog counterpart *gutom*), and *jowa* (boyfriend or girlfriend) (Constantino 2018).

> Gay language comes from a carnival of sources... The gays in the Philippines speak a common tongue. It is their code, their very sword. It is their way of communicating without letting the straight world understand the drift of their words (Remoto 2008, para. 8).

One of the discourses surrounding why these phenomena occurred is an attempt to circumvent the stigmata inflicted upon the *bakla*. Alba explained scholar Ronald Baytan's rationale in his essay Language, Sex, and Insults: Notes on Garcia and Remoto's the Gay Dict. According to him, the *bakla* invented the lingos to create terminologies that would sound

neutral and less derogatory, convert their desires into self-affirmation, and talk about sex freely (2006). They know that the topic of sex is taboo in the Philippines and that such conversation, combined with them being *bakla*, would inflict ire, disgust, and judgment from people. Because of the gay lingo, they would not have to use the vernacular terms of sexual acts they would want to perform on the male's reproductive organ anymore – which they found very liberating (ibid.). Additionally, according to linguists Cagalingan and Igno, it was done to establish or define this group in the Filipino culture stating that these invented words captured the spirit of the "gay" era during that time (De Guzman 2017). Remoto gave thought-provoking implications on the proliferation of the gay lingo. While his notions mirrored the said discourses, he also argued that this propagation led to the appropriation of the heterosexual mainstream that fictionalized the Filipino LGBTQ people's integration into the Philippine society and trivialized the original intent of why this vocabulary even emerged in the first place (2008). This fictionalization mirrors the earlier mentioned survey conducted by UNDP and USAID stating that the Filipino gay men nowadays had already embraced these terms, to the point that they now prefer to be called such. Giving reasons that the terms had eventually evolved and built positive connotations that helped them represent their identity and sexuality to society indicates that cultural appropriation in the Philippines does not merely exist but is also celebrated. Nevertheless, combined with the talent of the Filipinos in wordplay using the languages they picked from their colonizers; and the formation of modern notions on sexual orientations, the history of the Filipino gay lingo had already proved that the "*swardspeak*-gay lingo-*bekimon*" would continue to evolve in the Philippine society as time goes by.

The point of this segment, which will be further discussed in the last section, explains that simple usage of terminologies can also inflict homophobia on LGBTQ people. From being an *asog*, that had positive and dignified meaning, it changed to *bakla* with negative connotation from the Spanish era, which contemporary Filipino gay men later reclaimed. The accounts here mirror one of Genealogy's ideas: viewing the "process of descent as the outcome of power struggles and battles over domination, use, and meaning" (Garland 2014, 373).

V. The History (or lack thereof) of Lesbian People in the Philippines

The abovementioned idea in Genealogy is also applied in discussing the history of Filipina lesbian people. However, this study later discovered that they were purposely discarded because of "power struggles and battles over domination" (ibid.) in history influenced by machismo and patriarchy. This study also considers their absence as a result of a process of descent in the Filipino LGBTQ history that contributed to the current society's system of thoughts toward Filipina lesbian people.

Before the introduction of modern vocabularies in the 70s, lesbian terminologies and slangs such as *tomboy* and *tibo* were already being used in the Philippines, as shown in Calderon's (1915) English-Spanish-Tagalog dictionary:

Tomboy, n. [tómboi]	Prickle, n. [prikl]
Villano; doncella pizpireta y respingona.	Pua, espina.
Hámak; babaing magaslaw	*Tibó, tinik.*
Prickly, adj. [príkli]	Sting, n. [sting]
Lleno de puas, espinoso.	Aguijon; punzada; picadura.
Maraming tibò, matinik.	*Tibò; durò, tukâ, kagat.*

However, it can be observed that the usages of *tibo* in the early 1900s were regular and unaffiliated with negative connotations. However, it could be surmised that the earlier version of the word *tomboy* already had a negative undertone ("*babaing magaslaw*" means a woman who acts rudely or immodest). According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the first known use of the word was in 1566. Skeat's dictionary on word etymologies had defined *tomboy* as "a rude girl" – which was similar to Calderon's definition in the Tagalog dictionary – and was coined "from [the combination of words] Tom and Boy" (1911, 562). The current Filipino dictionaries were already defining *tomboy* as a lesbian. In Lim's "Filipino-English English-Filipino Dictionary," the corresponding Filipino terms for lesbian people are *binalaki*, *tomboy,* and *lesbya* (2010, 16, 37, 99, 126).

There were very few studies made concerning the historical aspect of lesbian people in the Philippines (Marin 1996; Villar 2000). The mentioned authors even disclosed that such histories were essentially a series of passed-on stories from generation to generation due to the absence of known studies on them, according to anthropologists. This mirrors the Philippine research field's problem with a lack of exploration specializing only in this search radius. The lesbian people were rarely mentioned in the Spanish explorers' and conquistadors' accounts. Among the resources that this research has used, only Morga did such. However, even so, his account was vague as he did not provide further information when he said, "the women are very masculine" when describing the people of Catanduanes (1609, 107). Villar provided one brief account of the history of Filipino lesbians in Zimmerman's book From Amazon to Zami: Towards a Global Lesbian Feminism (2000). One of which was Villar's suggestion that Princess Urduja, a famous warrior princess and one of the pre-colonial chiefs, was perhaps a lesbian. The princess was quite well-known for her impeccable armed combat ability and intelligence. Accordingly, she would only marry someone who could defeat her in combat. It was also observed that she never had any relationship with a man before. However, there was no proof that she had same-sex relationships either (584). Villar again implied similar assumptions while admitting no evidence of same-sex relationships in the women-only spiritual communities that had existed for years in Mount Banahaw in southern Luzon. Marin also made the same attempt on the female members of the revolutionary soldiers and fighters, saying that "some of whom may have been lesbians" (1999, 33). Unfortunately, it is yet to uncover the complete account of such stories from the past because, according to both authors, there were no historical

documents or accounts that refer to lesbian culture in pre-colonial and Hispanic societies in the Philippines. Marin claimed that there were also no attempts to reread and reinterpret historical texts and documents about lesbian people, emphasizing that the chroniclers' attempts to exclude women from their accounts generally made their existence became invisible (1999). Marin calls for the unearthing of archives and re-evaluates them. However, she said that the actions remained imminent because researchers of lesbian history were discouraged from further investigating for fear of dismissals from experts in different fields. Doran, likewise, pinpointed the same problem concerning accounting the history of the Filipina warriors and their roles in the revolution, wherein their military participation was systematically downplayed upon re-invention and re-imagination of their images from being autonomous agents to stereotypical roles such as mothers and sex objects (1998).

These research writings about lesbian history in the country only contained pieces and fragments of information, with no chronological order nor further information to back up the stories. However, this study does not dismiss these accounts. The effort to provide a picture of Filipino lesbian history is appreciated. Villar added some historical context on Filipino lesbian people, especially lesbian lexicons (2000). Even though there was no term for the word lesbian in the dialect of the *Badjaos* in Mindanao, there were words that represented sexual actions, such as *agkul-lit* or *kul-lit*, which meant vaginal manipulation by another woman. The word *binalaki*, which was used to describe the woman-to-woman relationships, is a combination of the words *babae* (woman) and *lalaki* (man). The exact meaning characterizes the word *byuts* – a term used in the 90s – coined by students in Catholic convents' exclusive all-girls schools (2000). Similarly, the term *mag-darling* (like darling) in the 1960s refers only to girls who have crushes on another girl (Sechrest and Flores 1969 cited in Mathews 1987, 66). Other Visayan terms exist like *lakin-on* or women with masculine physical characteristics, and *kuragan* or *kuragkuragang* as the sweetheart of a *lakin-on* (Hart 1968, 55-56).

By the 20th century, aside from some stories surfacing, like cross-dressed women and their long-term same-sex live-in relationships, Filipino lesbian people became invisible in society (Villar 2000). The lesbian people in this era were very secretive as they only associated with their social or business circle. They also organized occasional exclusive dance parties, which could be considered the closest "out" activities they could ever be. Like the elite status of gays in the 1960s, these exclusive dance parties comprised middle to upper-class lesbian people. Although, unlike the elite gay men, lesbian people were very private. They also perceived coming out as an unnecessary action because it was deemed as a western concept (Marin 1999). Coming out was considered a daunting process, especially in a society heavily influenced by the Catholic religion (Mohideen 1996). They were careful not to expose themselves to the risk of being considered as an outcast. The confirmation of a lesbian person's sexual orientation in their community, including their relationship status, was never fulfilled and was always only confirmed in the form of gossip. One example can be found in Hart's study on *bayot* and *lakin-on* in the province of Negros Island

region (1968). Local communities had plenty of stories regarding many *lakin-on* living with their women partner juxtaposed with terms "like a husband," "like a regularly married couple," and "have regular family quarrels" (56). However, there was a variance in definitions of *lakin-on* in this region depending on the time period. In the 1920s, a *lakin-on* was a woman who did a man's job (57). In the 1950s to 1960s, it became a reference to a Visayan lesbian person's sexual orientation with unique identifiable characteristics such as muscular physicality, ownership of *kaingin* (swiddens) in nearby mountains, someone who works in the fields, distinct clothing of tight-fitting denim or corduroy trousers, Beatles or flat top hairstyles, and only women as their object of love.

Even Tan (2001) had observed the invisibility of lesbian people in the 1970s, acknowledging their earlier reiterated "low profile status," as they also lacked representation in public movements. According to Rozul, the lesbian issues were inadvertently drowned because of the women's and feminist studies, which he claimed were heterosexual in nature, and included them with the gay movement conceptualized as a female version of a gay man (2017). Only in the early 1990s did women's movements start to discuss issues concerning lesbian people in the country (Villar 2000). The turning point of lesbian activism in the Philippines happened in 1993 when a lesbian contingent joined the International Women's Day march for the first time (Mohideen 1996). This opened doors for Filipina lesbian people to gather and collectively voice out the issues they experienced as a lesbian. The First National Lesbian Rights Conference, later on, followed it in December 1996, organized by three major lesbian groups in the country (Villar 2000). By this time, contrary to the coming out notions in the 1960s as unnecessary and very western, the coming out process would be considered an important political act (Mohideen 1996). In that article, the mentioned statement was followed by the words "as it did in the western movement in the 70s" (par. 6). This statement re-emphasized the western's influence in the country that eventually made them decide to change their status quo. They realized that, similar to lesbian movements in the west, coming out was an integral part of helping them develop a base to organize movements. Additionally, the aims of the first Pride March in 1994 - naming it the "Stonewall Manila" – were aligned to its corresponding crusade in the US as revolutionary and political in nature (Evangelista 2017). Currently, the Galang Philippines is one of the biggest lesbian groups in the Philippines that supports Filipino lesbian, bisexual, and transmen in poor urban communities to help them achieve social and economic equality while creating an enabling policy environment for them.

Complicated family relationships, along with expectations to follow religious teachings and heteronormative practices, are one of the reasons why the *bakla* and lesbian people develop personal problems. Like the *bakla*, lesbian people were also considered to have brought shame to their families because of their sexual orientation. According to Marin, "anything that is deemed unpleasant, challenging, or threatening to the existing fabric of family relations is not viewed favorably" (1996, 39). Some lesbian people experienced corporal punishment when their parents or relatives learned about their sexual orientation (See Umbac 2005; Ceperiano et al.

2016; Atadero et al. 2014). Some would even be pressured to believe they were not normal (Mohideen 1996). Because of these, some lesbian people would hide or deny their sexual orientation, tone down their gender expression, and continue to perform traditional gender roles, like having a relationship or marrying the opposite sex to satisfy their parents' expectations (Ceperiano et al. 2016). Even though the lesbian people wanted to come out to their families, they were always faced with denial and animosity. As a consequence of religious guilt, some would resort to self-policing (Umbac 2005). These self-imposed disciplinary practices were done to protect both themselves and their families. These restraints and pressure from their families resulted in many experiencing emotional problems, dysphoria, and internal homophobia, thus leaving their sexuality publicly undiscussed. Hence, the privacy and the secrecy.

Aside from family issues, public ridicule, and discrimination, lesbian women also experience sexual harassment. Both the lesbian people and the *lesbiyana* in Ceperiano and colleagues' (2016) study experienced indecent gazes and remarks from men expressing their fascination on their physical features and saying they are a waste because of their sexual orientation. Additionally, the gossips about them usually contain negative information. One of which is the judgment on a *lesbiyana's* choice to choose a lesbian partner even though they were both poor (because the combination of these circumstances is discriminated against and ridiculed, mostly in the low socioeconomic class in the Philippines); and the reason for seeking a same-sex relationship was because she was "already defiled" (20-27). There are also reports of sexual harassment on lesbian people that happened in their workplaces and domestic abuse caused by their previous male partners. Cases proving that lesbian people, along with bisexual and transgender people, are "more exposed to violence and discrimination, suffer different kinds of cruelty committed by family members, and often prevented from accessing social welfare programs of the government" were presented by Hega and colleagues (2017, 15). Umbac listed reasons why these events persist in society: some still believe that rape can cure a lesbian person's sexual orientation, men still hold power, thus making the violence more invasive, and most lesbian women do not report rape and sexual harassment cases because they know that they would be subject to humiliation from medical practitioners and law enforcement officers (2005).

Presently, the word *tomboy* has negative connotations in the Philippine setting. Some lesbian partakers in Nadal and Corpus' (2013) study felt that it was easier to practice their sexuality in the US than in the Philippines because there was pressure on them to fit the stereotype due to the rigid terms and homophobic tendencies of some Filipino people. Like the *baklang parlorista*s, *tomboys* were stereotyped as a low-income masculine lesbian person, occasionally called *butch*, whose jobs often included security guard (Ceperiano et al. 2016). Other societal perceptions include being drunks, gamblers, non-monogamous, emotionally unstable, and violent (Umbac 2005; Marin 1999). Marin (1999) gave an interesting overview of the group partition of Filipino lesbian people in the 1990s. She divided them into two groups: the lesbian feminists (LF) and organic lesbian communities (OLC). The lesbian feminists were radical as their belief was founded on notions

that lesbian people, through same-sex relationships, threaten and challenge the patriarchal society by denying men access to their bodies. The LFs were the ones who continually pushed lesbian issues on the political platform, actively organized lesbian gatherings and activities, and established the need to create global links through international lesbian groups. On the other hand, the organic lesbian communities were non-political, had no links to any movements, and were not governed by any lesbian feminist frameworks. Their sexuality and interpersonal relationships united the OLCs, and their primary function was to provide a support system to other lesbian people. Marin said that the majority of Filipino lesbian people belonged in this category. Furthermore, she gave two more distinguishable principles of these two lesbian groups in this era. First, the OLCs believed they were born gay, while the LFs believed their sexual orientation was a conscious political choice. The difference between these two is that the OLCs had always been sure about their sexuality admitting that they disagree with their feminine side and never felt any attraction towards the opposite sex, while the LFs believed that their sexual orientation was born out of feminist analysis and efforts to turn away from heteropatriarchy. Second, the LFs frown on the sexual and gender roles that the OLCs followed. The relationship dynamics of OLCs were derived from the heterosexist patterns: the "male" dominated the intimacy by being the sole giver in the sexual activities. Similarly, the "male" OLC also preferred manual labor and dangerous jobs because they believed that they could also perform tasks associated with men. The last two statements harmonized with the other studies mentioned in this study. The latter is similar to Hart's study in the Visayas wherein one of the characteristics of a *lakin-on* was a preference for fieldwork, while the first statement resembles the earlier mentioned notion of the gay men seeking another gay man as their sexual partners in the 60s and 70s.

> One of the most sacred tenets of this dynamic is that the *pars* (male) do not allow themselves even to be touched by their partner. To allow this would mean becoming "women" themselves, and as "women," they would be stripped of their power over the *mars* (female) in the relationship… *Pars* have their own ethics… unspoken policy to check on each other, making sure they do not succumb to "feminine" tendencies (Marin 1999, 47).

Despite all their differences, the agenda of lesbian separatism during this time was never raised. The LFs made an effort to change their attitudes towards the OLCs' sexual and gender roles by acknowledging that their disapproval was a form of self-righteousness that was condescending and discriminatory to the other party. However, this attitude resulted in steering away from collaboration and alienation of many women who could potentially be part of the lesbian rights movements in the country (Marin 1999).

VI. Discussion and Conclusion: Diagnosing the Roots of Homophobia based on Genealogy

One of the aims of this study is to contribute to finding ways to resolve the discrimination against Filipino LGBTQ people in the Philippines. However, to effectively do that, one must

consider the pragmatics of society. Their discriminating depiction is deeply rooted in the country's culture, as shown by its history. This study considers that the existing problems can be diagnosed by Michel Foucault's Genealogy, which is "a system of thought resulting from contingent turns of history, not the outcome of rationally inevitable trends" (Gutting and Oksala 2018, par. 27). Out of the many interpretations of Foucault's Genealogy, the mentioned definition best describes the situation. The history is vital in showing how homophobic tendencies and discriminatory notions against them were constructed in the Filipino mentality. It was explained that these beliefs were not inherent in the Philippine culture and only formed after the arrival of Western colonizers. This study has also provided evidence showing that the evolution (or devaluation) of Filipino LGBTQ people's status in society, such as from being one of the authoritative figures to embodiments of cowardice and sexual perversion, was not caused by "rationally inevitable trends" but was triggered by "contingent turns of history" that were the western influences. Genealogy is not to solely search for the origins but it includes pinpointing the processes of descent and emergence (Foucault 1984 cited in Garland 2014). The study has laid foundations to explain both: the fall of both women and the *asog's* once-great characters were caused by the strict imposition of Catholicism and the overwhelming practice of machismo to replace the matriarchal society. Following the mentioned situations considered as the "descent" in this study, the process of emergence continues through introduction of modern philosophies and trends on sexual orientations inspired by the liberal concepts and urbanization produced during the American era. Such ideas contributed to the formation of current society's belief in women and LGBTQ+ people.

One of the "indispensable restraints" of Genealogy is the necessity to be sensitive to the recurrence of events "to isolate the different scenes where they engaged in different roles" (Rabinow 1984, 76). Following this idea, this study emphasizes how western influences have affected the lives of the Filipino people several times. Every conqueror from different eras had their own set of notions, independent from one another, that soon became normative in Philippine society—for example, the various characteristics of the *bakla* and lesbian women from pre-colonial to the 20th century. Every era has its own definition of being gay, i.e., elite gays in the 1960s and *parloristang bakla* in the 1970s. Even the meanings of the terminologies used to identify them had changed throughout the years. This study has included explanations of the terminologies that are etymological, not just to understand the Filipino language but to show the weight of discrimination in this country to the point that homophobia can also be inflicted through simple usage of such words. According to Garland, "Genealogy views the process of descent as the outcome of power struggles and battles over domination, use, and meaning" (2014, 373). The aim of presenting these events was not only to describe the history of Filipino LGBTQ people based on historical accounts and terminologies but to discuss that the root of homophobia was deeper and culturally engraved that the society had become vulnerable to changes because of its inability to withstand the influx of modern ideologies brought about by western influences.

Foucault also stated that Genealogy is "an insurrection of subjugated knowledge and subjugated knowers, marginalized knowledge, and knowers that could be seen as resistance against totalizing and dominant knowledge, eliminating others through violence" (Lončarević 2013, 68). Despite the rich, albeit unfortunate, history of Filipino LGBTQ people, it is also an alarming find that most of the studies mentioned mainly detailed the history of gay men. The study has emphasized that the historical accounts of Filipina lesbian people lacked or were non-existent. History has proved that it was challenging to be a female in a patriarchal society built with machismo beliefs. The lack of historical records of Filipina lesbian people emphasizes that the discrimination against them during the Spanish era extended to the point of total exclusion on paper. Discrimination is carried on in contemporary times. Marin (1999) stated that the culture had become silent witnesses to lesbian people's existence and continued to persist because of the country's dominant heteronormative culture. This study backs Foucault's belief of rebellion against dominated and side-lined knowledge of the Philippines regarding Filipino lesbian people and women. Doran claimed that contemporary historians focused on the racial divide and prevailing political forces that downplayed women and lesbian people in historical records (1998). In addition, the historians had set the pattern of portraying the lesbian people based on prevailing gender constructs, existing unequal gender relations, emphasis on sexual roles (ibid.), and only if what they did was extraordinary in the eyes of the chroniclers (Marin 1999). These are some instances that hinder gender equality from progressing, not just in historical records but also in the entire country.

History has also paved the way for understanding how and why the Philippines is conservative, Catholic, and patriarchal. Genealogy aims to "trace the forces that gave birth to our present-day practices to identify the historical conditions they still depend on" (Garland 2014, 373). The basis of moral values, even today, is religion. The Catholic influence is apparent, especially in Filipino families, and being religious or following the church's teachings is expected. This study has also provided documentation of homophobia within the family that later affects an LGBTQ person emotionally and psychologically. Garland said that to be able to write the "history of the present," we should start by identifying a present-day practice that is both taken for granted and problematic. Filipinos consider the family as the basic but essential unit of society. However, history has shown that even the unit supposed to be accepting also expressed prejudice among its LGBTQ family members. History has also proved how influential a family can be in Philippine society. Following this line of thinking, this research aims to mirror Foucault's intentions by disturbing "what was previously thought of as immobile" (Garland 2014, 372). This study is invoking these: from the past to the present, a person who is guided by the overt-conservative interpretation of Catholicism, powerful institutions demonstrating overwhelming machismo, and a society robbed of their original beliefs and replaced by outsiders' philosophies had become the unbecoming characteristics of homophobia and sex and gender discrimination in the Philippines. This study recommends that researchers consider this diagnosis

and these characteristics when looking for possible solutions to sex and gender discrimination and homophobia in the future generation of Philippine society to help transform the country into a more accepting community for Filipino LGBTQ people.

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