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Locating the Asog: A Historical Account of Philippine Gay Identity in the Spanish Colonial Period

Francis Luis M. Torres
National University of Singapore

ABSTRACT

The paper investigates the *asog*, which is arguably the earliest representation of Cebuano gay identity in the Philippines, within the Spanish colonial period. Specifically, it evaluates how this identity has been shaped within its socio-cultural and economic milieus. By using critical content analysis, this study examines two chronicles and five dictionaries to see how the asog was inscribed during the Spanish colonial rule in the Philippines. Findings show that the asog was described by priests as a cross-dressing effeminate shaman who performed Satan's bidding by spreading false news and stealing gold from the natives. However, the asog's definition changed in the late nineteenth century as it became exclusively religious, while its association as an effeminate man became more secular and nationalistic. In this light, the study attempts to examine the social conditions that form today's Philippine gay identities—an issue that is largely underexamined—and how these subvert Western models of gender and sexuality as well as processes in linguistic translation. This paper intends to rearticulate the effects of writing and colonialism that influence current attitudes and perceptions toward Filipino gays.

Keywords: Philippine gay culture and history, Cebuano gay identity, Spanish colonial writing, asog, bayot

Accounting for a Spectral Past

In his article "Cracks in the Parchment Curtain," historian William Henry Scott says that it would be impossible for any Filipino scholar to access their ancestors' conditions without citing Spanish documents (1). In fact, he mentions that the ancient Filipinos' reactions and thoughts may have been hidden underneath these texts—or parchments, to borrow his metaphor—that seem fleeting and unclear. This is the reason why any aspiring scholar should see beyond what the archival materials provide since these reveal insights under Spain's colonial rule, which was primarily anchored on two crucial elements: conquest and conversion. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that a people's history and actions were not fully documented. This truth was made possible due to Spain's monopolization of publications, which indirectly shaped a people's episteme, thoughts, actions, and consciousness.

Colonization certainly reshaped how natives thought of concepts, and sexuality and gender were no exceptions. Based on their writings,[1] Spanish priests at that time were scandalized by the sexual habits of the natives. For instance, natives were reported to have used penis pins and rings, or dildo-like instruments for sexual pleasure. These activities were highly stigmatized because the Spanish chroniclers could not exactly comprehend what was unraveling before their eyes. The chroniclers made this one of the many reasons for establishing the need for other missionaries to settle in the Orient to enlighten the community and save them from that savagery. The priests also found that some natives did not exactly conform to heteronormative, Catholic identities. Historical documents reveal the discovery of effeminate male shamans who mingled with the rest of the community to spread religion. They called him the *asog,* an effeminate man who conducted Satan's bidding.

Accounts like the asog may help explain the stigma surrounding gays nowadays. Unfortunately, gay historical studies in the Philippines remains understudied and underexplored. For example, LGBT-related materials particularly focus on today's contemporary issues, which partially neglect the fact that the community's struggles are rooted in a more complicated historical milieu. It is imperative that framing a gay identity must be done within a genealogically locality-specific understanding to break its synonymity and homogeneity from other gay identities in the Philippines amidst the singular (and, oftentimes, Manila-centric) narrative. There is a gap that needs to be filled—that is, the history of early gay identities needs articulation, especially when historical documents are being reexamined.

I therefore intend to analyze the asog, who is arguably the earliest representation of Philippine local gay identities, to examine how this identity has been shaped within

its socio-cultural and economic milieus as well as how it has shaped society to some extent. I try to argue that the asog becomes a starting point in the formation of the Philippine gay men's genealogy and identity, particularly that of the Cebuano *bayot*. To substantiate the claim, I look into Fr. Pedro Chirino's *Relacion de las Islas Filipinas* (1969) and Fr. Francisco Alcina's *History of the Bisayan People in the Philippines: Evangelization and Culture at the Contact Period* (2002), which are often considered the earliest documents that mention the asog. Later accounts about the asog are also found in dictionaries including Fr. Mateo Sanchez's *Vocabulario de la Lengua Bisaya* (1711), Fr. Marcos Lisboa's *Vocabulario de la lengua Bicol: compueste por Marcos de Lisboa* (1754), Fr. Alonso Mentrida's *Diccionario de La Lengua Bisaya, Hiliguena Y Harana de La Isla de Panay* (1841), Fr. Julian Martin's *Diccionario Hispano-Bisaya* (1842), and Fr. Juan Felix Dela Encarnacion's *Diccionario Bisaya-Espanol* (1883). Secondary materials also supplement this discussion about the asog.

Given the limited resources about the asog, the selected texts were primarily chosen because these directly mention the asog. However, these may appear inchoate as these are alternative sources. In this light, what I intend to emphasize is how these bodies of work may still create a network of ideas that constitute the asog's historicity and intersections with other identities and cultures. Thus, the study will not exactly deal with the texts' authenticity and veracity. Rather, it tries to see how these flesh out socio-cultural and political realities of that time.

The texts will be analyzed using gay criticism to see how the asog and, later, the bayot are articulated. My framework primarily depends on J. Neil Garcia's discussion in *Philippine Gay Culture* (which will be referred hereon as *PGC*), where he writes that gay criticism should be able to (1) situate the discussions of Philippine gay identities by contextualizing the discourse under certain historical moments, (2) relate the epistemology of gay studies to feminist thought, and (3) understand how class-consciousness affects him (14). For this study, I will not pursue the third point since the paper will focus on a gendered reading of the texts.

Moreover, methods are also multifaceted because the study will examine multiple kinds of materials. A moderate nativist approach will help frame my study, which will hopefully recuperate and reconstitute the specters of the bayot and how they are inscribed throughout history. In "Nativism or Universalism: Situating LGBT Discourse in the Philippines" (2013), Garcia provides an extensive discussion of two approaches in contextualizing LGBT+ discourse in the Philippines: first, on taking a universalist (that is, Western) or second, a nativist (or local) approach in understanding Filipino LGBT+ cultures. The first approach might disregard the cultural specificities in framing the discussion. However, the second approach would also mean consciously ignoring the implications (and influence) of Western

models in Philippine epistemology. Garcia suggests that taking a moderately nativist approach would be a reasonable option in analyzing the complexities of Philippine gay culture. This method partly prioritizes local models of epistemology without disregarding the importance of Western models of gay criticism. I use this as it acknowledges the irreducibility of local inflections in gay identities without discrediting the country's (post)colonial history, which has been (regrettably) fundamental in the understanding of Filipino LGBT+ culture (57-60). This approach would provide a localized and theoretical grasp of the bayot's queering politics. In other words, utilizing local concepts and discourses would enable me to flesh out its subversive elements that question universalizing concepts in the LGBT+ discourse.

Aside from Garcia's moderately nativist approach, I also take inspiration from Jacques Derrida's concept of the pharmakon (Norris 37-38) to establish the asog, and later, other Philippine gay identities as marginalized figures. I do so to show the received legitimacy and validity, and thus the power of dominant institutions… including (but not limited to) heteronormativity and patriarchy which constitute marriage, relationships, and identities. Simultaneously, the asog has also become a figure that, in hindsight, destabilizes ideas of morality, knowledge, and gender which constitute commonsensical ideas on normalcy and authority.

Allow me to clarify that this study is not the social history of the bayot's self-representation. Most—if not all—of my sources are not authored by any self-declared bayot or confirmed member of the LGBT community. Instead, I seek to trace the inscription of the bayot's representational history. Through the asog as its earliest representation, I will only focus on how the bayot has been written in Cebuano history and culture, and not how the bayot has articulated himself. The study will not provide a historical purview of the bayot and other Philippine gay identities. Instead, it is more interested in how his figures in archival documents are articulated, thereby revealing the bayot's socio-cultural and economic milieus.

To elucidate my discussion further, allow me to clarify a few points. Philippine gay identities refer to local gay terms such as the Tagalog "bakla," Cebuano "bayot," Hiligaynon "agi," Tausug "bantut," and Waray "bayot," among others. It entails that there are multiple identities rooted in shared and specific socio-cultural, political, and economic conditions. I use this term when I locate the Cebuano bayot among other gay identities in the Philippines. As much as I would want to explore other Philippine gay identities, the study will limit itself to the examination of the Cebuano bayot as much as possible.

In addition, Cebuano pronouns are ungendered. Thus, assigning a pronoun for the asog and bayot in English becomes a problem. For this paper, I will use "he" or

"him" as pronouns for both terms to streamline the discussion and follow writing conventions. Despite the asog being a confusing signifier, I opted to use he/his/him for consistency since priests (unfortunately) describe him to be a man. In addition, the bayot is assigned the same pronoun because I have taken into consideration how studies about him have often used the aforementioned pronouns to describe or mention him.

The task of inscribing the bayot (or can be spelled "bayut"; I will use the former) can be problematic. "Bayot" is the Cebuano term for gay or homosexual. I have taken the step of appropriating bayot from J. Neil Garcia's (*PGC* 6) and David Corpuz's (159) definitions, which oscillate between "male homosexual" and a "feminized man" or between gender and sexuality (or sexual orientation, to be more specific). Because the term signifies two definitions, I interchangeably use the terms "gay" or "homosexual" to describe the bayot.

In this study, the asog is defined as the precolonial Cebuano gay identity to streamline the discussion. I also mean the asog to be "gay" because the concept of homosexuality in sixteenth century Philippines did not exist until the arrival of the Americans. Thus, the asog is slightly different from the bayot. As previously mentioned, the bayot in current usage is the closest idea we have of the English gay and/or homosexual. Simply put, translating the bayot normally means gay and/or homosexual. To clarify, the bayot and the gay/homosexual as concepts are not directly synonymous, yet I intend to use the terms to provide a straightforward way of expressing bayot in English. Unfortunately, the terms "gay" and "homosexual" do not fully flesh out the nuances present in the bayot.

Since most of my primary sources are originally written in Spanish, I opted to examine the translated works side by side with the original text, which was the case in reading Alcina's and Chirino's chronicles. For the dictionary entries, I translated the Cebuano terms to English, and I sought help from an expert with high proficiency in Spanish. To comprehensively discuss these chosen texts, the paper is divided into three parts. First, it discusses how the asog is described during the early Spanish colonial period based on the two chronicles that mention him. It will be followed by a discussion that examines the changes that had occurred in the late nineteenth century based on five dictionaries. It will also explore the many aspects that criticize Western concepts of gayness and untranslatability. The paper concludes by looking at how these historical events partly contribute to the politics that shape the bayot's identity. To provide clarity in the discussion, I added a glossary of selected terms at the end of the study.

The Asog as Colonial Perverse

The Spanish rule of the Philippines lasted for more than 300 years partly because the colonizers monopolized writing and printing with a strict and oppressive military and religious rule over the archipelago (Mojares, "Cebuano" 8-47). Moreover, they also converted natives into Catholics through catechism, which made them obedient. As a result, the Spaniards established a colonial government where there was no need to conduct round-the-clock, rigorous surveillance since Filipinos were regulated in their beliefs and deeds.[2] In fact, Resil Mojares writes, "the good Catholic is also the perfect colonial" ("Catechisms of the Body" 172) because they had been changed in how they appeared, behaved, and thought.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that some narratives and stories that do not conform to Catholic or Spanish rule may have been silenced or were demonized by the church. This was the case for the asog. For more than three centuries, he may have been poorly documented but, to some extent, he reflected the changes within the country and how, eventually, he evolved into the idea of the bayot that we know today.

I therefore examine how the asog, arguably the earliest representation of the bayot, was demonized to establish the Catholic social order. The colonizers needed to displace a spiritual and influential figure to assert their "civilizing" agenda. Ironically, the figure of the asog also haunted the newly established social order by indirectly critiquing and "perverting" the Catholic-laden ideologies. The accounts about him reveal that the natives were never absolutely colonized and that the civilizing mission was founded on violence and viciousness that eradicated him out of history.

Two chronicles stand out—Fr. Pedro Chirino's 1500 *Relacion de las Islas Filipinas* (1969) and Fr. Francisco Alcina's 1600 *History of the Bisayan People in the Philippines: Evangelization and Culture at the Contact Period* (2002).[3] These Jesuit priests probably had the most extensive documentation of the Philippines in the early Spanish colonial period due to their numerous accounts in the islands. Like most chronicles from that time, they consciously wrote these books to encourage other missionaries to come to the Orient and help civilize the natives (Chirino 232; Alcina 23). These books are remarkable because they have some of the earliest mentions of the asog. Thus, these texts will serve as the primary corpus of analysis for this part of the study.

Based on Chirino and Alcina's books, the asog is demonized. In fact, they pronounce the asog as an effeminate agent of Satan. He is also labeled as a heathen, trickster, sodomite, and madman. Ultimately, these accounts reveal the chroniclers' bias,

which frame the asog based on the Spaniard's civilizing and Western viewpoint. The books also mention instances where the asog is seen resisting the Catholic-laden and colonial language of the friars. He perverts the institutions that try to pigeonhole him. The asog is scarcely mentioned in published works, and this lacuna means that examining narratives about him is challenging. In this sense, it shapes the way we analyze and understand him.

Perhaps one of the most apparent problems in studying the asog is his constant and unavoidable association with the female *babaylan*. Both served as the community's spiritual mediums. As a result, they wielded a significant amount of political power in the community by serving as conduits to the spiritual realm. They also bore similar social functions such as being "chief mourners, spiritual ministers, healers, [and] offerers of sacrifices" (Garcia, *PGC* 158). They were usually chosen once they experienced a ritualistic insanity and became *alabay*, or an apprentice, to some older babaylan. Despite these similarities, they were not the same. Chirino and Alcina failed to distinguish their differences properly except for their appearances. The lack of distinct demarcation results in confusion because, when one reads the chronicles, Chirino and Alcina do not exactly distinguish if they are writing about the asog or the babaylan. Rather, they just discuss devil worshippers in general.

However, it does not mean that the babaylan and asog were similar. One of the most distinguishable signifiers between them is their biological sex, which is the reproductive organ a person is born with. Their genders, that is, the performative role they repetitively do,[4] are quite similar. However, this also introduces another problem: sex and gender were not clear-cut in precolonial Philippines (Errington 1-58; Brewer "Baylan"). Probably the best way to differentiate the asog from the babaylan is with gender-crossing. Garcia describes it as such:

> a cultural phenomenon denotes an almost complete transition from one gender to another; cross-dressing, on the other hand, simply means the donning on of clothes that are supposed to be exclusively worn by members of the other sex. Gender-crossing therefore signifies not merely a theatrical but more importantly *a kind of "ontological" transformation*: although characterized by transvestism, it is not reducible to it inasmuch as it also implies an almost complete "crossing-over" of socially enforced gender roles…
>
> Gender-crossing, then, is not just a matter of cross-dressing, but more importantly, of actually taking on, to the upmost possible degree the social and symbolic role of the other, complementary (at this time, *not* exactly opposite) sex. (*PGC* 152-53, 165)

The asog was a male-to-female gender-crosser who, based on numerous accounts, was either or both an effeminate and/or a hermaphrodite (Garcia, *PGC* 153). By emphasizing its non-novelty, Garcia says that this phenomenon is observed in the Indian *hijra*, Bornean *manang bali*, Thai *kathoey*, and Indonesia *warya*. Although similar, gender-crossing should not be equated to inversion since the latter implies same-sex desires. The asog was not exclusively defined solely on his desire but, generally, on his womanlike acts. In effect, his figure should be understood in a constructivist manner.

Studies by Carolyn Brewer and Jay Jomar Quintos describe the precolonial crossdressing effeminate man to be "homosexual." Brewer argues that the essentialist experience was introduced by the Spaniards using the teachings of Aristotle, St. Augustine, and St. Aquinas ("Baylan"). In addition, Quintos traces the history of homosexuality to as early as the time of the asog (155). However, Garcia reiterates that gender-crossing seems to be the most viable method in articulating the asog because homosexuality and inversion are colonial concepts that arrived much later in the Philippines, particularly during the American colonial period.

Instead of essences or "innate" characteristics, gender-crossing, I believe, is the more appropriate term to describe the asog's acts and appearances. It remains close to the nuanced understanding of the asog by examining how his body articulates the identity (through appearances and behavior) while considering the historicity of colonial ideas. For instance, homosexuality did not exist during the Spanish colonial period. His gender was ultimately based on the body and how local culture framed its articulations. This also proves a crucial point in the study of Philippine gay identities—Western frameworks of gender, sexuality, and sexual orientation do not necessarily operate smoothly. Identities like the asog contradicted the universalist (in this case, Catholic) notion of what gay or homosexual was at that time. Therefore, it is only appropriate to examine local gay identities within a constructivist and historical perspective to flesh out his nuances, albeit limited.

The asog appeared and behaved in a feminine manner. Chirino wrote that he was "contorting his face most hideously and knotting his hair, which he wore long like a woman's in token of his profession. He now took the initiative of shearing it off publicly (like the Magdalen)" (294). However, he was never mistaken as a man because (heterosexual) men had tattoos which they wore as a sign of winning wars and bringing glory to the community, while the asog did not have any (Scott, *Barangay* 20). In addition, the asog dressed and acted like a woman. Although assumed to be biologically male, he was speculated to be a hermaphrodite (Alcina 3: 257, 259). This may be Alcina's way of making sense of the asog's "ambiguous" gender as the priest was describing him to have both male and female genitalia.

The asog's transgendered characteristic also associated him with spirituality. As observed in other transvestic identities around the world, his supposed hybrid disposition (that is, the combination of the male-female gender) establishes his link between the spiritual and the material realms. However, Brewer and Garcia emphasize that his femininity established him as a spiritual medium—not a combination of both masculinity and femininity (Brewer, "Baylan"; Garcia, *PGC* 166). This affinity with the spiritual realm was frowned upon by Alcina. He wrote, "[the asog is an effeminate man who was] chosen by him [that is, Devil or Satan]" to perform "demonic" and "deceiving" rituals for the natives, who are left to suffer or die, for a fee (3: 257).

The asog was also considered a sodomite. But according to Alcina, the asog did not "invent" sodomy. Instead, the Chinese brought it to the Philippines since they were not satisfied "with the ordinary Venus" (Alcina 3: 421). The label "sodomite" given to the asog was based on his "confused" sexuality, which violated the Catholic Church's sixth commandment. This also contradicted the friars' opinion of the asog as a celibate. In his discussion of the "Manila Manuscript" or *Boxer Codex*, Garcia argues that the asog (and other effeminate identities at that time) had sexual interactions with other men (*PGC* 175). These acts ultimately defaced the validity of marriage and reproduction—two practices that the Catholic Church considers important for their unitive and procreative significance ("Section Two 'You Shall Not Commit Adultery'").

Unlike the Catholic priest, the asog was perceived as a lunatic because he persuaded and deceived others into worshipping false gods and participating in pagan practices (Alcina 3: 255-57). Chirino accused the asog of doing Satan's bidding by spreading absurd stories about their gods, which is part of their duty as the community's historians and cultural vanguards. The Jesuit priest wrote:

> Government and religion are for them founded on tradition and on the practices introduced by the devil himself (who communicated with them through their idols and their ministers and are preserved in songs which they have committed to memory and learned from childhood, having heard them sung while sailing, while at work, while rejoicing and feasting, and above all while mourning the dead. In these barbaric songs they relate the fabulous genealogies and vain deeds of their gods…telling a thousand absurd stories and even altering their stories a great deal. (296-97)

Presumably, the asog introduced and permeated idolatry and malevolence within the community. Chirino and Alcina confidently declared that he was a swindler for

asking for gold or other properties in exchange for bogus guidance and healing, thereby aggravating the suffering of the natives. This imagery established the missionaries' "messianic" agenda to save the natives from evil. The missionaries were always shown to be selfless for the natives,[5] whereas the asog and other false ministers were associated with disorder. This mud-slinging indirectly acknowledged that the asog threatened the spread of the Catholic faith and the establishment of the Spanish crown in the Philippines.

Arguably, the asog was an influential and powerful figure in precolonial Philippine society. To assert the authority of the Church and the Spanish Crown, the missionaries had to invalidate him by establishing confraternities (*confradias*), which prevented the "abuses, superstitions, idolatries, intoxications, dirges, music, and wailing that had been custom when they were pagans for both the sick and the dead" (Chirino qtd. in Rafael 186). According to Vicente Rafael, reworking the idea of death solidified the conversion of the natives to Catholicism. The pagan concept did not imagine an afterlife nor give the natives an idea of heavenly bliss in the afterlife which is, ultimately, the end of death. Rafael further writes that remaking death was "the ultimate basis of conversion" (193). As a result, this marginalized the asog because he was inscribed as a savage and barbaric man who epitomized Satan. By devaluing his role in the community, the people's culture and history were also disregarded. Reimagining death also entailed a change of life and, to some extent, served as a metaphor for the social shift. One must die for the "new" social order to begin.

The Spanish colonial agenda was not exclusively spiritual; it was also financial, monetary, and administrative.[6] To manage the colonies, the missionaries acted as mediators for both the Spanish Crown and the Roman Catholic Church by practicing the economy of patronage in the form of tribute (Rafael 155). In *Spain in the Philippines* (1971), Juan de Solorazo Pereria explains the theologico-judicial basis for collecting tributes as aid by the natives for day-to-day operations (Rafael 159). By giving out tributes, the natives recognized and desired dependence on the Spanish Crown and the Catholic Church. They became the "perfect" colonial subjects. The discussion on tribute is important because both Chirino and Alcina always highlighted the asog's "loot" from the natives. They believed that the Spanish colonizers were its rightful owners because they were the ones who provided protection as well as God's grace and mercy to the natives.

However, the asog as an identifier did not disappear. The characteristics that the asog embodied would somehow be similar to the current day Cebuano gay identity. For one, femininity remains to be a salient characteristic because it has become the basis of marginalization. Moreover, both have a history of madness, crossdressing, and transgenderism that continues to interrogate "acceptable" (that is, heteronormative,

patriarchal) gender and sex norms. Under the rhetoric of discrimination and hatred, their existence perverts the Filipino social fabric. Yet the realities for both the asog and, to a degree, the bayot remain undervalued or misread. Perhaps it is for this reason that, despite existing in different contexts, they remain connected.

What also surfaces in the discussion is the untranslatability of a Catholic and colonial perspective in framing the asog. The priests found it difficult to describe the asog, particularly his gender and sexuality. This demonstrates how they strived to fit their existing knowledge in order to "translate" it to local epistemes. In this sense, the asog's (and, later on the bayot's) identity would not conform to its Catholic "equivalent," which determines gender and sexual orientation based on a person's *loob* and *labas*, two concepts which will be discussed later. Western models of gender and sexuality were not completely suited within the discourse of Philippine gay culture. The priests' way of inscribing the asog is a strong indicator of how his identity and existence raises (post)colonial and queer questions on the Spanish conquest as well as their knowledge on the localities they try to write about. This would tease out the idea that he was, to some degree, a key player in his community by in/directly contradicting colonial and religious hegemonies.

The asog's role as historian and cultural vanguard located him right at the heart of society. Yet, the arrival of the Spaniards in the Philippines disregarded his important role and inscribed him as evil both in the spiritual and material sense. In effect, he became a specter of colonialism—he "died" (literally and otherwise) within the colonial/Catholicizing frame. By being an effeminate, sodomite, and preacher of Satan's will, he became disruptive to the missionaries' cause. From the sacred, the asog became perverse.

The Asog Towards the Turn of the Century

Through colonial writing, the asog's definition shifted from a respected to a demonized figure. This shift did not completely eradicate him, but his permutations were articulated within the language of Spanish colonial milieu. One common example in Cebuano society is how the priest is often associated with the bayot. This interrelation is not surprising since both have a history as spiritual mediums that required a certain degree of effeminacy and a "vow" of celibacy. Some of Damiana Eugenio's collection of riddles (159) ascertain that effeminacy's link to spirituality remained mostly during the Spanish rule (Salazar 35-41; Jocano 43-72; Garcia, *PGC* 160; Garcia, "Nativism" 53). Yet this "translation" from asog to priest shows how local concepts are susceptible to changes of a particular time.

Previously, the asog was described to be an effeminate false worshipper, a heathen, trickster, sodomite, and madman. But in the latter half of the Spanish colonial

rule, the definition of the asog became exclusively religious and associated with infertility. On the other hand, his association with effeminacy and cowardice became more secular and nationalistic. Part of the discussion also points out how the many dictionary entries relating to effeminacy and cowardice create an ambiguous yet subversive rhetoric. This idea of ambiguity becomes a queering concept that further supplements the elusive idea surrounding the asog's (and bayot's) untranslatability. This section will focus on dictionaries including Fr. Mateo Sanchez's *Vocabulario de la Lengua Bisaya* (1711), Fr. Marcos Lisboa's *Vocabulario de la lengua Bicol: compueste por Marcos de Lisboa* (1754), Fr. Alonso Mentrida's *Diccionario de la Lengua Bisaya, Hiliguena Y Harana* (1841), Fr. Julian's *Diccionario Hispano-Bisaya* (1842), and Fr. Juan Felix Dela Encarnacion's *Diccionario Bisaya-Espanol* (1883). Aside from being limited, these dictionaries might have been devalued for the simple fact that they only provide denotations. Mojares, however, argues that these "document the transformations of language at the time of their production, they provide us (through the cracks, as it were) glimpses of submerged meanings" ("Reconstituting The Mental Life" 567-68).

Published in 1711, Fr. Mateo Sanchez's *Vocabulario de la Lengua Bisaya*—probably one of the earliest published dictionaries in the Visayan language—defined the asog synonymously with the words *bantot* and *bayog*, which meant infertility (not being able to reproduce), cowardice, effeminacy, and heresy. His descriptions conformed to earlier definitions of the asog by Fr. Alcina and Fr. Chirino. This is also similar to Fr. Marcos Lisboa's *Vocabulario de la lengua Bicol: compueste por Marcos de Lisboa* (1754). Although my study primarily revolves around the Visayas, allow me to add the priest's definition as it supplements the discussion. In the Bikolano dictionary, he described the asog as a minister for false idols. Fr. Lisboa also added that the asog behaved and appeared feminine, and never married women (34). This is expounded further by Kristian Cordero, who cites a poem by another Bikolano priest, Fr. Bernardo Melendreras, wherein the asog is a "minister of the aswang, and is described to be someone who only has 'one testicle,' hence, the effeminate behaviors." (In precolonial Iriga, a mystical entity is believed to be transgender.) It is important to note that these dictionaries were published in the 1700s when the Church still controlled the printing press. To some degree, the religious institution had the power to monopolize knowledge. By writing what it deemed useful to its agenda, the Church established a society based on its bias (that is, Spivak's idea of "worlding").

After a century, two dictionaries in the Hiligaynon language were published. In the same manner, priests documented terms and defined them using the other language (that is, the dictionary provides the Hiligaynon term with its corresponding meaning in Spanish and vice versa). One of these dictionaries is

Fr. Alonso Mentrida's *Diccionario de la Lengua Bisaya, Hiliguena Y Harana* (1841). Like Fr. Sanchez and Fr. Lisboa, Fr. Mentrida characterized the asog as related to heresy and infertility. However, Fr. Mentrida's dictionary has a noticeable difference from the previous dictionaries since he did not associate the asog with effeminacy and cowardice (53). The other Hiligaynon dictionary is Fr. Julian Martin's *Diccionario Hispano-Bisaya* (1842). Here, he remained consistent with Fr. Mentrida's definitions by characterizing the asog in an exclusively religious manner since he described the asog as a heretic. In addition, he also defined bayog and bantot as effeminate and coward men. Clearly, "asog" as a term was no longer synonymous to effeminacy and cowardice. Instead, these definitions were attached to the bantot and bayog.

The changing meaning of the asog was also observed in Fr. Juan Felix de la Encarnacion's *Diccionario Bisaya-Espanol* (1883). Considered by Mojares to be one of the earliest religious writers and translators in Cebuano, Fr. de la Encarnacion served in Siquijor, Dumaguete, and Zamboanga. Among his oeuvre, this dictionary is his most significant work (Mojares, "Cebuano" 25). Based on his entry, the term "asog" was slightly different from how it was defined in the dictionaries previously discussed. Fr. Encarnacion described the asog as a minister of false gods, but also referred to the asog as a sterile woman (22). However, his entries on the bantot and bayog remained consistent with the two earlier dictionaries as they were synonymous to terms including *afeminado* (effeminacy) (4), *afeminarse* (to become effeminate) (4), *babayin-on* (behaving and speaking like a woman) (24), *binabaye* (effeminacy) (133), and *maricon* (coward man) (173). It is apparent that the asog's meaning remained an exclusively religious term, but other terms carried its association with effeminacy and cowardice. To some extent, these shifts also contributed to the disappearance of the asog's definition as a gender-crosser. Slowly, the process of inscription of the bantot and bayog associated the two with effeminacy and cowardice, and no longer with a religious leader who contradicts the Spanish socio-cultural order.

The shift that is expected from the asog's characteristics may be attributed to the major changes happening in the late nineteenth century. The opening of the Suez Canal transformed the economic landscape, which improved commercial trade between the Philippines and the rest of the world. Agricultural commerce and internal trade in the country increased after the end of the galleon trade led to regional prosperity. Reforms in education were also introduced. Even though the curriculum at University of Santo Tomas leaned heavily towards theology and morals, courses on the various sciences were also offered. Journalism also experienced a surge. There was a call to independence and people started harboring nationalist sentiments, which would later combat the Spanish colonial rule. These "radical" changes brought scientific and political revolutions from all corners of the country (Mojares, *Origins* 122-23).

Despite the influx of ideas and commodities to the Philippines, the Catholic Church censored "subversive" materials that promoted nationalism and the sciences (Mojares, *Origins* 9-10). The introduction of new cultures and concepts could explain why the effeminate man was framed within a more secular and nationalist definition because, at that time, the country was undergoing changes brought by modernity and nationalist movements. This is perhaps exemplified in Alfred McCoy's "Baylan: Animist Religion and Philippine Peasant Ideology" (1982). In the article, he highlights how animism partly developed modern political consciousness that mobilized the peasantry. He explains that they were ready to accept the babaylan's or datu's leadership during major political and social crises (100). For example, Ponciano Elofre, popularly called Buhawi, is "a reputed homosexual and traditional 'miraculous curer,' two often complementary attributes" (McCoy 167). He was fabled to have the ability to control the forces of nature. He led a revolt against the Spanish authorities in Dumaguete by drawing in "great numbers of people from all the towns along the coast" (165). This revolutionary leader also relocated them to an independent community in the mountains to avoid paying taxes to the Spanish government, but it was later suppressed and eradicated by the colonial government. In this sense, McCoy observes that the peasant movements that emerged in the revolutionary era were "better organized and exhibited a greater degree of national and class consciousness [and] drew much of their organizational strength and symbolism from the region's traditional religious concepts" (167) by leaders like Elofre.

Akin to the chronicles during the early Spanish colonial period, the dictionaries describe the asog and articulate his position within a predominantly Catholic and colonial narrative. He was inevitably a by-product of changing socio-cultural and historical landscapes that forever assured his "eradication." Ironically, this also gave him the opportunity to resist and subvert notions that fully subjugate the natives. This is where the asog was located—within the history of Spanish colonialism and Catholicism. He was defined as the enemy when the Spaniards started to establish a colony and remained so until the nationalist uprising against the same colonial masters.

To some extent, these chronicles and dictionaries laid our understanding of the bayot today. It can be said that the asog may no longer be defined as effeminate or a coward. However, the dictionaries flesh out the alteration that would lead to the connection of our idea of effeminacy and cowardice to the bayot. Given the nature of the Cebuano language, one could infer that the bayog and bantot might have served as the precursors to the current spelling and definition of the term "bayot." For instance, the alveolar unvoiced stop phoneme /t/ is relatively close to the velar voiced stop phoneme /g/—meaning, the tongue positions and articulation

for the sounds /t/ and /g/ are relatively close. Since the shift of phoneme is common in Austronesian languages, the term "bayog" might have been "mispronounced" or "misheard" or its pronunciation totally changed to become "bayot." In any case, the changes brought in the Cebuano language remains to be further explored and documented (see studies by John Wolff and Paul Zorc as examples[7]).

The discussion on dictionary terms and phonemes—or its confusion—may be partly explained by this queering (that is, subversive) characteristic surrounding the aforementioned words. One key aspect in dealing with the multiple terms is its ambiguity. For instance, the numerous entries relating to bantot, asog, and bayog demonstrate how friars struggled to encapsulate effeminacy, heresy, and cowardice within their concepts of gender and sexuality. To tangentially mention it, these dictionaries also could not capture the orality of these terms. That is, one can relate the bantot/bayog/bayot's identity as something elusive since it carries multiple meanings and pronunciations, thereby making it elusive for essentialism. In this sense, the terms also become ambiguous since they do not truly have clear-cut definitions and associations. The elusive dynamic found in these terms may explain why until today, labels like "bayot" continue to carry meaning such as gender and sex categories, effeminacy, sexual orientation, and transgenderism. This characteristic shows how Philippine gay identities remain to be untranslatable. For instance, a Filipino would not stereotypically describe a woman to be "gay" as it has been associated with a man, which is different from its American counterpart. In another example, American LGBT+ cultures today have numerous labels that describe sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions (e.g., cisgender, non-binary, queer). In the Philippines, however, the bayot would be the closest way to translate them. It is perhaps for this reason that the term "bayot" today carries this meaning while failing to capture its counterparts in other (Western) cultures and languages.

In the second half of the Spanish colonial rule until the 1900s, dictionaries written by friars documented the many changes in definitions and associations around the asog. Just by following its definition, the asog had taken a totally different meaning, from a gender-crosser to a sterile woman and heretic. Its definition of effeminacy and cowardice were later attached to terms such as the bantot and bayog. The phonetic proximity of the terms as well as the undocumented changes would explain the emergence of the term "bayot." More importantly, these publications and the evolution of the language prove that indigenous gay identities are unique, and their cultural irreducibilities constitute an important part in the formation of the bayot's identity. This may substantiate the claim that gay identities existed before the arrival of our colonizers (but with different terms and definitions). However, it also spotlights one crucial point—there is a dearth of materials about him.

Thus, other writers and scholars see that period "sans colonialism." This realization has led some scholars to rearticulate the past away from a nativist rhetoric that fetishized a society without any hint of colonialism in our shared histories.

Locating the Bayot's Origin: A Fetishizing Quest

Even though the earliest documented permutation of the bayot may have been articulated in the asog, locating the first documentation of the term "bayot" remains a quest. Perhaps one of the biggest problems facing the Filipino gay scholar are the nativists bent on romanticizing the effeminate man who, back then, enjoyed equality and relative power in his community. Hunting down his past, therefore, should focus on how inscribing and colonialism played a huge role in the bayot's formation. This is what I will examine in the third part of the study. By examining multiple archival materials, I will try to establish the lack of documents pertaining to the bayot and how it created this fabled power and respect for the asog and its early counterparts.

To provide a little context, the bayot's Tagalog counterpart, which is the bakla, was first documented in the pasyon "Casaysayan nang Pasiong Mahal ni Jesucristong Panginoon Natin na Sucat Ipag-alab nang Puso nang Sinomang Babasa," which mentioned that "Si Cristo'y nabacla" [Christ was confused] during the Agony at the Garden. At that time, bacla meant "fear and indecision" or "cowardice." Garcia mentions how this is related to the way the Tagalog poet Francisco Balagtas used the term to describe a "temporary lack of resolve, an emotional wavering" (*PGC* 74).

It is a different case for the bayot. After looking through several materials, I found that the earliest appearance of the term is seen in *Catalogo alfabetico de apellidos* (1849). Published in the mid-nineteenth century, the book documents all the surnames in the Philippines and the other islands in the Spanish East Indies to mitigate tax collection and census. The catalog includes "bayot." Unfortunately, it does not provide the meaning of the word. More importantly, it is just a surname, which still exists today. It also does not provide important details such as who these people are or where they lived. Quite literally, the book is simply a catalog of surnames.

To my knowledge, this entry is the earliest existing document where the word "bayot" appears. Let this claim be provisional as I have not examined all available and existing archives to make this a conclusive statement. More importantly, this is not the bayot that we know today. This is not a gender identity, nor does it signify anything relating to effeminacy, perversion, or spirituality. I just want to point this out for the purpose of documentation. I also wish to emphasize that locating the bayot's earliest documentation remains a quest.

The search for the bayot's origin is not a novelty. In his dictionary, Paul Zorc provides an etymology of bayot as "'effeminate; homosexual'… 'woman with a penis' [babaye + oten]" ("Core Etymological Dictionary of Filipino"). The bayot, therefore, is a juxtaposition of the two sexes. In addition, he associates the bayot with effeminacy and homosexuality. His source becomes problematic because he does not exactly trace or validate his sources. For example, he mentions that the etymology of bayot comes from the Proto-Southern Philippine language, which is a claim founded on examining phonetic and word compositions. The problem lies when one verifies where he got the meaning of the word.

Zorc's definition may indirectly explain why the bayot's definition might not have existed during the Spanish period. More importantly, inversion and homosexuality were introduced by the Americans in the early 1900s. For example, the first written proof I have seen of the bayot in its current usage is from a 1916 newspaper article[8] that chronicled a woman in Manila who wanted to divorce her husband because he was a bayot. She went to court since he could not fulfill his (implied sexual and reproductive) responsibility as a husband. The term itself may have already existed in the Spanish colonial period. However, the way Zorc makes sense of the word "bayot" as a homosexual would be plausible only after the Spanish colonial period. In this case, there is a shift wherein "bayot" becomes an identifier for gender identity and expression as well as sexual orientation. Regrettably, this goes beyond the scope of this research but hopefully, this could also become a topic for future researchers.[9]

Without a doubt, "bayot" as a term "existed" during the Spanish colonial period. Its formation, as previously mentioned, would have been possible due to a change of pronunciation and conflation of definitions. However, this claim is challenging to prove because actual documents or evidence could corroborate it. One should further examine other archival materials to dig deep and see if the current usage of the term "bayot" would have been similar then. For instance, the term "bakla" did not just turn into the Tagalog gay identifier overnight.

Scanning through the pages of numerous archival materials, this becomes the problem: why is the bayot not documented as extensively as his Tagalog counterpart? The colonial government's censorship laws might have contributed to this gap. Additionally, publishing houses were owned or controlled by the Roman Catholic Church and the process of publication was mostly centralized in Manila. Moreover, the medium of language the writers employed should also be considered. Spanish was the official language used in writing and speech, and the use of local languages was not widespread until the emergence of the ladino poets.[10] It is possible, however, that the term may have already existed orally.

Due to the ephemeral nature of speech, the burden of accounting for its prior existence with the same present-day meaning is difficult to prove. This gap creates that desire to locate the genealogy of the bayot but instead, it fetishizes the idea that they were figures of power and equality. Perhaps one of the most recurring themes when examining the asog is how he yielded power and experienced equality in his community.[11] However, this fantasy should not be used to sustain the illusion that gay men were not being discriminated then. Moreover, though the asog might be the earliest representation of the effeminate man—perhaps, the "origin" of the bayot—this should not be the only basis to establish a narrative that homogenizes his history. The asog as the "authentic" signifier of the Philippine gay identity (that is, the male, effeminate cross dresser) is fetishized for the simple reason that this implied power and equality existed before the Spaniards came.

Stereotypically, the bayot was a combination of both man and woman. This is most likely an effect of how colonialism and Catholicism reshaped the way we understood him. For instance, the bayot had a feminine soul within a man's body. In the precolonial and early colonial Philippines, the asog, *bayoguin,* and *bido* were perceived to be hermaphrodites. Western biomedicine and psychological science would insist that they are physically male when in fact, "their psychological core gender identity is anomalously female" (Garcia, *PGC* xxiii). These foreign concepts are, therefore, interrogated and integrated with local concepts of the body and soul, which leads us to examine the concept of the loob and labas.

Loob is defined as the person's soul or spirit while labas is the body or flesh. This model implies the way we determine our identities and thereby allows us to further understand how local gay identities are constituted. Garcia explains that the sexualization of the bayot was a "movement from the body to the realm of the psyche . . . [facilitated by] the native culture of . . . transcendental depth: loob" (*PGC* xxiii). The loob is a central idea in search of an indigenous Philippine psychology, with many scholars pointing it out as the recapitulation of the "psychospiritual"[12] aspects of Tagalog-Filipino subjectivity. Garcia describes the loob as "insideness," reflecting psychic depth and subjectivity:

> Loob as the interior or inside of any kind of container evokes the image of the body into which the spirit is poured. (And so, it is easy to see why loob quickly became appropriated by Catholic discourse, as it too describes a kind of metaphysical dualism of identity.) And this image/metaphor transforms itself in several other spheres in life, as proven perhaps by the extensive lexicon of loob-derived terminologies. (*PGC* 73)

However, this phenomenon is not exclusive to the Tagalogs, as Garcia points out. London-based anthropologist Mark Johnson observes that the bantut, the Muslim-

Tausug equivalent of the bayot, is formed in the similarly loob-labas kind of dynamics (Johnson 77-78). Moreover, Leonardo Mercado translates the Tagalog loob to *buot* in Bisayan or *nakem* in Ilokano (54). Thus, the loob-labas dichotomy may not be exclusive to the Tagalogs, Cebuanos, Ilokanos, or Muslims. It is applicable within the Philippine context. More importantly, what I am after here is the logic of loob-labas as the central function in the formation of the bayot's identity and in interrogating the inapplicability of Western models of gender and sexuality. Even though the study's focus is on the Cebuano bayot, I maintain the use of Tagalog terms "loob" and "labas" to streamline the discussion instead of the specificity of the term.

Garcia begins the discussion of the loob by referring to Jesuit Albert Alejo, author of *Tao Po! Tuloy* (1990). Alejo describes loob to be "mysterious," associated with various significations, and, ultimately, the singular core of the Filipino psyche. By doing so, Alejo also delineates both the loob and labas separately. He writes:

> The body embodies loob. Loob cannot exist apart from the body! . . . If I am born female, it is not just my body that is female. I am female. And my perspective, emotion, the possibility of my choice, the world of my loob, are all somewhat female, too.
>
> Ang katawan . . . ay pangangatawan ng loob. Walang loob kung walang katawan! . . . Kung ako ay ipinanganak na babae, hindi lamang katawan mo ang babae. Ako ang babae. At ang aking pananaw, pandama, at posibilidad ng aking pagpapasiyam ang daigdig ng aking loob, ay may pagka-babae. (Alejo qtd. in Garcia, *PGC* 125-26)

Alejo's model establishes the way we commonsensically understand the bayot today and, to some degree, this is how Catholicism and colonialism have partially reinscribed the bayot. However, this is problematic because it glosses over other "gay" identities, demarcating "true" and "non-true" gays. For example, bisexuality remains a porous gender category today in the Philippines such that there is no clear distinction between gays and bisexuals. In another sense, this also reiterates the level of ambiguity and untranslatability present in our local gender/ed concepts that ultimately interrogate Western models of gender and sexuality.

Moreover, we cannot truly know the gender of the asog because, in Alcina's chronicle, he never found out what he was. Upon reexamining his work, he interviewed a mute asog and he only speculated that he was a hermaphrodite. However, Alcina also hinted at other gay identities in precolonial Philippines: "Some [that is, not all] effeminate men were also chosen by him" (3: 257). In the manuscript's section titled "Account of the Pagan Rites and Ceremonies of the Indians of the Philippine

Islands," the bayog was described as a "priest dressed in female garb." The manuscript extensively described the native priest, revealing his sexual activities:

> Ordinarily they dress as women, act like prudes and are so effeminate that one who does not know them would believe they are women. Almost all are impotent for the reproductive act, and thus they marry other males and sleep with them as man and wife and have carnal knowledge.
>
> Ellos hordinariamente en traje mugeril su modo melindre y menios estran cifeminado que/quien no los conoce jusgara ser mugeres. Casi todos son ynpotentes para el acto de la generacion y asi se casan con toro ba-/ron y duermen juntos como marido y muger y tienen sus actos carnales. (qtd. in Garcia, *PGC* 181)

Garcia writes, "[m]ales other than the gender-crossers were perfectly capable of engaging in sex with other males, and this 'capability' went largely unchecked in the Spanish accounts" (*PGC* 183). In this sense, one may mention that the asog is certainly effeminate, but it does not mean that an effeminate man could directly be a minister like the asog. This makes the inquiry more complicated. This begs the question, who is the bayot? What constitutes his identity? How can he know or determine his gender and sexuality?

By historicizing the cultural underpinnings in the bayot's identity, one can also see the many points to consider when using Western epistemes. At least for this discussion, Judith Butler's idea of gender as performativity (29) may come to mind. For instance, the idea of loob remains to be a crucial concept in determining one's identity due to the strong influence of the Catholic faith in the Philippine context. To some degree, the logic of a psychic self—a core, to borrow Butler's term—remains relevant even if it is articulated by the body. In "Performativity, the Bakla, and the Orientalizing Gaze" (2000), Garcia interrogates Butler's arguments on performativity because "its assumptions cannot necessarily be operationalized in the Philippines without incurring incalculable notional and political risks" (266). In this way, it would be difficult to determine and define one's gender and sexual orientation based solely on performativity because our approach is more culturally specific. For instance, the idea of drag serves as a political statement in the United States but in the Philippines, it serves as a way for self-expression and self-rectification (of one's gender on the body). In a study conducted by scholar Patrick Alcedo in Kalibo, cross-dressing is seen as an individual act for gay men to localize and express their faith (112-22). These cultural specificities, therefore, interrogate the applicability of performativity (among many other Western models of sexual orientations, and gender identities and expressions) in the Philippine context.

The possibilities of rewriting and reexamining history of the bayot are endless. There is a clear lacuna of archival materials that may have contributed to that myth-making process of the bayot as a respected and powerful figure in society. In this sense, could there be a tradition in the past that remains unaccounted for or undocumented? How would these materials reimagine our understanding of the bayot? Speculative as these questions may be, they will certainly create events that interrogate the commonsensical understanding of Philippine gay culture and history. By undertaking a genealogical reading of the bayot, one opens more layers of complexities that help us understand who we are as individuals but, ironically, also challenge the LGBT's long-held myth that validated the community. In the end, the task of locating the bayot's origin will perpetually remain a quest.

Conclusion

The asog, which is arguably the earliest representation of the Cebuano gay identity, has played an important role in Philippine society and history. During the early Spanish period, he was documented to be a gender-crosser, transvestite/transgender, sodomite, effeminate, lunatic, and thief, among other definitions. During the late Spanish colonial period, this later changed as the word asog was used to describe a heretic and sterile woman. Terms specifically for effeminacy and cowardice were introduced, such as the "bantot" and "bayog." These terms may have been mispronounced or misheard that, in any case, this would later become the bayot. Around the same time, these were also associated with nationalist and secularist movements. Additionally, dissociating effeminacy from religious heresy might have also been a result of empiricist and liberal thinking common at that time. This would later pave the way for homosexuality as a scientific concept to be attached to the bayot, which would occur in the American colonial period. This elusive definition and pronunciation may have given the identity (and its meaning) an equally elusive but conforming characteristic—one that would also become subversive—to Western, colonial, and Catholic imperatives.

For example, the existence of the asog questioned the ethnocentric view the priests had when they first arrived in the Philippines. According to Fr. Chirino and Fr. Alcina, he was perceived to be an effeminate minister for Satan who deceived locals by looting them. He was also seen to be a madman and heretic. With the idea of conquering the islands and converting the locals, priests had to describe the asog negatively to warrant their claim to the islands. It may appear that the asog was silenced in the colonizing narrative, but his existence ultimately queers the legitimacy of the Spanish colonial and religious rule. This is exemplified by exposing the untranslatability of Catholic models of gender and sexuality into the local communities. His crucial role situated him in a position of power, which made him an important religious and cultural figure in the community. This would ultimately lead to his "eradication."

Despite the "disappearance" of the asog in chronicles, specters about him still prevailed. For instance, the prevalent association of the priest as gay men still existed in the form of riddles. In addition, dictionaries in the late Spanish colonial period also included terms such as "asog," "bayog," and "bantot." Based on the findings, there is an implied shift of the term "asog" as gender-crosser, to being exclusively religious when it was linked to a minister of false gods, in addition to a few associations with infertility. Moreover, the bantot and bayog would become signifiers of effeminacy and cowardice, which were formerly associated with the asog. Effeminate men also became involved in nationalist (read: anti-Spanish) movements. This shift might have been caused by the modernizing and nationalizing consciousness of the people. This came as an effect of opening the country to the world that allowed the influx of ideas and cultures to the Philippines.

Early Philippine gay identities like the bayot, I argue, have stemmed from the asog. Their characteristics are similar as both identities relate to effeminacy, madness, sodomy, and transgenderism. However, I also forward my position that due to the shift of pronunciation or hearing as well as poorly written documentation, categories of Philippine gay identities generate a sense of ambiguity—that is, the definitions and classifications of the bayot are difficult to capture. As a result, translating Philippine gay identities to other Western languages would be "impossible." Simply put, words such as "bakla," "bantot," "bayot," "agi" would have no direct or exact linguistic and cultural translations in other cultures and languages.

The elusive definition, poor documentation, and mis/pronunciation may have resulted in the bayot's ambiguous definition and existence. The lack of available sources prompted a more nostalgic and "idealistic" view of precolonial Philippine gay identities. For example, there have been claims that the bayot had garnered power and respect in the community. This is not to say that it is not true. Rather, these are not occasionally anchored on actual documents. As a result, one might articulate a nativist understanding of the asog, which becomes the basis of the bayot's history. Yet, this understanding also helps in determining what constitutes the bayot's identity and what roles he performs in modern-day society. However, what is clear is how his existence and role constantly interrogated and, ironically, conformed to Western-centered notions of gender and sex as well as concepts of patriarchal and heteronormative normalcy and morality.

The asog, then, became an ironic metaphor of both subversion and conformity. He was a queer and marginalized figure who helped establish the Spanish colonial order but also unintentionally subverted the order that he conformed to. He was the signifier of a residual past which contradicted the Western, colonial, and Catholic

ideologies that were not completely implanted in the natives' consciousness. In fact, concepts relating to the asog and his diachronic representations (i.e., current Philippine gay identities) continue to question the relevance of this colonial (and oftentimes, universalist) rhetoric within postcolonial Philippines. Truly, examples like the asog demonstrate how the natives simultaneously obeyed and contradicted the colonial social order. Ironically, the complexities in Philippine gay identities are a result of how they were inscribed in history. Thus, our understanding of the bayot comes from the (un)doing of the Spanish colonial regime. It is imperative that queering our Philippine gay identities entails some form of inscribing and evaluation of their genealogy.

The asog and its fantasies remain crucial elements in the myth of the bayot's history. The bayot's "pure" or "authentic" origin is fetishized when in fact, he is an articulation of a colonial and Catholic-laden language. This is the irony of accounting for the bayot's genealogy. The reader will deal with many fantasies as they skim through history, creating sites for negotiations and interpretations. The bayot reifies in memory those which are articulated in our deteriorating archives. He is that specter, which upon articulation, has been lost in inscribing. The genealogy of the bayot shows the legacy of our Spanish colonial masters. The moment they wrote about them was the exact "event"[13] that forever defined them as a gender and as an identity.

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GLOSSARY OF SELECTED TERMS

Asog – the precolonial term for effeminate ministers of false gods; he usually performed religious tasks for the community; he was an apprentice of the babaylan.

Babaylan – the female priestess in precolonial Philippines; she was similar to the asog in terms of functions and duties.

Bacla/bakla – Tagalog term for gay and/or homosexual.

Bayog – effeminate man; coward; to act feminine; weak; synonymous to the term bantot.

Bayot – Cebuano term for gay and/or homosexual; often used as a pejorative, especially to refer to "weak" or "flimsy" men.

Labas – literally means "outside" in English; in the study's context, it means the body or the flesh; may be associated with biological sex.

Loob – literally means "inside" in English; in the study's context, it means the soul or the inner psyche.

NOTES

1. A comprehensive list of these activities can be found in William Henry Scott's *Barangay: Sixteenth-Century Philippine Culture and Society* (159).
2. *Ejercicios* published by the Spaniards are some examples that validate this claim. For example, these books described how to use one's body part to determine whether their deeds were morally correct or not.
3. Alcina does not appear to have visited Cebu, but instead may have stayed long in Leyte and Samar. However, in *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898* (1906-1907), Blair and Robertson mention that Alcina "labored in the Visayas missions and was once rector of the Cebu college" in 1643 (53: 305). It is quite inaccurate, therefore, to say that Alcina's experience was only particular to one part of the Visayas islands when he traveled around the Visayas islands (that is, Cebu, Leyte, Samar, among many other places) to do his missionary work.
4. I take into consideration Judith Butler's idea of performativity here. She writes that gender is a "repeated stylization of the body, as a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (33). In addition, queer Asian scholars have critiqued and reread Butler's famous concept due to its applicability in multicultural and non-Western contexts.
5. Both Chirino and Alcina released the natives from the suffering caused by the asog and baylan. For example, both missionaries helped those who consulted the asog for help and were left miserable. With God's help and guidance, they were able to heal them of their illnesses and enlightened them to be converted to Christianity.
6. This discussion is supplemented by Rafael's "Translating Submission" in *Contracting Colonialism* (1989).
7. Some of the studies relating to Austronesian and Cebuano languages include John Wolff's *Proto-Austronesian Phonology with Glossary* (2010) and *A Dictionary of Cebuano Visayan* (1972); Paul Zorc's "The Bisayan Dialects of the Philippine Subgrouping and Reconstruction" (1975) and *Core Etymological Dictionary of Filipino* (1983); and other local studies including Akademiyang-Bisaya-approved "Cebuano Phonetics and Orthography" (2011).
8. This article, "*Bayot* ug walay dapat," is found in the 6 July 1916 issue of *Bag-ong Kusog*.
9. Studies including Torres's inquiry on the history of the Cebuano bayot (2019) and Suarez's examination of the medicalization of Tagalog bakla (2017) are examples where Philippine gay identities are framed within the discourse of medicine and psychology. Generally, they see that the bayot and bakla are articulated within the logic of pathology and disease. This is important as these processes frame the bayot and bakla as homosexuals—a concept which was relatively absent in almost the entire 333 years of Spanish colonial rule.

10. They were Filipinos who wrote for the priests, which gave them the opportunity to know how to write and read. They wrote some of the earliest texts by a Filipino. Mojares writes extensively about them in *Origins and Rise of the Filipino Novel: A Generic Study of the Novel Until 1940*.

11. Sister Mary John Mananzan's examination of women before and during the Spanish colonial periods and Cristina Szanton Blanc's essay about gender in lowland and highland communities imagines the Filipina woman (that is, babaylan) as a figure of power before the Spaniards came. To some extent, it is true, but their perspectives also fail to account for the impact of Catholicism and colonialism in the Philippines at that time.

12. Garcia describes the loob as psychospiritual because the loob is not scientific. The loob as such is not to be taken as an empirical fact, which means that the understanding of loob is based on analysis rather than observable data. It also implies that the reading of the loob is not "psychological" (i.e., a scientific study of mind and behavior). Garcia also expounds on the idea of loob as psychospiritual in a religious sense. The loob here is a "metaphor for psychic depth and subjectivity . . . as imagistic as it is semantically expansive: 'insideness'" (*PGC* 73).

13. I borrow this term from philosopher Jacques Derrida who defines it as "ruptures" or "redoubling" (i.e., an imitation) that may elicit interrogations (or to be more appropriate, "deconstruct") within dominant narratives (1978).

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Francis Luis M. Torres (fmtorres@u.nus.edu) is currently pursuing his PhD in Cultural Studies in Asia at the Department of Communications and New Media at the National University of Singapore. He received his MA degree in Comparative Literature from the University of the Philippines Diliman where he examined the genealogy of Philippine gay culture. He was also an assistant professor at the High School Department of the University of the Philippines Cebu. His current research focuses on Asian queer and gay theory and criticism, Philippine digital cultures, and new media studies.