Homosexuality and Transvestism in the Philippines:

The Cebuan Filipino Bayot and Lakin-on

Donn V. Hart*

A major conclusion of the pioneering cross-cultural investigation, *Patterns of Sexual Behavior*, was that "It is most regrettable that an area of inquiry [sexual behavior] having such fundamental importance in both its practical and its theoretical aspects should have been so inadequately studied and so incompletely understood" (Ford and Beach 1951: 267). This general conclusion, although made nearly two decades ago, still applies to one Southeast Asian nation, the Philippines.

The paucity of information on the sexual activities of Christian Filipinos prompted one clinical psychologist to report recently that "Filipino attitudes and behavior in the sexual realm are not much studied and are certainly not well understood as yet" (Sechrest 1966: 32). Basic sources for Filipino society and culture rarely examine or include detailed data on sexual behavioral patterns (Chicago 1956; Pal 1956; Nurje 1965; Nydegger and Nydegger 1966). The authors of a new book on Filipino culture and personality, a subject area wherein sexual behavior is of great importance, warn that "With respect to all aspects of sexual behavior, we must caution that our data are limited" (Guthrie and Jacobs 1966: 147).

This lacuna becomes more extensive when the subject of Christian Filipino sexual behavior is limited to homosexuality and

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transvestism; published sources on this subject are almost non-existent. The only scholarly article on this topic by a Filipino discusses two cases involving male and female homosexuality, but the study is so brief and superficial as to be uninformative (Aquino 1965: 20-25). In a recent issue of a Filipino university journal, three articles dealt with psychological aspects of Filipino culture, including deviant behavior, but none mentioned homosexuality or transvestism (Samson 1965a and 1965b; Merino 1965).

References in the popular press, however, to homosexuals and transvestites are not uncommon. The berdache, the transvestite, the overt homosexual who does not cross-dress, effeminate males, and even small children who prefer to play with persons of the opposite sex normally are all described under one heading. These various types are identified by a single Philippine term or one of its cognates. The native words are consistently translated into English as “tomboy” and “sissy” and constantly used with multiple referents (Guthrie and Jacobs 1966: 139).

The importance of this subject for a fuller understanding of Philippine society and culture in general and of homosexuality and transvestism in particular encouraged the publication of this exploratory article. Precise comparison among Filipinos of different cultural-linguistic groups is almost impossible, due to lack of data. Developmental histories of Filipino sexual deviants are unavailable. The contribution of this article is that it outlines in broad terms the contours of homosexuality and transvestism for the largest cultural-linguistic group in the Philippines. It is believed that these data are valuable, since “Workers in the various subfields of psychology and sociology urgently need cross-cultural data of this sort so that as the new approaches to homosexuality develop, the findings will not be conceptually limited to Western societies as were the older results” (Sonen-
schein 1966: 76).

Trustworthy data on homosexuality and transvestism are limited almost completely to studies made among urban Manila residents. This article reports the results of field research among the residents of a small village and in the provincial capital of Negros Island. These latter data extend comparative knowledge of Fili-
pino homosexuality and transvestism by including a predominantly peasant group who live in a different cultural-linguistic region beyond the capital of the Republic.

Research Area: Negros Island

Data for this examination of Christian Filipino homosexuality and transvestism were gathered during an extended period of residence in a rural Filipino municipality. The original research plan did not include an intensive investigation of this aspect of village life. However, considerable information on this topic was collected incidentally over the years as the field research progressed. In 1967, a preliminary draft of this article was prepared. During the summer of the same year, the author was able to return for a short period to Negros for additional research. At this time, data were also collected in Dumaguete, the provincial capital.¹

South of Luzon and north of Mindanao is the cluster of Philippine islands known collectively as the Bisayas (Visayas). The most numerous cultural-linguistic group in this area is that of the Cebuans (Cebuanos or Sugboanon) who mainly inhabit Cebu, eastern Negros, Siquijor, Bohol, western Leyte, and the coastal fringes of Northern Mindanao.

Negros Island, divided into two provinces, Negros Oriental and Negros Occidental, had an officially estimated 1964 population of 2,225,000. The two provinces, in turn, are subdivided into municipalities. Siaton municipality, situated at the southern tip of Negros Oriental, is about 35 miles southwest of Dumaguete. Daily bus service connects Siaton with this city.

In Siaton poblacion, the municipality's administrative center, are located the public buildings housing the mayor and other municipal and some provincial authorities. The largest municipal stores—owned by the Chinese—the Catholic church, and the parish priest's residence are also in the poblacion. Siaton poblacion had a 1960 census population of 2,862 persons.

Barrio (village) Caticugan, the research community, had a population of 720 persons in 1965 (author's census). The village, a 30-45 minute walk from the poblacion, is inhabited by subsist-
ence farmers, most of whom own all or much of the land they cultivate. Most barrio folk reside in clustered bamboo-walled, palm-thatched, pile dwellings, without electricity or running water. All are Cebuan-speaking Roman Catholics. By provincial standards, there are neither rich nor very poor families in the village. Most residents were born in Caticugan or in adjacent communities.

Dumaguete, a city of 47,000 (1960 census) is situated on the southeastern coast of Negros Oriental. Dumaguete’s population size should not obscure the fact that only 38 per cent of the people are considered urban residents (Pal 1963: 14). The large majority of residents live in peripheral rural communities and make their living by farming small rice and corn fields or by small-scale fishing. Accordingly, urban Dumaguete is a relatively small town.

“Downtown” Dumaguete consists of several major streets, each half a dozen blocks long, where are located grocery, hardware, and general merchandizing stores; plus several motion picture theaters, tailor shops, and cafés. A large public marketplace is located next to the Catholic church. The city also has three hospitals and the same number of private colleges and universities. As the capital, Dumaguete is the political, administrative, and trade center of Negros Oriental.

Among the many evening activities taking place in Dumaguete, one, reported by a Filipina in a popular magazine, is appropriate to the topic of this article.

No worries over birth control bother the local hermaphrodites [transvestites] ("butterflies") who walk along the boulevard at night, though. Arm in arm, they mince past the onlooker, calling loudly to each other, waving limp wrists and swaying soft hips, turning arrogant whenever some high-spirited male calls their bluff and touches a stray flank. "Hoy, bastos" [Stop it, you ruffian]. One can never quite get that arch tone [Polotan 1967: 60].

**Definition of the Cebuan Terms, Báyot and Lakín-on**

English translations of báyot and lakín-on (from laláki, “male”) indicate that the two terms are synonyms for homosexuality, transvestism, hermaphroditism, lesbianism, and general deviance
from sexual norms (Hermosima and Lopez 1966). These two vernacular words have the identical calibrated meaning of the popular use of berdache in anthropological literature (Angelino and Shedd 1955: 121). In Siaton and Dumaguete, báyot and lakin-on may refer respectively to men or women who only slightly exhibit physical stigmata or behavioral characteristics thought typical of the opposite sex, to transvestites, or to overt, aggressive homosexuals who do not cross-dress.

The Cebuan vocabulary, however, distinguishes between degrees of “bayotness.” A slightly effeminate man is dalopapa or binabáye (Tag. binabaeng). When these terms are used in reference to a chicken, they describe a rooster with henlike plumage (Hermosima and Lopez 1966: 69). Babae-babae (from babáye, “female”) or báyot-bayot are more effeminate males, who do not cross-dress and who usually are not considered active sexual inverts.

Male transvestites, who normally regard members of their sex as erotic objects, are “real” or “true” bayot. Frequently used female terms of address for Siaton bayot are Inday, Dan, and Ding (from the nicknames, Dading and Diding).

There are no additional terms in the local Cebuan vocabulary for the lakin-on. Lakin-on refers either to a lesbian or to a woman with some masculine physical features who often does tasks regarded primarily as a man’s work. In Siaton, no lakin-on cross-dressed, although female transvestites exist elsewhere in Negros. Local lakin-on were less common than bayot in southern Negros, reflecting the findings of cross-cultural studies that homosexual behavior and transvestism are “generally more common for men than for women” (Ford and Beach 1951: 257; Brown 1961: 1013).

These various referents for bayot are not unique to the Cebuan Bisayan cultural-linguistic area.

In the Philippines there is a [Tagalog] word, bakla, which is widely understood and which is used to refer to persons who are homosexual in their behavior. But it is also used to refer to transvestites, to effeminate males, and even to boys who are simply less active than others in games and outdoor activity. We doubt seriously that the word “homosexual” would serve as wide a variety of functions in the U.S. [Sechrest and Flores n.d.: 9].
Other Tagalog terms for the male homosexual are *binabae* (*babae, “woman”) or *parang babae*—the latter translates as “like a woman.” The broad referential scope of these words is indicated by the following quotation: “At puberty boys band with boys or they are teased as *bakla* or *binabae* (sissy) . . .” (Guthrie and Jacobs 1966: 141). *Mag-darling* (“like darling”), sharing one meaning of the Cebuan lakin-on, refers to a girl who has a crush on another female. The Tagalog equivalent for lakin-on is *binalaki* (or tomboy), which “has only been coined recently, as far as we know” (Guthrie and Jacobs 1966: 139).

Bayot, lakin-on, and bakla lack the clamorous condemnatory meaning of the English terms, homosexual, lesbian, or transvestite. Filipinos often translate these terms as “sissy” or “tomboy”; these synonyms are also given in the latest published Cebuan-English dictionary (Hermosisima and Lopez 1966: 65, 262). Tomboy and sissy are also used in Manila newspapers to describe incidents involving overt homosexuals and/or transvestites. The various meanings of these terms vividly contrast with usage in the United States where, as Sechrest and Flores comment, “Homosexuality is such a grave concern that it must be kept a non-overlapping term.”

*The Bayot in General*

Identification of a person as a bayot or lakin-on in Siaton is based on both physical features and behavioral characteristics. Cross-dressing is not essential for such classification. A boy who is inactive in male games and/or physically frail for his age may be teased by congeneres as a bayot, even when only eight or nine years old. The material below, referring to the 1920s, is taken from a personal narrative of a Siaton poblacion resident.

During this year [when the informant was attending the third grade in the elementary school in Siaton poblacion] I figured out folk dances, but I usually resented being paired with “ugly” partners. In short plays I resented being assigned to play “sissy” roles.

As a boy I was frail, delicate, sickly. For this ungainly appearance I was branded as a sissy [bayot]. This I resented very much. I developed an inferiority complex. As a consequence I had an aversion for all things that called for “muscles.” Assoc-
ation with healthy [i.e. physically strong] boys was not enjoyable for I could not [even] keep up with girls. This association with the opposite sex merely aggravated the pranks of the big boys that I was indeed a "bayot."

Due to my physical deficiency I chose the games that did not call for the use of extraordinary strength. One of those games that I used to play with unusual ability was the game of marbles. . . . Big boys didn't matter to me when they played against me. Before long I had a collection of marbles as winnings.

In the primary grades my Aunt, Mrs. ——— [name] made me clothing modeled after [the pictures in the] catalogues. I hated this type of clothing called mameluko [informant described dress as similar to Lord Fauntleroy clothing, but the term comes from the Spanish mameluco, for rompers] as I would hate a vicious enemy. Those clothes merely accentuated myissy looks. There were instances when I was forced to go to school attired with this "enemy." The boys had a holiday teasing me about the way I looked.

I did not possess the nerve to tell my Mother why I hated to wear those clothes for fear she would not understand my feelings. All I could do was to bear meekly the humiliations with the solemn vow to make the score even in the academic field. This I did in the classroom. I ridiculed the big boys whenever they couldn't answer questions [Hart 1956: 263-64].

This informant outgrew his childhood physical frailty, married, raised a family in the poblacion, and was never referred to as a bayot.

This attitude of Siaton residents toward such children is not unique, for in a rural municipality in southwest Leyte a small boy who "engaged in activities which are culturally defined as inappropriate for his sex" is called bayen-on (babayen-on) or "girlish," and a girl, lakin-on, or "boyish." These words are used in a "manner to convey sarcasm, and indeed it does shame a boy or a girl because the child spoken to will become pugnacious when called by such terms" (Pal 1956: 384).

Other typical bayot traits are a high-pitched laugh, hands dangling from limp wrists, and a mincing walk. Bayot are expert dancers; one informant thought this skill might be inborn. Siaton informants state that one sure technique for determining the sex of a suspected male transvestite is to look at his Adam's
apple, which is "always larger and more prominent than the female's."

Male transvestites in both Siaton and Dumaguete rarely dare to wear a dress in public. A bayot wearing a dress in Dumaguete usually is taken by the police to the station, and is firmly reprimanded but not arrested. One informant told of his surprise in seeing a woman "dragged" from a dance by a policeman before learning that he was a transvestite. Amy, a Siaton transvestite, never wore a dress when walking through the poblacion, shopping, or visiting friends. Community restriction on his public attire was rationalized by Amy as somewhat reasonable, "since it is distasteful to see the ugly knees and large calves of a bayot."

Bayot (including Amy) wear dresses in the privacy of their own homes or in friends' dwellings. Reporting on one Dumaguete bayot, the informant stated: "During the day, he wears a duster [in his house]. At night, a girl's dress. During the day, when he goes to market, he wears jeans, with step-ins [low-heeled women's shoes], and light lipstick." Another informant said: "From the movie, if they [bayot] cannot attract men, they go home. In attractive dresses with perfume and decorated step-ins, they wait for men coming from the show."

In large cities, where anonymity is possible, bayot wear dresses in public. Amy said this was common practice of bayot living in Cebu City. In fact, when he resided in a large city in Mindanao, "I wore dresses even when shopping at the marketplace." The youthful bayot who cross-dresses may appear as an extremely attractive Filipina. A high-ranking Siaton municipal official unknowingly danced most of the evening during one fiesta with a visiting transvestite, to the concealed merriment of his more discerning friends.

In public cross-dressing, bayot normally wear slacks or stretch-pants, blouses, and often "falsies." Amy had "falsies," but rarely wore them unless going to a dance or visiting in Dumaguete. He wrapped a towel around his hips to produce a more feminine figure. His long hair was marcelled, and sometimes "teased" in the latest mode. Eyebrows were shaved and penciled in; long fingernails brightly polished. Amy used lipstick and eyeshadow; once he had sparkles on the upper eyelids. He rarely used rouge.
or powder, two cosmetics that are not commonly used by most Filipinas. Amy had perfected the flirt’s posterior-wagging gait and the shrill laughter of the female.

Social Characteristics of the Siaton Bayot

No systematic census of the bayot and lakin-on in Siaton poblacion was attempted. An actual count would be difficult, if not impossible, for disagreement would occur regarding those who were dalopapa, bayot-bayot, etc. However, some data on this topic were collected through interviews.

Two self-proclaimed overt homosexuals and one transvestite resided in the poblacion. None of these bayot made any effort to hide their deviancy. Amy—his assumed female name—fits the revised definition of a berdache: a male (or female) who assumes the role and status of the opposite sex and is viewed by the community as being of one sex physiologically but as having assumed the role and status of the opposite sex (Angelino and Shedd 1955: 125). Amy dressed as a young Filipina and proudly related his sexual adventures with males.

Perhaps a dozen men, both single and married, young and old, in the poblacion were referred to as bayot-bayot. Some were regarded as not really bayot-bayot but dalopapa, because of slightly effeminate behavior or traits, e.g. a high-pitched voice. In addition, some Siaton males secretly engaged in occasional homosexual activities, unknown to the community or their friends. One poblacion bayot insisted there were “more than a few” men in this category; he claimed sexual relations with one. The accuracy of this claim cannot be assessed, of course, but it is believed that the number of covert homosexuals is very small.

The Caticugan census of bayot and lakin-on is more precise and dependable, since the village was the major research community. Two bachelor brothers, Juan and Cesar, who shared one household, were regarded as bayot. Their deceased mother was a barrio mananámbal (shaman), but the sons are not. In 1951, when visiting this household to talk with the mother, one son was seen doing kitchen tasks generally performed by women.

Esteban and Mario, two bachelor brothers who in 1951 oc-
occupied a second household, were also considered bayot. Later the older brother, Esteban, quarreled with Mario and moved to a separate dwelling nearby. In 1967, these two brothers were still living apart. Esteban, also a mananambal, was considered more bayot-bayot than Mario, since “he cannot always be trusted with women.” Esteban probably was bisexual rather than homosexual (Kinsey, Pomeroy, and Martin 1948: 657). Other Caticugan shaman and those in adjacent barrios, and the mananabang (traditional midwives, including one male), were not considered, with one minor exception, by the barrio folk to be either bayot or lakin-on.

Two additional bayot—both single—named Jose and Pedro, also resided in Caticugan. Both were teenagers; their classification was based mainly on their effeminate appearance and behavior, with sexual deviancy only a possible factor. One Caticugan mother volunteered the explanation that her small six-year-old son, called Inday, “is a bayot-bayot.” She hastily added, “But he has a penis.” Several barrio parents called a daughter or son by a nickname normally used for children of the opposite sex. There were no cases in Caticugan nor in Siaton poblacion where the child was dressed in the clothing of the opposite sex, as occurred elsewhere in the province.

The Caticugan barrio folk considered only Juan, Cesar, and Mario as bayot who sought male partners. It was agreed, however, that the other bayot might make sexual advances to men “when drunk,” suggesting a higher threshold for homosexuality. The Caticugan bayot were shy, somewhat withdrawn persons. During our residence in the village, they rarely participated in the various barrio celebrations, e.g. weddings, funerals, or baptismal parties. Esteban was the most social of the group, but his contacts with the barrio folk were largely when they came to buy a drink at his residence or sought medical advice from him.

No Siaton bayot were regarded as hermaphrodites or intersexes. However, several informants believed that some bayot had a vagina above the anus. The government physician, assigned to Siaton, personally reported examining a small boy in an interior barrio who had an underdeveloped vagina with a normal penis. This child is more accurately described as an
gynandromorph than a hermaphrodite (Kinsey, Pomeroy, and Martin 1948: 658).

Amy, who frequented the various fiesta dances in southern Negros, was questioned regarding the number of male transvestites in the poblaciones in this part of the island. He said that there were “plenty” in Valencia, one in Bacong, and four in Bayawan—“two who are old and two young ones.” In 1966 the transvestite living in Bonawon, a large Siaton barrio along the national road, moved to Cebu City. A Siaton barrio schoolteacher told of a second-grade student who was called a bayot by his friends. “He does not get angry. He is very graceful in his bearing.” Dumaguete informants estimated that there were 25-30 male and about 20-25 female transvestites in that city. These estimations did not include bayot and lakin-on who did not cross-dress or who were in the bayot-bayot category.

Table 1 permits a few generalizations concerning Caticugan and the poblacion bayot. First, Caticugan bayot were members of unusually large households for the barrio, where the average

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and birth rank</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Birth-place</th>
<th>Schooling (grade)</th>
<th>Other household members</th>
<th>Siblings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Juan (2d)</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Caticugan</td>
<td>3d</td>
<td>Cesar</td>
<td>7Br, 2Si</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cesar (5th)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>2d</td>
<td>Juan</td>
<td>See Juan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mario (4th)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>8Br, 1Si</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esteban (9th)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>See Mario</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jose (5th)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>6th</td>
<td>Fa, 2Si, 1Br</td>
<td>7Br, 3Si</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedro (6th)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Parents, 4Si, 2Br, 1 nephew</td>
<td>3Br, 6Si</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy (6th)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Poblacion</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>2Br</td>
<td>7Br, 3Si</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manuel (3d)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>6th</td>
<td>Widowed Si, 4 nephews, 1Br</td>
<td>1Br, 8Si</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlos (3d)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>6th</td>
<td>Parents, 2Si, 1Br</td>
<td>5Br, 4Si</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisco (5th)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>3d year High School</td>
<td>See Carlos</td>
<td>See Carlos</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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size was five persons (as of 1965). Similar statistical data are not available for the average size of poblacion households. Second, in two families (those of Juan and Esteban and Carlos and Francisco) other siblings were also bayot. Third, only Esteban was the last born, a birth ranking believed to encourage the future development of the deviant. Fourth, Manuel was the only bayot whose siblings were all females. In Pedro’s family, there were twice as many sisters as brothers. In the rest of the families, brothers outnumbered sisters.

A final generalization concerning the bayot listed in Table 1 is that with the exception of Pedro and Carlos, they represent households at the lower end of the local socioeconomic scale. In both Caticugan and the poblacion, the dwelling usually is an accurate indication of the occupants’ economic resources. Juan and Cesar occupied a very small, ramshackle dwelling. Esteban’s house can only be described as a flimsy, one-room hut, in which he could not stand erect. By Caticugan standards, these houses were much smaller, constructed of cheaper materials, and more poorly furnished than the average. Mario’s dwelling was a typical Caticugan residence; whereas the house of Pedro’s parents was one of the better ones in the barrio. Data from Dumaguete, however, indicate that some bayot and lakin-on come from families of comfortable, if not affluent, means.

An intensive study of the developmental history of these deviants was not attempted. However, some information of the life history of the poblacion transvestite was obtained. Amy claimed that he was first called a bayot when in the first grade. Several people who knew him as a child, including a former teacher, remarked they were surprised that he became a bayot, for there were no visible signs of these tendencies during childhood. Amy’s first homosexual experience occurred with his seduction by a local bayot in “the silong [space under the pile dwelling] of my aunt’s house.” Later Amy was hired as the assistant of an itinerant bayot hairdresser, traveling with his employer throughout Negros. Amy had never experienced heterosexual intercourse and found the idea repugnant. He would like “to have an operation that would make me a real woman but I lack the money.” The idea of “marriage” to a “husband” was not attractive, for Amy
asserted that this would “make it impossible to have boy friends . . . or any variety!”

Although his family and near kin would prefer Amy not to be a transvestite, the mother is “not unhappy for one of my brothers is no good.” Amy stated that this brother would beat him when he attempted to cross-dress. Later the brother was imprisoned for a stabbing, and Amy, then living in Mindanao with some family members, made the transition to female garb. This was shortly after the father, a fish vendor, died in 1963. In 1964-65, Amy's mother ran a small stall in the poblacion marketplace.

When Amy first returned to Siaton in 1964 as a transvestite, the local people were critical but not violently hostile. More recently, however, he felt accepted, for there was little open criticism. Teasing or joking was limited to small children and a few young men. Amy does not become angry when teased, but states that: “I lose my temper when someone tries to block my way or touch me” (on the “breasts” or buttocks).

The Lakin-on

Lakin-on are women with masculine physical characteristics, e.g. “more muscles in their legs and arms than women,” “a stiff, tough body,” and a “flat chest.” Lakin-on have a “brave look,” i.e. they lack the softer, more gentle (ideal), facial features of women. A respected Caticugan midwife is regarded a partial lakin-on, for she rides a horse, “works very fast, is active, and does not fear to challenge [argue with] men.” Several lakin-on reportedly had “kaiñgin [swiddens] in the nearby mountains” or regularly plowed their lowland fields. They may also “smoke and drink like men.”

Cross-dressing lakin-on are normally regarded as lesbians, for they “only love women.” The popular dress for these lakin-on are tight-fitting denim or corduroy trousers (locally called “cowboy pants”). Some wear the increasingly popular stretch-pants. As do many men, they may tie the front ends of their shirt in a knot at the waist. Informants reported that some lakin-on have crew or flat-top haircuts. Most, however, wear their hair “more like the Beatles,” i.e. shorter than the typical Filipina. Kuragán,
or *kurakuragang*, is the name for the sweethearts of Dumaguete lakin-on. In Siaton, these terms described women (or bayot) who exaggerate their femininity and flirt excessively, i.e. coquettes or hussies (Hermosisima and Lopez 1966: 144).

No lakin-on resided in Caticugan. A young poblacion school-teacher who did not, of course, cross-dress, was believed to be a lakin-on. Her features were strikingly masculine; she walked like a man, e.g. taking longer steps than most women and with a vigorous gait. Cross-dressing was neither observed nor reported for Siaton municipality lakin-on. Many local lakin-on were not regarded as lesbians, but as women whose mannish features and behavior set them apart from the typical female.

Stories were plentiful of lakin-on living in other villages or towns. Two lakin-on, both living alone, resided in a village adjacent to Caticugan. Several other lakin-on, in different municipalities, reportedly lived with another woman “like a husband.” In one municipality, a lakin-on and her kuragan lived together “like a regularly married couple.” In still another municipality, a lakin-on resided with another woman, and it was reported that “they have regular family quarrels.” This couple was the object of considerable local gossip when they began to occupy the same dwelling, “but people no longer talk about them, for they have been together for many years.” This lakin-on was a municipal government clerk.

In 1951, a lakin-on visited Caticugan as a member of a small string band (*comparsa*) hired to play at a wedding celebration. She sang with considerable skill; her songs were directed at another woman in the audience “who is her sweetheart.” Of the scores of different comparsa observed in Siaton municipality, this was the only band with a female member. Friends pointed her out as a “real lakin-on” from a nearby barrio. She did have a stockier figure than most females, and unusually muscular legs. Her dress was typical female attire except for an Eisenhower-type jacket, which women rarely wear. She supposedly resided with another woman, kept livestock (cattle), and managed her small coconut grove. The last two activities, physically demanding tasks, are invariably associated with males.

A segment from a personal narrative of a life-long Caticugan
resident summarizes the various local referents for lakin-on. The informant is discussing the period immediately following his father's death in the late 1920s.

My mother was a lakin-on when we were small so we could not help her. The floor of our house had many holes. She would get bamboos and split them and then repair the floor. [Question: What is a lakin-on?] A lakin-on is a woman who does a man's job. Mother knew how to get bamboo, gather rattan, make rope, and twist rattan into rope, and to weave. [Question: Do lakin-on sometimes love a woman?] Yes, but that is a different kind than mother. Mother was called a lakin-on because she worked like a man. She did not love any women.

I had a cousin who was also a lakin-on. She was never married because no man could get near her. She was never married and lived by herself. This cousin, if men wanted to sleep in her house, did not like it. If they tried, she would stab them. But she liked women to sleep in her house. But they only slept in her house once. The next day they would say: "What kind of woman is she? She would hug and kiss us and play with our nipples!" She even had a kaingin. She cut big trees in Sandolot [a barrio adjacent to Caticugan].

This cousin had another lakin-on in the poblacion. They would sleep together and they never told stories the next day, like other women did. This woman also worked in the fields, plowing. [Question: What makes a woman a lakin-on?] I guess it is in-born because they are like that when they are still young. When the lakin-on wears a skirt, they don't let the skirt fall like other women but wear it like a G-string. Even if the skirt is made of abaka or purchased cloth, they wear it like a G-string.

Data on lakin-on in Dumaguete can be presented most effectively by citing cases.

1. Tomboys [lakin-on] go out in groups, like bayot. They usually wait for girls at [name of a local college]. They whistle at them. If one tomboy sees a girl she likes, she tries to introduce herself, and begins to visit her. At first, they give gifts, money, etc., until the girl they like is close to them. Then they express their love.

2. Once I had a tomboy neighbor. When you saw her for the first time you would never think she was a woman. She had masculine arms and feet, with a flat-top haircut. She used to fix our faucet and bring us four cans of water each day. I was surprised why she never charged us. Later I discovered she was courting our maid.
3. One family I know had eleven children, all girls. The fifth child was dressed like a boy by the father until she was 17 years old. She would go with her father to the farm, and help him plow their rice fields. She was also a student in [name of a local college]. Nobody knew she was a girl until during their ROTC. She was selected as one to donate blood. When it was her turn, she fainted. Then it was discovered she was a girl, to the surprise of her girl friend. They have separated, but this tomboy now has another girl friend.

The success some lakin-on have in passing as males is illustrated by a newsstory from the Manila Chronicle (February 19, 1965). The article's caption was: “Groom Shown Up as Tomboy.”

Early this week, a couple signed in for a marriage application at a local Catholic church. The duo's wedding was to be officiated yesterday . . . but was called off.

The reason: the would-be bridegroom turned out to be a woman also.

The status of the future benedict was exposed when the parents of the would-be bride learned about the matter through a friend. To establish the bridegroom's sex a policeman had to be called who subsequently succeeded in identifying the bridegroom as a woman.

Clad in a man's attire and sporting a crew-cut, the tomboy had apparently courted the woman just like any other man until they became sweethearts and nearly got married.

Bayot and Lakin-on Occupations and the Sexual Division of Labor

The listing in Table 2 of the occupations of Dumaguete bayot and lakin-on requires a brief discussion concerning the division of labor by sex in Negros Oriental. A major characteristic of the local division of labor is that for numerous activities the separation is blurred, permitting either males or females to perform the tasks. However, some jobs and chores are reserved solely for one sex. Accordingly, performing tasks or following occupations identified mainly with the opposite sex is an important criterion in the identification of the bayot and lakin-on.

In Negros Oriental, small-scale vending normally is done by females. Women sell tubã (an alcoholic drink made from the
Table 2. Occupations of Bayot and Lakin-on in Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental: 1967

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupations</th>
<th>Bayot</th>
<th>Lakin-on</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dressmaker</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beautician</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manicurist</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk (commercial store)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policewoman</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk (government)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeper²</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maid</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babysitter (yáya)²</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labandera</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuba gatherer³</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuba/vegetable vendor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartender</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior decorator</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musician</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus driver</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artificial paper flower maker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

sap of the coconut tree), vegetables, or home-made rice cakes at small stalls in the marketplace. They also peddle their wares at the barrio events that attract relatively large crowds (e.g. weddings, funerals, fiestas). Table 2 lists three bayot as labandera (Sp. lavandera, one who washes), two as tuba or vegetable vendors, and one as a maker of artificial paper flowers. These activities are considered to be strictly female tasks.

In Caticugan, Esteban was the only male vendor of guhang (another alcoholic beverage, made from the sap of the buri palm). None was seen in the poblacion (Hart 1966: 339-72). A significant part of Esteban's meager cash income was made by selling guhang, often in front of his dwelling, where he had several tables shaded by a palm-thatched shelter. Two women, both young married girls, also sold guhang at their dwellings. On occasion, Esteban also sold rice cakes at barrio gatherings where all the other vendors were women, mainly girls in their
late teens. Finally, artificial paper flowers are usually made to decorate the church or chapel altars; the making of the flowers and the beautification of the altar normally is done by women.

Weaving abaka (Manila hemp) cloth on the home loom and plaiting sleeping mats and large grain storage bags from buri palm strips are regarded primarily as women’s jobs. However, men may plait and not be considered bayot (Hart 1966: 385). Esteban reportedly knew how to weave, but he was never seen weaving. An aged informant said that during her youth (in the 1880s) Caticugan bayot wove abaka and plaited buri. She laughingly remembered that although they did not cross-dress then, the bayot “wore ribbons in their hair.”

A recent study of occupation sex roles as perceived by nearly 500 Filipino male and female high school students indicated that beautician is defined as more a female than a male occupation (Castillo 1961: 6). Table 2 indicates that the most common occupation of bayot in Dumaguete is that of beautician (combined with manicurist). One of the most popular, and prosperous, beauticians in Dumaguete was a bayot who did not cross-dress. (He had moved to Cebu City in 1967.)

Amy was a part-time beautician. He gave permanent waves and set hair in a dwelling near his residence. Prominent women in the poblacion called Amy to their houses to arrange their hair for special events. During the Siaton fiesta, bayot beauticians, including transvestites, came to the community a few days before the start of this annual celebration. They attracted the attention of the younger males, who joked with them as they worked in their temporary stalls in the local stores. For one poblacion fiesta (in 1951), four visiting Dumaguete bayot beauticians spent several days working in the business area.

Another occasion when visiting bayot came to the poblacion occurred with the arrival of an itinerant dramatic troupe—almost unknown locally at present. The group presented traditional Bisayan folk plays on an improvised outdoor stage. A member of the troupe later passed among the audience, soliciting cash donations. Two extremely effeminate appearing and acting males in the group were pointed out as bayots. Since the troupe in-
cluded women, the bayots did not take female roles. They appeared to be the managers. Their "swishy" manner and beringed fingers amused many members of the audience, one of whom cried out "Bayot," but no overt hostility was expressed. As one informant explained: "They come from Cebu City that is famous for its bayot."

Most household chores are woman's work, e.g. daily marketing, preparing most foods, cooking, washing and ironing, cleaning house, etc. A man may perform some of these duties occasionally, or when his wife is ill, but rarely regularly. But Amy, and to a lesser extent the two bayot who were his closest companions, had completely assumed the woman's household role. In 1967, Amy's mother was living with some children in Mindanao. Amy was left to look after his two younger brothers, one of whom attended school. The two other bayot said that they "worked around the house," cleaning, babysitting for younger siblings, caring for the family vegetable garden, and, according to one, "decorating the house." (In 1967 one of these bayot had taken a job as a cook in a Dumaguete boarding house.)

Any Siaton male beyond adolescence, and not yet considered an old man, who participates as actively in Catholic ritual, official or folk, as most women would cause some doubt to be cast on his masculinity. Women fill nearly all positions in the official lay and folk Catholic hierarchy in both the barrio and the poblacion. Although membership in various Catholic sodalities is open to both sexes, all officers and most members are females. Mario and Esteban were probably the only adult Caticugan males to join one of these religious associations.

Prayers and novenas recited at the family altar in Caticugan are always led by the wife or another female household member. Manalabtan—lay specialists who lead prayers for the dying, novenas for the dead, and individual saint devotions—almost invariably are women. The only male manalabtan observed, of two reported by informants, was an aged effeminate resident of another barrio, regarded by all as bayot-bayot. Informants explained that it would be almost impossible for a "pure lalaki (man)" to be a manalabtan, for he would be teased for occupy-
ing this traditionally female position. If a “real man,” he would abandon this role, but if the manalabta had bayot tendencies, “he wouldn’t mind these remarks.”

One reason for the stereotype image of the priest, held by a group of male Filipino Catholic students in Manila to be effeminate, was that his duties required “dealing only with women” (Doherty 1964: 70). The ankle-length, gownlike soutane, or cassock, worn by most priests reinforces this stereotype. For this reason, many younger priests wish to abandon the cassock for more masculine garb. In Siaton some informants claimed that when parents observed a son with pronounced effeminate traits, they encouraged him to enter the priesthood. Such a case occurred in the poblacion, although the young man never finished his seminary training. For these Filipinos—although others would disagree—all priests have some bayot-bayot tendencies or traits.

Both Esteban and Mario were more active than most males in the poblacion religious events and in those held in the chapel in Caticugan. Esteban could always be seen with the women, holding his lighted candle, as the religious procession wended its way along the paths of the barrio. The most elaborate barrio family altar was in Mario’s dwelling. He had built an attractive and complicated bamboo structure, covering the framework with wrapping paper on which fancy designs were painted. The altar’s many niches held his various saint and Holy Family images.

Past assertions that a “close association between homosexuality and the occupations of priest and diviner is universal” are supported neither by previous cross-cultural investigations nor by this study (Norbeck 1961: 106). Evidence indicates that effeminate men, possibly bërđache, were sometimes associated with pre-Hispanic Filipino magico-religious activities. For example, the bayóguin (bayōgin), effeminate men (hombre maricon) who were “inclined to be a woman and to all the duties of the feminine sex,” were “ministers of the devil” or “served as priests to a hermaphrodite [?] god” of the Tagalogs prior to the Spaniards’ arrival (San Antonio 1903: 345; Plasencia 1903: 194; Llanes 1956: 58; Quirino and Garcia 1958: 394). It appears, however, that these persons did not dominate such positions;
at least, references to deviants in the literature in this context are only occasional.

No close association occurs in southern Negros of bayot or lakin-on with specialist positions of pre-Hispanic origin, such as the shaman (mananambal) or diviner. One exception was Esteban, yet he was relatively inactive as a shaman. The most popular and active shaman in Caticugan was not a bayot. A married male midwife (mananabang) lived in Caticugan, but he was not regarded as even a bayot-bayot.

In summary, for present-day Caticugan and Siaton poblacion, individuals who occupied these traditional magico-religious roles or those the result of Christianization and whose skills were the result of preternatural gift or guidance, rarely deviated from locally established sexual norms. The active participation of bayot in religious affairs is a reflection of their assumption of the female's role.  

*Sexual Activities of the Bayot*

The most common sexual practices of bayot are: (1) fellation, or *súsos* or *sísip* (“to suck, suckle”) (2) pederasty, or homosexual anal intercourse, known locally as *oras* or “Chinese Kick” (3) interfemoral copulation, or *ípit* (“to squeeze or press between”), when the penis (*útin*) is inserted between the lubricated inner thighs, and (4) manual, and sometimes mutual, masturbation (*laso*).

Some early Spanish writers on the Philippines (e.g. Morga, Alcina, and Ribadeneyra) claimed that sodomy (apparently not limited solely to pederasty) was introduced to Filipinos by the Chinese, and also the Japanese (Sande 1903: 51; San Antonio 1903: 365; Benavides 1903: 107). This accusation remains unproved. “A more plausible conclusion might be that the incidence of homosexuality increased among the Filipinos as a result of the coming of the Chinese” (Phelan 1959: 64, 186). This traditional belief, however, is reflected in the local English term, “Chinese Kick,” for anal intercourse.

Amy and his two bayot companions admitted the practice of all the above described sexual techniques. The sex act performed is the choice of the partner. Amy, as befitting the berdache,
waited for men to make the first sexual advances. The two other poblacion bayot actively sought partners, both in the poblacion and Dumaguete. It is not known how often and how much they paid to secure partners, although they said there were Dumaguete men "who are not bayot" but who sought them and did not require payment. Pederasty is not regarded as painful, Amy explained, unless "one doesn't do it often and lacks a lubricant."

Amy described a rubber pouch, simulating the female genitalia (vagina and upper cervix), that is strapped between the thighs, covering the wearer's sex organs. The pouch is lubricated before the partner's penis is inserted. With practice, one is able to produce a contractive motion of the pouch by movement of the thighs. This device, also called the "Chinese Kick," sells for "about P80 in Cebu City." In 1965, Amy claimed he did not own such a device, but he acknowledged possession of one in 1967. Since he had obtained a "Chinese Kick," Amy now refuses a partner's request for anal intercourse or fellation.

Amy enjoyed discussing his many sexual encounters. His contacts are made mainly at the fiesta dances. Most barrios and poblaciones in Negros Oriental, and in the Philippines as a whole, have a patron saint for whom an annual celebration is held (Hart 1955: 37-47; Hart 1954: 25-40). Part of the festivities include dances that may begin several weeks before the "core" events associated with the fiesta. Normally these dances are held outdoors in the evening; girls are admitted free to attract admission-paying males.

Amy related that one evening at a fiesta dance he met a handsome son of a provincial official who did not recognize him. He asked to take Amy home. On the way he stopped the car, kissed Amy, and proposed coition. (At this point in this interview, Amy left the house to urinate. A female friend, in whose dwelling this interview occurred, commented that when Amy urinated, he squatted like a woman.) During the young man's sex play, he discovered Amy's identity. Apparently he was not repulsed, for he first requested fellation. Amy refused. Amy also refused to submit to anal intercourse, but told the man to get out of the car and put his coat on the ground. The two then had intercourse, using the "Chinese Kick." Amy said the Filipino, after ejaculating
(magowa-an or itsár, from Sp. echar, "to discharge"), remarked that the "Chinese Kick" tasted good. The young man wished to repeat coition, but he was rejected. Later he came to Siaton to see Amy when he was in Dumaguete. For Christmas he sent Amy a photograph and a greeting card, but their relationship was never resumed.

One evening Amy left the dance with a Filipino at a fiesta in Santa Catalina, a municipality adjacent to Siaton. Since the ground was damp from an earlier shower, Amy leaned against the chapel wall while coition occurred. He laughingly told that Carlos and another bayot, to Amy's supposed embarrassment, watched the performance. "I wanted to stop but the boy was quivering with excitement." After climax, "he could hardly walk me home where he kissed and thanked me."

During the Lico-Lico barrio fiesta dance, Amy claimed that many men wanted a date, i.e. intercourse. He left the dance with one Filipino, who "used my Chinese Kick." Returning to the dance, Amy inquired of Carlos' whereabouts. A Filipino said he would take Amy to him. Once away from the dance plaza, he begged for intercourse. Amy thought it was hilarious that this young man ejaculated "after only six pushes."

Carlos was finally located in the undergrowth with his date, engaged in anal intercourse. Carlos was growing weary, for his date had not climaxed. He asked Amy to "take care of him" with the "Chinese Kick." Amy agreed, but the Filipino was still unable to ejaculate. Growing impatient, Amy excused himself under the pretext of needing to urinate. He then refused to continue the act, "The boy was angry, but he was afraid of Carlos and me so he did nothing."

During coition with the "Chinese Kick," Amy may ejaculate. Sometimes Amy masturbates his dates. He is never paid for sexual favors, "but my dates often give me cigarettes and Cokes." As Amy described his amatory adventures, with almost frantic delight, one realized he regarded these "conquests" as an excellent validation of his sex-role inversion.

During one lengthy joint evening interview, Amy explained, and the two other bayot agreed, that it was "embarrassing" for them to submit to another bayot. One informant related an experience
that occurred after a bayot friend and he left a Dumaguete dance with “dates.” In the informant’s case, nothing happened, for he found his date “untidy [physically dirty].” His friend was also unsuccessful, for his date demanded payment before submission. When the two had returned to their dwelling, the friend said: “Well, you have not tasted mine yet.” The informant said he refused, for the proposal was most improper. Amy agreed that it was “unwholesome” for two bayot to perform sexual acts, since “they are two of a kind,” i.e. women.

One Caticugan informant described his experience with a bayot. Although he did not cooperate, his mild reaction is typical of other interviewees.

It isn’t good to sleep with a bayot. One time a bayot [friend] and I went to the mountains. We slept together like men for two nights. On the third night I was awakened for the bayot was holding my penis. He began to hug me like he was trying to have intercourse. I elbowed him away, saying, “What kind of man are you?” From then on I put my abaka bundle between us when we slept together. I was surprised to find the bayot touching my penis and cried out, “Yuwa [Devil]! What is the matter with you?” The bayot just laughed.

One possible case of gerontosexuality was reported by the same informant.

There is a 13-year-old bayot in another barrio who likes to play with the penes of old men. The people tease him. [Question: How?] By jokingly asking: “Did your bana [husband] win the hantak [a local gambling game]? He also likes to fondle the testes of old men.

Several young male residents of the poblacion, who once lived in Dumaguete while attending high school or college, described experiences with bayot. In one instance, the informant (attending college in Dumaguete) was paid P10 by a well-known bayot to permit himself to be manually masturbated seven times in a theater men’s room! Prior to each ejaculation, the bayot inserted the informant’s penis in his mouth. Another informant related how a Chinese bayot in Dumaguete offered him P5 if he would submit to fellation. When the Chinese re-
fused prior payment, the informant claimed he hit him and ran away. Several young Caticugan males told of either the “advances” or experiences they had with the barrio bayot. Some young boys were alleged to stay overnight occasionally with Juan and Cesar, the bachelor brothers, and submit to manual masturbation.

**Attitudes Toward the Bayot and Lakin-on**

The majority of the residents of Siaton poblacion and Caticugan are both lenient and indulgent of the local bayot and lakin-on, including Amy. Some members of the poblacion elite were highly critical of Amy, but this disapproval may have been partly for the benefit of the resident American researcher. Dumaguete informants are more denunciatory of the bayot and lakin-on in the city. Many believed that “these hornless devils” were a “menace to society,” especially “at night”; they “bring shame to their families and Filipinos.” These “crazy,” “indecent” people should “not be tolerated,” but should be “disciplined by the government.”

A significant number of Dumaguete informants qualified their unfavorable comments toward bayot and lakin-on, including transvestites. For example, “many are helpful to the community and should be respected as humans”; “they are hardworking people who make good earnings but their money is spent on men they like.” Other informants noted that “there are bayot who are useful to society, active presidents of clubs and organizations. They should not be condemned just because they dress like women.” Finally, “many bayot are helpful. I know one who decorates the church altar and another bayot who is a manaliban.”

Teasing, a common feature of Christian Filipino culture, has been described as a “way of offering criticism without the uncomfortable feeling of openly standing in judgement or finding fault” (Guthrie and Jacobs 1966: 157). A difference has been made between teasing and joking, both means of verbal aggression. Joking intends only to provoke laughter; whereas teasing is intended “to annoy, irritate, or anger ...” (Nurje 1965: 96). Although a precise line separating joking and teasing is difficult
—at times impossible—to draw, Siaton bayot probably were more often joked with than teased.

The bayot's typical behavior or dress normally provokes smiles and ribald remarks, not scowls or threats. The bayot may be burlesqued in public by small children; young men may pinch, comically hug, or address the bayot by a female nickname. One may jestingly tell a transvestite that "I know you have a 'big stick' between your legs." Yet no bayot was observed to be infuriated by this verbal treatment.

Siaton bayot often match retorts with their amiable adversaries or playfully romp after a male tease. Manuel once roughly felt the genitals of a young man he met in public on a poblacion street. His hand was pushed away with a mock scolding, and the two men continued down the street, chatting. Joking with Caticugan bayot is more mild and indirect. After all, they are all permanent residents, not visitors to the community. None was a transvestite or as overtly effeminate in behavior as several poblacion bayot. A general impression of these observations, for both the poblacion and the barrio, is that an important aspect of Filipino society is that one interpersonal skill a Filipino child must learn in the process of maturation is to "tease [and joke] and be teased [and joked with] without losing his self-control" (Guthrie and Jacobs 1966: 203).

These observations regarding the bayot and lakin-on, based upon residence in a somewhat isolated Bisayan rural municipality and on data from a small town, substantiate preliminary generalizations of research in urban Manila. One clinical psychologist found that most Manilans had little concern with homosexuality. The typical attitude toward the bakla (or Cebuan bayot) is "one of fairly good-natured amusement." They are "teased and bantered [joked?] with but not detested and beaten" (Sechrest 1966: 33).

Sechrest states that the behavior of the Manila bakla, "even in its sexually apparent forms, is a matter that can be and is taken lightly. The bakla is not the object of hostility and fear. Rather he is thought funny, amusing, and a good butt for fairly coarse [by American standards] humor" (Sechrest and Flores n.d.: 9). Others have commented similarly. "In some of the
large cities, particularly Manila, males who dress as women and solicit the attention of men are regarded with amusement or only mild annoyance" (Guthrie and Jacobs 1966: 147). As one Filipino psychiatrist has noted, his compatriots show unusual forebearance and tolerance for "even 'disturbed behavior' . . ." (Maguigad 1964: 22).

Available evidence indicates not only considerable tolerance of the bayot and lakin-on but also the probable existence of a low level of Filipino anxiety associated with male homosexuality. The analysis of a comparative study of graffiti on public toilet walls in both Chicago and Manila supported the original hypothesis "that conflict concerning homosexuality is considerably less frequent in the Philippines than the U.S." (Sechrest and Flores n.d.: 8). Of all recorded graffiti, 42 per cent of the American sample, but only 2 per cent of the Filipino sample, involved homosexuality either directly or indirectly.

Research also indicates that "conflicts concerning sexuality are infrequently reported for Filipino mental patients, and reports of homosexual activity among such patients are rare" (Sechrest and Flores n.d.: 8). In Sechrest's study of 125 male mental patients, "only one instance was found of a Filipino male who heard voices or thought that other people were calling him homosexual. Such hallucinations and delusions are frequent in American patient groups" (Sechrest 1963: 202).

Two psychologists have written that the "indifference of the Filipino to males dressing as women, and to the associated homosexuality activity, suggests that the direction of the sexual interests is greatly the result of social factors. Instinctually oriented libido theory would probably have been formulated quite differently if it had been based on observations made in the Philippines" (Guthrie and Jacobs 1966: 202). The findings of this study would question only the statement's usage of "indifference." Since most Siaton and many Dumaguete informants, including bayot, accept heredity as a basis for homosexuality and transvestism, the typical attitude is more one of tolerance than indifference. Furthermore, some Filipinos are hostile toward the sexual deviant, particularly the transvestite.
The Bayot and Lakin-on: Nature or Nurture?

Sechrest suggests that one cannot be sure that "when barrio Filipinos regard mental disorder as 'inherited,' they have in mind a scientific, genetic notion" (Sechrest n.d.: 14). In his report, the second most frequently expressed hypothesis—by informants in Negros Oriental—for insanity was heredity, although often only "as a very tentative hypothesis" and usually accompanied by "an alternative."

In this study, focused primarily on Caticugan and Siaton, careful attention was taken to explain to informants that heredity meant inborn biological traits. (The Cebuan term used was kaliwat, which, for Siaton, is the best word for characteristics, either physical or behavioral, that offspring supposedly biologically inherit from their parents.) In Caticugan and Siaton poblacion, most informants believe that the bayot and lakin-on traits, physical and behavioral, are hereditarily transmitted.

Once an animated discussion was held with Amy, Manuel, and Carlos as to whether the bayot and lakin-on genesis was primarily biological or cultural. For example, a person might later develop into a bayot because of childhood training and/or the family situation, i.e. parents dressing and treating a son as a daughter or intense adolescent identification with the mother when the father was a stern, nonsuccoring figure. They firmly rejected these suggestions or any cultural basis of sexual inversion. To support his opinion, each informant cited relatives who were bayot. One claimed a bayot cousin, another said both his younger brother and a nephew were bayot, and the third, a classificatory uncle. For these Filipinos, the hereditary nature of their deviancy was indisputable.*

Caticugan informants also shared the opinion that the bayot and lakin-on were the result of hereditary factors. For example, several cited as evidence the two sets of brothers, Esteban and Mario and Juan and Cesar, who were bayot. Furthermore, Esteban and Mario had one bayot brother residing in Mindanao and another bayot-bayot brother living in the poblacion.

Yet there were other Caticugan informants who asserted the primacy of cultural factors in the development of the bayot or
lakin-on. One elderly barrio woman, who had known Juan and Cesar since birth, claimed that their mother’s youngest daughter was the family “pet.” Juan and Cesar were forced, by a domineering mother, to do the chores normally performed by a girl “so the daughter would not have to work hard.” When young, the two brothers washed and ironed the family laundry, and were taught to weave abaka cloth. Their father, a bayot-bayot, had been “under the saya [skirt],” “henpecked,” or “tied to apron strings.” The same informant had also known Esteban and Mario since childhood. No member of their family was a bayot, and they had not been required, as children, to do woman’s work. “Their bayotness just appeared. Maybe it was the will of God”—implying neither a biological nor a cultural origin.

Among the better-educated, more acculturated poblacion elite informants, the bayot and lakin-on are often regarded as the product of heredity. A latent genetic basis for inversion must exist, otherwise no amount of influence could make one a bayot or lakin-on. One municipal official cited the case of a cousin who dressed her last child (all her children were sons) as a girl, calling him Inday. Before he began school, a daughter was born to the parents, and the boy returned to male dress. That he never became a bayot in adult life was cited as evidence of its hereditary nature.

Research in Dumaguete revealed more cases that supported the cultural rather than the biological origin of sexual inversion. Some informants believed, however, that either hereditary or cultural factors could be deterministic. Below are cited some actual opinions that illustrate, according to the informants, the hereditary origin of the bayot and lakin-on.

1. I have a niece who was really a tomboy when she was born. My sister used to buy her dolls but she did not like to play with them. She got her brothers’ toys, like guns. But her tomboyishness was never developed when she was young because her friends were not tomboys in high school. But during her college days most of her friends were tomboys. They courted girls. She had three girl friends. At first we did not believe her. One vacation letters began to arrive from her girl friends. So we would believe her, she let us read the letters.

    • • •
2. My niece was a tomboy who married during the [last] war. She has four children, three girls and a boy. All her daughters are tomboys. These girls have only a few dresses, only for Sunday. Most of the time they are in cowboy pants. They have girl friends, too. One is already living with her girl friend. I believe they inherited their tomboyishness from their mother who until now is always dressed in jeans or shorts.

3. I think the bayot inherits his qualities. I know a son of a good family who, as a bayot, became a problem to the parents. They tried to correct his ways, to prevent him from wearing a woman’s dress. His father is masculine, but the bayot’s mother’s father was a bayot. He married and had two children. But he continued to play around with men so the family was broken. When the wife could no longer tolerate her husband, she left him to live with another man. They were never reconciled.

4. The son of a man and wife, both schoolteachers, was born a bayot. The parents did not try to correct him. There were times when they did not have a helper so their son did all the household chores. Now, at the age of 18, the couple admit it is their fault for not trying to change his bayot ways. They cannot trust him anymore. The money for their food, etc., is spent for men. If by chance he can get things from either his father or mother, he will give them to his boy friends. He dresses more elaborately than his mother and the dresses are expensive. The father, a masculine man, is surprised why his son is a bayot. The mother is resigned since scolding him, day after day, was hopeless. She says, “Well, God gave us a bayot son.”

Other Dumaguete informants were of the opinion that the bayot and lakin-on are the result of early childhood influences.

5. I know of two teachers who live together in a rented house. One is a tomboy. It is said that the tomboy was influenced by her own brother. They were the only children in the family. The boy was older. They were very close to each other. When the brother went out to look for beautiful girls, his sister went with him. He had a girl friend whom he used to visit. His sister always tagged along. One day he married this girl. The sister felt bad. Two weeks later she went out to look for a beautiful woman. She met this teacher and they fell in love. They live together now.

6. Escolastico’s parents died during World War II when he was only two years old. His four spinster aunts agreed to raise and
to dress him like a girl. They sewed dresses for him and renamed him Escolastica, nickname, Ticay. Ticay grew up with his aunts. He attended school and no one knew he was a boy. Even the neighbors thought Ticay was a girl.

In his third year of high school, Ticay became the girl friend of the son of a Philippine Constabulary officer. The boy’s parents approved of Ticay but his aunts did not want him to marry for they feared their secret would be revealed. Ticay was so in love with his boy friend that they eloped. When the boy discovered Ticay was a boy, he left him.

Ticay returned home to his aunts but they quarreled. His friends, neighbors, and classmates were all surprised to learn Ticay’s real identity. He could not tolerate their jokes so he left for Mindanao. He is now a real man, wearing pants, and employed by a pineapple canning company.

* * *

7. I have a son who was almost influenced in becoming a bayot by a real bayot. He was a really feminish when he was in high school. All his friends were bayot. My family noticed this, and so my husband watched him. He found his friends were all bayot. He disciplined our son, threatening to stop his schooling if he continued to go out with bayot. We were successful in controlling him. He later confessed that he was taught by another bayot how to go out and approach men etc.

* * *

8. I know of a family with eight children, all boys. The mother wanted very much to have a daughter. She dressed her youngest son like a girl. He was close to his mother. Whatever the mother did, he followed to her delight. The father blames his wife because the son is the number one bayot in their place.

The last example illustrates the belief in the “genetic recessiveness” of the bayot, which requires later influence to develop into deviancy.

9. There are those when young who have signs that they will become bayot. But if they are not influenced or encouraged by others, they will not be bad. I know one boy who had feminine traits and was influenced by his friends. He was not a bayot in the past but he is today. In fact, once he became annoyed when children shouted at him [“Bayot”]. But now he sways his hips all the more when he is called Inday . . . His father wanted to change him but could not because all his friends were bayot. The bayot promised his father many times he would change but he could not. His father told him he would disinherit him.
So his father would believe his desire to change, he married a
tomboy. The wife is a real tomboy. They were married in the
church. The wife first treated him as a real girl and he treated
her as a real man. But now the bayot goes out with handsome
men and the tomboy-wife is said to be courting girls. They still
live in one house but do not mind each other's traits.

In summary, the origin of male and female homosexuality and
transvestism, according to Siaton and Dumaguete informants, is
the result of a variety of factors. This type of sexual inversion
may result primarily from either innate biological traits or from
cultural influence. Rural Filipinos appear to favor a hereditary
origin; whereas urban informants are more inclined to explain
the bayot and lakin-on as the product of their cultural milieu.
Some informants, in both Siaton and Dumaguete, while accept-
ing the hereditary basis for homosexuality and transvestism, be-
lieve that activation of this biological proclivity requires either
frequent contacts with seducing bayot or role inversion of the
child by parents or close relatives. Finally, in each community,
a person may become a bayot or lakin-on "because it is his [or
her] fate" or the "will of God" (pagbúot sa Diyós).

Conclusions

A trustworthy explication of the Christian Filipino cultural
matrix resulting in homosexuals and transvestites awaits future
research. Present scholarly knowledge of Filipino sexual inver-
sion, psychosexual roles, or possible continuities between child-
rearing techniques and basic cultural themes and adult Filipino
personality is both meager and, more often than not, of ques-
tionable validity. The first comprehensive study of Filipino
(Tagalog) personality development was published only two
years ago. Yet accumulating data on Christian Filipino culture
and society encourage some cautious generalizations, which "can
only be tentative, advanced with apologies, but with heuristic
zeal" (Sechrest 1963: 192).

One aspect of Christian Filipino culture that may create a
favorable psychosocial environment for the development of the
Filipino homosexual, or transvestite, is the institutionalized same-
sex friendship of young people. These intimate friendships, typical of most Filipino teenagers, have been recognized by many researchers but seriously studied by none. Although the general structure of these friendships is known, their affective content remains largely uncharted.

In the Philippines, these close, same-sex friendships usually develop during adolescence—sometimes before. During the last school years in Tarong, an Ilokan community in northwestern Luzon, “Girls and boys pair off with one of their own age and sex, from whom they are thereafter inseparable. They go everywhere together and share everything; since they are usually sitio-mates [i.e. residents of the same neighborhood] and most often cousins, they may eat and sleep together, alternating between their houses” (Nydegger and Nydegger 1966: 165).

Public display of affection between young Filipino men and women is generally disapproved. A “platonic” relationship between nubile Caticugan men and women is inconceivable for most barrio folk. Men are thought by nature to be cunning, aggressive sexual predators. As a result, young women are carefully chaperoned. For example, girls attend barrio dances in a group, and return home in the protective custody of their own sex. Courtship in the barrio often is conducted secretly by furtive meetings and smuggled love letters, unknown often to the girl’s parents and to most of the couple’s companions. After marriage, men enjoy the “double standard,” explained by one young male as: “A man’s love is free; a woman’s love is bound.”

For these reasons, teenage friendships provide for the “release of normal emotions [by] interaction with a person of the same sex” (Chicago 1956: 1, 423). It seems possible, for some Filipinos, that these intense friendships lead to an arrested development, so that they are unable to make the transition to heterosexual activities when the time comes for marriage.

Associated with this patterned friendship is the probability that fewer absolute rules govern the relationships between Filipinos of the same sex than is the case for Americans. Although their data are self-admittedly limited, Guthrie and Jacobs “are led to believe that the generally tolerant attitude permits some males to move rather freely from masculine to feminine sexual
roles and then back to masculine roles again" (Guthrie and Jacobs 1966: 147). Sechrest has commented that some informants believe that many bakla are only going through a stage and eventually will revert to a heterosexual way of life (Sechrest and Flores n.d.: 9).

The public behavior of many young Filipinos lends support to the hypothesis that interaction among persons of the same sex is characterized by considerable permissiveness. In Siaton, as elsewhere in the Philippines, young men often are seen in public, walking with their arms around a friend, or swinging hands linked by crooked little fingers (Guthrie and Jacobs 1966: 147). In Tarong, for example,

pairs of boys and girls are never seen without linked arms or arms about each other's waist. Even among adults touching is an expression of friendship, and adult men and women will at times stand with an arm around each other or walk hand-in-hand. This is never seen between sexes, however [Nydegger and Nydegger 1966: 165].

Young male teenagers in Tarong may practice dance steps together. In Caticugan, close companions often have special—usually secret—nicknames. This same-sex public display of emotional warmth, coupled with the popularity of heavily-scented hair pomade and the careful grooming of their hair, has been misinterpreted by both Americans and Europeans.

A similar pattern of friendship occurs among young Indian males in Guatemala, which is suggestive and instructive for the Philippines. During their early youth, and before marriage, highly emotional bonds of friendship may link two young men. One pair of friends danced together, once were seen kissing one another in a joking manner, and told their companions they would like to marry if only one of them were a woman.

This dyad, or camarada, occurs "at the transition in life when a Chingautleco achieves adult status but has not acquired all its emotional rewards. The strict separation of all the sexes in all adult social gatherings, including dances, public rituals, and drinking occasions, reinforces the camarada complex and creates a pseudo-homosexuality" (Reina 1959: 49-50).
The interpretation of Tarong friendships, typical for Christian Filipinos in general, is equally true of the special friendship pattern among male Guatemalans: "these barrio companions engaged in no overt homosexual acts, and much of their conversation directly or indirectly concerned the opposite sex" (Nydegger and Nydegger 1966: 165). Nevertheless, as is suggested for Chiautla, and as is probably true for Filipino friendship companions also: "The inner emotions and sexual drives find a partial outlet in this socially approved pattern of friendship" (Reina 1959: 50). Given this institutionalized friendship complex, the relative difficulty of public courtship, and the low anxiety associated with homosexuality, such dyadic associations may be a crucial factor that blocks, for some Filipinos, the heterosexual transition in adulthood.

Only future research can substantiate the hypotheses and tentative conclusions presented in this article regarding Christian Filipino homosexuality and transvestism. On the basis of available evidence, however, previous generalizations for a basically urban, acculturated Manila population also apply to the residents of a rural community and a small town in a different cultural-linguistic region. Evidently one is dealing with a diagnostic aspect of Christian Filipino culture that merits greater understanding. Furthermore, increased investigation of this topic would enhance existing general knowledge of homosexuality and transvestism.

EIVOR'S NOTE

In accordance with the author's practice, italics and accents are used for Philippine-language words only on their initial appearance in this article.

NOTES

1 A preliminary draft of this article was read by Professor Lee Sechrest, Department of Psychology, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. Dr. Sechrest offered constructive comments on the draft and posed some questions that were investigated in Siaton, Catiguan, and Dumague during the summer of 1967. A revised draft of this article profit from the criticism of Professor Fred Eggan, Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago; Professor Daniel Scheans, Department of Anthropology, Portland State College; and Mr. Morton J. Netzorg, of Detroit, Michigan. The au-
Author is grateful to these colleagues for their suggestions, especially to Professor Schreer.

Since it was impossible to work in both Siaton and Dumaguete during the summer of 1967, a former Filipino research assistant was requested to obtain information on homosexuality and transvestism in the provincial capital. This person, who worked with the author in 1964-65, interviewed 17 informants (10 males and 7 females), predominantly Roman Catholics, whose ages ranged from 28 to 76 years. All were long-time residents of the city. Research in the Philippines (1950-51, 1955-56, and 1964-65) was made possible by Fulbright Research Fellowships.

A Philippine public primary education consists of Grades 1-6.

A housekeeper, in this context, is a bayot who stays home, performing various household chores (cooking, cleaning, washing, marketing, etc.).

A babysitter is a bayot who watches his younger siblings or is hired to supervise children in another household.

A tuba gatherer must climb tall coconut trees to collect the sap that drips into bamboo containers.

Although Llanes defines bayogin as "effeminate," he adds that the word in Tagalog means "tomboy." He notes that Fr. S. Luca's dictionary "gives the word the contemporary meaning: that of marimacho," i.e. Spanish for virago (in its archaic meaning) or masculine females. Llanes also states that in Tagalog, binabaye also means hermaphrodite.

This male role conflict, as related to active and regular participation in religious activities, has been recognized with the recent organization of an all-male sodality, the Cursillistas. A major purpose of this Catholic association is to increase the man's role in official church ritual and in associated community activities.

Local Filipinos often symbolize copulation as the woman's sex organ (bildá) "eating" the man's penis. For example, nagkaong piligad, or "eating while lying," refers to intercourse. The female and male sex organs are compared with rice cakes (puito and búbod) that have suggestive resemblances. Testes are called ílog (or "eggs").

Amy did believe that a person might become a bayot or lakin-on if his or her pregnant mother "craved" such a person. For additional data on Caticugan beliefs regarding prenatal influences, see Hart 1965: 34-39.

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