

Reconstruction of the 'Bakla' as an Identity

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Abstract : Homosexuality has been adapted as the universal concept that defines the deviations from the heteronormative parameters of society. Sexual orientation and gender identities have been used in a concretely separate manner the same way as the dynamics between man and woman, male and female, gender and sex operate. These terms are all products of human beings' utilization of language. Language has proven its power to define and determine the status and the categories of the subjects in society. This tool developed by human beings provides a definition of their own specific cultural community and their individual selves that either claim or oppugn their space in the social hierarchy. The label 'bakla' is reasoned as an identity which is a reaction to the spectral disposition of gender and sexuality in the Philippine society. To expose the Filipino constitutes of bakla is the major attempt of this study. Through the methods of Sikolohiyang Pilipino (Filipino Psychology), namely Pagtatanung-tanong (asking questions) and Pakikipagkuwentuhan (story-telling), the utterances of the bakla were gathered and analyzed in a rhetorical and ideological manner. Furthermore, the Dramatistic Pentad of Kenneth Burke was adapted as a methodology and also utilized as a perspective of analysis. The results suggest that the bakla as an identity carries the hurdles of class. The performativity of the bakla is proven to be a cycle propelled by their guilt to be identified and recognized as subjects in a society where heteronormative power contests their gender and sexual expressions as relatively aberrational to the binary gender and sexual roles. The labels, hence, are potent structures that control the disposition of the bakla in the society, reflecting an aspect of the disposition of Filipino identities. After all, performing kabaklaan in the Philippine society is interplay between resistance and conformity to the hegemonic dominions as a result of imperial attempts to universalize the concept of homosexuality between and among distant cultural communities.

Keywords : gender identity, sexual orientation, rhetoric, performativity

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