

# Filipino psychology: on spirituality, homosexuality, psychopathology



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On Filipino Psychopathology Psychopathology is said to be the deviation of an individual's behavior as compared to the norms of the society. It is classified into two—neurosis and psychosis. In a third world country like ours, it is a fact that poor people outnumber the rich ones, that's why most Filipinos are prone to having problems, especially economic/financial ones. For some, these problems lead to emotional and psychological disturbances. But the question lies on which extent does these disturbances lead to, whether the individual is still intact with reality or not anymore.

This is where the study of psychopathology comes in, focusing on the different dynamics of mental disorders in the Philippines, like on what reasons why the Filipinos lose their sanity or on what standards do the society perceive these insane people. More often than not, when a Filipino encounters a neurotic, one who manifests emotional conflict but still is able to be in touch with reality, he would usually do all things to help that person out. This is due to the notion of the Filipino's intrinsic pakikipagkapwa. He is naturally concerned with the problematic person's emotional and psychological well-being. Whether he may be the person's relative, friend, or even just a co-worker, he would provide aid so as to ease the person's burden. He wouldn't want him to become a baliw.

But what happens if the person becomes a baliw? There are different trends on how the Pinoys treat the baliw. If the person has a coherent family system and his family has money, then he probably would be treated with some kind of psychotherapy, psychopharmacology or be sent in a special school (as for the case of special people). If in case he indeed has supportive relatives but don't have the money for therapy, then he would just be kept inside the

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house, treated by the other family members as normally as possible and without any intervention. But if his family is very poor or very unsupportive of him because of his mental illness, then that person would be seen wandering in the streets, and people would be scared of him probably because he is shouting and untidy or lost and walking naked. Through this we could infer that the Filipino society in general has attributed a negative implication on the baliws.

Since the Filipinos as a whole have close family systems, it is important to note that the concept of family is a significant aspect on the individual's mental illness. The Filipino psychopathology indeed adheres somehow to the family systemic model, believing that a person's pathology is attributed to his family systems. In a society that expects everyone to have not only smooth interpersonal relationships but also smooth family relationships, a person might find it hard to cope up with his problems when his family has defective communication or is shattered in structure. Sure, he could seek aid/comfort from his friends, but certainly on the back of his mind and in the depths of his heart, he is utterly concerned that his family is not like the other happy Filipino families he has known. It is also vital to note that culture is a big part on the study of Filipino psychopathology. We have to be aware that there are some beliefs that for us may be normal but for other cultures may be aberrant.

One profound example of this is the people's belief on the faith healers.

Some of these individuals would claim that they are able to talk to some famous hero or saint, or they had encountered apparitions, and this was the

cause why they were endowed with such gift of healing. Faith healers are <https://assignbuster.com/filipino-psychology-on-spirituality-homosexuality-psychopathology/>

indeed part of our culture, but are we to believe such convictions, or would we think that those are just the distorted thinking of the faith healer? Surely with such behaviors, the DSM IV would categorize these faith healers as individuals manifesting the symptoms of the schizophrenics. But among all, what is most essential to take notice on is the present situation on the interventions that is available to the mentally ill individuals. A person does not need to go into the public mental institution to see the repugnant condition of the patients there.

Just a whole day's stay in the streets of Cubao or Quiapo would enable him to see a number of psychopathologic individuals either naked or begging for alms. It is just disappointing to know that these individuals are least prioritized, and the fact that the society has lost hope in them. I think that this should not be the case, because these mentally ill individuals in fact still has the chance of getting well. I believe that curative status of the psychologically imbalanced individuals should be improved and actually be well funded by the government. These people would just remain discriminated and a burden to the society unless the society understands, takes notice, and prioritizes their well-being. But I wonder, when would this actually happen? I fervently hope that it would be sooner than later, or else, the people whom we know as baliws (crazy people) would just live miserably for the rest of their lives.

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\*\*\*\*\* On Filipino Religiosity and Spirituality Our country is composed of a hodgepodge of different religions, although it is a fact that this is a predominantly Christian country. But whatever religion that a Filipino may <https://assignbuster.com/filipino-psychology-on-spirituality-homosexuality-psychopathology/>

adhere to, it is part of his culture to go to church or to do whatever deed that his dogma tells him to do. Indeed, most Filipinos are perceived to be religious, especially if they belong to the Catholic community. It is evident though, by the way churches always fill up on Sundays, how streets and plazas are filled up by devout crowds during fiestas of some saint, or by the number of saints that are displayed on their altars. So we say that we Filipinos are in fact religious, but can we say that we are spiritual? There is a big difference between religiosity and spirituality.

In the discussion we had in class, there have been different insights that the class has imparted. It has been said that religion is more of an external concept whereas spirituality is an internal one. It was also pointed out that religion is one's system of beliefs or creed and that spirituality is the personal relationship with whoever god one believes in. I think the whole class agreed that religion is indeed a system of beliefs in which he bases his principle as well as his lifestyle in.

It is an institution in which an individual belongs to (in the case that he is not an agnostic), and the teachings embedded therein would direct him to his purpose in life. As the discussion went on, the class was able to probe deeper upon the subject of spirituality. There were notions that what if one does not believe in spirits, then there is a probability that he would not possess spirituality of any kind. There was even an idea that spirituality is just a concept which was produced out of the people's attachment to groups and their will to put order in the inevitable chaos that they will encounter.

I guess spirituality is harder to define, because this concept not only encompasses the issues related with religion but on science, ethics, and morality as well. There was a social psychologist (Diarmuid O'Murchu) that said, " Spirituality concerns an ancient and primal search for meaning that is as old as humanity itself, and belongs—as an inherent energy—to the evolutionary unfolding of creation itself. There is set in motion in all aspect of creation a spirit that holds everything in place and directs everything to its end, gives each a place of rest in this vast universe, a home, a meaning, and a relevance. All life responds to life, and all life is drawn to what is life-giving.

We follow the spirit that is in our nature, the spirit that is our nature. " I have pondered on this quote and had thought that every individual should search for his own spirituality so as to get meaning and relevance in his life.

Moreover, spirituality is inherent within us, and to ignore this spirituality would mean one would also disregard the inherent energy that he possesses.

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Filipino Homosexuality Pagkababae and Pagkalalaki The differences between men and women are attributed by what society dictates them to be.

Here in the Philippines, society, especially the family, plays a vital role in the lives of the people. As what was discussed in class about pagkababae and pagkalalaki, there are specific roles and actions that a man and a woman should do. It is expected that for one to be a Filipina, she should be refined, modest, loyal, and be a perfect mother and wife. The Filipino, on the other hand, is expected to be brave, decisive, and be the family's provider and disciplinarian.

With this set-up, I think that indeed, there exists gender inequality in this society. For the longest time, the Filipinas are regarded as weak, quiet, and feeble individuals. During the Spanish time, they were only made to stay inside the house and do the household chores and are only allowed to go out when it is time to go to church. They were even not allowed to go to school, for they are also regarded as unintelligent individuals. There were very little opportunities for women. In these contemporary times, they say that there has been a change in the society's view of the Filipinas.

But changed as it is, stereotypes still remain. There are a lot who do not trust and look down on the skills and abilities of women. Because for them, the men are still the better, stronger, and more powerful sex. There are only a few women who stand as the head of their family, and at most times, it is the husband who decides for the whole family. This is because of the ascription that men should be decisive and women should be submissive.

Or else, the Filipino would be regarded as under de saya. That designation would be a batter for the Filipino's ego. One of the Filipinas' disadvantageous qualities is that they are always sensitive and emotional. They are easy to fall in love and tend to cry easily—maybe this is the disadvantage of it. But what is advantageous of it tough, is that since they are emotional, they are likely able to let out their sentiments and hurt feelings. On the other hand, if the Filipinos would cry his heart out over a problem or heartache, there is a possibility that he would be thought of as corny or even bakla.

Thus, he has to keep things by himself and cry alone. This is also probably the reason why women complain that men are very insensitive. With the

women's characteristics that tend to be more family-oriented than the men, would we say that women are better spouses and parents? When it comes to the strength and decisiveness of men, is it safe to say that men are indeed stronger, thus they are better workers than women? In my opinion, a Filipino and a Filipina have characteristics of their own. People should not waste time on determining if such sex is better than the other. We all have our strengths and weaknesses, and we should learn how to respect the weaknesses of each other. I think that in assessing people, we must look at a person's characteristics first, not on the gender that he or she has.

Although sexuality has a great bearing on person's identity as a whole, their sex and gender performance is generally a deeper core identity and is not necessarily influenced by their sexuality. Bakla Sward, Bading, Jokla, Transvestite, Closet queen, Bi- these are among the usual labeling of Filipino gay men. On the other hand, terms like tibo, lesbo, butch, t-bird, tomboy are entitled to Filipina lesbians. For years, gays and lesbians have been a marginalized group in our society, and it was only about three decades ago that they had started to come out into the open. But even though they are already increasing in number and revealing their true identities to the public, one question still remains.

Has the society fully accepted the gays and lesbians? All over the world sex and gender diverse people are being legally and socially disadvantaged, discriminated against, excommunicated from their religions, attacked, beaten up, raped, sexually assaulted, murdered both in public and covertly.

Nothing perhaps can be more frustrating than to be denied a fair chance at self-improvement and be deprived of basic services because of sexual  
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orientation. For many years gays and lesbians have had to contend with this reality, and whether much has changed for them through the years is still an unanswered question. Here in our country, gays and lesbians are also given a hard time because of their sexual orientation. A gay child would receive tremendous mockery upon his friends' realization that he is gay.

A lesbian adolescent would more or less gain a few friends because she is sexually deviant. A gay worker could even be accused of stealing money from the company, in order to finance his lover (or papa). These are some of the hardships that gay and lesbians undergo in our society. Due to these adversities, gays and lesbians strived to succeed in the workplace (especially gays).

Many gays and lesbians are now holding reputable positions in companies. Slowly, they are able to go up the ladder of the people's approval that they are actually an integral part of the society.