

**THE PHILIPPINES IN MICROCOSM: TRANSCULTURAL ENGAGEMENTS AND
CATHOLIC VISUAL CULTURE UNDER SPANISH IMPERIALISM (C. EIGHTEENTH
– NINETEENTH CENTURIES)**

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Abstract

This thesis considers the visual production and culture of the Philippines from the Spanish colonial era (1521-1898). It aims at shedding further light on the complexities of Philippine art history as one that is both autonomous and transculturally intertwined with other histories. Through the concept of conversion as expanding beyond a mere shift in faith, I argue that the objects in focus are evidence of the shaping of the land and people of the Philippines as subordinates of the Spanish Empire.

Emphasizing on the people's conversion to the religion and culture of Catholic Spain, the analysis of religious imagery in the works of Jesuit Fr. Pedro Murillo Velarde's *Carta Hydrographica y Chorographica de las Yslas Filipinas* (1734) in partnership with Filipino artisans, Nicolas de la Cruz Bagay and Francisco Suarez, and paintings using Catholic iconography—specifically of the *Via Crucis* (Stations of the Cross) by an unknown Bohol Master (1830) and two renditions of the “triplet” *Santisima Trinidad* (Holy Trinity) also by unknown artists (c. late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century)—I illustrate how these objects articulate the various modes of conversion used under Spanish imperialism. Since Spanish imperialism cannot be disassociated from the use of the Catholic faith and the subsequent conversion of non-European communities, I examine the complex and contradictory impacts of nearly four centuries of Spanish colonialism on Philippine land, its peoples and their cultures. While I make references to the sixteenth century, this is to clearly outline the historical foundations of Spanish settlement in the Philippines, as it establishes the colonial regime in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries from which the objects in focus date from.

Lay Summary

By examining the work Jesuit Fr. Pedro Murillo Velarde's *Carta Hydrographica y Chorographica de las Yslas Filipinas* (1734) in partnership with Filipino artisans, Nicolas de la Cruz Bagay and Francisco Suarez, a rendition of the *Via Crucis* (Stations of the Cross) by an unknown Bohol Master (1830) and two separate versions of the "triplet" *Santisima Trinidad* (Holy Trinity) by unknown artists (c. late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century), I consider the visual production and the subsequent emergence of the Filipino *mestizo* cultural identity during the Spanish colonial era. I argue that these objects exemplify the various modes of conversion used under Spanish imperialism. Through the supposition that the effects of Spanish imperialism cannot be separated from Filipino culture and national identity, the research explores the complex and contradictory impacts of colonialism on the land, its peoples and their cultures over the course of nearly 400 years of Philippine history.

Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Alexi Louise Cordero Paglinawan.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Lay Summary	iv
Preface.....	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Figures.....	viii
Acknowledgements	x
Dedication	xi
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: Charting Colonization through Art and Science.....	16
1.1 The "Mother of Philippine Maps"	16
1.2 The Printing Press and the Colonial Gaze	24
1.3 Colonial Legacy	35
Chapter 2: The Colonial Baroque, Mestizo and Folk Catholicism: Religious Imagery and National Identity	39
2.1 The Via Crucis by an Unknown Bohol Master.....	39
2.2 Art and Labor	49
2.3 The "Triplet" Holy Trinity: from Europe to the Colonies	53
2.4 Visualizing Conversion through Language	60
2.5 Folk Catholicism.....	63
Conclusion: The Weight of Colonialism and the Baroque as a Concept.....	73
Figures.....	82

Bibliography	95
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List of Figures

Figure 1. Pedro Murillo Velarde, Nicholas de la Cruz Bagay and Francisco Suarez, <i>Carta Hydrographica y Chorographica de las Yslas Filipinas</i> , 1734, 112 x 120 cm, engraving, Ayala Museum Private Collection, Makati City. Photo: Alexi Louise C. Paglinawan	16
Figure 2. Pedro Murillo Velarde, Nicolas de la Cruz Bagay and Francisco Suarez, <i>Carta Hydrographica y Chorographica de las Yslas Filipinas</i> (detail), 1734, engraving, 112 x 120 cm, Bibliotheque nationale de France, Paris.....	17
Figure 3. Pedro Murillo Velarde, Nicolas de la Cruz Bagay and Francisco Suarez, <i>Carta Hydrographica y Chorographica de las Yslas Filipinas</i> (detail), 1734, engraving, 112 x 120 cm, Bibliotheque nationale de France, Paris.....	17
Figure 4. Pedro Murillo Velarde, Nicolas de la Cruz Bagay and Francisco Suarez, John Bach & T.H. Pardo de Tavera, <i>Carta Hydrographica y Chorographica de las Yslas Filipinas</i> , 1734, 112 x 120 cm, engraving, National Library of Australia, Canberra.....	18
Figure 5. Unknown Bohol Master, <i>The Stations of the Cross</i> [Via Crucis], <i>III: Jesus falls for the first time</i> , oil on panel, 1830, National Fine Arts Collection of the National Museum of the Philippines, On Loan from the Collection of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Manila. Photo: Alexi Louise C. Paglinawan. Published with permission from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.....	43
Figure 6. Unknown Bohol Master, <i>The Stations of the Cross</i> [Via Crucis], <i>XIII: Jesus is taken down from the cross</i> , 1830, National Fine Arts Collection of the National Museum of the Philippines, On Loan from the Collection of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Manila. Photo: Alexi Louise C. Paglinawan. Published with permission from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.....	44
Figure 7. Unknown Bohol Master, <i>The Stations of the Cross</i> [Via Crucis], <i>XIV: Jesus is laid in the tomb</i> , 1830, National Fine Arts Collection of the National Museum of the Philippines, On Loan from the Collection of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Manila. Photo: Alexi Louise C. Paglinawan. Published with permission from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.....	48
Figure 8. Unknown Bohol Master, <i>The Stations of the Cross</i> [Via Crucis], <i>V: Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross</i> , oil on panel, 1830, National Fine Arts Collection of the National Museum of the Philippines, On Loan from the Collection of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Manila. Photo: Alexi Louise C. Paglinawan. Published with permission from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.....	48

Figure 9. Unknown artist, <i>La Santísima Trinidad</i> , oil on panel, 56.7 cm x 39cm, late 18th to early 19th century, National Fine Arts Collection of the National Museum of the Philippines, On Loan from the Collection of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Manila. Photo: Alexi Louise C. Paglinawan. Published with permission from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.....	53
Figure 10. Unknown artist, <i>La Santísima Trinidad</i> , oil on panel, 45.2cm x 36.5cm, late 18th to early 19th century, National Fine Arts Collection of the National Museum of the Philippines, On Loan from the Collection of Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Manila. Photo: Alexi Louise C. Paglinawan. Published with permission from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.....	53
Figure 11. Jean Fouquet, “The Enthronement of the Virgin,” in <i>The Hours of Etienne Chevalier</i> , 1420-1480, illumination, Musée Condé, Chantilly. Wikimedia.org.....	57
Figure 12. Hans Holbein the Elder, <i>Trinity as three identical persons</i> , panel 1, 1499, Staatsgalerie Altdeutsche Meister), Augsburg. Wikimedia.org.....	57
Figure 13. Unknown Bohol Master, <i>The Stations of the Cross</i> [Via Crucis], VI: <i>Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus</i> , 1830, National Fine Arts Collection of the National Museum of the Philippines, On loan from the Collection of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Manila. Photo: Alexi Louise C. Paglinawan. Published with permission from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.....	65

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For my parents, Aleli and Jong Paglinawan.

Introduction

Philippine colonial art history remains an explored subject within the field despite its evident interrelations with other histories greatly impacted by Spanish imperialism. The objects produced and circulated in and around the Philippines throughout the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, from books, cartographs, sculptures and paintings as a result of European contact are exemplars of the major influence of Spanish Catholicism in the country. In light of this, how can we frame objects such as these?

Initially a stepping stone en route to the East Indies, the Philippines was soon met with the transplantation of the faith by religious orders, beginning with the Augustinians and followed by the steady arrival of the Franciscans, Jesuits and Dominicans from Spain, following its accidental discovery by the Portuguese conquistador, Ferdinand Magellan in 1521.¹ The gradual settlement of Spanish missionaries across the Philippine archipelago and the fortification of the city of Manila by 1571 provided the impetus for the syncretism enabled by colonialism. Not excluding the violence of colonialism, the amalgamation of Spanish culture and Catholicism with indigenous religions and cultures remains an intriguing point of entry into this immense aspect of Filipino heritage. Over the course of nearly 400 years, the Philippines, duly named after King Philip II (1527-1598), would be subjugated by Spain—the period easily summarized as an “unholy marriage of conquest and Christianity.”² Catholicism, rooted in early modern European culture, remodeled daily life in the Spanish colonies like that of the Philippines. Many

¹ José Mario C. Francisco, “The Philippines,” in *Christianities in Asia* (2011), 97.

² Antonio D. Sison, “Afflictive Apparitions: The Folk Catholic Imaginary in Philippine Cinema, Material Religion,” *The Journal of Objects, Art and Belief* 11, no. 4 (2015), 425.

contemporary historians centered on the Southeast Asian region and transpacific relations alike contend that the pace of change, however, was uneven and in many places the string which tied people to Christ was relatively slack. As stated by Filipino historian, Vicente L. Rafael, “The coming of the Spaniards dramatically transformed much of the precolonial societies. Spanish conquest was relatively swift in the lowland areas but slow and never quite completed in the upland and in the predominantly Islamicized southern areas. Spanish hegemony thus remained a work in progress for 350 years.”³ Nevertheless, Spanish colonization would prove to be an integral part of Philippine history and identity, as its reverberations still linger within modern Filipino society. Because religion was such an overpowering presence in Spain’s colonies, its influence is noted in language, cartography, diplomacy, and image production and architecture—the patterns of production all indicative of the necessary requirements to create performative habits appropriate for encountering the holy.⁴ Conversion, as Dana Leibsohn aptly describes, is akin to the shaping of the Philippines in both land and people as true subordinates of the Spanish Empire, as well as the translation of Eurocentric ideals as closely interlaced with the Catholic faith. On the subject of visual culture, Leibsohn expands on this idea by stating that modes of conversion “[cued] religious worship and the sacred but also the negotiation of equivalencies and the permeability of boundaries.”⁵ The intertwining of conversion and colonial violence produced epistemological perspectives and bodily experiences that are rather inseparable from historical concepts linked to the transpacific. Though the varied but intertwined means of conversion in the

³ Vicente L. Rafael, “Colonial Contractions: the Making of Las Islas Filipinas, 1565-1946,” in *Transpacific Engagements: Trade, Translation, and Visual Culture of Entangled Empires (1565-1898)* (Makati City, Philippines: Ayala Foundation, 2020), 36.

⁴ Dana Leibsohn, “Pacific Matters, and Otherwise,” in *Transpacific Engagements: Trade, Translation, and Visual Culture of Entangled Empires (1565-1898)* (Makati City, Philippines: Ayala Foundation, 2020), 273.

⁵ Ibid, 272-273.

Philippines as instigated by Catholicism recast the sacred in ways similar throughout the colonies, the distinctions are slight.⁶ It is within the context of the Philippines, its imperial inheritance of Roman Catholicism, and its involvement in transcultural engagements that the colonial era undoubtedly left its mark and thus brings forward a number of artworks that speak for this period in time.

Building off of this notion that the manifestations of conversion in transpacific histories are varied, the objects in question will address how cartography and image production have contributed to the imperial agenda of conversion. Regarding cartography, the infamous “Mother of Philippine maps,” formally known as the *Carta Hydrographica y Chorographica de las Yslas Filipinas* of 1734 by the Jesuit Fr. Pedro Murillo Velarde and Indigenous Filipino artisans, Nicolas de la Cruz Bagay and Francisco Suarez is studied in order to provide an in-depth analysis of how Spanish perception and the colonialist lens shaped and portrayed the Philippines. Regarding image production, paintings of Filipino renditions of Catholic iconography will be examined. As a means of exploring the influences of Spanish colonialism and the utilization of the Catholic faith to subjugate the local communities in the Philippines, the analysis of the iconographies of the *Via Crucis* (Stations of the Cross) (c. 1830) by an unknown Bohol Master, and the “triplet” *Santisima Trinidad* (Holy Trinity) (late eighteenth to early nineteenth century) by unknown artists will be discussed in tandem with issues pertaining to conversion as closely tied to Filipino *mestizo* culture and Philippine folk Catholicism, or the amalgamation of Philippine Indigenous understanding and values with Catholicism. The concept of folk Catholicism will be presented as both the adaptation of the Catholic faith and resistance against

⁶ Ibid.

the colonial power that introduced the faith. Resistance, in this sense, will refer to the assertion and/or preservation of Indigenous Filipino autonomy within colonial production.

Only a select number of images of the *Via Crucis*, namely stations III, V, XIII, and XIV are considered in this thesis alongside renditions of the *Santisima Trinidad*. These paintings are housed in the National Museum of the Philippines on loan from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (Central Bank of the Philippines). With these points in mind, I intend to discuss the general history of Spanish colonialism in the Philippines by highlighting the impacts of this religiously-charged history on the local population in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Drawing from scholarship on the Spanish colonial Baroque—a term that is typically used to describe Spanish colonial era works in the Americas—and how this contrasts with notions regarding the Spanish Baroque for a theoretical and foundational purpose, in addition to post-colonial scholarship on Philippine history and transpacific encounters, I argue that the works in focus here speak to and encourage further investigation and understanding of Filipino culture and heritage rooted in Christianity. By employing a postcolonial lens for this examination, this thesis does not seek to unravel over three centuries of colonial history, but rather treat the colonial works as objects of cultural entanglement and as products of colonial contact.⁷ In addition, by emphasizing the transpacific connection between the Philippines and the Americas, the transplantation of Catholicism and the Spanish Baroque into the colonies become common denominators, making the objects of this visual culture into testaments to this period of conversion from which the

⁷ Florina Capistrano-Baker, “Whither Art History in the Non-Western World: Exploring the Other(’s) Art Histories,” *The Art Bulletin* 97, no. 3 (2015), 255.

mestizo cultural identity was born. At the same time, the works in focus encourage a critique of imperialist systems that have become deeply embedded within Filipino society and culture.

A secondary, equally important, objective of this thesis is to elaborate on several interconnected components. Can a typically Hispanic transcultural lens concentrated in the colonial histories of the Americas be applied to the Philippines? In answering this, commonly forgotten or unrecognized as a former Spanish colony, let alone the only Spanish colony in modern Asia for nearly four centuries, a lack of recognition regarding the nation's colonial history and its relations to a wider historical scope comes into view.⁸ In relation, the lack of historical documentation and research carried out for specific objects of the Philippine colonial art tradition encourages such parallels to be drawn from elsewhere in search of a more stable critical analysis of religious artworks that have been viewed simply as icons or objects for veneration. Related to conversion and the adaptability of Christian teachings and images into pre-conquest belief systems, the case studies reveal the eclecticism of Philippine visual culture. A culture that has only recently been viewed as comparable to the concept of *mestizo* identity that is mostly known as exclusive to Latin American society, art and culture of Hispanic America, the “native slant” of Philippine colonial art expresses the multilevel network that constitutes the effects of religion on pre-Hispanic communities.⁹

Chapter one will encompass the ideas introduced above by centering on Spanish contact, the role of the friars in education, governance and quotidian activities, as well as the general state of the nation during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in order to frame the significance of

⁸ Eva Maria Mehl, “Intertwined Histories in the Pacific: The Philippines and New Spain, 1565–1764,” in *Forced Migration in the Spanish Pacific World: From Mexico to the Philippines, 1765–1811* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 32.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 313.

the Velarde-Bagay-Suarez map. Indeed, this thesis will refer to the map as the Velarde-Bagay-Suarez map as opposed to the “Velarde map,” by which it is most commonly known as, in order to carry forth Filipino historian, Ambeth R. Ocampo’s remarks that Bagay and Suarez’s work on the map is equally as momentous as Velarde’s. This comes from the fact that Bagay and Suarez’s work was meant to be recognized, given the visibility of their signatures in four different places on the object.¹⁰ A rare and significant object with less than fifty extant copies around the world, the Velarde-Bagay-Suarez map will be understood as a cartographic portrait of the Philippine Islands that presents the archipelago as a collective colonized body under Spanish imperialism. The map, as stated by Ocampo, can be unequivocally read as a historical document given the text etched into the object itself. Written in the Spanish language and situated in the southwest portion of the map is a cartouche that opens with, “On August 10, 1519, Hernando Magallanes left Seville, arrived in Cebu on April 7, 1521, and was killed in Mactan. Miguel López de Legazpi arrived in 1565, and on June 24, 1571, founded Manila as capital of the Philippines, named after Felipe II.”¹¹ This declarative opening arguably does nothing but ratify fundamental Philippine history as it has been taught for generations. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the map’s inclusion of a founding history makes it an invaluable historical object that demands further study for its representation of the archipelago as politically, economically and socially significant to the Spanish Empire and, undoubtedly, for its place within Philippine colonial history and art history. With regard to its imagery, historian Ruth Hill argues that the map recycles religious and imperial images from the Middle Ages, Renaissance and Baroque

¹⁰ Ambeth R. Ocampo, “It should be called the Velarde-Bagay-Suarez Map,” *Inquirer Opinion*, INQUIRER.net, *Looking Back*, September 11, 2019, <https://opinion.inquirer.net/123895/it-should-be-called-the-velarde-bagay-suarez-map>.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

periods.¹² In addition, and most intriguingly, the illustrations that bookend the map show different ethnic communities—both local ethnic groups and those associated through trade—in connection to the Philippines. Included as well is a listing of the religious orders and the extent of their dispersion in towns across the archipelago, which implies the number of souls converted to Catholicism or at least impacted by Spanish Catholic culture.¹³ From the cartouche alone and in its exhibition of both text and image is a critical example of the usage of religious and imperial imagery for it unites the entire object together, and effectively communicates the achievements of imperial expansion to its presumably Spanish and courtly audience. Given that the map does not only stand for geographical use but also represents the people found in and around the Philippine Islands, it is clear that despite of the fact that two of the best *indio* artists of their time had worked with Velarde and were able to sign their names on their works, it will be argued that a certain attitude is maintained about the Philippines and its people. Drawn in portolan style, the sea chart, as implied, exhibits a marriage of art and science. According to Kevin Sheehan, portolan charts that favored aesthetics in as much as scientific accuracy were highly coveted.¹⁴ Originating as early as the thirteenth century, portolan charts were arguably rarely intended for practical navigation, but rather were goods designed and consumed to show off one's worldliness, though also used as references or to record new discoveries. This concept of new discoveries is now widely acknowledged to be a symptom of the colonial gaze which, like most

¹² Ruth Hill, "Imperialism and Empiricism in the Spanish Monarquía," *The Eighteenth Century (Lubbock)* 59, no. 2 (2018), 131.

¹³ Ambeth R. Ocampo, "The Velarde-Bagay map as a historical document," *Inquirer Opinion*, INQUIRER.net, *Looking Back*, September 18, 2019, <https://opinion.inquirer.net/124037/the-velarde-bagay-map-as-a-historical-document>.

¹⁴ Kevin Sheehan, "Aesthetic Cartography: The Cultural Function of Portolan Charts from 1300 to 1700," *Imago Mundi* 65, no. 1 (2013), 133.

European representations of foreign lands, exists in the Velarde-Bagay-Suarez map. Mary Louise Pratt's analysis of what she calls "planetary consciousness" in relation to cartography is the emergence of science and rational classification in early modern Europe. Such consciousness gave European travelers "the sense that theirs was a universal ordering system that would conquer and bring under the high modern lens all the flora, fauna, and land of the world 'out there.'"¹⁵ This standardization is a crucial aspect of the colonial gaze, which would lead to techniques of control and so-called modernization and, hence, a reflection of the rhetoric embedded in the Velarde-Bagay-Suarez map. The representation of the archipelago in the *Carta Hydrographica* is, thus, a display of a comprehensive catalogue of the information necessary for the governance of the islands, its role in the galleon trade, as well as a message that takes on both textual and symbolic forms, making evident the extent of Spanish control of the Philippine Islands in the eighteenth century and the general perception towards the archipelago's people.

The issues raised here in the introduction about contact and conversion and the aspects associated with representation in chapter one will especially connect to the emphasis on cultural identity in chapter two, which will expand on *mestizo* cultural identity and its implications throughout the Spanish occupation of the Philippines and in the present. Of Spanish etymology and typically limited to Latin American or Hispanic studies, *mestizo* primarily refers to persons of mixed heritage (*indio* and *peninsulare*), but is also used to refer to the "hybrid" or mixed race culture and art of the colonial baroque.¹⁶ The idea of hybridity, which has been used to connote a

¹⁵ Robert Nelson, Mary Louise Pratt, Stuart Banner, and Bruce Braun, "Emptiness in the Colonial Gaze: Labor, Property, and Nature," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 79, no. 1 (Spring, 2011), 163.

¹⁶ Mehl, "Intertwined Histories in the Pacific: The Philippines and New Spain, 1565–1764," 40; René B. Javellana, S.J., *Weaving Cultures: The Invention of Colonial Art and Culture in the Philippines, 1565-1850* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2017), 309. *Indio* refers to "Indian," or native, which has derogatory connotations today, while *peninsulare* refers to a Spaniard born in the Iberian Peninsula.

hierarchy that functions to distinguish “pure” Spanish Baroque and the “unoriginal” or “decorative” art of the colonies, has been challenged in recent years in defense of an unparalleled art style that was, in turn, appropriated upon arrival in the Americas.¹⁷ The appraisal of the Spanish baroque is considered to be hypocritical by postcolonial scholars due to assessments of how the Spanish Baroque style was already influenced by foreign socio-political relations. Its grafting onto the colonies only added to the contested intricacies of the Spanish baroque, which leave it stylistically unresolved.¹⁸ Currently on display in the National Museum of the Philippines, which is the country’s main museum institution, are galleries dedicated to religious imagery from the colonial period. As stated previously, this thesis will only focus on a select number of images from the Stations of the Cross and selected renditions of the “triplet” Holy Trinity. The paintings made of oil paint and wood are proven to have been locally sourced, though as indicated above, this tradition of art production was imported from Spain alongside the Catholic faith.¹⁹ Across the fourteen images that comprise the narrative of the Passion of Christ, this significant and essential story within Christianity is evident and, thus, abides by the necessity of the message to be communicated clearly. Speaking to the notion of *mestizo* cultural identity, which encompasses both people and culture, it cannot be ignored that the figures, as they are depicted, are arguably light skinned, and bear European facial characteristics. This, however, may not only be attributed to the white Spaniard since such characteristics comprising of dark hair and fair skin have been part of the Christian tradition for centuries. As one looks beyond

¹⁷ Lois P. Zamora and Monika Kaup, "Baroque, New World Baroque, Neobaroque: Categories and Concepts," in *Baroque New Worlds: Representation, Transculturation, Counterconquest* (Duke University Press, 2010), 3.

¹⁸ Charlene Villaseñor Black, "Race and the Historiography of Colonial Art, " in *Envisioning Others* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2016), 310.

¹⁹ Ibid.

what is apparent, it is in the relatively minor details like that of artistic composition and interpretation alongside those that are heavily suggestive of the Spanish occupation that exhibit the pre-colonial roots of ethnic Filipinos.

It is on this notion of pre-colonial roots that another image known by its iconography as the *Santisima Trinidad* (Holy Trinity) will be discussed to further explore the term *mestizaje*. With this example, the portrayal of the *Santisima Trinidad* as three identical persons will open up a sub-topic within *mestizo* culture, which is Philippine folk Catholicism. Also displayed in the National Museum of the Philippines, the images are nearly identical to each other, except for individual artistic execution and ability. Each figure has their gaze set on the viewer; their feet rest on or are directed towards a globe, and the group altogether is surrounded by clouds—creating a truly heavenly image. Furthermore, each figure is holding up their right hand in blessing. Concerning the roots of this particular image that is most uncommon within Europe, Filipino art historian and Jesuit, René B. Javellana, S.J. in *Weaving Cultures: The Invention of Colonial Art and Culture in the Philippines, 1565-1850*, states that sacred icons from the Philippine colonial era are characterized as having “Byzantine conventions,” in that the prototypes bearing such conventions that came in from Spain with the friars and other settlers, and, eventually, from the Spanish Americas, were compositionally unchanged.²⁰ Javellana’s framing of “Byzantine conventions” falls short in that what should instead be considered is the broader context of the baroque in relation to Spanish colonization, and art and architectural production. Speaking for both the tripled image of the divine and the images of the Stations of the Cross, rather than solely focusing on such Byzantine conventions, this thesis will take into

²⁰ Javellana, *Weaving Cultures: The Invention of Colonial Art and Culture in the Philippines, 1565-1850*, 148.

consideration the notion that the baroque, in essence, is not a set style that is exclusive to Western Europe, nor is it a “continuation of the Renaissance,” as Erwin Panofsky argued in 1934.²¹ On this issue of the concept of the baroque and its treatment within the canon of art history, Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann in “Discomfited by the Baroque: A Personal Journey,” argues that the baroque lends itself to the idea that it is an international phenomenon, and that every form of the baroque is proof that “styles may be diffused widely even beyond the original context in which their artists or ancestors worked.”²² Expanding on his example of colonial production in Guatemala and Brazil and the notable European influences on architectural facades in those regions—in which traditional architectural orders (i.e., Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian) in conjunction with delayed compositional strategies which are reminiscent of structures of 70 to 100 years prior to the high baroque—Kaufmann’s remarks are useful in relation to other cases of colonial art and architecture that have been made to fit the rubric of the European baroque. Kaufmann, alongside other scholars of the early modern such as Claire Farago, points out that this rubric, first articulated by Panofsky and has subsequently served as the foundation for baroque research and study since his lecture in 1934, does not consider the international scale that the baroque had gained through cultural engagements within Europe and, certainly, through colonial contact outside of Europe. This critique of Panofsky, in turn, opens up the conversation of transcultural and transpacific engagements between Asia and the Americas due to both colonization and the galleon trade. Thus, colonial production in the Americas and in Asia have remained relatively unexamined and misunderstood if not alienated from the canon of art history

²¹ Claire Farago, “Reframing the Baroque: On Idolatry and the Threshold of Humanity,” in *Rethinking the Baroque* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011), 99.

²² Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, “Discomfited by the Baroque: A Personal Journey,” in *Rethinking the Baroque* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011), 94.

altogether.²³ However, as Kaufmann writes, this requires scholars to rightly situate racialized art histories in a broader, international context that also accounts for or contextualizes national origins.²⁴ The so-called “New World Baroque” or “colonial baroque” of the Spanish colonies must be considered as different iterations of the baroque, which would thus encourage space for autonomous art styles.

Regarding Philippine colonial art, Pál Kelemen, whose seminal work *Art of the Americas. Ancient and Hispanic with a comparative chapter on the Philippines*, which has served as an important text for the foundations of the study of Philippine art during the Spanish era since its publication in 1969, describes that the manifestation of the colonial baroque shows enough of the transnational influences that were imported in the Americas and in the Philippines, and especially demonstrates how these were received according to the artisans who affected them. By this, Kelemen alludes to the execution of material production under the Church as specific to location, culture, and human ability. Like Kaufmann, Kelemen argues that what was produced across the colonies culturally varies. Thus, the production of a unique interpretation of Catholic concepts emerged and was eventually established as an accepted means of image-making that appealed equally to local church authorities and the native communities.²⁵ In light of these diverse interpretations of Spanish Catholic visual culture, it should be clarified that the arrival of “fixed” visual prototypes from the West is due to the fact that religious imagery was regulated and supervised by the dominant authority that was the Church. Therefore, prototypes in the Spanish colonies were closely copied to the best of the artisan’s ability, since faithful copying

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Pál Kelemen, *Art of the Americas. Ancient and Hispanic with a comparative chapter on the Philippines* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1969), 339.

assumed the orthodoxy of religious imagery.²⁶ As with the case of the “triplet” Holy Trinity, such consistency is found in the composition of facial features and, in some instances, the clothing which plainly show that the three figures are identical, and conceptually comprise one entity. With the two paintings from Manila, regardless of dependence on Iberian or transnational influences which should not be overlooked, any inconsistencies in the iconography are particular to their colonial contexts, which ultimately subvert traditional baroque conventions.²⁷ In this sense, the idea that visual reinforcement for the sake of native comprehension is reasonable, yet reveals that the execution of the methods diverged in ways set to cater to the needs of the colonial agenda at a given time and place.

The points articulated above lay the foundation for the concept of folk Catholicism which cannot be divorced from Philippine mestizo culture, as a result of conversion through Spanish colonization. Thus, as part of the intention to shine a light on the complexities of Philippine colonial history, this thesis will also attempt to apply a postcolonial perspective in order to broaden discussions of transpacific histories. Issues pertaining to national identity as a result of colonialism and transpacific engagements must be noted at the outset in order to ground what is being argued here. A complex social history, the Philippines may be framed as what political scientists Anna Grzymala-Busse and Dan Slater call a “godly nation,” which connotes the strong cultural attachment to religiosity. From historical pathways that are political, non-linear and contingent, the complexity of religious nationalism arises and ultimately dictates both society and politics in the country.²⁸ This concept appropriately articulates that Philippine nationalism,

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid, 311.

²⁸ Anna Grzymala-Busse and Dan Slater, “Making Godly Nations: Church-State Pathways in Poland and the Philippines,” *Comparative Politics* 50, no. 4 (2018), 545.

identity, the Filipino value system and overall socio-political fabric of the country are directly linked to the Roman Catholic experience imported and subsequently misused by the friars that settled in the Philippines.²⁹ Drawing from the work of Filipino historian and writer, Vicente L. Rafael and his notion of the Philippines' conversion through religion, language, and material culture, Grzymala-Busse and Slater argue that religious and national "fusion by substitution" is due to the weakness of the State or governing infrastructure during the Spanish colonial period. Fusion by substitution, in turn, allowed the Church and its agents (i.e., the friars coming mainly from the Jesuit, Dominican and Augustinian orders) to insert itself into every aspect of social life as the constant source of stability. However, the Church's strict and skewed basis for moral authority on the local populations proved to be problematic, as it failed on a national scale to develop any secular alternatives to religious attachments.³⁰ Such tensions continue to persist today in the conflicting dynamic of Church-State relations.

The evidence as seen in the Velarde-Bagay-Suarez map, the religious icons, and in the arguably present protracted period of colonization in the Philippines, is ultimately reflective of the extensive grip that imperialism and religion had on the country. Given that Christianity remains to be a significant part of the Filipino identity, Philippine colonial history and its ramifications are critiqued differently from other postcolonial histories. Both local and contemporary scholarship that critically analyzes the Spanish colonial era is relatively recent, and has only scratched the surface of what is accepted today as the roots of a pan-Filipino national identity—the *mestizo* cultural identity.³¹ With that said, nearly 400 years of colonial

²⁹ Ibid, 546; 554.

³⁰ Ibid, 547.

³¹ Javellana, *Weaving Cultures: The Invention of Colonial Art and Culture in the Philippines, 1565-1850*, 314.

history has encouraged the hunt for the “true Filipino” by scholars, or in this case, authentic Filipino art. However, it has been contrastingly proposed by scholars of Filipino heritage that, perhaps, the way to view and retell the past is by accepting precisely how much 377 years of colonization have shaped the Filipino people.³² These objects, therefore, neither affirm nor destabilize the success of the Spanish Empire’s objective of making the whole world Roman Catholic, and instead serve as contributors to Filipino heritage and identity.

³² Capistrano-Baker, “Whither Art History in the Non-Western World: Exploring the Other(s) Art Histories,” 255.

Chapter 1: Charting Colonization through Art and Science

1.1 The “Mother of Philippine Maps”

In 2014, an original copy of the Velarde-Bagay-Suarez map, most commonly known as the Jesuit Pedro Murillo Velarde’s *Carta Hydrographica y Chorographica de las Yslas Filipinas* (“Hydrographical and Chorographical Chart of the Philippine Islands”) published in Manila in 1734 was won by Filipino businessman, Mel Velarde at an auction facilitated by Sotheby’s for approximately 730,000 Canadian Dollars (12 million Philippine Pesos (Fig. 1)).³³ The map at this point in time proved to be a key piece of evidence in the Philippines’ territorial disputes with China over landmasses in the South China Sea (or conversely, the West Philippine Sea), and subsequently became an emblem of Philippine sovereignty. Although this is the second copy to fall into Philippine possession as a result Mel Velarde’s subsequent donation to the National Museum of the Philippines following his purchase of the map, what was previously the one and only copy of the map is currently held in the museum’s private collection and remains widely unpublicized and presumably understudied given the scarce scholarly discussion of the object.³⁴ Its repatriation from England—where it had been kept in the library of the Duke of Northumberland for over two centuries—brings forth a series of issues that will be explored in this thesis, for not only does the map embody the modern nationalist spirit, but it also signifies a vital piece of the people’s complex history.³⁵ Since its purchase, media coverage on the map has

³³ Ocampo, “It should be called the Velarde-Bagay-Suarez Map.”

³⁴ Ambeth R. Ocampo, “Rare, Important and Significant,” Inquire Opinion, INQUIRER.net, *Looking Back*, June 10, 2015, <https://opinion.inquirer.net/85658/rare-important-and-significant>.

³⁵ Ocampo, “It should be called the Velarde-Bagay-Suarez Map.”

focused on Velarde's genius and the map as proof of Philippine sovereignty, but has fallen short on shedding light on the map's colonial history, including the work of the Indigenous Filipino artisans who drew and engraved the map. While it has been pointed out by local historians that the map is not simply a chart, but also a portrait of the Philippines in the eighteenth century, little commentary on the implications of such a portrayal has emerged since.

The few studies of the map have appraised the map's geographic isolation of the Philippine Islands, which is a pivotal moment in cartographic history that supposedly speaks to a rejection of the Hispanic concept of the Philippines as part of the Americas and, thus, is a cornerstone in the geographical representation of the archipelago as a world unto themselves.³⁶ Generally interpreted as an assertion of Filipino identity, what remains under discussed is the formation of this "Filipino identity" under Spanish imperial rule—presented in this thesis as but an extension of the Spanish Americas and a gateway to the rest of Asia. Therefore, this chapter will aim to bridge this gap by exploring the map's contents and its authors: the Jesuit Pedro Murillo Velarde (1696-1753), and *indio* (Tagalog) artists, Nicolas de la Cruz Bagay and Francisco Suarez. In view of the fact that the map is undoubtedly rich with a myriad of parts that work together and also independently from each other, this study will attempt to scrutinize the map's colonial roots by focusing on the map's illustrations, especially the two illustrated columns that bookend the map (Figures 2 and 3). Without the intention of disregarding the map's groundbreaking cartographic study of the region by Velarde and Bagay's evident skillfulness in his execution of the map itself, the bookend illustrations done in partnership with Suarez will be

³⁶ Mirela Altić, "Jesuit Contribution to the Mapping of the Philippine Islands: A Case of the 1734 Pedro Murillo Velarde's Chart," in *Mapping Asia: Cartographic Encounters Between East and West* (2018), 74-75.

paid closest attention to in order to emphasize the role of the map in empire building. A map that affirms that foreign lands like the Philippine islands could be great if “tilled,” the Jesuit-run printing press in Manila, the colonial symbols of the cartograph, and the aforementioned illustrations will be analyzed altogether as an overall portrayal of colonial Philippines as it was eighteenth century.

Hailed as the “Mother of Philippine maps,” the *Carta Hydrographica* and its distinction as the first accurately scientific map of the country is a longstanding tradition.³⁷ There exist less than fifty copies around the world, some of which are now accessible through digital databases.³⁸ The dissemination of the print and, likewise, the provenance of these facsimiles—which undoubtedly would have influenced political and economic boundaries in the eighteenth century—is uncertain and merits further investigation.³⁹ One such digitized example from the National Library of Australia attests to the map’s eminence (Fig. 4). In this copy made by Filipino historian, Trinidad Pardo de Tavera (1857-1925), two inscriptions line the top and bottom of the object. The upper line in English states that the facsimile was created in 1934 from the original copy held in Paris, while the bottom, translated from Spanish reads that the map by Fr. Pedro Murillo Velarde is the first of its kind, published in Manila in 1734, and drawn by Nicolas de la Cruz Bagay. In addition, there is a concise description of additional elements on the map, these being the different types of people in the archipelago, scenes of daily life, and maps

³⁷ Leovino Ma. Garcia, “‘Mother of Philippine Maps’ Settles Sea Dispute with China,” Ateneo de Manila University, July 18, 2015, <http://ateneo.edu/news/%E2%80%98mother-philippine-maps%E2%80%99-settles-sea-dispute-china>.

³⁸ Ocampo, “Rare, Important and Significant.”

³⁹ Altíc, “Jesuit Contribution to the Mapping of the Philippine Islands: A Case of the 1734 Pedro Murillo Velarde’s Chart,” 86.

that specifically depict the cities of Manila and Zamboanga, and the Port of Cavite.⁴⁰ Curiously, Pardo de Tavera's textual description does not address the map of Guam (an important stop for the trans-Pacific trade), nor does Tavera acknowledge Francisco Suarez, which is perhaps due to the fact that Suarez's signatures are absent from this particular copy of the map.⁴¹ In relation, and to reiterate Ocampo's remarks, the map may be read as a historical document given the text etched into the object itself.⁴² Written in the Spanish language and situated in the southwest portion of the map is a cartouche that essentially summarizes the founding history of the Philippines, especially punctuated by the arrival of Magallanes in Cebu on April 7, 1521 after having left Seville on August 10, 1519, followed by the founding of Manila on June 24, 1571 by Legazpi—six years after his own arrival in the Philippines.⁴³ The authority that the text exudes suggests that the map's inclusion of a founding history makes it an invaluable historical object that is worth further study for its representation of the archipelago as politically, economically and socially significant to the Spanish Empire and, undoubtedly, for its place within Philippine colonial history and art history. Briefly discussed by Ruth Hill in her study on imperialism and empiricism in the Spanish *monarquía* (monarchy), the 1734 map recycles religious and imperial images from the Middle Ages, Renaissance and Baroque periods.⁴⁴ The aforementioned cartouche in its exhibition of both text and image is a critical example of this for it unites the entire object, and effectively communicates the “achievements” of imperial expansion to its

⁴⁰ Pedro Murillo Velarde, Nicolas de la Cruz Bagay and Francisco Suarez & T.H. Pardo de Tavera, *Carta Hydrographica y Chorographica de las Yslas Filipinas*, Manila, 1734, engraving, National Library of Australia, <https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/1958881>.

⁴¹ Altic, "Jesuit Contribution to the Mapping of the Philippine Islands: A Case of the 1734 Pedro Murillo Velarde's Chart," 83.

⁴² Ocampo, "The Velarde-Bagay map as a historical document."

⁴³ Ocampo, "It should be called the Velarde-Bagay-Suarez Map."

⁴⁴ R. Hill, "Imperialism and Empiricism in the Spanish Monarquía," 131.

audience. At the top of the roundel is a lion, which is a symbol of Spain's composite monarchy that appears to literally and figuratively reign over the souls and soils of the East.⁴⁵ The text beyond its very succinct founding history of the archipelago further recounts its impressive claims of the natural resources that may be found in the islands. Included as well is a listing of the religious orders and the extent of their dispersion in towns across the archipelago, which implies the number of souls converted to Catholicism.⁴⁶ Such souls, whether Christianized or not, appear diversely along the roundel and visually subordinate to the lion representing Spain. Clockwise from the lion is an enslaved African (*cafre*), a *Mardica* from Jakarta, a *mestiza de sangley* (a half-Chinese, half-Tagalo woman), an *indio* (Tagalo), an Aeta from the indigenous group native to the hills of northern Philippines and, finally, a Chinese (*sangley*) nobleman.⁴⁷ The portrayal of colonial intervention in the Philippine Islands as shown through this cartouche in conjunction with textual description cements the archipelago's role within the Spanish Empire.

Moreover, and given that the object is first and foremost a navigational chart, perhaps the most immediate cartographic proof of Spain's trading investments in the archipelago are the lines drawn in and around the islands. These are intersected by four ships that are undoubtedly the massive galleons that brought goods in and out between Spain and New Spain territories. Inscriptions along these lines reveal that these are *derroteros* (plural for "direction," or "route") to a number of ports that were part of the galleon trade routes, which visually officiate the economic activity in the archipelago. Of further intrigue is a certain *derrotero* that reminds and

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ocampo, "The Velarde-Bagay map as a historical document."

⁴⁷ R. Hill, "Imperialism and Empiricism in the Spanish Monarquía," 130.

reaffirms viewers of the founding of the archipelago by Magellan in 1521. His route, aptly labeled, “*Derrotero de Hernando Magallanes Año 1521*,” is punctuated by his ship, the *Victoria*. The most significant part of Magellan’s route is marked by a small illustration of what appears to be a chapel on the island of *Zebu*, or Cebu today, which denotes his landing in the Islands and his erecting of the Christian cross in the earth. Should one’s eye follow Magellan’s route and view the map as a gateway into the farthest reaches of the Spanish Empire, the isolation of the archipelago is perceptible, which most studies on the map highlight is justified by the fact that Velarde’s invention only implies regional relations with Spain, New Spain and neighboring Southeast Asian territories through text and illustration.⁴⁸ For these reasons, the visual isolation of the Philippines in this regard is what is considered to be the beginnings of the formation of Filipino identity; however, this argument becomes complicated when one is reminded that the Philippine archipelago would remain under Spanish rule for another 164 years from the map’s publication date. Even through a purely cartographic understanding, the notion of the colonial gaze is intertwined with the map regardless of the archipelago’s novel portrayal. Bridging from the issues introduced, colonial cartographs like the Velarde-Bagay-Suarez map are important for understanding the fabrication of the colonized collective which, in this case, encompasses both land and people. Notwithstanding that the chart is a prime example of excellence in the history of Southeast Asian cartography, its overt colonial rhetoric is substantially glossed over in favor of the map’s acute attention to detail in charting the archipelago, and even more so given the heightened Philippine-China tensions within the last 10 to 15 years.

⁴⁸ Altic, “Jesuit Contribution to the Mapping of the Philippine Islands: A Case of the 1734 Pedro Murillo Velarde’s Chart,” 79.

The map is a culmination of years of research by the Jesuit Pedro Murillo Velarde. Seen in the top-right corner of the map is another cartouche that bears equal importance to the larger cartouche in the lower half of the map. This cartouche contains the map's title, dedication, authorial attribution, its scale, and its publication date and location (1734 in Manila). The Spanish coat of arms is flanked by two *putti* with trumpets. Ribbons with inscriptions in Latin from each trumpet appear to flutter from the air of the trumpets, the left inscription reading, "Even the furthest earth serves you," and the right reading, "The ocean likewise is subject to him." Two women who personify geographical knowledge are shown with their scientific instruments in their laps and at their feet, as they hold up an expanse of cloth that has inscribed on it the title, *Carta Hydrographica y Chorographica de las Yslas Filipinas*, and its dedication to "the King our Lord" (*dedicada al rey nuestro señor*)—who would have been Philip V (1700-1746) at the time of printing—by Governor General Fernando Valdes Tamon. Ordered by Philip V, Tamon entrusted the commission to Velarde due to his reputation in the archipelago.⁴⁹ Finally, written in smaller font is the credit to Fr. Pedro Murillo Velarde done "based on the best maps and accounts that have come out and on the observation of the Author." Based on an article by Angel Hidalgo, which celebrates the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the Jesuits in the Philippines, Velarde had exceptionally utilized the resources available to him in Manila in order to create his *Carta Hydrographica*, and was subsequently a production that would prove heavily influential for his later publication, the eighth volume of his *Geographia historica* (1752), which he devoted to the Philippines and Africa.⁵⁰ As it will be discussed, the organization of his

⁴⁹ Angel Hidalgo, "Philippine Chartography and the Jesuits," *Philippine Studies* 29, no. 3/4 (1981), 361.

⁵⁰ R. Hill, "Imperialism and Empiricism in the Spanish Monarquía," 129.

publication, which dedicates each chapter to fruits, animals, economy and the natives amongst other topics, emulates the objective of the bookend illustrations.

Velarde was of the most prominent scholars of the Universidad de San Ignacio—a Jesuit-founded college in Manila founded in 1590 and later dissolved in 1768 when the Jesuits were expelled from the Philippines—and had arrived in Manila in 1723. He was especially known for his interest and dedication to cartography. Indeed, cartography was an essential part of being a missionary. Missionary work especially in the early modern period entailed traversing uncharted locations, which inherently called for the need of maps. It was rare that the missionary did not make accounts in written form or through sketches of the region in which he explored and settled in for the duration of his mission. Letters were especially common between missionaries and their superiors in Europe, which were also essential doorways for the curious European audience wanting to know about the progress of evangelization and the exotic environment in which their brothers labored.⁵¹ A testimony from Fr. Miguel Selga, who was the director of the Manila Observatory from 1926-1949, proclaims that Velarde had produced numerous maps that were put on display in the halls of the Universidad de San Ignacio. These presumably drawn, engraved and, therefore, printed maps, however, did not survive due to the Second World War during which the college was destroyed; nor are other copies of these maps known to existence.⁵² Some of his only surviving works are, incidentally, the 1734 original of his *Carta Hydrographica*, as well as a scaled-down 1744 edition also signed by Bagay. To note briefly, there exist numerous

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Altic, "Jesuit Contribution to the Mapping of the Philippine Islands: A Case of the 1734 Pedro Murillo Velarde's Chart," 76.

copies of this 1744 edition around the world, some of which are held in Philippine local libraries.⁵³

Albeit the map conveys that *la experiencia* (experience) is a significant factor for the advancement of knowledge as evinced by the authorial attribution beneath the title of the map, Velarde, in actuality, arguably lacked a justifiable amount of personal observation to corroborate his *mapa*.⁵⁴ The map is undeniably impressive in this regard, considering that Velarde's first-hand observations of the archipelago were limited to the city of Manila, and that most of his knowledge about the archipelago was gathered from descriptions and maps made by the British, Dutch, French, Portuguese and fellow Spaniards. Furthermore, personal accounts penned by Velarde reveal that the extent of his own observations were infrequent trips to various islands, sailing along coasts and penetrating into the interior of only some of these islands.⁵⁵

1.2 The Printing Press and the Colonial Gaze

Inclusive of the side illustrations, the chart altogether measures at approximately 112 x 120 centimeters—its size relatively small compared to much larger printed works in Europe and even in the Spanish Americas during the same period. Its production in this respect speaks to the limited but evolving practice of printing in the Philippines, particularly in the capital city of Manila. Matthew Hill's study on the book trade in Spanish-occupied Philippines describes that printing presses were, indeed, limited in numbers all across the archipelago.⁵⁶ Owned and operated exclusively by religious orders and later passed on to the archdiocesan seminary, these

⁵³ Garcia, "'Mother of Philippine Maps' Settles Sea Dispute with China."

⁵⁴ R. Hill, "Imperialism and Empiricism in the Spanish Monarquía," 130.

⁵⁵ Altic, "Jesuit Contribution to the Mapping of the Philippine Islands: A Case of the 1734 Pedro Murillo Velarde's Chart," 74.

⁵⁶ Matthew Hill, "The Book Trade in the Colonial Philippines," in *Book History* 20, no. 1 (2017), 41.

printing presses printed over a thousand different titles that are known of all throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. But as Hill emphasizes, this was no small accomplishment considering Manila's distance from the intellectual centers of Europe and colonial America.⁵⁷ Another look into Velarde's *Geographia historica*, confirms how many printing presses there were during his time in the Philippines, as well as reveals what he had thought of the operations in these Spanish territories. He accounts for three printing presses in Manila alone, which were "all operated by the Indians to compose and print."⁵⁸ Drawn in portolan style, the sea chart in totality exhibits a marriage of art and science. Portolan charts, according to Kevin Sheehan, favored aesthetics in as much as scientific accuracy and were highly coveted. Originating as early as the thirteenth century, portolan charts are argued to have been rarely intended for practical navigation. Rather, they were goods designed and consumed to show off one's worldliness, though were also used as references or to record new discoveries.⁵⁹ This concept of new discoveries is now widely acknowledged to be a symptom of the colonial gaze which, like most European representations of foreign lands, is the main operative in the Velarde-Bagay-Suarez map. In connection, Mary Louise Pratt's concept of "planetary consciousness" in relation to cartography speaks to the rise of science and rational classification in early modern Europe. Such consciousness gave European travelers "the sense that theirs was a universal ordering system that would conquer and bring under the high modern lens all the flora, fauna, and land of the world 'out there.'"⁶⁰ This "universalizing" system, which subsequently led

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Pedro Murillo Velarde, *Geographia Historica, De Las Islas Philipinas, Del Africa, y De Sus Islas Adyacentes: Tomo VIII*, Spain: en la oficina de D. Gabriel Ramirez (Madrid, 1752), 38.

⁵⁹ Sheehan, "Aesthetic Cartography: The Cultural Function of Portolan Charts from 1300 to 1700," 133.

⁶⁰ Nelson, Pratt, Banner, and Braun, "Emptiness in the Colonial Gaze: Labor, Property, and Nature," 163.

to techniques of control and so-called modernization, is a crucial aspect of the colonial gaze and is, hence, manifested in the Velarde-Bagay-Suarez map. The representation of the archipelago in the *Carta Hydrographica* is a display of a comprehensive catalogue of the information necessary for the governance of the islands, knowledge about the galleon trade, as well as including a message that takes on both textual and symbolic forms, making evident the extent of Spanish control of the Philippine Islands in the eighteenth century and the general perception towards the archipelago's people.⁶¹

Relating to the work of Bagay and Suarez and the bookend illustrations themselves, it is clear that despite the fact that two of the best *indio* artists of their time had worked with Velarde, a certain attitude is maintained about the Philippine islands. Unsurprisingly in Velarde's *Geographia historica*, he makes no formal recognition of the Tagalog artists he worked closely with during the production of the *Carta Hydrographica*. Perhaps it is this lack of textual recognition that contributes to the general absence of biographical records of Filipino artists. Quite a rare sight in Philippine colonial art, the signatures of Bagay and Suarez which intriguingly declare that they were specifically *indios* of the *Tagalo* group, literally and figuratively scratch the surface of artistic and printing practices in Manila. Though not present in the Paris facsimile and, therefore, Tavera's facsimile of the map, the mark of the artist-ego in four different places on the object only brings forward more questions about the lives of artists in colonial Philippines. (Bagay's signatures are inscribed on the main engraving of the map itself and one illustration depicting ethnic Filipinos. Suarez's signatures are inscribed on the maps

⁶¹ Altic, "Jesuit Contribution to the Mapping of the Philippine Islands: A Case of the 1734 Pedro Murillo Velarde's Chart," 77.

depicting the city of Manila and the Port of Cavite.) Such questions may never be completely answered due to the scarcity of historical records. However, according to Filipino historian Carlos Quirino (1910-1999), Bagay was the head printer of the Jesuit press owned by the Universidad de San Ignacio—the same college in which Velarde was a prominent figure.⁶² Ascertained to have been an outstanding engraver, Bagay's known works include religious icons, at least thirty-seven books dating from 1743 to 1768, and other cartographs like that of the 1744 rendition of Velarde's map.⁶³ In comparison to Bagay, Suarez is, unfortunately, much lesser known. Immediately pertaining to Bagay and Suarez's work with Velarde on the map, an in-depth account of the process and materials used remains insufficiently researched. Nevertheless, what is known about printing in the Philippines comes from Regalado Trota Jose's landmark work on Philippine colonial church art, *Simbahan*, from 1992 in which he describes that printing presses for artistic production progressed steadily between the late sixteenth century and into the seventeenth century beginning with the xylographic method, then typography and, eventually, copperplate etchings. Although, exactly when copperplate engraving was introduced in Manila is not definite.⁶⁴ Contingent on catalogue descriptions of the *Carta Hydrographica* around the world, the map is, in fact, a copperplate engraving. Details provided by the British Library claim that the map was published on eight sheets.⁶⁵ The type of paper it was printed on is indefinite,

⁶² Carlos Quirino, *Philippine Cartography 1320-1899, 3rd edition* (Quezon City: Vibal Foundation, 2010), in M. Altić, "Jesuit Contribution to the Mapping of the Philippine Islands: A Case of the 1734 Pedro Murillo Velarde's Chart" (2018), 78.

⁶³ Alfredo J. Morales Martinez, "Cartografía y Cartografía Simbólica Las "Theses De Mathematicas, De Cosmographia e Hydrographia" De Vicente De Memije." *Varia Historia* 32, no. 60 (2016), 681.

⁶⁴ Regalado Trota Jose, "Chapter Seven: People's Art on Cigarette Paper," in *Simbahan: Church Art in Colonial Philippines, 1565-1898* (Metro Manila, Philippines: Ayala Foundation, 1992), 134.

⁶⁵ Pedro Murillo Velarde, Nicolas de la Cruz Bagay and Francisco Suarez, *Carta Hydrographica y Chorographica de las Yslas Filipinas*, Manila, 1734, engraving, British Library, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/britishlibrary/50264966283>.

though it may be inferred that paper used in Manila was imported from China. Jose names these types of paper, which would have been used at the time Bagay and Suarez were active: *papel de arroz* (rice paper), paper made from bamboo, cotton, and even paper produced from a specie of elm called *kochu*. *Papel de arroz* is the most brittle of these, as Jose notes; this would then suggest that copperplate engravings—which were expensive and limited in availability—were likely pressed on more durable paper variants, as listed.⁶⁶ In consideration that copperplates were expensive, the commission by Philip V and the general craftsmanship of the map and its illustrations reinforces Jose’s sentiments that Filipino engraving reached its Golden Age in the eighteenth century.⁶⁷ Affirmation of this comes from Velarde’s own relatively positive comments about the work of native craftsmen in his *Geographia historica*, since the Jesuit expressed that he had seen “more blunderous errors in the printing of Spain and Milan.”⁶⁸ Bagay’s work on the chart alone, as mentioned, is apparent proof of the strides the practice of Filipino engraving had made since its beginnings in the late sixteenth century. Executed with a *buril* (etching needle) the detail of the chart and illustrations as seen in the precise use of hatching and cross-hatching techniques exhibits the technical expertise of both Bagay and Suarez, whose artistic styles are seemingly identical.⁶⁹ Given this, it may be that Bagay’s and Suarez’s training in Manila by the Spaniards followed similar conventions, especially since it is known that friars and *indios* occasionally collaborated on printed works.⁷⁰ At this moment, it is worth noting that the twelve illustrations that complete this cartographic portrait of the

⁶⁶ Jose, “Chapter Seven: People’s Art on Cigarette Paper,” 134.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 135.

⁶⁸ Velarde, *Geographia Historica, De Las Islas Philipinas, Del Africa, y De Sus Islas Adyacentes: Tomo VIII*, 38.

⁶⁹ Jose, “Chapter Seven: People’s Art on Cigarette Paper,” 134.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 137.

archipelago were likely made from separate copperplates, which are additional to the eight sheets that comprise of the chart itself, and pieced together to complete the object, since comparison between known digitized copies held in the National Library of Australia, British Library, Library of Congress, Bibliothèque nationale de France and Biblioteca Nacional de España differ in terms of the arrangement of the side illustrations. As the illustrations exhibit both the land and its people, these are organized as such with each group occupying either side of the map in a top-down or left to right structure. Similarly, a recent visit to the exhibition, *Intertwined: Transpacific, Transcultural Philippines*, curated by Filipino art historian, Florina Capistrano-Baker held in the Ayala Museum in Makati City, Philippines, provided the personally enlightening display of yet another copy of the Velarde-Bagay-Suarez map (see Fig. 1). Straight from the museum's private collection, this version is an exact copy to those owned by the National Library of Australia, British Library, and Library of Congress.

That being said, it is possible to view the sea chart autonomously from the side illustrations and vice versa, which would suggest the possibility of two different modes of referential viewing. Taking the Ayala Museum arrangement, for instance, the left column of illustrations shows people from different ethnic backgrounds found in and around the Philippine Islands who are also characterized by their dress and the actual name of their ethnicity. It may be deduced that such representatives of these ethnic groups have strong relations to port cities, and thus alludes to the trading lifestyle and culture in the Philippines during this time, especially in Manila. Significantly, the same individuals mirror the figures around cartouche discussed previously but with a number of additions. From top to bottom, there appear the *sangleyes* (or Chinese men), who are differentiated into four types: Christian, middle class man, fisherman and dockworker. These are followed by a group of *cafres* in motion watched by a *canarin* (a South

Asian man from Mangalore), and a *lascar* (South Asian mariner). Below is a representation of a *mestizo* family of three, and to their right, a *mardica* (descendants of freed slaves of different ethnic backgrounds from the Dutch East Indies), and a *japon* (Japanese man). The next frame shows a Spanish man of status with his servant (*payo*) who is holding an umbrella high above his master to shield him from the hot sun; a man of Black creole descent appears to greet him, while *indios* (natives) participate in a cockfight adjacent to him. Above and in the distance against the silhouette of mountains is an Aeta couple, referred to here as “mountain people.” The “Eastern world” is represented in the following frame, in which an Armenian is smoking and seemingly conversing with a *mogul* (Moghul) and a *malabar* from Dutch Malabar, what is today Cochi, India. Finally, a representation of pure ethnic Filipinos is seen, differentiated by attire and daily activities. From left to right is a native couple wearing what is understood to be formal attire for mass, followed by a native woman carrying a fruit basket; by an urban structure in the background is a group of young native individuals dancing a traditional folk dance, and a Visayan man with a *balarao* (“winged dagger”), who is arguably a representative of the first Filipino people encountered by Magellan in 1521 on his expedition and, ultimately, the cause of his demise. Interestingly, and true to both political and cartographic accuracy, the chart itself includes a small banderole that says, “*Desde Zamboanga a Caraga por el norte es de España,*” (From Zamboanga to Caraga in the north is Spain’s) which makes a clear acknowledgement of the Muslim resistance in the South, and that Spanish control did not extend in the sultanates of Mindanao Island.⁷¹ In relation, the informative cartouche in the lower-left quarter of the Velarde-

⁷¹ Altic, “Jesuit Contribution to the Mapping of the Philippine Islands: A Case of the 1734 Pedro Murillo Velarde’s Chart,” 79.

Bagay-Suarez map implies that these territories, which were off limits to the Spanish, “could be plentiful if it were tilled,” (*La tierra es capaz de mucho si tuviera cultivo*) as the lands were enticingly rich in natural resources. Notwithstanding that this particular line refers to natural resources, the idea that the land could be productive if further cultivated may be extended to the local community. Accordingly, and although a clear-cut caste system is not immediately discernible, the grouping of one or more ethnicities and races in a single frame indicates otherwise. This demarcation is precisely articulated by Rafael, as per the quote transcribed in the introduction. The southern territories of the Philippines will perpetually be known as the most resistant to Spanish forces, also considered to be the peoples that resisted conversion to the Catholic faith. The idea that Christianized Filipinos in Manila to the north are portrayed as culturally distinct from the animist and Muslim ethnic groups to the South speaks to the cultural and religious extent of Spanish influence, as well as, perhaps, the imperialistic urgency to expand Spanish authority.

To return to the concept of the colonial gaze, these frames which encase both people and natural resources exhibit an overt expression of territorial claims by the Spanish Empire through the visual classification of the subordinated. The same notion can be extended to Velarde’s *Geographia historica*, in which the organization of his descriptions of the Filipino community mirror the illustrations on the map. Bearing in mind that the map’s printing production would have likely been supervised by Velarde with the actual work done by Bagay and Suarez, the map’s depiction of these Spanish territories clearly categorizes and, subsequently, emphasizes the most curious aspects of the Philippines. Comparable to Velarde’s positive sentiments on the Indigenous-run printing presses in Manila, his generalized descriptions of the people found in the local community, especially the native Filipinos, are seemingly just as positive. Resonant of the

argument that Velarde's map underlines Filipino identity due to the archipelago's cartographic representation, so, too, does his account of the islands in that the focus remains on the Philippines and its people. The fifth chapter of his *Geographia historica* is dedicated to the *indios* of the Philippines, wherein he describes the different native groups, their physical characteristics, indigenous beliefs and customs, as well as his admiration for their ability to do good physical work.⁷² Nonetheless, the inconspicuous threat of the subordinated collective becomes evident, for he describes that the natives of the Philippine Islands—despite their naïve and simple appearances—are internally complex like a “labyrinth,” and that they “hide an underhanded dissimulation,” which greatly implies that the locals are not to be trusted.⁷³ Whether the skill of concealment is seen as a positive or negative characteristic, much of Velarde's text expresses disparagement. Especially on the details regarding the different “types” of indigenous peoples in the Islands, he emphasizes that each group is unique in appearance, language and customs. This made the natives a string of contrarities that cannot be reconciled, but can be molded into the ways of the Spaniard, which Velarde recounts was something some peoples were willing to do.⁷⁴ Overall, “there are in the Philippines, as everywhere, many fools; but there is no lack of some ingeniousness, skillfulness, and strength, for they study grammar, philosophy, and theology, in which they have made some progress, though not great.”⁷⁵ Nonetheless, Velarde's statement is certainly belied by the work of Bagay and Suarez on the *Carta Hydrographica*, and any other native artisan that worked in the printing press. The map's colonial rhetoric that effectively ties together souls and soils, as Ruth Hill expresses, further

⁷² Velarde, *Geographia Historica, De Las Islas Philipinas, Del Africa, y De Sus Islas Adyacentes: Tomo VIII*, 35.

⁷³ Ibid, 38.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 36.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 37.

emphasizes the archipelago's economical and socio-political value for the Spanish Empire. The mere presentation of the diverse community in this manner presupposes that these peoples are part of the local landscape. Brought together by pre-Spanish and Spanish-era trade relations and early migration, the inclusion of all types of people gives the impression of the expanse of the Spanish Empire as it was in the eighteenth century. Moreover, the other six illustrations done by Suarez on the right side of the map reinforce this idea since these frames display the natural resources that the Philippine Islands have to offer, together with the emphasis on the empire's exploitation of these resources. Again, the emphasis on Manila, Zamboanga and Cavite speaks not only to trading activities in the Philippines, but also the supposed progress of urbanization as a result of the Spanish presence.⁷⁶ With regards to trading posts, these locations are noted to have been some of the major Christian outposts as a means of spreading colonial power.⁷⁷ Religious orders were highly involved alongside weak formations of government jurisdictions in the transformation of native space by way of *reduccion* (reduction)—the New Spain strategy that organized towns in a grid pattern that consisted of a central plaza, a church and its convent in the center of the plaza, encircled by civic buildings and residences.⁷⁸ The organization of a town in this manner literally and symbolically placed religion at the center of everyday life. As expounded upon in a chapter on Christianity in the Philippines, historian José Mario C. Francisco makes clear that there was no separation between Church and State, an inseparable dynamic reinforced in various ways that included the *reducciones*. Given that the Church was the overseeing presence in the settlements, such jurisdiction seeped into the educational institution.

⁷⁶ Altic, "Jesuit Contribution to the Mapping of the Philippine Islands: A Case of the 1734 Pedro Murillo Velarde's Chart," 83.

⁷⁷ Francisco, "The Philippines," 99.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

A sector of interest in this topic was artistic education which had, accordingly, been under the sole administration of members of religious orders (i.e., the Jesuits, Dominicans and Augustinians).⁷⁹

Similar to the representation of the different ethnic groups, these panels are also labeled and numbered diagrammatically to clearly show each point of reference. Mirela Altić, whose study of the map concurs that that the novel geographic representation of the Philippine archipelago by Velarde may be equated to a milestone in Filipino identity, notes that these twelve illustrations, in their portrayal of the thriving cosmopolitan population of eighteenth century Philippines due to trading activity, is proof the success of the Spanish administration and the stability of Spanish rule over the both land and people.⁸⁰ Provided that the map was an order made by Philip V, its eventual possession in the king's hands to be used as a reference or to flaunt the growth of the Spanish Empire, as Sheehan would argue, heavily informs Velarde's vision in uniting both elements in the *Carta Hydrographica*. Similarly, Robert Batchelor states, "cartography enabled the Jesuits to play important roles in helping shape the absolutist state and "rationalize" eighteenth century empires."⁸¹ With the Spanish coat of arms proudly stamped on the upper-right hand corner of the chart, it becomes clear that what is exhibited is not simply what should be taken as an assertion of Filipino identity, but rather what the object was meant to convey, which is a colonized collective impacted and forever changed under Spanish hegemony.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 99-100.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Robert Batchelor, "Introduction: Jesuit Cartography," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 6; no. 1 (2019), 11.

1.3 Colonial Legacy

Viewed as one, the twelve frames that portray a thriving people living in an equally thriving land corresponds to the census inscribed within the rounded cartouche discussed in the beginning of this paper, and ultimately presents to its viewers (i.e., Philip V) both a prospering empire, as well as an exclusive look into far away territories. Maps by the Jesuits in particular, therefore, were tools in the art of persuasion and, indeed, made lasting impressions that directly affected early modern empires and political practice.⁸² As evinced by the opening issue of territorial disputes, the legacy of the *Carta Hydrographica* in this regard remains true. The map proved to be an important object that pacified territorial disputes between the Philippines and China over landmasses in the South China Sea. However, these disputes between the Philippines and China were rehashed in 2012 due to China's growing presence in the remote islands most known by their British namesakes, the Scarborough Shoal and the Spratly Islands.⁸³ Valued for natural resources, like fish and gas, the disputes over these largely uninhabited islands have been instrumental in reasserting Philippine sovereignty and nationalism over its neighbor. Following a standoff between the Philippine and Chinese navy around the Scarborough Shoal in 2012, an official report was filed by the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), citing allegations of increased Chinese presence within the Scarborough Shoal and the Spratly Islands. This included several examples of flags erected on various islets and atolls throughout the twentieth century.⁸⁴ Hard evidence of the Scarborough Shoal and the Spratly Islands as rightfully under Philippine responsibility is in and of itself a remarkably turbulent issue. Similarly,

⁸² Ibid, 6.

⁸³ Dylan Michael Beatty, "Re-Inscribing Propositions: Historic Cartography and Philippine Claims to the Spratly Islands," *Territory, Politics, Governance* 9, no. 3 (2021), 437.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 441.

territorial claims made by China were supported by assertions of the islands supposedly being in one of the nation's oldest maps charting the Yuan Dynasty in 1279, which would prove that the Scarborough Shoal had been utilized by Chinese fishermen as early as the thirteenth century. However, no such map has been released to the public by the Republic of China.⁸⁵ As exhibited by Dylan Michael Beatty's analysis of the primary use of maps in the case, Philippine claims over the land masses are ultimately unsupported by most maps during and after the Spanish-era. Only one map arguably sustains the case, which was used in support of the DFA's report: the Velarde-Bagay-Suarez map. Basing the argument on the age of the map, as well as its acute accuracy, the Scarborough Shoal is presented as being historically part of the archipelago for its very inclusion in the chart. Beatty points out, however, that age in this case can also be equated with outdatedness given the fact that the map precedes the Treaty of Paris of 1763.⁸⁶ Hence, the repatriation of a second copy of the map from Britain in 2014 had solidified the map's purpose as proof against China's claims over the scattered remote islands. More recently, the Philippine Postal Corporation (PHLPost) launched Murillo Velarde Map 1734 postage stamps as part of the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the founding of the Philippines by Magellan.⁸⁷ Praised as the "holy grail" of Philippine cartography following the events of 2014, the issuing of the stamps is in support of Republic Act no. 10086, otherwise known as the "Strengthening People's Nationalism through Philippine History Act," and as PHLPost states, the postage stamp is for the "hopes to rekindle the sense of patriotism among our young people, develop their geographic

⁸⁵ Ibid, 445.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 439.

⁸⁷ "PHLPost launches 'Murillo Velarde 1734 Map' postage stamps," *Business Mirror*, Makati City, March 21, 2021, <https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/phlpost-launches-murillo-velarde-1734-map-postage/docview/2503420628/se-2?accountid=14656>.

awareness leading to a better understanding of our history and culture.”⁸⁸ But as this study has attempted to show with regards to issues of identity and sovereignty, such notions can be challenged, especially on the basis of the failure of public education to seize the opportunity to investigate the object’s role in empire building and its portrayal of the Philippines as it was in the eighteenth century.⁸⁹ Arguably, perhaps the only semblance of Filipino assertion present are embodied by the signatures of Bagay and Suarez. In agreeance with Quirino, Jose comments that these signatures are extraordinary and, despite the small size, the inclusion of their signatures is inscribed on the map in such a way that inherently leads the eye to their names. In the same vein, both Jose and Ocampo propose that the presence of the “indio-genius” as evinced in the *Carta Hydrographica* is a demonstration of Filipino nationalism in art.⁹⁰ This alternative view on the map’s widely accepted historical and scientific implications is a clear step towards a decolonization of Philippine history, which continues to be a complex methodological application on a historical canon that considerably accentuates the Spanish-era. Ultimately a colonial cartographic portrait centered on exhibiting the positive effects of Spanish Imperialism, the Velarde-Bagay-Suarez map has the potential to encourage a better understanding of local history beyond the premise of sovereignty.

While the map in particular represents a clear union of secular and religious imagery, this chapter has shown the overpowering authority of religiosity which, as demonstrated thus far, permeated all aspects of daily life. Because Catholicism—as it was exploited by the friars proved to be the main governing body in the Philippines—its manifestations are especially found in

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ocampo, “It should be called the Velarde-Bagay-Suarez Map.”

⁹⁰ Jose, “Chapter Seven: People’s Art on Cigarette Paper,” 137; Ocampo, “It should be called the Velarde-Bagay-Suarez Map.”

religious objects that vary in dimensions and contextual settings. In their depictions of biblical figures and stories, as well as the adaptation of the Catholic faith into pre-Hispanic Filipino culture, the examples I turn to now will show how the complex conversion process of the Filipino people to both Catholicism and to a culture that neither completely mimics the Spanish nor abandons pre-Hispanic values can be embodied by a series of paintings.

Chapter 2: The Colonial Baroque, Mestizo and Folk Catholicism: Religious Imagery and National Identity

2.1 The Via Crucis by an Unknown Bohol Master

Hung all around in its own gallery in the National Museum of the Philippines in Manila, the *Via Crucis* paintings exhibit, above all else, the colonial inheritance of the country. Fourteen paintings in total are attributed to this unidentified, but distinguished artist referred to as an “unknown Bohol Master,” known as such due to the supposed provenance of the paintings from the province of Bohol situated in the Visayan region of the Philippines. Due to a lack of proper record-keeping and suspected unjust selling of the paintings by priests of the original church from where they had come from, research on these paintings and on the identity of the Bohol Master is limited. Looking at the paintings themselves, their rich formal qualities perhaps speak to the relative wealth of the equally unidentified Bohol parish they were displayed in.⁹¹ As this is what has been widely surmised by the limited research conducted on the paintings themselves, the objects have been attributed to the two largest municipalities of Baclayon and Loboc and are, therefore, linked to the colonial history of the province itself.⁹² Historian José Mario C. Francisco describes that, much like how conversion through text was conducted, the visual arts were also geared towards the conversion of the local peoples. In this, the establishments of the missions raise the possibility that there was a guild, or, likewise, an artisan “school” from where

⁹¹ Wall text, *The Via Crucis*, Gallery of the *Via Crucis* of the Unknown Bohol Master, National Museum of the Philippines, Manila.

⁹² Ibid.

the unknown master might have labored. Such a school, if it had existed, has no historical documentation, and leaves room for additional conjectures in that the “school” was thought of as nothing more by their establishers than a workshop dedicated to the production of religious visual culture.⁹³ This theory yields comparison with other guilds derived from artisan schools in the Spanish colonies in the Americas, which includes the widely researched seventeenth century establishment of what is known in scholarship as the Cuzco School, or the Cuzco School of Painting. This school headed by Spanish friars trained Indigenous and *mestizo* artists in the Western art tradition of oil painting and sculpture as part of the intention of converting the local community to Christianity. Despite this, it was through the objects produced most notably by anonymous artists and few known artists that a distinct style emerged, which has since been known as *mestizo*. This artistic syncretism turned out to be an advantageous method for religious instruction of the Indigenous peoples.⁹⁴ The style’s term of Spanish etymology, which primarily applies to persons of mixed heritage of *indio* (“Indian”) and *peninsulare* (Spaniard born in the Iberian Peninsula), straightforwardly refers to the mixed heritage of the art style—the nuances of which will be expanded upon further in later sections.⁹⁵ Such art under Spanish colonial rule, as it were, would extend beyond the Andes Mountains of Peru and into the art markets of Ecuador and Chile, and up north to Mexico. From there, the galleon trade route which had connected Mexico and the Philippines only augmented relations between Spain’s colonies, which resulted not only in the trading of goods but also in the trading of artistic and cultural elements.⁹⁶ The

⁹³ Francisco, “The Philippines,” 97.

⁹⁴ Samuel K. Heath, “Cuzco School of Painting,” in *Encyclopedia of Latin American History and Culture* (Detroit, MI: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2008), 739.

⁹⁵ Mehl, “Intertwined Histories in the Pacific: The Philippines and New Spain, 1565–1764,” 40.

⁹⁶ Zamora and Kaup, “Baroque, New World Baroque, NeoBaroque: Categories and Concepts,” 4; Mehl, “Intertwined Histories in the Pacific: The Philippines and New Spain, 1565–1764,” 34.

term *mestizo* would also apply to persons of mixed heritage in the Philippines from the interrelations of *indio* and *peninsulare*, or *indio* and *sangle*y (Chinese), but not applied to art historical readings of art produced during Spanish rule in the Philippines.⁹⁷ It is through these parallels allowed by the expanse of the Spanish Empire that provides the grounds for a more engaging analysis of the *Via Crucis* paintings by the unknown Bohol Master. Hence, comparable to the works of artisans from the Americas, it can also be argued that distinct Filipino inflections are present in the otherwise orthodox, dominant subject of the Passion of Christ and, in effect, permits the application of the *mestizo* art practice onto the context of the *Via Crucis* paintings which speaks to the notion of conversion and the issue of national identity.

Turning to the works, all fourteen paintings, measuring at approximately 50 by 76 centimeters, are brightly painted with oil paint mainly consisting of reds, greens and blues. The paint and wood are proven to have been locally sourced, but as mentioned, this tradition of art production was imported from Spain.⁹⁸ Across the fourteen images composed on wood panel, the narrative of the Stations of the Cross is evident and abides by the necessity of the message to be communicated clearly. Traditionally derived from the Passion of Christ, the *Via Crucis* are the fourteen visual aids to the biblical text that articulate Jesus' torturous walk to the site of his crucifixion in Calvary, and is a narrative that is unmistakable to the devout Catholic. Every year during Lent, this is part and parcel of the period of penitence as preparation for Easter; worshippers perform the ritual that entails a visit to their local parish or a pilgrimage to a venerated site (e.g., the *Via Dolorosa* in Jerusalem). The narrative principally emphasizes Jesus'

⁹⁷ Nicole Tse, "Artistic Practices of the Bohol School of Painting: An Analytical and Archival Study of Nineteenth-Century Panel Paintings in the Philippines," *Ricerche* (2005), 150.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

sufferings and his death on the cross, which altogether amounts to his sacrifice for humanity. For as long as Christianity has been practiced and conveyed teachings through visual forms, the series reminds believers of his sufferings and that no mortal suffering is greater than his. It is within the context of the Philippines and its ties with Roman Catholicism that examples of images of the Stations of the Cross are found in church, of which there are hundreds. The colonial era undoubtedly left its mark in that regard, and brings forward one such example that speaks for this period in time, in that the images unquestionably embody the story that is a part of the backbone of Catholicism. In addition, the paintings ignite curiosity with respect to the artist's anonymity. Something as inherently vague and intriguing as anonymity paves the way for inquiries that could unveil what artistic practice and production was like in the Philippine colonial era. While anonymity may account for factors as simple as the loss of records or the failure to sign one's name, the colonial *sistema* (system) brings to mind other possibilities that concern exactly how religion monopolized the art world in the Spanish colonies. The evidence as seen in the *Via Crucis* paintings, and in the arguably present protracted period of colonialization in the Philippines, is ultimately reflective of the extensive grip that religion has on the country.

As stated in the introduction, it cannot be ignored that the figures, as they are depicted in the paintings, bear white European characteristics. This, however, may not only be attributed to the white Spaniard since such characteristics comprising of dark hair and fair skin have been part of the Christian tradition for centuries. In relation, it may very well be that such figural rendering is a result of Filipino artisans copying and painting from sculptural and/or printed examples.⁹⁹ Similar to the theorized origins of the Cuzco School, the stylistic roots of Philippine colonial

⁹⁹ Javellana, *Weaving Cultures: The Invention of Colonial Art and Culture in the Philippines, 1565-1850*, 150.

painting may be traced to statues and prints which were brought into the Philippines with the friars and the galleon trade. These were used as prototypes or models for the reproduction of religious images in the colonies. Moreover, in the same way that statues were subjects of engraving and painting, so, too, were engravings and paintings used for statuary.¹⁰⁰ But as one looks beyond what is apparent on the painted panels, it is in the relatively minor details alongside those that are heavily suggestive of the Spanish occupation that exhibit the pre-Hispanic roots of the Philippines. Specific to these impressions are four of the stations that are identified in sequential order: III) Jesus falls for the first time, V) Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross, XIII) Jesus is taken down from the Cross, and XIV) Jesus is laid in the tomb. These four selections, however, will be presently discussed out of order as a means of articulating the intricacies of colonialism, which are argued to be denoted by the *Via Crucis* paintings. Beginning with the third station (Fig. 5), the generally crowded renditions of the images are reminiscent of the Mannerist movement that is marked with critiques for its presentations of dramatic, elongated figures, and the very lack of an organized and geometric composition that greatly contrasts the Renaissance. Nonetheless, the figures by the unknown Bohol Master appear to exhibit Western European art traditions, specifically in the way the physiques of the figures show an understanding of the human body and its muscles. This knowledge is best demonstrated on the legs of the Roman soldiers, especially the figure to the right of Jesus, although the rest of the bodies contrastingly vary in proportions. Jesus is shown predominantly in the center of the composition, while the assumed trio of Roman soldiers that flank his figure are in motion, tormenting and flogging him as he attempts to stand up. Jesus' eyes are seemingly half-lidded,

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

indicating exhaustion, and are unable to open fully due to the blood that is drawn from the crown of thorns which forcibly sits on his temple. The crown of thorns is lightly emphasized by the wash of yellow that signifies his holiness and divinity. Furthermore, the crucifix sits heavily on his right shoulder and reinforces the reading of his attempts to recover from his fall based on his bent legs, which are curiously composed in that the foreshortening of Jesus' figure does not inherently demonstrate to the eye that he is on the ground. As the eye follows the extension of the crucifix out of frame, one takes in a background that garners fascination. Not unique to this station alone, the background depicts a range of mountains or hills, which have been likened to the infamous "Chocolate Hills" of Bohol, named as such because of the changing colors of the trees from green to brown as a natural occurrence during the dry season that is typically from February to April.¹⁰¹ The hills can be found in five out of the fourteen stations and alternate with depictions of an urban landscape. They are strictly represented in a blue-green color variation, perhaps the maintenance of the green hills is to simply contrast with the brown-colored ground beneath the feet of the figures. The changes in the background project a sensation that effectively makes the viewer and believer feel as if one is following alongside Christ. Such a projection only serves to strengthen the purpose of the Stations of the Cross, wherein believers process and pray with the guidance of the images in order to wholly sympathize and empathize with Jesus' sufferings.

Regarding the matter of landscape, an example of a city view is found within the image of the thirteenth station (Fig. 6). In the wake of Jesus' crucifixion, the cross with a white draping stands upright and in the center of the composition. A cloud formation against the blue skies

¹⁰¹ Jean-Nöel Salomon, "A Mysterious Karst: The "Chocolate Hills" of Bohol (Philippines)," *Acta Carsologica* (2011), 430.

haloes the cross seen with ladders on either side. This group leads the eye downward to the figures of the Virgin Mary in the middle who is seen cradling her deceased son. The pair come together in a *Pietà* configuration. They are flanked by Saint John on the left and Saint Mary Magdalene to the far right with her long, flowing hair that is an aspect of her conventional iconography. The ground beneath them remains brown and contrasts greatly against the whiteness of the urban city topped with red roofs, which may be seen as though extending outwards from the focal point that is the Virgin's face. While the structures could be a general depiction of urbanity, the roofing is reminiscent of Spanish colonial buildings in the Philippines known as *bahay na bato* (house of stone).¹⁰² This architecture is a blend of Spanish and Filipino modes of construction that served to compensate for the ineffective Spanish construction methods that proved to be highly susceptible to the tropical climate and periodical earthquakes.¹⁰³ In order to specifically defend against the climate, the red clay tiles were incorporated to combat humid interiors because the material is suitable for warmer weather.¹⁰⁴ Churches would later also incorporate the red tile into the roofing. With these buildings as part of the equation, the incorporation of both the Filipino-Spanish structures and the Chocolate Hills arguably equate to the *mestizo* style that is particular to the Filipino context. Moreover, the changing landscape speaks plainly of the major presence of Catholicism in the country, which conclusively shows a temporal continuity of centuries-old customs and traditions.

In an article by Antonio D. Sison, the author explores Filipino *mestizo* artistry through the discussion of Filipino folk Catholicism. This analysis is explicated to be the interconnecting

¹⁰² Yves Boquet, "Spatial Structures of the Philippines: Urbanization and Regional Inequalities," in *The Philippine Archipelago* (Cham: Springer, 2017), 442.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 443.

visual elements that illustrate the demarcations between the sacred and profane space, and the related notion of a “double belonging.” On the sacred and the profane, the Spanish missionary campaign sought to embed Roman Catholic rituals and concepts of morality by way of icons and text.¹⁰⁵ Pertaining especially to the act of procession like the Stations of the Cross, these icons and their respective connotations served as analogues to pre-colonial cult practices that were already a part of the Indigenous culture.¹⁰⁶ Sison proceeds to explain that the arrival of the Iberian icon was “seamless,” as per the account from Antonio Pigafetta who was Ferdinand Magellan’s travel companion and official chronicler.¹⁰⁷ Likewise, Regalado Trota Jose in his chapter, “God of the Spaniards” in *Simbahan* explains that Indigenous Filipino belief systems worshipped one god; however, this god was deemed aloof and distant from mortal matters. Thus, no images were made of this god, and instead, mediators or lesser deities of the divine and mortals known as *anitos* were materialized into carvings made from natural resources.¹⁰⁸ Carvings of *anitos* were also believed to provide protection, prosperity, good health and strength.¹⁰⁹ Pigafetta, writing in 1521, describes that he found several shrines along the shoreline of Cebu as opposed to temples or permanent worship sites.¹¹⁰ During the baptism of Rajah Humabon in the province of Cebu, the queen was much enamored of the Catholic idol depicting the *Santo Niño* (Holy Child) brought in by Magellan’s expedition. It is said that she was simply given the idol for personal veneration, and this ultimately resulted in the foreign icon gaining the

¹⁰⁵ Sison, “Afflictive Apparitions: The Folk Catholic Imaginary in Philippine Cinema, Material Religion,” 426.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 427.

¹⁰⁸ Regalado Trota Jose, “Chapter One: God of the Spaniards,” in *Simbahan: Church Art in Colonial Philippines, 1565-1898* (Metro Manila, Philippines: Ayala Foundation, 1992), 13.

¹⁰⁹ Gladys Pino, “The Power of Amulets,” Philippine News Agency, April 15, 2019, <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1067307>.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

status of a rain god. The *Santo Niño* in this particular community had incorporated the idol in rituals that were believed to produce rain, but was not disconnected from the teachings of the Church, hence this “double belonging.”¹¹¹ Although this account of the *Santo Niño* does not have immediate connections with the paintings in question, the basis of Sison’s argument is relevant here. There is no doubt that Catholicism was used to alter pre-existing beliefs and customs of Indigenous groups, and despite the possibility that Pigafetta’s account is biased, the fact that the Iberian idol was inserted relatively seamlessly speaks to an extent of its versatility. The icon drew the focus on stories and legends rather than on theoretical terms, which conclusively led to mass comprehension amongst native groups, and thus came the emergence of an accepted and unquestionable, common understanding of the faith. Once the Spaniards gauged this effect, the teachings of Catholicism were fully operational and were taken advantage of in order to maintain superiority.¹¹²

In the case of the *Via Crucis*, a Roman burial custom is preserved in the Christian narrative. Under Roman rule, biblical Jerusalem, as it was, forbade any person to be buried within the city walls with the intentions of maintaining the city’s purity.¹¹³ This precise custom bled into the visual representations of Jesus’ life, wherein Jesus’ torturous walk was, in effect, a journey outside the walls of the city towards the site of his crucifixion and burial. Otherwise stated, the traditional Christian scenes as they had been adopted in the *Via Crucis* paintings, situate the final hours of Jesus’ life beyond the pure, red-roofed city and closer to the Chocolate Hills and, consequently, insinuates that the native space is impure. The visual connection of

¹¹¹ Sison, “Afflictive Apparitions: The Folk Catholic Imaginary in Philippine Cinema, Material Religion,” 427.

¹¹² Ibid, 428.

¹¹³ Steven L. Tuck, *A History of Roman Art* (Malden: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 63.

religion to one's local environment served to narrow the gap between the western faith and the *indio* who would have been inherently unfamiliar with Roman Catholicism. As seen, too, in the image of fourteenth station (Fig. 7), the entombment of Jesus is performed with the Hills in sight—situated in the distance as the three crucifixes remain erect, again indicating that the scene is taking place away from the walled city. The inscription, “*Año del Señor de 1830*,” (In the year of our Lord 1830) plainly written on the surface of the slab that is to cover the tomb, is, firstly, the only indication of when these paintings are presumed to have been completed, and secondly, seems to reinforce a sense of temporal specificity. The paintings, in other words, are not historicized but are to be discerned as contemporary to the time they were created.

Furthermore, this suggestion of religious enforcement within the pictorial frame may be marked in the fifth station (Fig. 8), and could connote precisely this. Here, the same compositional aspects are straightforwardly consistent as with the other selected frames and the overall series. The narrative has progressed with Jesus now upright from his first fall and walking to his ultimate death, only now he is aided by Simon of Cyrene seen in green and red garments. Like the unidentified figure at the very left of the frame, and Jesus and the Virgin Mary behind him, Simon of Cyrene's head is bowed. The somber aura is broken due to the two Roman soldiers now positioned above the focal point of the crucifix that is still on Jesus' shoulders. This pair of figures are unlike the others in that they appear to be making eye contact with the viewer; in fact, this is the only instance in which figures look outward from the confines of the frame and its narrative. An interesting observation made by the National Museum of the Philippines additionally points out that the features of each face bear stylistic characteristics

rooted in the medieval tradition.¹¹⁴ This is argued as portraying damned souls by means of grotesque features like elongated noses, which are apparent especially in the faces of the Roman soldiers. Thus, this portrayal has led to conclusions that such representation of the soldiers equates to their lack of mercy and remorse for their contributions to the suffering of Jesus, and would have been “very plain to any Catholic observer of the era.”¹¹⁵ Subtle yet effective, this detail only appears to buttress the goals of the faith, wherein the believer must register the visual cues that are to incite reflection and prayer. On the more troubling basis of colonialization, however, this mode of nonverbal communication provides a glimpse into the impacts of colonialism on the ethnic population.

2.2 Art and Labor

Given what has been considered thus far on the Bohol panels, and on the subject of early print production in the Philippines in the previous chapter, it is important to examine the paintings in terms of art production in the Philippine colonial era. As insinuated in earlier sections, the colonial *sistema* would have encompassed this and would have not been without the pitfalls of colonialism. Art making is comparative to labor in the fields but was, nonetheless, still a facet of what had been established by the religious orders and should also be considered as such. Similar to other Spanish colonies and, again, related to the Cuzco School, art making in the Philippine colonial era under the Spanish hegemony was not divorced from Catholicism. Thus, the commissioning of local artisans to execute works like the *Via Crucis* is an exhibition of the extension of power structures in vocations that the Western European sphere by the seventeenth

¹¹⁴ Wall text, *The Via Crucis*, Gallery of the *Via Crucis* of the Unknown Bohol Master, National Museum of the Philippines, Manila.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

century had already been viewed with high esteem. Further exploration of the Western tradition of oil painting in Bohol exposes the record-keeping habits of the Spaniards, which plainly reveal how commodified religious art was in the colonies. Based on information preserved in some parish archives of the Spanish colonial-era churches in Bohol, it would appear that more than one of these unknown Bohol masters existed.¹¹⁶ Commended to have been astounding record-keepers, the Spanish friars documented details such as the purchasing of art materials, their costs, as well as the monthly wages of carpenters and painters.¹¹⁷ In hindsight, the anonymity of the local artist in and of itself shows the priorities of the Spaniards, which evidently excluded the documentation of the identities of their employed artists. This fundamentally makes room for the argument that underscores art and labor, in that native artists were not to be credited for their work as the very act of praise would undermine the supremacy of the Spaniard.

In 1890, Philippine National Hero, Dr. José Rizal (1861-1896)—whose biography is outside of the scope of this paper—published his socio-political essay titled, *Sobre la indolencia de los filipinos* (“The Indolence of the Filipinos”). The essay is a significant account of the Spanish occupation in its counterattack of colonial perceptions of the Filipino people, most of which express the privilege of the colonizer. Rizal himself is considered to be privileged in his own regard as someone who was from an upper-middle class background and, indeed, had access to the best education in the Philippines and in Europe. Nevertheless, historians opine he is one of several Filipino patriots who had used his privilege and his fluency in Spanish to publish this essay in a Barcelona-based minority newspaper called *La Solidaridad*, for which Rizal was an

¹¹⁶ Tse, “Artistic Practices of the Bohol School of Painting: An Analytical and Archival Study of Nineteenth-Century Panel Paintings in the Philippines,” 149.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 150.

editor alongside his fellow *ilustrados* (the “learned,” or the “enlightened”)—a group of male liberal Filipinos seeking not total independence from Spain, but for Spain and the Philippines to be considered as equals.¹¹⁸ The essay’s enlightened rhetoric was both an influential contributor to the Philippine Revolution (1896-1898), and fatal, as it led to Rizal’s execution by the Spanish in 1896. *Sobre la indolencia* is, moreover, one of many works Rizal published, all of which exposed the corruptness of Spanish rule in the Philippines. It is in this particular text that Rizal elaborates in five brief chapters on the roots of the indolent characteristics that the Spanish accused the Filipinos of bearing. Evidently, instead of accepting the violent colonial message that caused much harm to native Filipinos, Rizal inverts the argument by attributing Filipino indolence, as it came to be by the nineteenth century, to the Spanish occupation. Of especial interest, Rizal recalls the writing of the Spanish friar and historian, Gaspar de San Agustín of the Augustinian Order. In 1720, Gaspar de San Agustín wrote a letter to a friend residing in Spain who had inquired him about the nature and characteristics of the natives of the Philippine Islands.¹¹⁹ The list of negative characteristics is scathing, though the points that appear to be most emphasized surround laziness, ungratefulness towards the “gifts” of the motherland (Spain), and the perceived impropriety of the native man.¹²⁰ Labor is especially analyzed by Rizal to address laziness, arguing that the system of colonialism did not allow for the native to grasp any sense of liberty or aspirations, for his life is not his own but belongs to an empire that only intends to exploit. Rizal relays the words of a Spanish priest who answered the question

¹¹⁸ L. E. Claudio, “Conclusion: Resurrecting Plants,” in *Jose Rizal. Global Political Thinkers*. (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 73.

¹¹⁹ Gaspar de San Agustín in *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1998*, vol. 40 (The Project Gutenberg EBook of The Philippine Islands, 2009), 187.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 196.

asked by natives: ““Why work?”” The answer was entrance into heaven, for even the rich man must work to pay off his dues.¹²¹ But in the case of native Filipinos, their dues were their entire existence. This, according to Rizal, is an ideology that had been reinforced repeatedly by the *sistema*, wherein anything that would blur the lines between Spaniard and native was deemed evil. For instance, the native was not to learn Spanish (in fear of revolts), the native was not be separated from his carabao, and the native was not comprehend beyond nor question what the Bible says.¹²² Such a system had deprived the native individual of a sense of self-esteem, and that labor was “to place him on a level with the beast....”¹²³ Simply put, and as Rizal satirically analogizes, the indolent attributes of the Filipino is a repeated prescription from the doctor (the priest or friar) that tries to “cure” the sickness that was triggered by the very corruption of colonialism. Through the guise of Christian spirituality, labor was the cure for irrationality, wherein irrationality was equated with indigeneity.¹²⁴ Likewise, it may be viewed that the very act of religious art production was part of the cure to reverse this supposed irrationality. The role of the arts in their priority to convert the native population to Catholicism, and in their visual representations of the pure and impure space underlines Sison’s discussions of mass comprehension. This may be concluded as the simplification of native mentality by only allowing them to think of nothing less of the universal Christian God. The presence of the Christian God in native land, in turn, solidifies the grip of colonialism in the Philippines in its replacement of individual thought with the overwhelming sense of inferiority, which rendered the faith unquestionable.

¹²¹ José Rizal, *The Indolence of the Filipinos* (1890), 76.

¹²² Rizal, 90.

¹²³ Rizal, 91.

¹²⁴ Kevin Slack, “A Foucauldian Study of Spanish Colonialism,” *The Latin Americanist* 62, no. 3 (2018), 438.

It has thus far been discussed that Spanish colonization in the Philippines gave way to the syncretism of Spanish Catholic values onto the local communities of the archipelago. The inclusion of the Philippine landscape, namely the “Chocolate Hills” of Bohol in the *Via Crucis* exemplifies the concretization of *mestizo* culture in the country and opens up other factors that pertain to conversion. This rendition of the Stations of the Cross exemplifies the unique ethnic expression or rendition of the Christian faith. In this case, art, labor and issues of mimicry in relation to the strict preservation of Christian doctrine and practices were presumably tolerated for the sake of religious conversion. In other words, precise and skillful renditions of biblical figures of European standards were not prioritized as long as Christian teachings are clearly visually communicated. Continuing on this thread of conversion of the Filipinos, the adaptation of the Catholic faith into local Filipino knowledge systems, otherwise framed as folk Catholicism, the so-called “triplet” *Santisima Trinidad* images also displayed in the National Museum of the Philippines will be explored in the following sections so as to further unveil the cultural impacts of Spanish colonization in the Philippines. This equally unique and intriguing image provides the opportunity to consider the role of image and language together, as well as private worship.

2.3 The “Triplet” Holy Trinity: from Europe to the Colonies

Found in the Gallery of Paintings of the Philippine Colonial Tradition of Sacred Art in the National Museum of the Philippines are 100 paintings dating back to the Spanish colonial period. The most striking of these paintings are those depicting *Santisima Trinidad* (Holy Trinity), two renditions of which will be analyzed. Made by unknown artists, both are attributed to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century (Figures 9 and 10). What is striking is that the Holy Trinity is depicted as a triplicate—a representation that the majority of Christian devotees

do not typically come across in their practice of the faith. Accordingly, the National Museum's catalogue provides a lay description of why this might be the case:

[They] belong to a type of depiction that the Catholic Church was not comfortable with. Three persons identical in face and vesture are seated together, amidst clouds, their feet resting on an orb symbolic of the earth. On their chest are emblazoned symbols that distinguish each one. The Father [center] usually has a sun, the Spirit [right] a dove and the Son [left] a lamb. As the Church was uneasy about this depiction, such imagery was not used in churches but remained in home altars. This 'triplet' Trinity was even casted in bronze *anting-anting* or talisman medals....¹²⁵

In true catalogue fashion, the description does not proceed to provide further information as to the questions it raises. If this depiction of the Holy Trinity caused discomfort, or was otherwise perceived to be heretical, why does it exist within the colonial context? Additionally, is this portrayal known to other parts of the Hispanic world? While I suspect that the answer to the latter portion of the question is affirmative, the image, nonetheless, paves the way for an investigation of the presence of the image in the Philippine colonial era. Stemming from the essential information provided in the museum's catalogue, this analysis attempts to identify two interconnected factors in order to present a rounded analysis of this "triplet" *Santisima Trinidad*. One aspect is the European roots of the image and how it was transplanted into the colonial context by way of conversion and religious teaching. The second related aspect is the articulation of how this image—which is deemed inappropriate—folded itself into Philippine practices of Catholicism. As seen in the catalogue's description, the triplicate was incorporated into personal objects known as *anting-anting* (amulets or medallions) that are believed to have mythical, magical and superstitious functions. Such a detail in and of itself is arguably revealing of the

¹²⁵ René B. Javellana, S.J., "The Philippine Colonial Tradition of Sacred Art – Treasures of Philippine Art from the Collections of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and National Museum of the Philippines," *Art History and Conservation Publication Series*, vol. 3 (Manila: National Museum of the Philippines), 23.

state of private worship as it had come to be in the Philippines in the latter half of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century. Regarding the former, the works will be analyzed in connection to other works of the Holy Trinity portrayed in this manner from the Spanish Americas as reinforcement for the hypothesis that this image was widespread in all of New Spain. The focus on this particular image is intended to examine the extent of which religious conversion in the colonial period was interwoven with the learning and utilization of language, and pre-existing, indigenous belief systems. This could also inform the longevity of this presumably heretical image outside Europe and could, in turn, provide insight as to how the faith was adopted locally and changed over time.

Hence, in order to establish a foundation for the meaning and function of these sacred art objects, it is important to commence with a rudimentary discussion of the concept of the Holy Trinity. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity has been a core tenet of the faith for most Christians since the fourth century.¹²⁶ It is the belief that one God exists in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; and that these three are one, meaning they are co-equal and have the same nature and attributes.¹²⁷ But if there is only one God, how can there be three separate beings as per the depiction of the “triplet” Holy Trinity? Insight provided by scholars James Hall and Kenneth Clark includes a closing note in relation to art, indicating that the depiction of the Holy Trinity as three identical men was common in Byzantine art and, by the twelfth century,

¹²⁶ James Hall and Kenneth Clark, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art* (London: Routledge, 2008), 319.

¹²⁷ “Sermon 3 the Athanasian Creed,” in *Sermons, Volume 1 (1–80) (the Fathers of the Church, Volume 31)* (Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 26. Taking the apt articulation by St. Caesarius, Bishop of Arles in the first half of the sixth century in one of his sermons: “Whoever wants to be saved, brethren, above all must know and adhere to the Catholic faith. If anyone does not keep it whole and intact, doubtless he will perish forever. Moreover, this is the Catholic faith which we preach and believe. We adore one God in the Trinity, and the Trinity in unity. There is no confusion of persons nor a separation of substance, which is one in the Trinity. For the person of the Father is one, that of the Son another, and that of the Holy Spirit still another. However, the divine nature of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit is one, so the Son and, likewise, the Holy Spirit.”

was widely used in Medieval and Renaissance artwork.¹²⁸ This detail is a significant gateway into the wider discussion of the function of the triplet Trinity. It should be noted, however, that religious, visual interpretations of the Holy Trinity within Europe have varied across centuries, which strongly suggests that representations were subject to change, such as those declared in ecumenical councils. Given the undulating history of the Holy Trinity within Christian doctrine, changes in doctrine would have led to experimentation or revision of images, as dictated by the needs of the Church. If such changes were made throughout the centuries due to supposed misrepresentations of Catholic concepts, then it is interesting that the image may be found in the colonies despite this particular rendition of the Holy Trinity's discomfiting composition. In addition, the insufficient representation of the "triplet" Holy Trinity within Europe may reaffirm the public discontinuation of the image.

Because sources on this depiction Holy Trinity as three persons are difficult to unearth due to its unpopularity in Europe, and would thus require further investigation, an adequate point of entry may be found in Erwin Panofsky's work on "The Friedsam Annunciation and the Problem of the Ghent Altarpiece" from 1938. Panofsky, however, only refers to a handful of examples.¹²⁹ A minor detail in relation to the upper hand triptych of the Ghent Altarpiece by Hubert (c. 1385-1426) and Jan van Eyck (c. 1390-1441) in St. Bavo Cathedral in Ghent, Belgium (1432), addresses the "triplet" representation of the Trinity. Panofsky states that it is derived from a scene from the Old Testament depicting the three angels entertained by Abraham, and that the representation of the Trinity as three persons survived until it was condemned in the

¹²⁸ Hall and Clark, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*, 319.

¹²⁹ Erwin Panofsky, "Once More "The Friedsam Annunciation and the Problem of the Ghent Altarpiece,'" *The Art Bulletin* 20, no. 4 (1938), 433.

eighteenth century by Pope Benedict XIV. Other examples Panofsky points to is the *Book of Hours* of Etienne Chevalier by Jean Fouquet (1420-1480). Presently located in the Musée Condé in Chantilly, the miniature shows the Trinity in the upper and central portion of the composition. All three beings are garbed in white; their postures are identical as they all appear to lean to their right. In addition, they all bear halos in the appearance of rays of light. Finally, they are all holding up their right hand in blessing, and gesturing towards to the Virgin Mary, who is seated to the right of the group in an adjacent throne, which indicates the event of her coronation. Occupying the rest of the miniature are saints witnessing the event (Fig. 11). A second example is a panel from an altarpiece by Hans Holbein the Elder for St. Catherine's Monastery in Augsburg, Germany (c. 1499), which also shows the Coronation of the Virgin in the upper register. The Trinity as three persons is depicted with the same facial features, and are only differentiated by the color of their clothing, varying in shades of green and red. The Virgin is situated in the middle of the group, kneeling as she is crowned by the central figure who is presumably the Father (Fig. 12). This evidently differs significantly to the Fouquet miniature, as the Trinity in the miniature are entirely identical to one another. Contrary to Hall and Clark, such portrayals of the Holy Trinity as a triplicate appear to be most prevalent in the early modern period, although the three angels entertained by Abraham do appear in Byzantine art. When these works are observed alongside the renditions from the Philippines, the *Santisima Trinidad* paintings arguably carry forward a set iconographic structure, which relate to the concepts of mimicry of Spanish visual material addressed in earlier sections.

As implied above, the Holy Trinity as three persons is not unique to the Philippines. Also found in the Americas, most commonly in Mexico and Perú, the image of the "triplet" Holy Trinity in the Americas is pinpointed to have been produced throughout the seventeenth and

eighteenth centuries. Limited individual museum catalogue information for these images reiterate the remarks published in the National Museum in Manila. They echo insofar as that the “triplet” was hardly produced in Europe especially after the eighteenth century, since the representation of the Trinity was problematic despite its literal and clear exhibition of the fundamental concept in Catholicism. However, these descriptions all declare an important facet that is not included in the National Museum of the Philippines’ catalogue, which is that this representation was used or permitted for teaching Indigenous populations.¹³⁰ In consideration of the reality that Philippine and Hispanic colonial histories are linked by the same imperial and religious power, it may be argued that the triplicate in the Philippines was also initially utilized for conversion and teaching purposes. This would reflect theories on the function of religious imagery as extensions of devotion and ritual, as described by Javellana, for the image does visually clarify the concept of the Holy Trinity, thus reinforcing its didactic potential.¹³¹

Formally matched as the manifestation of a single God, only minor differences between each figure, like that of clothing, may be observed in the selection of *Santisima Trinidad* paintings from the Philippines. Bearing great similarities to the interpretations attributed to Mexico and Peru, each person of the triplicate is also consistently shown directly facing the viewer and holding up their right hand with a gesture of blessing, though some variations between the Philippine examples show the person of Christ seated on the left appear to be exhibiting his

¹³⁰ Unknown artist, *The Trinity*, c. 18th century, oil on tin (?), 35.6 x 25.6 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/120050111?rpp=60&pg=2&ao=on&ft=* &what=Paintings&pos=100; Andrés López, *Santisima Trinidad*, 1780, 175 x 107 cm, Colección Blaisten, Mexico, <http://museoblaisten.com/en/Obra/2132/Santisima-Trinidad>; Unknown artist (Cuzco School), late 17th or early 18th century, *The Holy Trinity*, oil on canvas, 133 x 109 cm, Christie’s, New York, <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-5438971>.

¹³¹ Javellana, “The Philippine Colonial Tradition of Sacred Art – Treasures of Philippine Art from the Collections of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and National Museum of the Philippines,” 3.

stigmata. Interestingly, the two Philippine triplicate images do not show any differentiation in the clothing of the figures, but are instead shown with symbols on their chests serving as the only indicators of distinction. As seen in both and from left to right, the Son is attributed by the lamb, the Father with the sun, and the Holy Spirit with a dove. Likewise, on the matter of the symbols possessed by each of the figures, the ascribing of symbols adds to compositional inconsistencies between the European and Hispanic and Philippine interpretations. Based on the case studies at hand, it may be speculated that symbolic assignment for each figure catered to the colonial audience. Considering that these symbols do not appear on the European examples, such differences in the color of the clothing and the symbolic attribution with a sun, lamb and dove, might reveal the distillation of the image from its origins in Europe to its transference into the Americas and the Philippines.

Concerning iconography, René B. Javellana, S.J. describes in another publication entitled, *Weaving Cultures: The Invention of Colonial Art and Culture in the Philippines, 1565-1850*, that sacred icons from the Philippine colonial era are characterized as having primarily “Byzantine conventions.” Similar to the stylistic attributions of the *Via Crucis*, this connotes that the prototypes from Spain and the Americas for religious material production were compositionally unchanged.¹³² Javellana’s framing of “Byzantine conventions” is debatable, in that what should be instead considered in this case is the greater issue of Baroque visual culture with regard to Spanish imperialism. To reiterate, the arrival of “fixed” visual prototypes from Europe is due to the fact that religious imagery was regulated and supervised by the dominant authority that was the Church. Therefore, prototypes were copied as much as possible, since

¹³² Ibid, 148.

faithful copying assumed the orthodoxy of religious imagery.¹³³ As such, consistency is found in the composition of facial features and, in some instances, the clothing which plainly show that the three figures are identical, and conceptually comprise one entity. With the two paintings from the Philippines, the images are nearly identical to each other, save for individual artistic execution and ability. Each figure has their gaze set on the viewer; their feet rest on a globe symbolizing humanity, and the group altogether is surrounded by clouds. Clouds, as observed, are a common feature in each of these paintings that likely serve to communicate the divine setting in which the Trinity originates. In addition, these renditions follow nearly identical color palettes. Regardless of dependence on Iberian or transcultural influences which should not be overlooked, any inconsistencies in the iconography are particular to their colonial contexts, which ultimately subvert traditional “Baroque conventions.”¹³⁴ In that regard, the idea that visual reinforcement for the sake of native comprehension is reasonable, yet reveals that the execution of the methods diverged in ways set to cater to the needs of the colonial agenda at a given time and place.

2.4 Visualizing Conversion through Language

With this thumbnail of a survey of the triplet Trinity from a largely colonial context, the way in which this image may have complimented religious teaching will be additionally examined. Bearing in mind that Spanish imperial conquest was backed by Catholicism, methods of conversion depended on the comprehension of indigenous populations—otherwise, the missions would have been failures in the eyes of, firstly, the Church and, second, the Spanish

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 311.

Empire.¹³⁵ Methods of conversion entailed communication in oral, written and visual form; thus, the role of language in relation to conversion in the Philippine context may shed further light onto the triplet Trinity in the Philippines. In Vicente L. Rafael's study of language and conversion in Luzon, Rafael discusses the colonial experience in the Philippines, and argues that while the Tagalog natives of Northern Philippines were major converts to Christianity, they also controlled it such that Christianity, as it was transplanted from the West, did not altogether destroy pre-colonial culture. Rather, Christianity was reformed, and gave birth to a "third reality" he characterizes as "colonial culture and society."¹³⁶ Moreover, he foregrounds Spanish and Tagalog ideas about language and signification, and argues for the importance of translation in conversion. However, the missionaries stationed all around the archipelago faced challenges related to language. In this, Rafael makes an interesting comparison between the Spanish colonizer's (Spanish Catholic missionaries) experience in the Philippines and in the New World. He states that the diverse indigenous populations of Mesoamerica and the Andes had come under the sway of the Aztecs and the Incas, respectively, even before the Spanish conquest. As a result of "Aztec domination," their dialect became widespread by the sixteenth century, which greatly uncomplicated the process of translation for the Spanish missionaries.¹³⁷ In contrast in the Philippines, there was no common language amongst the natives. The seventeenth century Jesuit historian, Francisco Colín, says of the archipelago: "If a language was spoken at the mouth of a certain river, there would be another spoken at its source, which is a great impediment to the

¹³⁵ Kelemen, *Art of the Americas. Ancient and Hispanic with a comparative chapter on the Philippines*, 333.

¹³⁶ Vicente F. Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society Under Early Spanish Rule* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), 21.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, 5.

conversion and instruction of these peoples.”¹³⁸ For this reason, Philippine vernaculars withstood the Spanish conquest. Friars were forced to learn every dialect they were met with and, in turn, had to codify them in grammar books. Further, Rafael stresses that while this may have been the case, this did not leave native languages unchanged. Significant words in the Catholic faith, those in Spanish such as *Dios* (God), *Espiritu Santo* (Holy Spirit) and *Jesucristo* (Jesus Christ), found no adequate equivalents in the local languages. Thus, these were retained in their untranslated forms to “punctuate the flow of Christian discourse in the vernacular.”¹³⁹ Indeed, this is evident when one turns to the first printed book in the Philippines, the *Doctrina Christiana* (The Teachings of Christianity) from 1593 believed to have authored by Fray Juan de Plasencia, a Spanish friar of the Franciscan Order who was among the first of Franciscan missionaries to land in the Philippines.¹⁴⁰ Printed in Castilian Spanish, Tagalog and traditional *baybayin* script, some vocabulary words as identified by Rafael were left untranslated. The necessity for a side-by-side translation between the languages in print for conversion purposes had “constrained the universalizing assumptions and totalizing impulses of a colonial-Christian order.”¹⁴¹ Because native languages like Tagalog were not wholly eradicated, Filipino conversion simultaneously supported and deflected Spanish power through language.¹⁴² Evidently, Rafael’s study of language and conversion, which is but one of the numerous analyses on the role of language and religion during the Spanish conquest of the Philippines, shows that the colonial agenda

¹³⁸ Francisco Colín, 57, col. 2 (1663), quoted in Marlon J. Sales, “Translation and interpreting in the early modern Philippines: a preliminary survey,” *Perspectives* 26, no. 1 (2018), 56.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Edwin Wolf, *Doctrina Christiana: the First Book Printed in the Philippines, Manila, 1593: a Facsimile of the Copy in the Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, Library of Congress, Washington* (Washington, 1947), 1.

¹⁴¹ Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society Under Early Spanish Rule*, 21.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

prioritized mastering language for effective communication. Even so, artistic reproduction should be considered as parallel to the impacts of written and verbal communication.¹⁴³ Like the role of language, visual translation of Christian concepts was crucial for both consolidating Spanish power and soliciting native responses.

2.5 Folk Catholicism

Bearing in mind the observations made above, it is important to examine how images like the “triplet” Holy Trinity had taken root in the colonial world. Given that Javellana’s description of the Philippine triplicate provides no further evidence of how the icons were used, aside from the supposition that they were venerated privately, the transpacific relations of the image open up pathways that are worth noting. Especially relevant here as an extreme case is the representation of the Trinity with three faces, which is also referred to as the “trifacial trinity.” According to Panofsky, this so-called “Cerberus” depiction was disapproved at a much earlier date and was condemned by Urban VIII in the seventeenth century.¹⁴⁴ Further, Alicia Zuese’s publication titled, *Baroque Spain and the Writing of Visual and Material Culture*, describes that although the image was banned, and material depictions of the image were burned, it survived due to personal meditations on the image.¹⁴⁵ Zuese elaborates on the writing of Martin de Roa, a Spanish Jesuit from the seventeenth century, who wrote regarding the trifacial trinity: “This type of invention and painting is very appropriate for teaching, because it puts things and colors that suit them before the eyes of the body: it delights the mind with imitation and representation of invisible things; it helps the memory greatly by making a lively impression, which is recoded on the

¹⁴³ Javellana, *Weaving Cultures: The Invention of Colonial Art and Culture in the Philippines, 1565-1850*, 157.

¹⁴⁴ Panofsky, “Once More “The Friedsam Annunciation and the Problem of the Ghent Altarpiece,”” 433.

¹⁴⁵ Alice Zuese, *Baroque Spain and the Writing of Visual and Material Culture* (Wales: University of Wales Press, 2015), 24.

soul.”¹⁴⁶ Materially speaking, how the image survived at all in a presumably highly censored environment is obscure; however, it is not inconceivable that images of the trifacial Trinity continued to be produced privately and eventually circulated outside of Spain. Speaking for this trifacial representation of the Trinity in the colonial context is José Gabriel Alegría Sabogal, who hypothesizes that the trifacial Trinity arrived in Peru in the Spanish editions of a book titled the *Flos Sanctorum* by Pedro de Vega in 1541. The author states that the image is a “medieval symptom of the American Baroque,” given that it was copied and adapted into painting from a book engraving.¹⁴⁷ Such remarks are akin to Javellana’s use of the term “Byzantine conventions,” but as stated, these medieval and byzantine conventions only represent a portion of the discernible influences in the paintings themselves. Subsequent exploration of the engraving’s reproducibility in both a European and American context shows that the image was significant for spiritual contemplation. Especially in the Andean colonial context, the author states it was for a didactic purpose, and makes clear that this icon is not necessarily a diffusion of Andean and Catholic beliefs. Rather, the trace of the image from book engraving, its role with language, and subsequent translation into colonial painting may reveal some insight into what the image meant in the colonial context. Alegría Sabogal says, “The image seems to have had permanence in two spheres simultaneously: the conventual, probably due to the affinity that it could awaken among the mystics and the civil, where it could have awakened certain interest for Andean sensibility.”¹⁴⁸ With this notion of a culturally specific interpretation of the Catholic faith in the

¹⁴⁶ Martin de Roa, *Antigüedad, veneración i fruto de las sagradas imagines* (1623), quoted in Alice Zuese, *Baroque Spain and the Writing of Visual and Material Culture* (Wales: University of Wales Press, 2015), 24-25.

¹⁴⁷ Jose Gabriel Alegría Sabogal, “Trinidad trifacial: fuentes grabadas y problemas historiográficos,” *ILLAPA Mana Tukukuq*, no. 16 (December, 2019), doi: <https://doi.org/10.31381/illapa.v0i16.2585>, 80.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 82.

Andes, the image carried on to become a part of Andean culture—a form of Andean devotion or Andean Catholicism, thriving discretely in those who found or sought spiritual connection with the image. It is through an example such as this that colonial images inform us of the eclecticism born from colonial contact.

What is particularly intriguing in relation to the trifacial trinity is a similar rendition, which may be found in the depiction of station VI from the *Via Crucis* panels by an unknown Bohol Master depicting Veronica wiping the face of Jesus (Fig. 13). From the background are three Roman soldiers, Simon of Cyrene and the Virgin Mary, who is further obscured from view in comparison to her presence in the fifth station. In the foreground and to the left of the central figure of Jesus is Veronica, dressed in a blue mantle with delicate gold detail along the front, and an ochre-colored dress. Like the other panels discussed above, the image shows the specific moment of Veronica showing and, thus, declaring her devotion to Jesus as he stalls on his journey to Calvary. Veronica is seen kneeling and holding up her veil or sudarium, which has an imprint of Jesus' face; this establishes that Veronica had already wiped the face of Jesus out of devotion and kindness. In the presumed aftermath of Veronica's actions, Jesus bears a strained posture as he bears the heavy cross with Simon of Cyrene and the Virgin Mary trailing behind them. The same three Roman soldiers from previous panels are seen in the background, appearing to demand Jesus to keep walking. As Christian beliefs maintain, Veronica wiped the bloodied face of Jesus—the blood and sweat miraculously leaving a full imprint of Jesus' face on the cloth. Art historian Steven F. Ostrow in his study of the Spanish artist, Francisco de Zurbarán, states that the veil by its very nature is considered to be “a contact relic (something

that touched Christ).”¹⁴⁹ In the same token and on the subject of painterly renditions of the Veil of Veronica, such as the one by the unknown Bohol Master, these are considered to be “authentic [portraits] of Jesus, an *acheiropoieton* (not made by human hands), an image of truly divine and miraculous manufacture,” which were especially common throughout the Middle Ages and the early modern period.¹⁵⁰ European renditions like those by Zurbarán in the seventeenth century traditionally depict the Veil of Veronica as having a frontal or three-quarter view of Jesus’ face. The “floating” quality of the image demands attention, therefore inciting religious enchantment and veneration. Jesus’ face is suspended on the veil and up against a dark background, which draws complete attention to the bloodied and pained expression that Jesus holds, as it is depicted on the contrastingly clean piece of linen the imprint stains.¹⁵¹

Given that the image made by man could not be disassociated with the biblical narrative that which bestows the icon with power, the image of the Veil of Veronica became actively engaged in the trade in relics beginning in the thirteenth century.¹⁵² The idea of the “true image” which was also considered as a “true copy” eventually became part of the practice of indulgences for prayers—a practice circulated that circulated as such through pilgrims. To gaze upon the trompe l’oeil illusionism of Jesus’ anguish transcends the imprint or the trace, thus leading to the belief that the viewer gazes upon the face itself, with the point being to display his sufferings in order to visually be in line with the Catholic Church’s emphasis on the indictment of human sin, the engine of repentance, and the source of grace. In this case, the tromp l’oeil was intended to

¹⁴⁹ Steven F. Ostrow, “Zurbarán’s *Cartellini*: Presence and the *Paragone*,” *The Art Bulletin* 99, no. 1 (February, 2017), 85.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 266-267.

mimic the relic, which also bridged the gap between the physically taxing activity of pilgrimage and devotional image.¹⁵³ By the fourteenth century, Veronica and her veil is established as one of the Stations of the Cross, whose importance is circulated further in material manifestations of the Passion of Christ.¹⁵⁴ Within the Spanish colonial context, little is known as to the reason why the imprint of the face of Jesus on the sudarium is tripled. As seen in the detail of this “trifacial sudarium” from the Bohol panel, the three imprints of Jesus’ face seem to attempt to portray his face in three different angles. These are rendered so close to one another that they appear physically connected (see Fig. 13). From left to right of the veil, the imprints start by exhibiting the right side of his face, to a three-quarter pose in the center and, finally, to exhibiting the left side of his face. Each facial imprint is carefully painted to show that this is meant to depict a singular person, given that the features are precisely the same alongside with the exactitude of the crown of thorns and the drops of blood and sweat. The idea of the imprint is executed quite literally, as the three faces certainly appear to be floating in their incredible, vivid coloration but lack a certain level of depth that achieves the enchantment, perhaps due to the frontal stiffness of the veil itself. The Bohol rendition, though unique in its own right, finds a common thread in the Americas.

Following a similar composition is an interpretation made from the first half of the nineteenth century. The tempera painting which is currently on view at the Denver Art Museum

¹⁵³ David Morgan, “The Sensory Web of Vision,” *The Oxford Handbook of History and Material Culture* (Oxford University Press, 2020), 267; 269.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 261; 246. Scholar David Morgan argues that so-called enchantment stemming from the complex series of conditions that constitute the Veil of Veronica greatly contributes to the icon’s power. The image eventually became popular by the Middle Ages, being associated with the Passion of Christ, procession and pilgrimage. With these conditions, Morgan states that this history explains the conditions that allow the (manmade) image of Jesus to function as an enchanted object.

in Denver, Colorado, is attributed to New Mexican artist Pedro Antonio Fresquí (c. 1749-1831), also known as the Truchas Master. His works are generally considered to be some of the first folk art created in New Mexico.¹⁵⁵ In the Fresquí painting, composed mainly in browns and reds, only Veronica's head may be seen at the very top of the image. The veil she is sometimes depicted to be holding up in her hands appears to be expansive, as her entire body is covered by the veil itself which shows three large imprints of Jesus' face. Interestingly created around the same time as the *Via Crucis* panels, Fresquí's interpretation is comparable with the Bohol painting because the angles of each face are similar, in that slightly different angles of the face of Jesus, perhaps, attempt to show all sides of his face. Such a fascinating detail which is likely of some historical importance in the Spanish colonies could very well be an artistic "accident" or experiment as part of the non-Spanish artist's trials in the attempt to copy European prototypes of Christian images and motifs. Like the trifacial Holy Trinity's appeal to Andean sensibility, perhaps the tripled imprint of Jesus' face on the veil of Veronica actively functioned in a similar manner within the home, as Javellana suggests with the taboo quality of such images. In consideration of the above on the "trifacial sudarium," it is an unprecedented phenomenon that is well beyond the scope of this project and requires further investigation.

Returning to folk Catholicism within the Philippine context, this is analyzed by Charles J-H Macdonald as a significant outcome of colonialism that ironically diluted the "purity" of Spanish Catholicism. Much like the influx of trade goods and the exchange of culture and influence, friars from the Western Hispanic world taught and shared with their converts their

¹⁵⁵ Pedro Antonio Fresquí, "Saint Veronica's Veil," Denver Art Museum, accessed July 7, 2022, <https://www.denverartmuseum.org/en/object/1936.3>; "Pedro Antonio Fresquí," Smithsonian American Art Museum, accessed July 7, 2022, <https://americanart.si.edu/artist/pedro-antonio-fresquis-1672>.

own brand of Spanish peasant folk Catholicism.¹⁵⁶ To a certain extent, and because it was imperative for the friars to convert indigenous communities, indigenous systems of knowledge were studied and thus utilized to translate and assimilate Christian concepts, especially since there were similarities in the structures between some Christian and Indigenous belief systems. As Catholicism was never imposed completely, aspects of indigenous culture managed to survive.¹⁵⁷ In addition, an intriguing overarching issue stems from the friars themselves. While the first wave of missionaries were indeed scholars and theologians of the highest order from Spain, those that came after within the 200 years that followed were less erudite, with some importing their own ideals and experiences from the Spanish Americas.¹⁵⁸ As well, teachings between religious orders (i.e., Jesuits and the Augustinians) differed and had, therefore, introduced inconsistent instructions of doctrine. These factors altogether resulted in a situation wherein evangelization was perpetually an on-going process, in addition to the fact that resistance was met from ethnic groups who fought against conversion to Catholicism and Spanish rule. It must be stressed that open practice of “pagan” faiths was suppressed, and that it is also precisely these Indigenous belief and cultural systems that the friars took advantage of in order for conversion to take root. Ultimately, what was considered to be “proper” Catholic concepts depended on what was acceptable to the settled and localized Catholic friars, many of whom had invested time in the Americas and came to respect established customs of folk Catholicism in different communities.¹⁵⁹ Given this, concepts that appealed to ethnic groups—

¹⁵⁶ Charles J-H Macdonald, "Folk Catholicism and Pre-Spanish Religions in the Philippines," *Philippine Studies* 52, no. 1 (2004), 79.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 87.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 79.

like that of the trifacial Holy Trinity in the Andes and the “triplet” Holy Trinity in the Philippines and Mexico—were allowed with the blessing of the local clergy, so long as they adhered and manifested as Catholic teachings and rituals.¹⁶⁰ Harking back to the paintings located in Manila, the co-existence of two belief systems may be argued to have maintained the veneration of the image. In the Philippines, the cult of saints, for instance—which, as discussed above, appealed to the Filipino in *anitos*—elicited interest amongst the Indigenous communities. As *anitos* were essentially equated with the images of saints and that of Christ (including the Holy Trinity) and were subsequently attached to the belief that amulets bore the power to provide prosperity and good health, this would certainly indicate that such Christian practices and concepts were agreeable to preconquest belief systems.¹⁶¹ Typically taking the form of small, portable and wearable objects, as well as small sculptures like that of the traditional *anito* figures mentioned above, the positive or negative powers of *anting-anting* depended on the purpose or intention placed upon it.¹⁶² For the most part, the usage of *anting-anting* with negative intentions is considered to be taboo or witchcraft. In the presumption that ethnic Filipino belief systems adopted the Christian practice of religious material production, the private use of the triplicate image, as Javellana suggests, would likewise indicate that the “triplet” transcends the visual translation of Christian concepts and vocabulary. The triplicate’s implied usage as *anting-anting* testifies to the people’s belief in the image to provide, perhaps, spiritual guidance and protection. In contrast, the use of *anting-anting* today is more prevalent in certain ethnic groups. Most Filipinos are aware of these belief systems, though some devout Filipino Catholics today

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 88.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 81-82.

¹⁶² Pino, “The Power of Amulets.”

consider these superstitious and part of old beliefs.¹⁶³ Ultimately, ethnic Filipino beliefs were given a Christian exterior. This perhaps sheds light on the description from the National Museum that simply mentions that the image was not used openly, but more so privately in the form of *anting-anting*, which typically take the form of personal objects meant to serve as protection and/or ward off evil spirits. Similarly, small-scale works like the paintings themselves manifested as such to serve as amulets for the home, likely for protection and veneration of the image. Echoing Alegría Sabogal's remarks on the trifacial Trinity and its relationship to Andean Catholicism, the "triplet" Trinity in the Philippines does not necessarily represent the Filipino belief in multiple beings, but instead represents how certain Catholic concepts and their corresponding visualizations were appropriated for local customs of spiritualism. This buttresses the initial notion that inconsistencies in religious teachings were at work despite overarching authorities like Spanish Crown or the Inquisition. Though, as explored, such pedagogical methods took advantage of the native ideologies of the Philippines for the agenda of conversion. When one turns to the Philippine paintings of the Holy Trinity, this simultaneous flow of Christian discourse and preconquest beliefs are transferred onto image. Presented are three figures alike in physicality and garb, and are marked with symbols meant to distinguish the three persons within a single God. While it remains unknown if the image of the triplicate was included in books like the *Doctrina Christiana* in the same manner the trifacial Trinity may be found in *Flos Sanctorum*, the trace of the origins of images as demonstrated by Alegría Sabogal may be compared with Rafael's analysis of the use of language for the purposes of conversion. The maintenance of those three essential words can be seen as having permitted and perpetuated

¹⁶³ Ibid.

the use of the “triplet” Holy Trinity in the Philippines. Compounded by the cultivation of folk Catholicism within local communities, the entanglement embodied by colonial culture becomes apparent in both religious and artistic spheres.

Conclusion: The Weight of Colonialism and the Baroque as a Concept

As a final note in relation to the overarching subject of the *mestizo* that is embedded in the realm of Spanish colonialism and art history, it is important to lay the foundation upon which the Velarde-Bagay-Suarez map, and the *Via Crucis* panels and the *Santisima Trinidad* paintings sit as Spanish colonial works. The Spanish Baroque as a concept is an art historical style from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and is thoroughly researched within the discipline of art history.¹⁶⁴ Though the period and style has received criticisms for being unequal to the Italian art tradition, the Spanish Baroque tradition is the basis for comparison between it and art objects produced from Spain's colonies. Quite the contrary to the assumed superiority of the Spanish Baroque, scholars Lois P. Zamora and Monika Kaup's chapter in a publication titled, *Baroque New Worlds: Representation, Transculturation, Counterconquest*, suggests that the Spanish Baroque had been colonized, and that to underestimate Spanish colonial art is to be sanctimonious. This text, like most postcolonial sources that analyze the impacts of Spanish colonialism, focuses on the Americas. However, the preliminary emphasis established by Zamora and Kaup, in that Spanish colonial art is related through trade and commerce between colonies, is of relevance. As previously articulated, the Spanish colonies were connected via trade, which allowed for influences between colonies to spread. Trade, as the authors explain, is a major contributor to the rather unstable identity of the baroque, proposing that, in terms of historical chronology, the Spanish Baroque as it was before imperial expansion was fleeting.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ Zamora and Kaup, "Baroque, New World Baroque, Neobaroque: Categories and Concepts," 3.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 4.

In this, the authors state that the baroque's exportation to areas outside of Europe is "one of the few satisfying ironies of European imperial domination worldwide that the baroque worked poorly as a colonizing instrument."¹⁶⁶ Thus, it is examples like the *Via Crucis* and *Santisima Trinidad* paintings as religious works and the Velarde-Bagay-Suarez map as a secular work that serve as testaments to the "colonization" of the Spanish Baroque. The argument presents itself through the transplantation of the style to the colonies, which steadily incorporated the traditional, western iconographies and cultural perspectives with the artistic abilities of the natives who built and decorated Catholic architectural monuments, sculptures and paintings. The authors additionally consider other factors such as the initial limitations of local artists in their creations of western visual culture and the use of local materials that had consequently changed and shaped colonial art for what it is. In support of this notion, Zamora and Kaup especially draw from Friedrich Nietzsche (1884-1900), who had recognized the baroque "as a [rejection of] harmony in favor of heterogeneity."¹⁶⁷ This essentially allows for a rethinking of the baroque in the colonies—one that Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann supports—in that the usage of the drama is to oppose the idea of a progressive or linear history for something continuous and purposeful. Such rethinking has had its difficulties, since to oppose an art historical progression undermines the traditional genealogy of the discipline. Turning back to the objects in focus, and while all factors in the map and the paintings are significant, it is through the selection of paintings that clearly depict Christian iconography that conceivably best delineate the dissimilarities between what is considered to be "proper" Spanish Baroque style, and what is *mestizo* or "bastardized"—

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 3.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 5.

a manifestation of the baroque that traditionalists say could only be a colonial symptom.¹⁶⁸

Following Zamora and Kaup's argument as a means to question these traditionalistic conceptions, it is important that the "Philippine Baroque" should be justly viewed as autonomous from traditional Spanish Baroque art and more so associated with the postcolonial lens utilized for the Americas. To fully apply such an argument, however, is trying due to the impacts of colonialization.

A chapter by art historian Charlene Villaseñor Black serves as an additional and useful contemporary scholarly text that is fundamentally rooted in the examination of the presence of Spanish rule in the Americas as embodied by the art and architecture that was mandated in the colonies. Regardless that this text, too, focuses on the Americas, the argument's emphasis on the *mestizo* will be useful. In their exploration of colonial art in Mexico, Black criticizes other scholarly writings that discuss the *mestizo* style as it is observed in the subject of Spanish Baroque-era art and architecture. The author provides their own analysis on the notion of artistic style when viewing such objects, and argues that descriptions of *mestizo* are too simplistic, and is a "convenient label" that espouses a more nuanced perspective.¹⁶⁹ In this, Black's expounding over the word *mestizo* brings forward an interesting standpoint, wherein to label colonial art as such is equivalent to how *mestizo* people were viewed during the colonial era. As Black explicates, the *mestizo* is "neither pure, noble Spaniard, nor primitive, earthy Indian, the mestizo is instead impure, unclassifiable, and therefore uncontrollable product of miscegenation."¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Charlene Villaseñor Black, "Race and the Historiography of Colonial Art, " in *Envisioning Others* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2016), 310.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

Hence, despite an individual having Spanish blood, or despite an artwork bearing Spanish influences, their social status remains below the pure Spaniard. The *mestizo* is also gendered as female, which implies the demeaning influence of the typically *indio* mother against the *peninsulare* father. Moreover, and similar to Zamora and Kaup's argument, the appraisal of the Spanish Baroque style is hypocritical, as the style itself traces its formal characteristics to the Italian and Flemish Renaissance, the *mudéjar* and plateresque; thus, inciting that the Spanish Baroque was already in and of itself colonized and stylistically unresolved.¹⁷¹ Black implores this is not necessarily adverse because it should not be a point of contention. For this reason, the common scholarly outcome might not be that the colonial baroque is unoriginal and merely decorative.¹⁷² If one takes Sison's emphasis on Philippine folk art in Catholic imagery, then Black's criticisms on perceptions of the *mestizo* style supports the idea that such colonial objects are inherently subjugated to a second-class status that all the more makes Spain's colonies inferior. Rather, the label *mestizo* must be critically used in order to create an autonomous identity.¹⁷³

Delving into another layer of the repercussions of colonialism, reception and viewership of Spanish colonial art must be considered, as it may be beneficial to this empirical analysis of the objects in question. Due to the absence of any such records relating directly to the Velarde-Bagay-Suarez map, the *Via Crucis* and the "triplet" *Santisima Trinidad* paintings, Luis A. Sánchez Gomez's analysis of the Philippine Exposition of 1887 held in Madrid, Spain must be relied upon since the rare event reveals certain responses to the matter. Reflecting both Rizal and

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 316.

¹⁷² Ibid, 318.

¹⁷³ Ibid, 311.

Black's fundamental argument, Sánchez Gómez contends that the exposition's display of perceived Filipino successes in art and literature only proved the Spanish colonial system's failure in nurturing anything substantial in the Philippines. Sánchez Gómez describes that the aim of the Spanish administration was "to demonstrate the level of development reached by the Filipino indigenous population...thanks to the civilizing and educating role of the religious orders and to the Spanish colonial policy since the sixteenth century."¹⁷⁴ To show this, the exposition followed a model that had become prevalent across Europe and in America by the nineteenth century, wherein the exhibition highlighted the "exotic" and the "primitive."¹⁷⁵ The exposition of 1887, indeed, incorporated a human zoo of the Indigenous Igorot people of the Northern Philippines—which, in general, was a common highlight in these Western events, and only heightened the atrocious representation of the Filipino people. The art objects displayed in an indoor space included oil paintings and woodcarvings by Filipino artists, which unsurprisingly received hostile reactions from elitist Spaniards. Artworks from those trained in the Philippines and were not of an *ilustrado* background were especially marginalized from full-blooded Filipino artists recognized for their mastery of the Western tradition of art.¹⁷⁶ Reminiscent of both Velarde's remarks on the hindered progression of the Filipino natives in *Geographia Historica* and Gaspar de San Agustín's letter, the inescapable "crudeness" of works by native hands were attributed to an "unavoidable consequence of 'racial limitations,'" and accordingly, characterized as attempts to imitate Spanish art.¹⁷⁷ It is here that Rizal and Sánchez

¹⁷⁴ Luis A. Sánchez Gómez, "Indigenous art at the Philippine Exposition of 1887: Arguments for an ideological and racial battle in a colonial context," *Journal of the History of Collections* 11, no. 4 (2002), 291.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 285.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 288.

Gómez converge, as Sánchez Gómez also emphasizes the shallow level of education brought upon the Filipino natives. This calls to remove the blame from Filipinos and instead onto the friars that controlled their education. Such critiques solely based on their race and ignorance toward the impacts of the colonial system in their artistic executions had effectively reduced these artists to mere craftsmen and, in turn, amplified racial divides between the colonizer and the colonized. Fully incorporating the ideas of failure and hypocrisy, Sánchez Gómez defends the Filipino case in saying that if Filipino art objects are imitations of the Spanish Baroque,¹⁷⁸ and as Rizal would assert, then it is because the *sistema* simply did not allow for the native to thrive. Therefore, as the objects have been analyzed within the context of the so-called colonial Baroque, the observed “flaws” especially highlighted in the paintings may be attributed to this causation of imitation. Particularly in the four selected panels from the *Via Crucis*, the asymmetrical composition of each frame, the skewed foreshortening of Jesus’ figure in the third station, and the inconsistent proportions of each figure may well be examples of presumed racial limitations, but the application of the concept of imitation certainly works to lessen any malice toward colonial art. In the case of the Velarde-Bagay-Suarez map, the precision necessary for cartographs is evident in Bagay’s work, and are well complimented by the meticulous micro-maps of Manila and Cavite by Suarez. These ideas put together affirm the intentions of the Spaniards to establish a religious stronghold on foreign land, so much so that there was a degree of disregard for “proper,” Western European education for the sake of blatant conversion that left most colonized Filipinos oblivious to the societal problems that Rizal raised in his essay.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 289.

Comparatively, Jose Mario C. Francisco articulates that while the missionaries took great care in transplanting Spanish Catholicism to instruct the natives, they were less cognizant to native assertion via the arts.¹⁷⁹ Harkening back to the province of Bohol, a case that addresses resistance to colonial rule may be made. The municipalities of Baclayon and Loboc were first established by the Jesuits who notoriously had larger demarcations between the Spaniard and the native Filipino. When the Jesuits were expelled in the 1700's, the Augustinians, who lobbied for the protection of Filipino natives, took over most of their churches.¹⁸⁰ In that regard, it may be theorized that the *Via Crucis* paintings, which are attributed to the year 1830, may have been commissioned by the Augustinians and, thus, raises the idea that Catholic vernaculars in the *mestizo* style of the Philippines is an expression of Spanish resistance.¹⁸¹ Similar to Sison's articulation of Filipino folk Catholicism, the assertion in artistic creativity and production ultimately shaped the religion in a way that unequivocally argues for a distinctive Filipino identity, for the expression of Filipino folk Catholicism worked within the walls of the Catholic Church. In the convergence of native and Spanish elements that stemmed from neither copies nor original designs, the dynamic allowed for the maintenance of its own "semi-autonomous, grassroots piety."¹⁸² Correspondingly, Rafael's discussion of conversion and language has since been reinterpreted as not merely a matter of conversion, but also a matter of negotiation.¹⁸³ In consideration of the folk Catholic elements within the "triplet" *Santisima Trinidad* images, it may be argued that the domestication of Spanish Catholic culture in the Philippines is in and of

¹⁷⁹ Francisco, "The Philippines," 104.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 103.

¹⁸² Francisco, "The Philippines," 103; Sison, "Afflictive Apparitions: The Folk Catholic Imaginary in Philippine Cinema, Material Religion," 427.

¹⁸³ Javellana, *Weaving Cultures: The Invention of Colonial Art and Culture in the Philippines, 1565-1850*, 205.

itself resistance to Spanish colonization. It was a means of survival and adaptation in a drastically changed social environment. Thus, notwithstanding the pitfalls of colonialism and its hand in artistic training and material production, the objects born from the Spanish colonial-era remain to be exhibitions of local creativity that should not be overlooked.

The examples of the Velarde-Bagay-Suarez map, the selected paintings from the *Via Crucis* by the unknown Bohol Master and the “triplet” *Santisima Trinidad* renditions are not only meant to be case studies, but rather to open up the objects to important contextual histories. These include transpacific histories, wherein conversion to the Catholic faith acted as a major catalyst in the shaping of what is considered today as the pan-Filipino *mestizo* cultural identity. Moreover, these objects demonstrate the rather literal shaping of the native land and its peoples based on their inherently hybrid nature. In the map’s convergence of both art and science, the Philippines, as it has been depicted in the Velarde-Bagay-Suarez map, is a land shown to have been enriched due to the establishment of the Spanish. In their enrichment, communities in and around the Philippines are clearly subjugated under Spanish authority. In conjunction with Velarde’s other works and sentiments about the Filipino people, it is clear that regardless of Bagay and Suarez’s achievements on the map, the colonizer’s perceptions are maintained. In the case of the selected paintings, I have argued that these emphasize the subject of *mestizaje* and Philippine folk Catholicism as a result of conversion and, thus, directly relate to the issue of national identity. As discussed, *mestizo* culture and Philippine folk Catholicism cannot be separated due to the deeply rooted significance of the Catholic faith in the social fabric. To reiterate, the concept of the “godly nation” addressed by Grzymala-Busse and Dan Slater refers to the intertwined dynamic of Church and State in the Philippines. Due to the weakness of the State, the Church served as a substitution for essentially all aspects of social life. Religious

production, both for public and private veneration, as in the case of the Bohol paintings and the “triplet” Holy Trinity works respectively, expand upon the complexity of the Spanish-era in the Philippines.

Figures

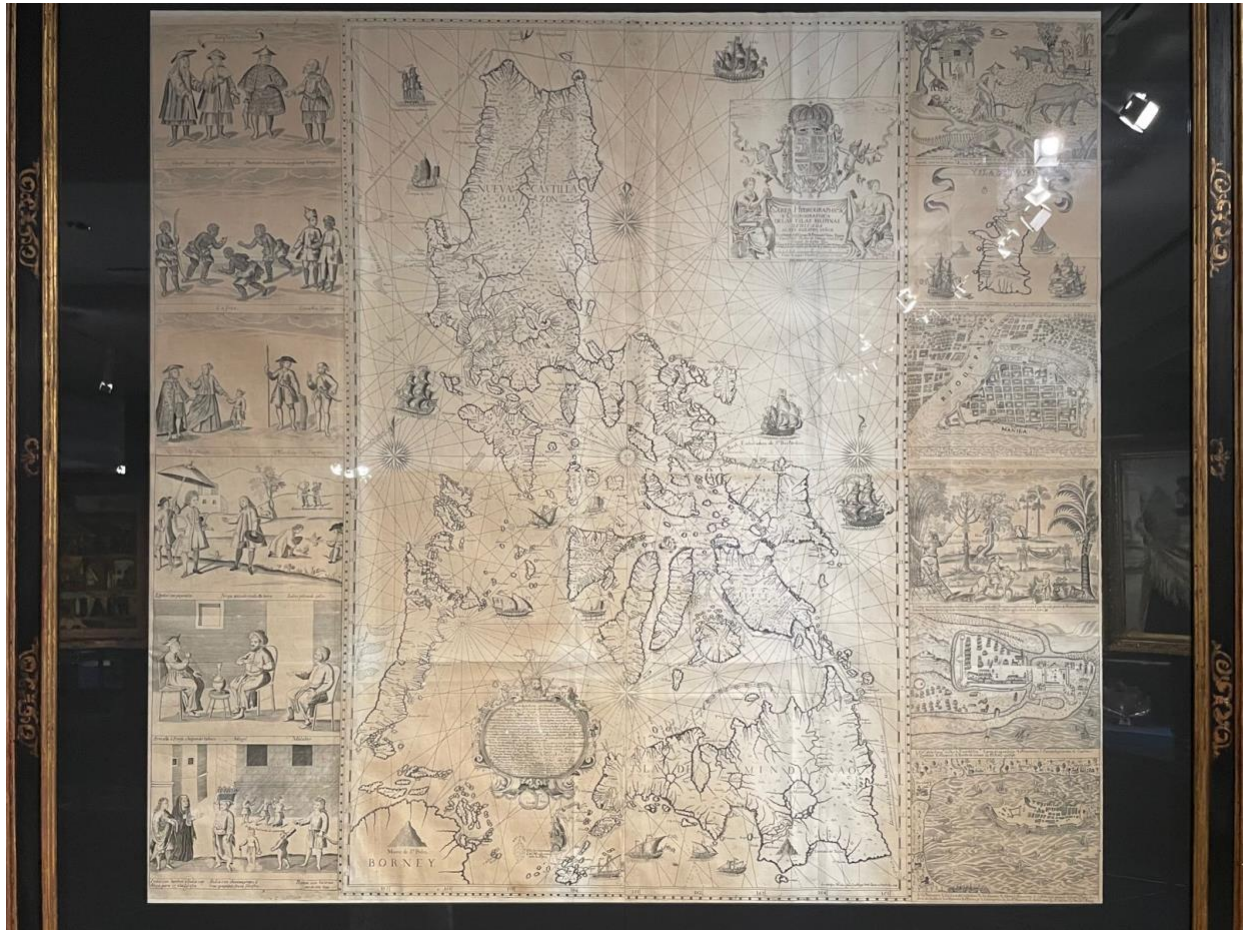
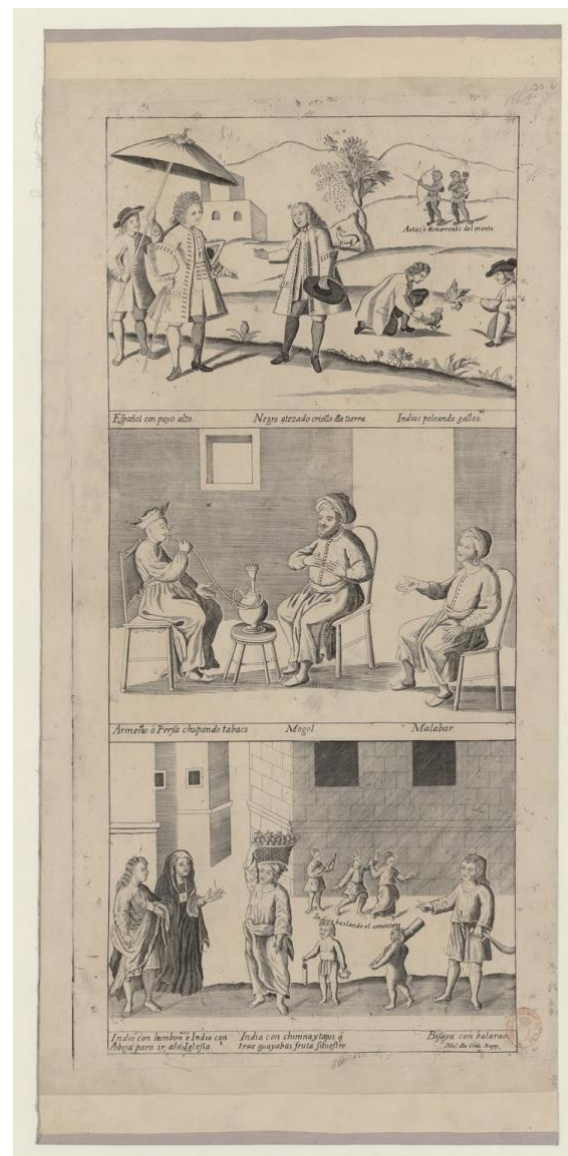


Figure 1. Facsimile of the map resembling that of the map purchased in 2014 by Mel Velarde from Sotheyby's. Part of the *Intertwined: Transpacific, Transcultural Philippines* exhibition (Dec. 4, 2021- Dec. 31, 2022) curated by Florina Capistrano-Baker, Ph.D. Pedro Murillo Velarde, Nicolas de la Cruz Bagay and Francisco Suarez, *Carta Hydrographica y Chorographica de las Yslas Filipinas*, 1734, 112 x 120 cm, engraving, Ayala Museum Collection, Makati City. Photo: Alexi Louise C. Paglinawan.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

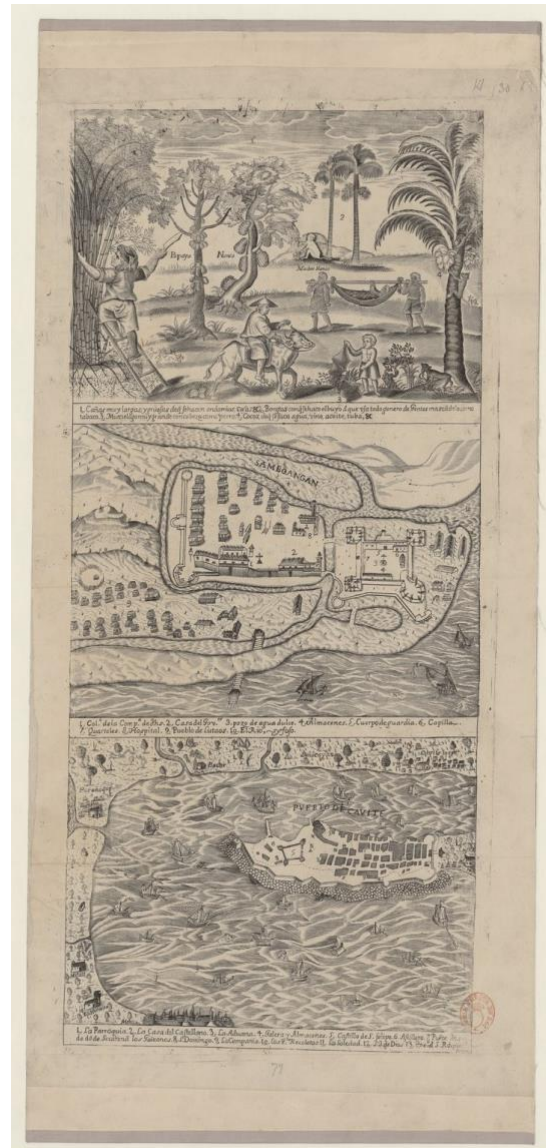


Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 2. Left-hand column illustrations. Pedro Murillo Velarde, Nicolas de la Cruz Bagay and Francisco Suarez, *Carta Hydrographica y Chorographica de las Yslas Filipinas* (detail), 1734, engraving, 112 x 120 cm, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53066953z>.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 3. Right-hand column illustrations. Pedro Murillo Velarde, Nicolas de la Cruz Bagay and Francisco Suarez, *Carta Hydrographica y Chorographica de las Yslas Filipinas* (detail), 1734, engraving, 112 x 120 cm, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53066953z>.



Figure 4. Pedro Murillo Velarde, Nicolas de la Cruz Bagay and Francisco Suarez, John Bach & T.H. Pardo de Tavera, *Carta Hydrographica y Chorographica de las Yslas Filipinas*, 1734, 112 x 120 cm, engraving, National Library of Australia, Canberra, <https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/1958881>.



Figure 5. Unknown Bohol Master, *The Stations of the Cross* [Via Crucis], III: *Jesus falls for the first time*, oil on panel, 1830, National Fine Arts Collection of the National Museum of the Philippines, On Loan from the Collection of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Manila. Photo: Alexi Louise C. Paglinawan. Published with permission from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

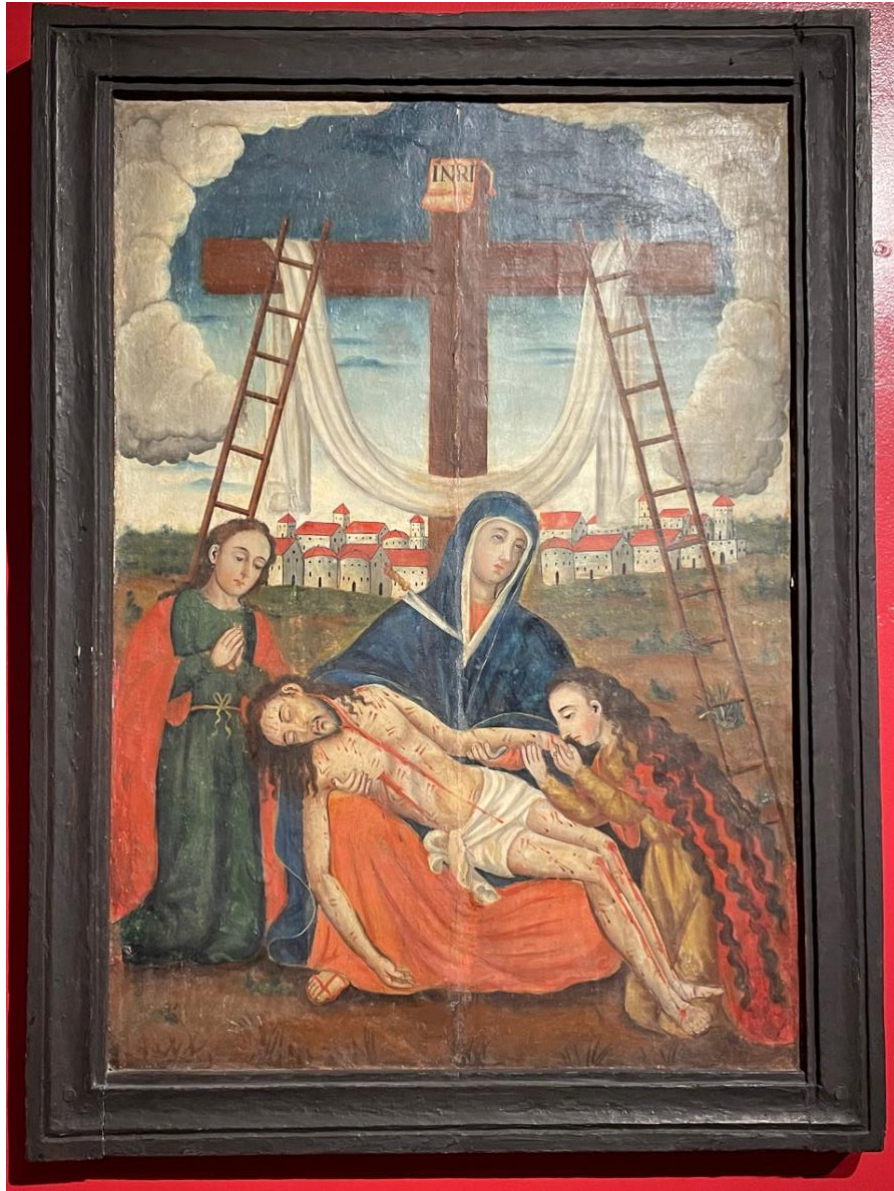


Figure 6. Unknown Bohol Master, *The Stations of the Cross* [Via Crucis], XIII: *Jesus is taken down from the cross*, 1830, National Fine Arts Collection of the National Museum of the Philippines, On Loan from the Collection of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Manila. Photo: Alexi Louise C. Paglinawan. Published with permission from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.



Figure 7. Unknown Bohol Master, *The Stations of the Cross* [Via Crucis], XIV: *Jesus is laid in the tomb*, 1830, National Fine Arts Collection of the National Museum of the Philippines, On Loan from the Collection of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Manila. Photo: Alexi Louise C. Paglinawan. Published with permission from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.



Figure 8. Unknown Bohol Master, *The Stations of the Cross* [Via Crucis], V: *Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross*, oil on panel, 1830, National Fine Arts Collection of the National Museum of the Philippines, On Loan from the Collection of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Manila. Photo: Alexi Louise C. Paglinawan. Published with permission from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

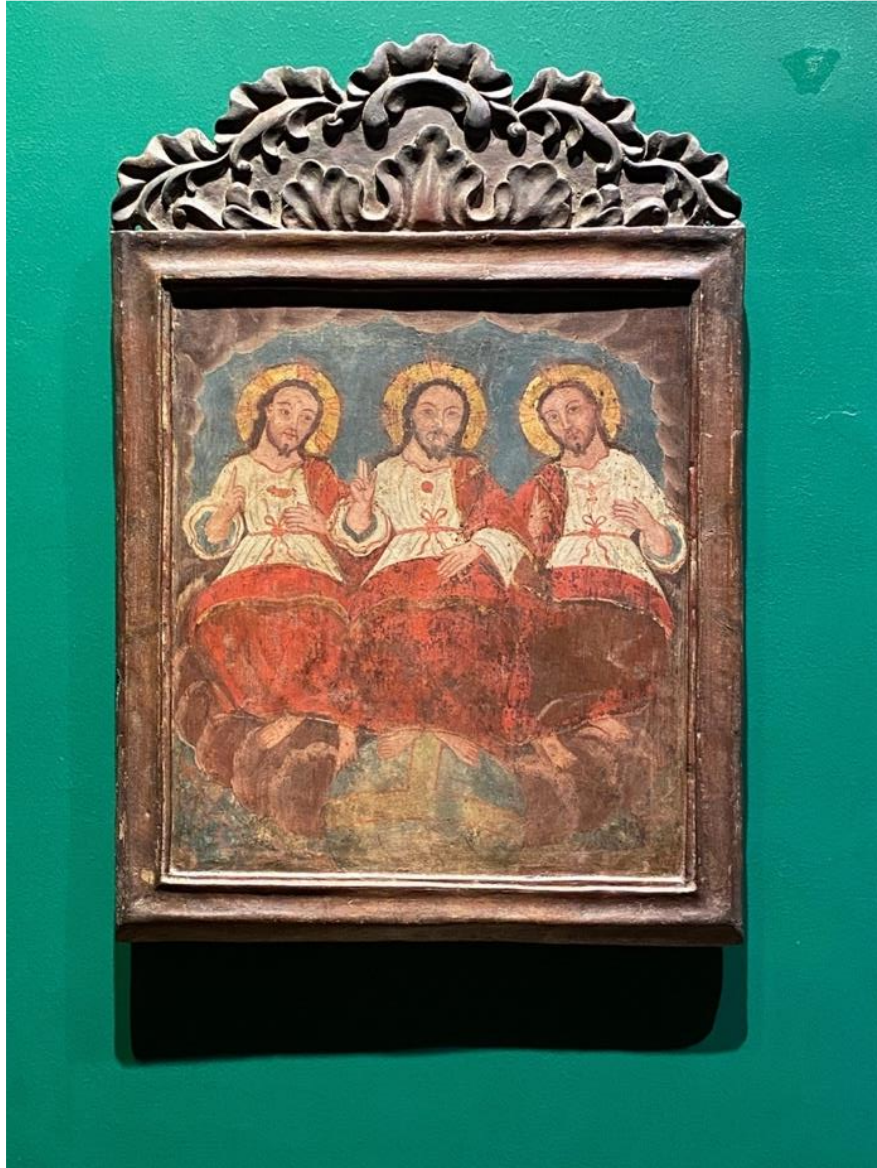


Figure 9. Unknown artist, *La Santísima Trinidad*, oil on panel, 56.7 cm x 39cm, late 18th to early 19th century, National Fine Arts Collection of the National Museum of the Philippines, On Loan from the Collection of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Manila. Photo: Alexi Louise C. Paglinawan. Published with permission from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.



Figure 10. Unknown artist, *La Santisima Trinidad*, oil on panel, 45.2cm x 36.5cm, late 18th to early 19th century, National Fine Arts Collection of the National Museum of the Philippines, On Loan from the Collection of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Manila. Photo: Alexi Louise C. Paglinawan. Published with permission from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.



Figure 11. Jean Fouquet, “The Enthronement of the Virgin,” in *The Hours of Etienne Chevalier*, 1420-1480, illumination, Musée Condé, Chantilly. Wikimedia.org, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jean_Fouquet_-_The_Enthronement_of_the_Virgin_-_WGA08027.jpg.



Figure 12. Hans Holbein the Elder, *Trinity as three identical persons*, panel 1, 1499, Staatsgalerie Altdeutsche Meister), Augsburg. Wikimedia.org, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Holbein_-_S._Maria_Maggiore_-_Basilica_Cycle_1.jpg.



Figure 13. Unknown Bohol Master, *The Stations of the Cross* [Via Crucis], VI: *Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus*, oil on panel, 1830, National Fine Arts Collection of the National Museum of the Philippines, On Loan from the Collection of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Manila. Photo: Alexi Louise C. Paglinawan. Published with permission from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

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