

The Materiality of Religious Healing in *Kamay ng Manggagamot* (Hand of the Healer) in Anyatam, San Ildefonso Bulacan Philippines

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Abstract: The religious phenomenon under study forms a part of what is referred to as ‘popular religiosity’ in the Philippines, whereby religious experience is syncretised and where religious rituals and practices are an amalgam of indigenous, pre-colonial religion and mainly Catholic Christianity. Anthropological fieldwork was done by visiting the religious shrine of *Kamay ng Manggagamot* in Anyatam, San Ildefonso, Bulacan, around 65km North of Manila. By undertaking participant observation during the annual season of Holy Week, the researchers were able to identify key informants and gather significant data on the shrine of St. Martin de Porres, where a local male healer resides. His teaching mainly harps on the idea that healing is accomplished by his hands, whereby the wooden hand of the saint acts as an extension of his bodily hands. Both wooden and bodily hands are then understood as an extension of the hand of God that heals. The teachings and ritual practices of *Kamay ng Manggagamot* exemplify the link between ‘matter’ and ‘form’; of ‘action’ and ‘passion’, terminologies derived from Thomistic philosophy. From the modern standpoint, it demonstrates the link between ‘spirit’ and ‘body’; between ‘agency’ and ‘reception’ and highlights the material context of spirituality, as much as the spiritual context of matter/things that pertain to the symbolic world of ritual and religion. In terms of religious heritage, this study allows for an understanding of the link between tangible and intangible heritage in a manner that links them, not as principles that categorize religious phenomena apart.