Spirituality and Personhood: *Homo Liturgicus* and *Pagkatao* in Conversation

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**Abstract**
This essay places James K. A. Smith’s *homo liturgicus* (liturgical human) in conversation with the Filipino concept of *pagkatao* (personhood). For Smith, humans are desiring creatures, and they are formed through practices, daily routines, cultural texts, and the liturgical sites where they spend their time. Smith’s proposals within his *homo liturgicus* are not alien to the Filipino worldview. Filipinos see a person holistically and view reality as dynamic, which manifests in the *pagkataong* Pilipino (Filipino personhood), particularly the *loob* (the core of personhood) and *kapwa* (the shared self). Furthermore, the formation of a human being is not only through the ideas that enter the mind but also via cultural texts (songs, comics, movies, drama, proverbs, stories, and others). I argue that *homo liturgicus* and *pagkatao* reject Cartesian thought, specifically the naturalistic view of reality, the overemphasis on cognition, and extreme individualism. I then propose a Filipino Christian spirituality that is post-cognitive, post-individual, and post-dualist.

**Keywords**
post-cognitive, individualism, dualism, personhood, *pagkatao*, *loob*, *kapwa*, *homo liturgicus*

**INTRODUCTION**

Personhood is an important aspect of Asian Christian spirituality. As George Capaque has noted: “Spirituality is a way of making sense or finding meaning in one’s life experience. It is a movement toward a fuller 

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1 I presented a shorter version of this piece during the ATESEA’s Asian Christian Spirituality Conference held in Bangkok, Thailand, on July 26–27, 2023. I thank the participants for their questions and suggestions.

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human wholeness and a more authentic self.” As such, I argue that the way we understand personhood affects our view of spirituality. In this essay, I will draw on James K.A. Smith’s *homo liturgicus* and the Filipino concept of *Pagkatao*. This article seeks to explore the two concepts and formulate a Filipino Christian spirituality that is post-cognitive, post-individual, and post-dualist.

Modernity is a historical and cultural phenomenon that made human reason the arbiter of reality. The ascendancy of the autonomous self was central to the spirit of modernity in creating a utopia. Its philosophy promoted subjectivity, freedom, rights, liberalism, autonomous individualism, and tolerance. With the help of science and technology, humans aimed to master nature. Modernity’s fixation on deductive reasoning and an individual’s ability to achieve objective knowledge influenced the spirit of the time. The Enlightenment birthed the modern intellectual phenomenon that aimed to present reality within the parameter of reason.

René Descartes (1596–1650) stated the necessity of doubting all certainties produced by an empirical method. For him, it was not prudent to place complete trust in such a method since our senses are deceptive most of the time. Therefore, it is proper to conceive everything with uncertainty, but in so doing Descartes realized that he was operating based on doubt. He admitted that the most certain reality with no foundation of doubt was the fact that while thinking he was at the same time existing. Put simply, he started from doubting everything to a final concession, “I think, therefore I am.” This reductionist approach continues to reverberate


7 See René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy: With Selections from the Objections*
around evangelical teachings, particularly in theological anthropology. Humans are seen as fundamentally rational, containers of ideas, and thinking beings. Such kind of anthropology is manifested particularly in how some Evangelicals tend to prioritize propositions (or sets of ideas) on the nature of doctrines, evangelism, and discipleship. In contrast, both Smith’s *homo liturgicus* (liturgical creatures) and the Filipino *pagkatao* (personhood) differ from Cartesian epistemology. They are more holistic and dynamic.

**James K. A. Smith’s *Homo Liturgicus***

There are two factors in the formation of Smith’s *homo liturgicus*: his appreciation of postmodernism and Augustine (354–430). Smith’s reaction against the Cartesian perspective of personhood results in his premise that humans by nature are more than just thinkers. The following are the elements of *homo liturgicus*.

The Importance of the Body: A Challenge to Cartesian Anthropology

Modernism tells us that the main problem of humanity is intellectual anemia. Therefore, reason and empirical inquiry are the major players in solving such a dilemma. Humans are to become rational experts in dealing with all existential mysteries and inquiries in life. Such a perspective, specifically at the height of the influence of Descartes, results in a naturalistic view of the world. The Cartesian anthropology pictures

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8 James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*, vol. 1, *Cultural Liturgies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 32. It is proper to admit that I am stating an oversimplification of Descartes’s philosophy.


The mind becomes the center of a human person. However, Smith believes that humans do not primarily utilize the intellect but also use the faculty of imagination and body in making sense of the world.

Smith claims that a cognitive-propositional approach to perceiving reality and understanding the world is very limited. He finds aid from pentecostal worship, which understands the primacy of the body and imagination more than the cognitive-propositional lens. Pentecostal worship encourages the people of God to include their physical bodies in worship (such as through the raising and laying on of hands, kneeling, and others). This emphasis on the necessity of the body rejects the modernists’ dualist approach. Worship that focuses on mere didactic teachings reduces the role of the body to that of a vehicle to get the mind to the altar.

Desiring Creatures: Humans as Lovers

_Homo liturgicus_ postulates that humans are lovers or desiring creatures who are molded by embodied practices and rituals that convey a vision of the good life. It is an anthropology that presupposes the necessity of valuing the pretheoretical (practices, habits, emotions, desires, and others) components of “living in the world.” It highlights that humans are religious by nature. What we desire is what we worship, and the things we revere we resemble because we are primarily oriented by what we love. This liturgical anthropology insists that humans are not primarily theorizers. Instead, we are creatures of habits fueled by our desires. What we desire shapes our imagination, and such a formation occurs due to

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16 Smith, _Desiring the Kingdom_, 86.
17 Smith, _Imagining the Kingdom_, 75.
18 Smith, _Desiring the Kingdom_, 25.
19 Smith, _You Are What You Love_, 11.
the liturgies in which we participate in our daily lives. Even the so-called “secular” is not neutral in influencing human hearts.

The argument that humans are fundamentally lovers stresses the need for a holistic framework that fills not just the cognitive part but also the whole aspect of a person. That is because it is quite possible to have the correct information yet be guided by a distorted desire. According to Smith, “[d]isordered love is like falling in love with the boat rather than the destination.” Following Jesus Christ is not only confined to understanding the correct doctrines on a cognitive level but also includes the right practice and proper behavior. More importantly, it is about becoming a disciple whose love and desire point to God.

Smith draws on Augustine’s locution, “You stir man to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.” Such a locution has two important implications. First, human beings are created by and for God. Being human is not primarily about acquiring the right ideas but connecting to the Creator for whom we are created. Second, we are not robots. We are intentional beings directed toward an end goal. Succinctly speaking, we are after someone or something because we are creatures of desire. Homo liturgicus implies that we are shaped by what we desire and love.

Target: The Teleology of Love and Desire

Smith writes, “[L]ove as we’re talking about it here—love as our most fundamental orientation to the world—is less a conscious choice and more like a baseline inclination, a default orientation that generates the choices we make.” That being the case, the church needs to understand its role in forming Christians who are capable of living as citizens of the community of God—a people who can counter the unwarranted claims and visions of other “liturgical sites.” That is necessary because one can profess the

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20 Smith, Imagining the Kingdom, 7.
23 Smith, You Are What You Love, 8–9.
24 Smith, You Are What You Love, 16.
lordship of Christ without any effect on one’s behavior and practices. The mind may have the right information about Christianity, but the individual may still lack Christian virtues.

Humans are directed toward a telos, which means “human consciousness is intentional.” Every person searches for a narrative that provides belongingness, acceptance, and love along the journey. Again, homo liturgicus posits that we are intentional creatures who navigate the world with our desires, longings, and love. That desire has a target—aimed at something, someone, or any version of the good life (eudaimonia). We are religious animals not because we think through our daily living, but we are “embodied, practicing creatures whose love/desire is aimed at something ultimate.” Smith also pronounces that human actions are intentional not because they intend to think through their practices but because these actions have targets. This explanation shows that humans are worshiping creatures. The targets of humans’ actions show whom or what they worship.

Smith uses the shopping mall as an example of a liturgical site that can influence one’s imagination. The mall’s liturgies, such as the supermarket, gadget stores, beauty products section, cinema, and the like, imply that the nature of “the good life” is having the latest phones, high-end laptops, full grocery carts, being entertained by the latest movies, having a good look with the help of the latest beauty products, and so on. Accordingly, the mall is a religious site in the sense that those people in this space are shaped by the “rituals” of this institution. Thus, the mall is not a neutral place because it contains subtle formative practices connected to its own eudaimonia (the good life). Its “rites” target the center of human consciousness. Put another way, the being and the becoming of a person are affected not primarily by careful deliberation on ideas but also by a precognitive nexus (habits, longings, love, and desires) that carries the vision of a good life.

25 Smith, Desiring the Kingdom, 48.
26 Smith, Desiring the Kingdom, 40.
27 Smith, Imagining the Kingdom, 54, 56.
28 Smith, Desiring the Kingdom, 25.
29 Smith, You Are What You Love, 2. That is why Evangelicals need to consider whether their liturgy is the same as what the mall is offering or if it has a counter-proposal for spiritual formation. See Simon Chan, “The Holy Spirit as the Fulfillment of the Liturgy,” Liturgy 30, no. 1 (2015): 33–41.
**The Filipino Concept of Pagkatao**

There are two important elements of *pagkatao* in this article: *loob* (the core of personhood or the “most authentic relational self”) and *kapwa* (shared self or “the self in the other”). To understand the Filipino consciousness, one cannot disregard the people’s traditional religions even if these are negatively labeled as animism. I start by elucidating the animistic roots of the Filipinos because this kind of cosmology and spirituality fashioned our understanding of *pagkatao*. I use the terms “Filipinos” and “natives” interchangeably to describe the people in the Philippines, whether before or after 1521, when Ferdinand Magellan (1480–1521) arrived in the country.

The primal religions of Filipinos are important in examining the core aspects of *pagkatao*. *Loob* is connected to animistic worldviews. For instance, a person may have *kapangyarihan* (power and strength, or the ability to control nature and other phenomena) through the purification of *loob* not through mastering propositional beliefs but via rituals, tests, challenges, and so forth.

Filipino scholar Leonardo Mercado notes that the Cartesian system has demythologized the dynamic and mystic aspects of nature. The exaltation of mathematics and science in studying the natural world removes the deity and the supernatural from the scene. But Cartesianism is quite different from the worldviews of Filipinos because “[i]n the traditional Filipino primal (animistic) world view, the world is full of spirits. The

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divine energy which permeates the universe is manifested in ‘every aspect of the natural world, in stones, trees, clouds, and fire.’ Mountains, caves, rivers, plants, animals, and people have power.”

Therefore, respecting the ecosystem was ubiquitous before the colonizers arrived and brought their worldviews to the Philippines. One could cut a tree only after that person asked for permission from the tree guardian (spirit). This kind of worldview indicates the close relationship of a Filipino toward the unseen and the ecosystem. In short, Filipinos do not see the natural world as autonomous from the supernatural realm.

The animistic cosmology of the ancient Filipino civilization, which is common in Southeast Asia, teaches Filipinos to navigate the world communally and holistically. Their daily living was not separated from unseen beings and other inanimate objects. For this reason, typical Filipinos believe that their lives revolve around the *gulong ng palad* (the wheel of fortune). This wheel of destiny is linked to the spirits and gods who have the power to influence people’s lives, safety, fortune, misfortune, and relationships.

The Filipino worldview does not compartmentalize the material world and the spirit realm. Both humans and spirits coexist because entrenched in Filipino psychology is a worldview that is welcoming to supernatural beings. I, as a Cordilleran or Igorot from the northern part of Luzon, can testify to this. For Filipinos, rituals are vital avenues that portray their relationships with other people, nature, and spiritual beings. The animistic religion produces a Filipino anthropology that perceives human beings not merely as products of atoms but as composed of both an eternal soul and a material body.

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35 Mercado, *Filipino Thought*, 123.


Loob: A World of Consciousness

Loob is the dynamic aspect and core of pagkatao. The concept of loob has a very rich content that Filipino thinkers have begun to explore only recently. The word loob literally means “inside” or “inner self.” Two aspects are crucial here. First, it may refer to spatial interiority. When loob refers to a house or a place, it points to the “inside.” Second, when pertaining to personhood, it indicates a world of human consciousness. Mercado argues, “Even if Philippine society is pluralistic in the sense that it has regional differences and sub-cultures, still Filipinos have many things in common.” In the Filipino worldview, loob is not merely a corner in one’s personhood but a world (daigdig) of consciousness that is connected to other people, and the natural and supernatural realms. This portrays the dynamism of the Filipino concept of pagkatao.

Loob: The “Most Authentic Relational Self”

Filipino theologian José de Mesa contends that loob is the most authentic relational self. It is “a wholistic understanding of the most authentic self

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39 Landa Jocano’s assertion is helpful in this discussion: “There are many other examples that show the importance of the concept of loob in Filipino culture. True, this concept may not be uniquely Filipino. It may also be found in other cultures. However, it is still necessary that we learn it because it plays a vital role in understanding our ways of thinking, believing, feeling, and doing things.” F. Landa Jocano, Filipino Worldview: Ethnography of Local Knowledge (Manila: PUNLAD Research House, 2001), 98.

40 José de Mesa, Bakas: Retrieving the Sense of Sacramentality of the Ordinary (Pasig City, Philippines: Anvil Publishing, 2008), 58.

41 Some may argue that loob is synonymous with nakem of the Ilocano and buot of the Bisaya. Dionisio M. Miranda, Loob: The Filipino Within (Manila: Divine Word Publications, 1989), 18. Ilocanos and Bisayans are ethnolinguistic groups in the Philippines. Mercado argues, “Even if Philippine society is pluralistic in the sense that it has regional differences and sub-cultures, still Filipinos have many things in common.” Leonardo Mercado, Elements of Filipino Ethics (Tacloban City, Philippines: Divine Word University Publications, 1979), 99. I do not claim that loob is totally the same as nakem and buot, but they have a commonality as central to personhood.

42 Albert E. Alejo, Tao Po! Tuloy! Landas ng Pag-unawa sa Loob ng Tao (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila, 1990), 80–81, 85, 91.

43 José M. de Mesa, Adequate, but Not Enough: A Filipino Reflection on the Triune God (Quezon City, Philippines: Claretian Communications Foundations, 2018), 94.
of a person in relation to God, others and the world.”44 The real worth or identity of a person is based not on what that individual does but on the loob.45 It is safe to say that loob refers to the genuine self of a Filipino. This not only pertains to the inner self of a human being but also includes a person’s relations with other people. As such, one’s desire and action spring from the loob.46 In short, the “most authentic relational self” means that this is the center of one’s thoughts, words, desires, and deeds in relation to the world, fellow human beings, and God.47 This is one reason why loob cannot be separated from kapwa because the former is always relational.

One can have a glimpse of the pagkatao of a person through the individual’s relationship with others. If a person shows humanness, openness, goodness, and generosity to a fellow human being, his or her authentic relational self is maganda (beautiful).48

Loob: The Core of Personhood

Despite the different nuances or interpretations of loob, it is still the center or the core of the Filipino pagkatao. If we analyze the Filipino understanding of the phrase loob, we will notice that this refers to the summary of our personhood. That is because the true nature of personhood is the loob.49 Loob refers to the center or core of a human being. As the center, it does not only point to the character, intuition, desire, and emotion but to the whole pagkatao.50 That is important since it affects the Filipino value of “utang na loob” (debt of gratitude and unending reciprocity). If the loob is seen as the whole person, it follows that it includes

45 Alejo, Tao Po! Tuloy!, 27.
47 de Mesa, Bakas, 58.
48 de Mesa, José M. de Mesa: A Theological Reader, 302–303.
49 José M. de Mesa, In Solidarity with the Culture: Studies in Theological Re-rooting (Quezon City, Philippines: Maryhill School of Theology, 1987), 211.
50 Miranda, Loob, 1, 28.
the intellect. Therefore, to be true to one’s loob, an individual has to use the mind critically if the other person abuses the debt of gratitude. Thus, in “utang na loob” one needs to be true to his or her loob by using both the emotions and the mind critically. Or in the Filipino parlance, “Mag-isip ka naman” (think well).51

The content of the loob of a person manifests in the labas (outer self) because these two are not antithetical.52 Loob provides a realm of perspective in processing realities and in relating with other human beings. The only way by which a person understands the core of one’s personhood is not through the logical-deductive method but through relationships.53 This is where kapwa or shared self comes in.

**Kapwa: The Extension of the Self to Others**

Virgilio Enriquez says that the closest English equivalent of kapwa is “others,” but he is quick to point out that such an English equivalent sequesters the self, reducing it into a separate identity, whereas the true nature of kapwa recognizes not an isolated self but, rather, shared humanity with others.54

The rise of community pantries in the Philippines during the pandemic is a good example. For the government, mitigating the spread of the virus necessitated the implementation of lockdowns. The effect of the pandemic stopped small business operations, increased the national poverty rate, and brought more hunger. Amid this situation, kapwa culture appeared in the street. In April 2021, one resident, Ana Patricia Non, started a community

51 De Mesa points to the importance of the mind: “Hindi natin binabale-wala ang papel na ginagampanan ng isip sa buhay. Batid natin ang maaring kahinatnan ng mga nagpapadala sa kanilang mga damdamin. . . . Ang bugso o udyok ng damdamin ay maaring magdala sa kapahamakan.” (We do not neglect the role of the mind in our daily lives. We are aware of the danger of being impulsively motivated by emotions). José de Mesa, “Kapag ang ‘Ganda’ ang Pag-uusapan: Mungkahi para sa Dulog at Paraan ng Mabathalang Pag-Aaral,” in *Ang Maganda sa Teolohiya*, ed. Levy Lara Lanaria (Quezon City, Philippines: Claretian Communications Foundations, 2017), 9. Italics original.


54 Virgilio Enriquez, *From Colonial to Liberation Psychology*, 3rd printing (Quezon City, Philippines: University of the Philippines Press, 2016), 52.
pantry to help the poor with the slogan, “Magbigay ayon sa kakayahan, kumuha batay sa pangangailangan” (Give according to ability, take based on need). This action presents the oneness of “loob.” It even shows that the poor can help one another through mutual charity.

In recognizing this shared identity, one is not to focus on the outside appearance of a person. Good looks do not guarantee a pure heart. It is imperative to touch the loob of the person, which necessitates building relationships. As indicated by the explanation above, Filipinos are by nature people-oriented. Generally speaking, they consider others in everything they do. For example, de Mesa observes:

Filipinos who know one another ordinarily recognize the presence of the other by saying, “Where are you going?” or “Where are you coming from?” when they meet one another. It is impolite; it may even be considered haughty not to recognize the presence of the other. Only a snob does a thing like that. Foreigners, however, especially if they are new in the country, resent such questions. They feel these to be intrusions into their privacy. Thus they begin to regard Filipinos as “nosey” who appear too eager to know what is none of their business. But this is clearly a judgment of an “outsider” who does not understand the cultural language.

By recognizing the shared humanity, the “most authentic relational self” begins to manifest the kagandahang-loob (this may mean agape, goodness, or benevolence) to other people. Kagandahang-loob does not mean only goodness and benevolence but also refers to a genuine love that arises from a person’s loob.

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56 de Mesa, José M. de Mesa: A Theological Reader, 302.
58 de Mesa, In Solidarity with Culture, 34.
59 José M. de Mesa, Mabathalang Pag-aaral: Ang Pagtetelohiya ng Pilipino (Manila: De La Salle University, 2010), 78–79.
HOMO LITURGICUS AND PAGKATAO

Upon treating *homo liturgicus* and *pagkatao* briefly, I suggest three aspects of Filipino Christian spirituality.

A Filipino Spirituality is Post-cognitive

This proposal emphasizes the importance of a post propositional approach to evangelism, discipleship, and spiritual formation. Humans do not just navigate the world with a “thinking hermeneutic.” We can learn from our Filipino cultural wisdom which values the heart and the mind as distinct, but one cannot stand without the other. They are side by side, and no priority is given to either. Both thought and desire are connected yet distinct. Hence, human conversion and Christian sanctification are holistic because “it is not simply the mind that receives the light, but also the heart.”60 Spiritual formation does not only mean treating people as intellectual beings in need of instruction or mere emotional individuals. Humans have volitional, cognitive, and affective aspects. That argument is important since it can challenge the cognitive propositional approach in evangelism and discipleship.

Christians in the postmodern era need to remember that presenting the gospel to the unbelieving world cannot happen simply through a rational discussion regarding the content of the gospel. It is both “thinking and living Christianly, toward authentic ‘discipleship-in-context.’”61 Christianity, then, is not just an intellectual phenomenon. Faithful performances of the Christian narrative are necessary. Thus, Filipino Evangelicals need to go beyond the cognitive aspect of the Christian faith. God’s revelation presupposes transformation more than information.62

Since discipleship and sanctification are not just a “heady” affair, Filipino Evangelicals need to understand the power of cultural texts and cultural liturgies (malls, markets, and others). A post propositional

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60 Ike Miller, *Seeing by the Light: Illumination in Augustine’s and Barth’s Readings of John* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020), 34.


approach gives place to the importance of cultural texts proposed by Smith which is also explicit within the Filipino worldview (ceremonies, fiestas, rituals, processions, novenas, and other devotional practices that are also inculcated by Spanish Catholicism). The power of arts, songs, rituals, movies, Instagram, TikTok, and others are crucial factors in the formation of one’s spirituality.

Drawing on the Filipino worldview, the natives’ tradition tells the responsibility of the ancestors in educating the youth through proverbs, Bugtong (riddles), poetry, songs, dances, and epics. Interestingly, the use of nondeductive methods has similarities with the early Christians who communicated the gospel to the needy and oppressed more than through catechetical methods. Thus, this post-propositional approach affirms that the Scripture is a valuable source for formation since it is composed not only of deductive ideas but also of psalms of different kinds (joy, lament, victory, and others), proverbs, and stories.

While ideas are a necessary component in Christian discipleship, a post-cognitive approach also sees the necessity of the transformation of desire (Augustine and Smith) or, in the Filipino language, pagbabalik loob sa Diyos (turning or returning to God). This shift in a person’s love does not happen by merely filling the mind with ideas, but by being illuminated by the Holy Spirit, making it possible for a person to change his or her cravings and desires. But this does not mean abandoning the importance of intellect or the life of the mind.

A Filipino Spirituality Is Post-individual

Matthew Eppinette defines individualism as “the idea that one’s own needs, interests, and desires are more important than those of others or any larger group or community.” While that concept has penetrated

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65 Matthew Eppinette, “Human 2.0: Transhumanism as a Cultural Trend,” in *Everyday*
Evangelicals, such an idea is quite different from Christianity in general. The body of Christ is more than just individuals who have a relationship with Jesus Christ. They also belong to one another. The church is not a secondary phenomenon. 66 I agree with Singaporean theologian Simon Chan, who believes that one positive symptom of a maturing evangelical spirituality is having a catholic (universal and historic) sensibility by appreciating our shared heritage and commonality with the larger body of Christ. 67

In short, Christianity is not merely a private affair for individuals who get to choose whatever they believe and practice. That statement attacks the extreme focus on oneself. We would do well to learn from Filipino values that emphasize a strong sense of community. For example, a child cannot learn to see the world, the importance of intimacy, morality, and collectivity apart from the community. The formation of a child takes place not in isolation but in the collectivity of relationships. 68 According to Capaque, “In Filipino spirituality, the other (kapwa) is always in relation to the loob. Becoming fully human takes place in the context of the family, the immediate community, and the wider society. Family and community provide Filipinos with a sense of identity as well as a sense of belonging, stability, and security.” 69 The loob of a person is not detached from the other’s pagkatao. 70 But I am not arguing that each person is not a unique individual.

A Filipino Spirituality is Post-dualist

This proposal tells of the importance of both body/material and soul/spirit. Followers of Christ should not focus only on the soul while

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68 Jocano, Filipino Worldview, 52.
69 Capaque, “Spirituality for Asian Contexts,” 60.
neglecting the body. The tendency is to give priority to the human spirit, which is destined for heaven or hell, while the crucial role of the body in the Christian life and spiritual formation is neglected. This may be because “for centuries within Christianity, the term ‘body’ brought to mind not the embodiment of Christ in the Incarnation, nor even God’s deliberate creation of the human body, but instead associations with sin, lust, temptation and excess.”\textsuperscript{71} In a way, the aspect of a person that needs redemption is implicitly thought of as the spirit/soul only.

The dualism of Plato has encroached on Christians’ theological anthropology. The elevation of the mind and intellect became common. This results in “despising of the body, especially when linked to spiritualized notions of salvation.”\textsuperscript{72} It is then necessary to be reminded that the heart, mind, hands, and spirit are all included in the sanctification of a Filipino believer. The concept of \textit{spirituality} does not only refer to the soul or spirit but also includes the whole being of a person. In short, body and practices are also vital factors in living the Christian life if we consider \textit{personhood}, experiences, and our culture as part of spirituality.

Historically, Filipinos advocated a spirituality that does not recognize an extreme demarcation between the body and the spirit/soul. Further, to have \textit{ginhawa} (comfort, well-being, or relief), it is necessary to maintain the wholeness of both body and soul.\textsuperscript{73} Synchronizing the mind and the body or the immaterial and the material aspects is important in the Eastern worldview since such a process brings a clear perception of reality, removal of fear, and a clear sense of one’s self.\textsuperscript{74} As de Mesa argues, the concept of \textit{spirituality} does not only refer to the soul or spirit but also includes the


\textsuperscript{72} Charles Sherlock, \textit{The Doctrine of Humanity} (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 77.


\textsuperscript{74} Carmela D. Ortigas and Josephine P. Perez, \textit{Psychology of Transformation: The Philippine Perspective–Philosophy, Theory and Practice} (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University, 2009), 20.
whole being of a person. In short, body and practices are also vital factors in living the Christian life if we consider personhood, experiences, and our culture as part of spirituality.  

The Filipino perspective of personhood does not believe in the same dualism between the body and the soul that modernism has emphasized. In this strand, *homo liturgicus* asserts the equal importance of the soul and the body. By bringing these two concepts together, we draw a post-dualist approach. This asserts the necessity of the importance of the body or the material aspect of a person. Putting these arguments side by side, Christian spirituality includes not just the spirit or soul but also acknowledges the person as a whole.

Another challenge for us is the Greco-Roman dualism resulting in the separation between the material and the spiritual, the natural and the supernatural. Smith acknowledges that material things are spaces by which the Spirit may operate. In this vein, he argues for a logic of incarnation that debunks a logic of determination. The latter promotes a binary approach to reality (for example, body vs. spirit/soul, natural vs. supernatural, material vs. immaterial, secular vs. spiritual, and so on). The former contends for the necessity of harmony among the different facets of life. Smith and the Filipino worldview argue for the removal of the extreme dichotomy between the body and the spirit/soul, the natural and the supernatural, and the sacred and the secular. Hence, that kind of worldview accommodates the importance of experiences and cultural wisdom, and it recognizes the holistic approach to personhood. That is, “By holistic worldview we take it to mean here the unity of the unseen and the seen, the visible and the invisible world.”

75 de Mesa, “Kapag ang ‘Ganda’ ang Pag-uusapan”: 15.
76 de Mesa, Bakas, 12.
79 Mercado, *Filipino Thought*, 84.
CONCLUSION

In this article, I put James K. A. Smith’s *homo liturgicus* in conversation with the Filipino concept of *pagkatao* (personhood). There are thematic similarities between the two concepts with regard to the dynamism of personhood, which is crucial in our understanding of spirituality. The difference lies in the historical aspects. Smith’s *homo liturgicus* is postmodern anthropology, while the Filipino view of personhood is premodern. As such, many of Smith’s proposals within *homo liturgicus* are already explicit in the Filipino primal religions.

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