Whichever Works

Functional syncretism and religious pragmatism in Ahin, Ifugao

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Photo (made by author) on the front page shows the Catholic “mother-church” of Ahin.

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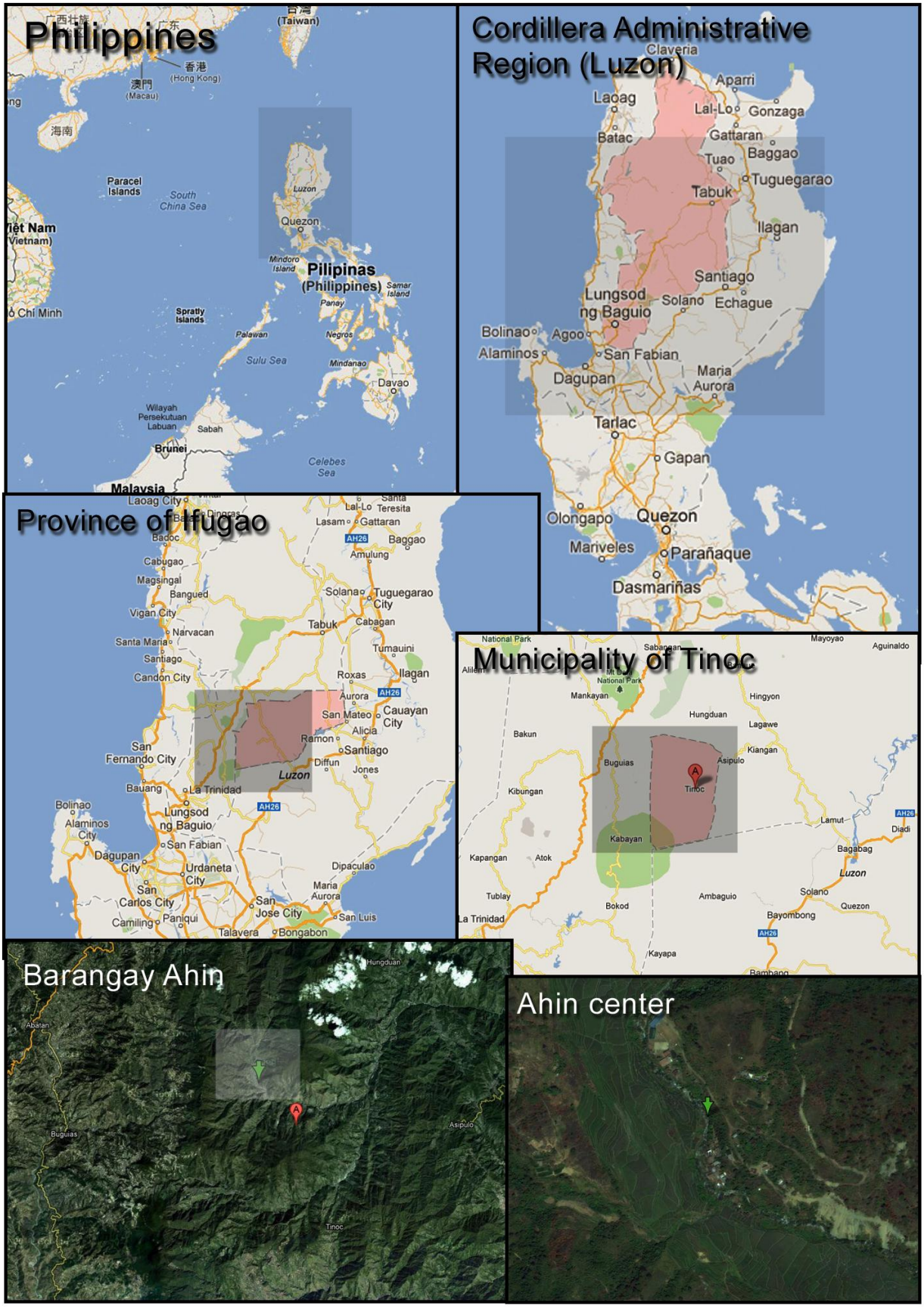
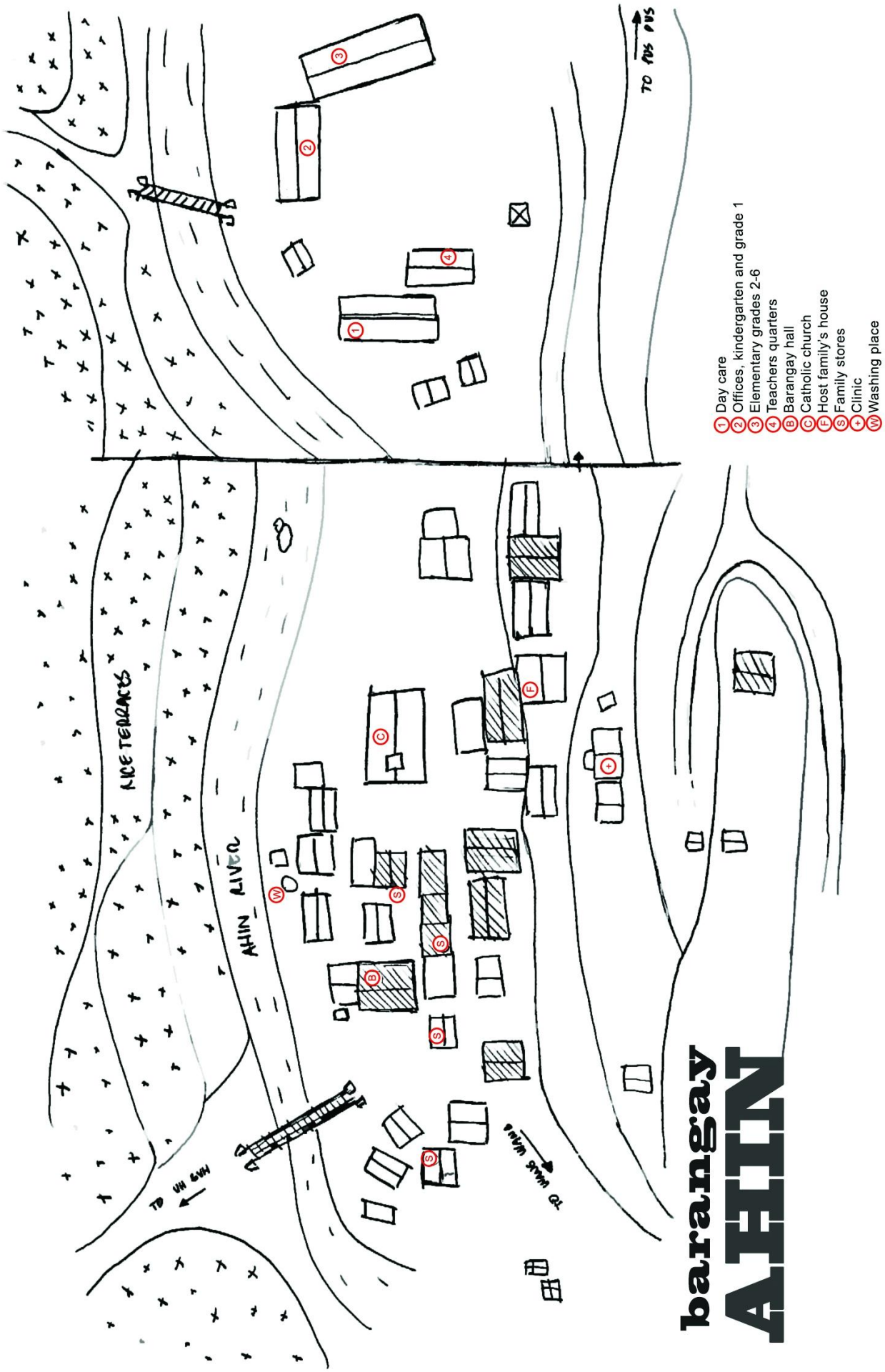


Map 2: Ahin (source: made by Johannes Renders)



Glossary of Kalanguya terms

Abuno	Positive cultural practice. When e.g. a woman gives birth, others will replace her and work in her fields without payments. Also in case of recovering from operation.
Agamang	See *dak-ai.*
Ahin	Barangay of Tinoc, Ifugao, CAR. Literally means "salt".
Aliguyon	Son of Bugan and Balitok. Renown warrior.
Ampahit	Dwarfs, smallest kind of spirit in watershed/spring.
Anap	Process of looking for the problem an ill person has (using oil, stick or cards).
Antinganting	Amulet that prevents you from accidents. In Kalanguya: *kudlah.*
Ayak	Curse. *Inayak:* to curse.
Babba-ing	If you do a ritual to not be ashamed, for example when the fixed date of a wedding had passed already; you butcher a pig.
Baghtu	Negative practice. Identify the guilty one by throwing eggs at the backs of suspects.
Bagua	Ritual in which the bones of a dead person are cleaned and put back again.
Bales	Revenge system. Two persons to be killed for each victim.
Baliti	Old, big tree. Fell in the river when the people stopped offering. House of spirits.
Balitok	God who went to earth to court Bugan. You can ask him for gold. Son of Wigan.
Balhan	Positive cultural practice. Solicitation, giving of money in emergency case.
Bayanihan	Tagalog. Other people will help for free the one who cannot afford to repay.
Baki	Prayer of the old priest.
Bibiyaw	Spirits in the forest and mountains. Gardeners of the gold.
Bilin	Traditional 10 commandments, the same to Christian ones.
Bingbinga	Charm, talisman from dried leaves that brings good luck in specific occasions. Need to be prayed for by *mabaki.*
Bugan	Compared to Mary or Eva. First women, mother of Aliguyon.
Bulul	statue of old man to put in granary to protect the *palay*, rice plants.
Bu-uh	*Sitio* of barangay Ahin.
Canyao	Ritual feast.
Culting	Prayer to bless the drinks/the person who paid for it.
Dahngah	When you have work that needs more hands, give helpers meat in return.
Dak-ai	(or *ator)* gathering place where old men used to teach young boys.
Dau-da-wak	Ritual they did before when the expected day of birth passed and the baby was not yet born.
Gumun	Dream that predicts the future.
Hangbu	Ritual to receive good blessings after a sign or omen (mostly from ancestors).
Hidit	Ritual in which they call the ancestors to take a new deceased person with them.
Impaba-il	A butchered pig not to be eaten by all family-members. For example a man who have done adultery should not eat it, because they fear he will commit adultary again.
Inayak	To curse.
Kabuñyan	Highest God.
Kagungkung	Ritual for if you feel the spirit of a deceased person keeps disturbing you. All twenty Gods need to be recalled. They will beat the gongs, dead person will

	dance.
Keleng	Thanks giving, feast done after harvest. Different amount of animals to butcher.
Lawa	'Bad': e.g. married couple sleeping in a new house that has not yet been blessed.
Lawit	Ritual after burial when the people call for the spirits of the relatives of the dead to come down and don't go with their dead relative.
Liau	Thunderstorm. When someone is hit by the thunder they will butcher to not let the *malas* pass to other family-members.
Liteb	Ritual if someone keeps on doing bad things. If bile is good → *nilin.*
Lúpon	Elders elected by the brgy captain, always present at *Tungtung.*
Ma-ayak	Opposite of *mabaki,* priest who knows how to curse someone.
Mabaki	Old/Traditional priest. He who does the *baki.*
Mabdang	Spirits in the water, in rivers, creeks and with rain. Souls of drown people.
Mahangbu	To accept a blessing from the souls of ancestors by doing rituals or service (Thanksgiving) because if not, the blessing will go to another person.
Maktum	The person who knows what should be done, who knows the process of culture.
Mapahangan	Unseen spirit that steals the soul of a person when the ancestors do not take care of that person. *Pahang* is needed to find the soul back in one of the five houses of the *mapahangan*.
Mapha-ak	Herbalist, traditional healer with plants.
Malas	Bad luck.
Ma'anap	Woman who can see what the problem is with an ill person.
Mamuntus	Same as *Ma'anap.*
Minatay	Soul. Of the dead for example.
Nilin	Ritual if someone returns from prison, he cannot enter his house for three days, butcher a pig, read the bile, he has to take a bath and enter silently if nothing falls from the table, if the sky is clear etc.
Pahang	Ritual to change a lazy, aggressive or immoral individual.
Pakadlang	semi-cross in the mountains where the Pagans pray.
Papatayan	Sacred place where God or the spirits are supposed to be.
Pekdel	Ritual done by scarce harvest, everybody provides small money, butcher, people from other places cannot enter the *sitio* then, signs with warning are on the roads.
Pihyew	"Not allowed". Taboo
Pudad	Ritual to change an immoral person if they think the ancestors are guiding him/her.
Sapatá	Negative cultural practice. Promise to God, swearing.
Suerte	Good luck
Tanung	Ritual to change immoral behaviour of a child.
Timbal	Civil wedding
Tungtung	Amicable settlement by elders, custom law
Ubbu	When you give people who work for you meat. You will have to help them in return.
Wangwang	Barangay of Tinoc, Ifugao, CAR.
Wigan	God. Father of Balitok. Gives the first palay to Bugan/Bayeng to plant rise.

Foreword

This thesis is the result of 10 weeks of anthropological fieldwork in The Philippines and three years of studying Cultural Anthropology at Utrecht University. Despite the various rigours I endured during my stay in a remote area of Ifugao, I have not once regretted my choice to carry out research among the Kalanguya of Ahin. Instead, I believe this was a unique opportunity; a true ethnographers dream. At the same time, I realise that both the fieldwork and this thesis would not have been possible without the help of many people I met before and during this research. In the first place, I would not have had access to any kind of data, without the trust and openness of my informants. Even though their experiences with foreigners have not always been positive and their tendency to shyness and shamefulness, they dedicated their little free time to listening to me and answering my questions. Their great hospitality and friendliness made me feel at home and I am extremely proud of being "adopted" as a daughter of Ahin (see appendix 2). Thanks to the *barangay officials* and the *barangay captain*, Samson Benito, I was accepted into the community. Special thanks goes to my host family, Florencio and Fidela Tyaban, who welcomed Johannes and me in their home and openly shared their thoughts and insights about life. Thanks to Marilyn Dulawan, for being an excellent interpreter and for introducing me to many non-English speaking villagers. Thanks to the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA), especially to Sarah Bestang Dekdeken, and the Montañosa Research and Development Center (MRDC), especially to Matthew and Reyaline Aquino, for introducing me to the region and to Ahin, for facilitating my stay and for their loving care. Thanks to the Nederlands-Filippijnse Solidariteitsbeweging (NFS) because it was Theo Droog who got me enthusiastic about the Philippines in the first place.

I want to thank Johannes Renders, my (research) partner, for always being on my side. For inspiring, encouraging and criticising me and for continuously holding up the "ethnographic mirror". From Utrecht University, Marc Simon Thomas was my supervisor and coordinated the entire process; from research design and field reports towards this end product. Without his involvement and guidance I would not have been able to successfully finish this thesis. He encouraged me when I needed a boost but he also kindly slowed me down when I was running too fast. I want to thank Olga van de Goor for correcting my English spelling and grammar and for helping me improve my English writing skills. Dozens of other people are in my mind right now. Thanks to all of them who I cannot mention here, for inspiring me on my path to becoming an anthropologist.

Introduction

Notwithstanding the powers of Western capitalism and technological and scientific knowledge that prevail in our "Secular age",[1] the importance of religious faith seems to have been dismissed too early. For example, popular Christian movements such as the Pentecostalism church grow rapidly, spreading their views over our planet and attracting millions of believers, particularly in Latin America, Asia and Africa. Questions concerning religion are among anthropology's hardest and most enduring ones, and have been central to the discipline since its beginnings. However, religion in contemporary times of globalisation demands a new anthropological approach to its various aspects and changing phenomena.

On multiple levels the scientific and social interest in religion has grown, putting it at the centre of various social and political debates worldwide. This thesis will contribute to these debates, by studying religion in the 21st century. It has never been an easy task for anthropologists to define what religion exactly is, and maybe this is not even relevant, since the anthropological discourse puts its emphasis rather on what religious faith means to people. Like cultures, religions are considered to be dynamic, instead of monolithic and homogeneous entities. Religions are flexible and may change in the course of time as a result of cross-cultural contacts like past colonialism and contemporary globalisation. Every religion is composed of various elements from different cultures; elements and aspects that are borrowed, imposed or acquired during colonialism, or in times of rapid socio-economical change as an adaptation to a broader social environment. Modern globalisation processes may bring previously strictly separated cultures and religions in contact, which brings about a religious mixture or the intermingling of aspects that belong to different, incompatible religions, as the result. In this thesis this process is referred to as syncretism.

Shaw and Stewart (1994) state that syncretism is a contentious term, often taken to imply "inauthenticity" or "contamination": the infiltration of a supposedly "pure" tradition by symbols and meanings seen as belonging to other, incompatible traditions. Nowadays, a lot of authors are still concerned with the defence of religious boundaries. On the other hand, syncretism can be seen as something positive: as a fight for maintaining traditional values and symbols (Shaw and Stewart 1994: 49). In many non-Western cultures, however, believers tend to have a more pragmatic approach towards religious syncretism, their common attitude being: "If it works, we will use it too" (Crapo 2003: 261). In this case, theological truth is less important than functional adaptation to a changing socio-economical context. A fourth option,

[1] Referring to Charles Taylor's newest work: A Secular Age (2007).

as expressed in scholarly literature (Drooger 1989: 20), is that religious syntheses may become uncontested and reproduced without intentionality. Syncretism, then, becomes part of the taken-for-granted habitus. Although all religions do have syncretic elements, the extend to which a religion is syncretic varies. Syncretism may be seen as the result of religious encounter, though the preference lies on the approach to syncretism as a process. Religious syncretism should be considered as being deeply related to power relations, identity-formation and re-formation, globalisation, colonialism and other aspects, which will be elaborated in chapter 1 (Shaw and Stewart 1994).

With this research on religious syncretism I will contribute to the theoretical debate on religion in times of globalisation. It will provide deeper insights in the formation and development of religions and how they incorporate elements of already existing religions in their new mixture. By describing, analyzing, and interpreting the various manifestations of Catholic and Animistic beliefs in general and of syncretism between Animism and Catholicism in particular, this study will expand the already existing scientific knowledge of cultural and religious mixtures and syncretism. Further more, my goal is to contribute to the research on modern animistic religious views. This research confirms the anthropological discourse that both cultures and religions are dynamic, changeable and changing as a result of acculturation, globalisation and other cross-cultural contacts.

In order to be able to reach these goals, I conducted an anthropological research during a ten-week fieldwork period from February till April 2012 in the *barangay* (smallest political unity) of Ahin, Ifugao, on the northern island of Luzon in the Philippines. As a result of its colonial history, The Philippines is the third largest Roman Catholic country in the world. Under modern American influences, however, also Protestantism and various forms of Pentecostal sects are becoming increasingly popular. Besides different Christian denominations, forms of Animism, the pre-colonial religion, are also widely practised in the region of Luzon. I studied this religious pluralism and found that both religions do not simply exist alongside each other, but that syncretism occurs on multiple levels in social life. I focused on the ways the villagers of Ahin, experience Christianity, Animism and syncretism of these religions in their lives. Therefore the central question of this research is: How do the villagers of Ahin, Ifugao (The Philippines), give form and meaning to their Christian and Animistic religious beliefs in their everyday lives? To be able to understand the complex meanings of religion for my informants, I used classical ethnographic methods of data collection such as participant observation, qualitative interview-techniques and informal conversations. For an extended methodological justification please see appendix 1.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I set out the theoretical framework regarding the anthropology of religion and syncretism, wherein the research is embedded. In chapter 2, I provide a detailed description of the research location and situation. In chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6, I make use of empirical data to investigate how the people of Ahin give form and meaning to their religious views in their everyday lives. More precisely, chapter 3 describes the various religious manifestations in Ahin and chapter 4 and 5 address the way villagers speak about the different religions and what they know about them, respectively. The last of these empirical chapters contains an analysis of how meaning is given to both Christianity and Animism. In the final conclusion, I will combine the theoretical framework and empirical data to argue that my findings demonstrate the tendency of the Kalanguya people of Ahin towards a mainly pragmatic approach regarding religion and that the kind of syncretism I describe should be interpreted as something I will refer to as "functional syncretism", in the sense that syncretism should have a concrete function.[2]

[2] Thus, I do *not* refer to the anthropological theory of functionalism!

1. Religion and religious syncretism in an anthropological perspective

1.1 The anthropology of religion

No matter how fast the modern globalized western world seems to secularize in the last decades, presenting every day the newest scientific discoveries with which we can explain and understand even more of our planet, we have yet to discover a society that does not articulate at least some notions about the sacred and about spiritual beings. In other words: there is no society that does not have any religion, as defined and conceptualized in this chapter. Plato already stated that "all mankind, Greeks and non-Greeks alike, believe in the existence of gods" (Morris 1987: 49). That religion is indeed a human universal is one of the few questions concerning religion on which anthropologists have come to a shared agreement (see Kottak 2008). Even though the study of religion has been central to the discipline from its beginnings, scholars are still concerned with solving the problem of an appropriate definition. In the development from evolutionary to postmodern anthropology, many different theoretical approaches of how religion can best be defined and understood have been at the centre of international debates. All of them have been severely criticised by later theories, leaving us with no final, universal solution to hang on to. Nevertheless, within the stages of development of the anthropology of religion, are valuable lessons to be learned and it is under the rubric of the anthropology of religion that fundamental questions of human difference have been addressed, according to Lambek (2002).

Contemporary anthropology of religion draws from a number of sources. One of the first anthropologists concerned with studying religion was Tylor and his definition of it is at the core of classical anthropology. He states that religion is "a belief in supernatural beings" (in Lambek 2002: 9), referring almost exclusively to Animism from an evolutionary perspective (see paragraph 1.2.3). Besides Tylor, also Durkheim, Weber and Geertz have succeeded in developing original and powerful definitions of religion. Whereas Tylor focused on a rationalist or intellectualist approach, Durkheim's position is rather social. The latter worked on a symbolic approach and argued that religious ideas and rituals both express and regenerate society (in Lambek 2002: 19). With Weber the attention shifts to the comparative aspects of the text-based religions. I agree with Lambek (2002) however, that the most interesting attempts at defining or modelling religion emphasise meaning and order (2002:9). Geertz is one of the thinkers that studied how conditions of meaning, meaningfulness, truth and certainty are produced, guaranteed and underpinned. He states that a religion is: "A

system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic" (Geertz 1966: 5). Notwithstanding these different definitions, there are some general consistent features that characterise the anthropological study of religion. Lambek argues that an anthropological approach comprehends arguments that are variously holistic (religious "facts" are seen as dimensions of larger social and cultural wholes), universalistic (taking the whole range of human societies as its subject matter), ethnographic (analysis are usually developed through the study of specific societies), comparative (particularistic ethnographic accounts must be made to speak to each other), contextual ("facts" are understood relative to their contexts), historical (understanding cultural agency with respect to past and present political economic forces), dialogical (method is rooted in conversation) and critical (literary-, political-, and self-critical) (Lambek 2002: 2-3). I acknowledge the relevance of these general features in the contemporary study of religion in general and their importance for my research in particular. In this thesis, I will not choose one definition of religion over the others. However, the focus will be on the meaning religion has in the lives of people. Particular aspects of religion that are important for how religion is studied throughout this thesis will be set out in a comparative analysis in the next paragraph.

1.1.1 Religion in contemporary small-scale societies

In a chapter on "Religion here and there", anthropologist Winzeler (2008) describes some general acknowledged western assumptions regarding religion that do not necessarily apply to non-western societies where religion may be lived and practised in a completely different way. The first assumption he mentions is the western emphasis on seeing religion as a matter of belief and faith, while in fact, religion is as much a matter of behaviour as of belief. Some anthropologists even emphasise the preference of rituals and practise over religious faith. In this view, people perform rituals for concrete purposes, for example to achieve success in hunting animals, making crops grow and curing the sick, or sending the souls of the dead to their new home (2008: 24). Secondly, in some places where the world religions are well established, people do not regard religious identities in exclusive terms, unlike in Europe. Asian religions, for example, do not easily conform to the notion that people adhere to one or another specific religion to the exclusion of others. Thirdly, religion in small-scale societies or among nomads may not always be associated with a special building, while many people think of religion and church, synagogue or mosque as inseparable. Fourthly, religion has both

a transcendental and a practical side. The space for practical religion in modern western life has greatly narrowed, however due to advanced technology and industrial capitalism. In contrast: in many places of the world, healing and sustenance are still two major religious concerns (2008:31). In addition to these important differences, Momen (2001) adds that we should notice that the separation of religion and government or culture is not that obvious in many non-western countries where most of the people see their religion, culture and usually their political order as being one undivided whole. We could even question the universal application of the very concept of "a religion". Smith (1999 in Momen 2001) argues that the concept of religion is a result of the process of reification (the conversion of an abstract concept into a falsely concrete "thing") carried out by the West and that before this occurred people were not even conscious of belonging to a particular religion.

Momen (2009) subscribes some general features to what he calls "primal religions". Without falling into overall-generalisations he argues that the characteristic religious activity here is that of propitiation of the gods by gifts and sacrifices. Other aspects might be: the belief in the existence of power that can be obtained by a human being, the sense that sacred or supernatural objects are taboo, magic, divination, prayer and various rituals for propitiation deities or spirits and expiating evil deeds. In primal religions, the religious specialist is most commonly of the type known as witch doctor, shaman or medicine man (2001: 48).

1.1.2 Religion and the environment: ecological functionalism

An aspect of religion that has largely been studied in – mostly but not exclusively – small-scale societies is the possible relationship between religious beliefs and practises and their environmentally or ecologically adaptive function. As a formal theory or mode of interpretation, functionalism and Cultural Ecology has been discredited for several reasons by postmodern and interpretive anthropologists who rather focus on a culture's symbolism and meaning (see Barret 1996). [3] Winzeler (2008) however, states that the idea that patterns of behaviour can have important but unintended and unrecognised consequences continues to be a fundamental part of the way that scientists – and to a certain extent, anyone - understand how the world works (2008:68). In a controversial advocacy of an ecological anthropology, Rappaport analyses the role of ritual in regulating the ecology of pigs and warfare among the

[3] Malinoswki argued that magic relieved anxiety and fostered confidence and therefore helped people cope with danger and difficult situations, and that religious activities promoted social solidarity. This is a true functionalist approach; an answer to the question of the purpose of holding religious ceremonies in the first place. Functionalists would argue that the real purpose of engaging in magical or religious rituals was in fact of a psychological or social nature (Winzeler 2008: 67).

Maring people of New Guinea. Pigs are only eaten at ritual feasts, which are held in relation to warfare. If pig numbers increase, they create strains for those who care for them and besides that, they also put pressure on the agricultural resources required to support them. Therefore, when the pig population increases, Maring villagers go to war with other villagers. The pig population then decreases and has to be built up again and the cycle starts anew, enabling the Maring to live in harmony with their environment, if not with other people (Rappaport 1968 in Winzeler 2008). Despite this example of an underlying utilitarian motive to religious beliefs and practices, serving to enhance environmentally good practices , there are also numerous examples that seem to contradict this theory (see Krech 1999 and Diamond 2005 in Winzeler 2008). Perhaps no general conclusion can be reached regarding the connection between religion, ecological adaptation and environmental practices. It should be clear that I do not support the theory of Cultural Ecology as it is conceptualised by Barret (1996). Nevertheless, I do agree with Crapo who writes that: "Religion is part of the system of culture and, as such, can be seen as playing a role in the human adaptation to the circumstances of survival (2003: 256). I also belief that it is important to be aware of the multiple and complex intended and unintended consequences of religious beliefs and practices and its effect on various social, political and environmental dimensions of human life.

1.1.3 Animism

In this thesis, religious syncretism of Christianity and Animism will be studied. Animism is generally associated with small-scale or "tribal" societies and primal religions.[4] When discussing Animism, it is inevitable to start with the work of Tylor (1958), since his essay was the very start of the anthropological attention paid to Animism and his definition of religion is often cited as the very first. Considering the history of anthropological theory, Tylor can be placed in the evolutionary perspective, with its inherent racist thoughts (Barrett 1996: 47). Evolutionists generally assumed that societies have gone through the same stages of evolution in the same order, a thought which is no longer tenable in modern anthropology. Following this line, Tylor argued that culture evolved from the simple to the complex, and passed through three stages: savagery, barbarism and civilisation (Barrett 1996:49). In his often cited and commented essay "Primitive culture" he states that: "Animism is, in fact, the groundwork

[4] Because of the roots of this term in colonial anthropological discourses and its possible inherent racist- or hierarchical connotations, I prefer not using this term, even though other modern scholars do (see for example Momen 2001).

of the Philosophy of Religion, from that of savages up to that of civilized man" (Tylor 1958 in Lambek 2002: 24).

Tylor's writing continues to have some influence, even in a highly innovative approach to Animism: the work of Eduardo Vivieiros de Castro on Amerindian Perspectivism. De Castro defines Animism as "an ontology which postulates the social character of relations between humans and non-humans" (2006: 554). According to him, in the eyes of Amerindians, the body is making the difference. Animals see in the same way as humans do, but they see different things because their bodies are different from ours. After the Spanish invasion in Latin America, the Europeans kept arguing whether the natives had a soul or not. The Indians, for their part, did not doubt if the Spanish had a soul since animals and spirits had one too. They doubted, however, what kind of body the invaders had. That is why they tried to drown them in order to see if they were humans or spirits (Levi-Strauss 1973 in De Castro 1998: 475). The body can thus be seen as the locus of the confrontation between humanity and animality. This approach of De Castro appealed the most to me, because he refers to Animism as "ontology" and his definition goes further than others which only take into account the assigning of human components to non-human entities.

Despite various definitions and approaches that I have read but which go beyond the scope of this thesis, I will hold on to the notion of Animism as the "belief in spirits" because I need a more pragmatical definition in order to be able to recognise it in the field. I want to avoid working with an approach that is too narrow and therefore missing aspects of the Animism ontology. Further I am aware of the influences the Tylorian approaches on Animism, including the evolutionary perspective, possibly still have on the people of modern Luzon. The farmers, but also the clergy, might consider Animism a "backward" movement, or the first stage of religious awareness, while Christianity might be considered a "superior belief". This could cause difficulties in the field if people are more anxious and ashamed to acknowledge their Animistic religious views and to talk about them.

1.1.4 Global Christianity

Only during the last decade or so, some scholars have made some self-conscious efforts to develop an anthropology of Christianity, according to Robbins (2011). A reason to explain this delay might be found in the fact that Christianity is simply too familiar to western anthropologists (2011: 409), who are usually interested in studying local, unknown cultural phenomena. In this section I will briefly address some main issues regarding the global spread of three main Christian schools: Catholicism, Protestantism and Pentecostalism and their

relation with (post)colonialism, conversion and power.

The first established Christian school, the Roman Catholic church, has – till today - achieved the greatest success in preserving a globally centralised system with an international organisation and identity, as illustrated by Jack David Eller's work "introducing anthropology of religion" (2007). While studying Catholicism it becomes clear that the concept of "faith" is at the very centre of the religious Catholic experience, as put forward by Momen (2009: 141).

Upon the separation of the Catholic Church and following Luther, the Protestants put more emphasis on the individual relationship between the faithful and God. Momen (2009) states that western religion and especially Protestantism, tends to privilege words and ideas (beliefs) over behaviour.

Being the fastest growing group of churches today, Pentecostalism is a prime example of a modern global religion. In an article about Pentecostal and denominational Christianity, Howell (2003) refers to Pentecostalism as: "that emotive and dramatic form of Christianity that has grown precipitously throughout the world in the last half of the twentieth century" (2003: 234). An expert in the study of Pentecostalism and former Pentecostal minister, Allan Anderson defines Pentecostalism as: "globally all churches and movements that emphasise the workings of the Spirit, both on phenomenological and on theological grounds" (2004: 103).

Unlike Animists, Christians of all denominations have not always been Christians. The acceptance of Christianity by people who practised other religions before, involves a process of change, which is usually referred to as "conversion". I agree with Austin Broos, who argues that conversion is a "passage: constituted and reconstituted through social practice and the articulation of new forms of relatedness" (2003: 9 in Eller 2007: 195). It should be seen as a process in which religious identities are inter- and re-constructed. As I will point out in the next chapter, all religions have syncretic elements. Religious change therefore is a dynamic process and conversion is diverse, practised, constructed and modular (2007: 198). There is no single key to the explanation of why people would convert to another religion. World religions in general and Christianity in particular are associated with colonisation and cultural and religious hegemony and domination. Sometimes the coercion used by Christians to convert others has been a matter of brute force. "Convert or die", for example, happened to Jews and Muslims in Spain during the Inquisition in the sixteenth century (Momen 2009: 161). Sometimes conversion has been a matter of psychological, social or financial pressure (Momen 2009: 161). Also, changing economic situations can be a motivation to voluntarily join another religion. Kammerer, who studied the conversion to Christianity in northern

Thailand, concluded that the Akha-tribe eventually began to accept Christianity as a way of getting out of the costly animal sacrificing that was part of the traditional, ritual obligations (Kammerer 1990 in Winzeler 2008: 275). In many places and ways, the assimilation of Christianity by locals and the assimilation of local religion by Christianity led to novel religious arrangements, often referred to as local Christianity or in the case of Catholicism: Folk Catholicism.[5] These forms of Christianity, practised by local communities, are syncretic constructions, as will be illustrated in the next section.

As we have seen so far the difficulty of defining religion is a reflection of the concept's complexity and I think we should doubt its necessity. In order to understand religion from an anthropological perspective, I think that research on what religion means to people worldwide may be more relevant than actually defining the term. Furthermore, I have emphasised that by describing and interpreting religions in small-scale, non-western societies I should use an approach that goes beyond euro-centric views on what religion is. It is important to keep in mind that not a single religion is stable or unchanging in the course of time. There are no fixed boundaries between one (world) religion and the other. Religions are rather heterogeneous and dynamic instead of homogeneous and monolithic. Various religions overlap and show mixed, borrowed or "syncretic" elements. These syncretic elements indicate the ongoing process of syncretism: the intermingling of seemingly incompatible elements from one or more religions. In the Philippines I will search for syncretism of Animism and Catholicism. After having discussed both religions I will now turn to the complex notion of religious syncretism.

1.2 Syncretism

Syncretism is a contentious and contested term which has undergone many historical transformations in meaning. It has received positive or negative connotations depending on the regional scholarly tradition within which one encounters it (Stewart 1999: 49). Through history it has proven to be every bit as shifting and historically contingent as the religious boundaries to which it refers (Stewart, et al. 1994: 3).

[5] I will use the definition of Don Yoder: "Folk religion is the totality of all those views and practices of religion that exist among the people apart from and alongside the strictly theological and liturgical forms of the official religion" (1974: 14)

1.2.1 Problemazing the concept

Plutarch (AD 45-125) was the very first to use the term "syncretism" when he spoke about how the Cretans often quarrelled with and warred against each other, but eventually made up their differences and united when outside enemies attacked. "The coming together of Cretans" was then called syncretism (Stewart and Shaw 1994: 3). The Greek author Vassilis Lambropoulos (2001) adds that in this context, syncretism is a positive notion of harmonisation and solidarity. Erasmus of Rotterdam recommended syncretism as a positive and productive way of handling theological differences in Christianity (Droogers 2005: 466). Seventeenth-century theologians, though, gave the term a very negative connotation by using it for the undesirable reconciliation of Christian theological differences; they saw syncretism as a threat to the purity and authenticity of the Roman Catholic religion. This negative connotation remained in place during times of missionary expansion and colonisation. But still we can find scholars who advocate what Stewart and Shaw call "anti-syncretism": "The antagonism to religious synthesis shown by agents concerned with the defence of religious boundaries" (1994: 7). According to Crapo, however, this attitude that rejects syncretism is indeed common among western religions such as Christianity and Islam, but is not the norm among human religions. The common religious attitude about the beliefs and practices of other religions is: "If it works, we will use it too" (2003: 261). This refers to a more pragmatic approach towards religions, in contrast to the theological truth Christian missionaries are concerned with.

Syncretism in itself is indeed neither "good" nor "bad", says Lambropoulos (2001). According to him, syncretism refers to: "The cultural mixture of diverse beliefs and practices within a specific socio-historical frame; to the congruity of dissent within such a frame, despite differences of opinion; to the non-organic solidarity of heterodoxy which constitutes a collective worldview; to the forging together of disparate, often incompatible, elements from different systems; and to their intermingling and blending. Syncretism connotes not juxtaposition but mixing and mingling" (2001: 225). Here Lambropoulos refers to syncretism as the mixture of various cultural elements, religion included, but discussing not exclusively religion. Basically, the term syncretism does not refer explicitly to religious syncretism. Authors such as Lambropoulos among others comment on the broader concept of cultural syncretism. In a way, of course, we could apply syncretism to the process of culture itself. Anthropologists mostly agree that culture is not a stable structure successfully transmitted across generations, but rather the result of historical and social processes that both deform and reform "structure" (Stewart 1999: 55). In a way, there are no "pure" or "authentic" cultures,

since they are all involved in one another: “None is simple and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated and unmonolithic” (1999: 41).

It is important to notice, as Stewart and Shaw put forward, that “the fluidity and political contingency of boundaries as “religion” and “culture” become part of the very subject-matter of syncretism rather than impediments to its study” (1994: 11). However, we should be aware of the risk of reverting to labelling every cultural denominator as “syncretism” and eventually lose the meaning and relevancy of the term syncretism. In this thesis I will only focus on religious syncretism, leaving behind all other possible forms of mixtures and mingling as the result of cross-cultural contacts.

1.2.2 Syncretism and fundamentalism

In his essay “syncretism and fundamentalism: a comparison”, Droogers (2005) makes a paradigmatic comparison between religious fundamentalism and syncretism, using positivist and constructivist approaches. He argues that although both processes can be seen as a reaction to globalisation, they appear to be stimulated in contrasting religious contexts. To explain this, Droogers provides a three-dimensional model of power relations in which he contrasts fundamentalism and syncretism. At the *internal* level, power relations exist between believers but even more so between religious leaders and their followers. Fundamentalism usually emphasises the vertical and hierarchical power relations between believers, while syncretism works best when there is no control by religious leaders due to relatively horizontal power relations. At the *external* level, there is a power relationship between believers and non-believers or believers of other religions. Fundamentalists usually adopt a hostile attitude towards non-believers while syncretists on the other hand are open to external influences and thus more tolerant towards believers of other religions. Then, at the *supernatural* or *transcendental* level there is a power relation between the believers and their god(s). Here, the fundamentalist position seems to tend toward the submissive end of the spectrum. Syncretism, however, points to a more manipulative, than submissive attitude. Droogers furthermore draws a parallel between positivism and fundamentalism on the one hand and constructivism and syncretism on the other hand. “Just as the positivists hold that the term reality refers to a singular entity, objectively “there”, so too do fundamentalists hold that there is but one form of the sacred reality. Likewise, constructivists hold that there are multiple, socially constructed realties, similarly, syncretists have no qualms about working with multiple forms of religious reality” (2005: 469).

We should note however that by using the term syncretism here, Droogers has chosen

a definition regarding the outcome of religious syncretism, rather than the process itself. Earlier in his work (1989) he wrote that when one speaks of a "syncretistic religion" this can refer to a religion which is the result of a period of religious encounter, but that the term may also refer to an extremely tolerant and permanently absorbent religion, ready to adopt and adapt everything (in Gort 1989) (see chapter 1.2.3). In this essay of 2005 it looks like he has chosen for the second option. I particularly doubt talking about "syncretists" while referring to a bounded group of people, when most of the time, they are not even "aware of the label syncretism" (2005: 466) as Droogers himself pointed out earlier (see paragraph 1.2.4). Of course the same can be asked with regard to "fundamentalists" although in some cases they do proudly refer to themselves as such. [6]

By comparing syncretism to constructivism, Droogers perfectly agrees with a postmodern constructivist epistemology: a popular theory in contemporary anthropology that is considered to be a relativist approach. The way of studying syncretism from a constructivist point of view therefore is an example of constructivist trends in modern anthropological theories. Like many modern anthropologists, I think that cultural constructivism is the best approach for doing ethnographic research and in particular for my research in the Philippines.

1.2.3. Syncretism as a result or a process

Droogers and Greenfield (2001:31) have caused some confusion and disagreement within the anthropology of syncretism. They discuss for example whether syncretism should refer to the end result of mixing or to a continuing process. Shaw and Stewart (1994) state that simply identifying a ritual or tradition as syncretic is of no relevance, since all religions have composite origins and are continually reconstructed through ongoing processes of synthesis. That is why they prefer to focus on processes of religious synthesis and discourses of syncretism rather than considering syncretism as a category – an "ism" (Shaw and Stewart 1994: 7). We could ask if syncretism is a temporary or a permanent phenomenon. I agree with Stewart and Shaw (1994) and Lambropoulos (2001) that considering syncretism as a process is a first step in being able to add other meaningful aspects and concepts to it. A temporary formation should be seen here as a situation of tension. In this light, syncretism is best seen as a "comparative study that analyses the agonistic yet symbiotic interaction among incompatible elements, looking at their various beginnings, times of arrival, intensity of participants and ultimate fate" (2001:117), a definition I like best.

[6] see for example Juergensmeyer (2003) and Stern (2003)

Jack David Eller (2007) sees the result of syncretism as something "new". He defines it as "an attempt to mix or blend elements of two or more cultures or belief systems to produce a new, third, better culture or system" (Eller 2007: 175). I do not think that the mixing and blending of different religious elements will always necessarily lead to a third, new religious form. Sometimes it might, but my hypothesis is that it is also possible for religious elements from one or two different religions to co-exist in a society and that in some rituals and ceremonies people make more use of religion A, while in other occasions they prefer using elements or symbols of religion B. The definition of syncretism I am going to work with is therefore simply the "intermingling of seemingly incompatible elements from two or more religions".

Although I agree with the concept of syncretism as an ongoing, dynamic process, I am aware of the methodological restrictions I have investigating a "process" while being in the field for just ten weeks. It would therefore be best to focus on the *result* of syncretic processes, keeping in mind that I am in the middle of an unfinished process.

1.2.4 "Unconscious" syncretism

As pointed out in paragraph 1.2, syncretism has been subject to various negative *subjective* definitions (Droogers (in Gort 1989) throughout history. Syncretism was perceived as a "threat" to the alleged purity of a religion. However, a positive subjective view has proven to be possible as well. Syncretism is sometimes related to identity- or ethnicity- questions when it comes to religious "survivals" of "former" traditional beliefs. In syncretism/anti-syncretism Stewart dedicates a chapter to a different understanding of syncretism as "authenticity" in the discourse of religious survivals in Modern Greek nationalism and folklore (1994: 7). In fact, both syncretism and anti-syncretism can be paths to the construction of authenticity and identity. A third possibility, however, is that syncretism is not actually happening "consciously", that the people are not aware that they "practise" religious syncretism or that there is syncretism in their everyday lives. This is also my hypothesis for the rural people of Luzon; that syncretism has become uncontested, reproduced without intentionality as part of the taken-for-granted habitus. Yet, even if syncretic practices are no longer consciously syncretic, we can and should still describe them as such, because although their composite origins are erased from conscious memory, they contain the sedimentation of historical experience (Stewart and Shaw 1994:18). This is the reason why Droogers would apply a definition to syncretism as "contested interreligious interpenetration, either taken for granted or subject to debate" (1989 20-21).

1.2.5 Syncretism and adaptation to the environment

Crapo (2003) writes that in some cases, syncretism can be seen as a kind of adaptation to the broader social environment in which a religion exists. Despite a religion's stability function, it is subject to many changes, one of them being syncretism. The symbols that determine its ideology may be reinterpreted in ways that reflect the perceived needs of the current believers. For example, religions adjust to environmental circumstances that one has to cope with. In paragraph 1.1.2, I have outlined an example from Rappaport's study of the role of ritual in regulating the ecology of pigs and warfare. Another vivid example of this kind of adaptation is the notion of the sacred cow in India. From an ethnocentric perspective, it might seem irrational for Hindus not to eat beef when there are so many cows and poverty is wide-spread, but in fact the cow is economically and ecologically of more use when it is not slaughtered (Crapo 2003: 257).

Kammerer (1990 in Winzeler 2008), who studied religious conversion from indigenous people to Christianity in northern-Thailand, found out that this religious change had an economic motive. She rejected the "rice Christian" hypothesis,[7] but offered an explanation that focuses on the changing economic circumstances of the Akha (Kammerer in Winzeler 2008). For decades, the Akha did not pay any attention to conversion efforts and remained devoted to their own traditional religious practices. These were, and are, mainly a matter of practise rather than belief. Therefore, the Akha were not affected by the Christian emphasis on belief or faith as the main basis for a religion. Eventually, however, they started accepting Christianity, because they were no longer able to afford their traditional religion that required the butchering of many animals in rituals. These costly traditions were not considered overly burdensome in the past, but recently, their economic adaptation, has come under stress. The Christian missionaries, however, were still not completely satisfied with the kind of Christians the Akha had turned out to be. For the Akha, Christianity was a new set of customs and practices and not yet a whole new way of thinking and believing (Winzeler 2008: 176). They adopted Christianity but in the same line as "practising a religion" as they were used to with their traditional customs. In sum: as a response to a changing economic situation, the Akha converted to a syncretic kind of Christianity, which still had a "traditional" character.

In a colourful ethnography on the intersection of calypso music, Christianity and

[7] Theory that practical benefits, financial or materialistic reasons, provided by missions, explain conversion. Previously, Chritsian mission schools and hospitals were all that existed in some regions in South-East Asia (Winzeler 2008: 274).

capitalism on the island of Sint Maarten and Saint Martin, Guadeloupe (2009) points out that for pragmatic reasons Christianity has undergone various adaptations to better suit the contemporary realities on the island. Even the Bible can be interpreted by individuals, to the extent of employing it to explain the homosexual lifestyle of a tourist couple (2009: 101), as long as the *money tie system* can function freely.[8] Besides this, Guadeloupe demonstrates that most politicians are true religious "bricoleurs", [9] they engage with one another's denominations and borrowed extensively from non-Christian religions. Here, Christianity is adapted to fit the socio-economic situation of a highly capitalist society. An informant explained it clearly: "We trying to be Christian Christian yes,[10] but we can't be it as long as this island remains being the Little Apple"[11] According to Guadeloupe, Christianity is employed as a metalanguage to promote inclusive belongings, since the islanders cannot afford chasing away the tourists, their main source of income.

Conclusion

In short, this theoretical framework shows that not even world religions are "authentic" or have fixed boundaries. They in fact overlap and show shared, borrowed or implemented elements from other belief systems as a result of cross-cultural contacts like past colonialism or globalisation. Therefore, religions are changing, dynamic and heterogeneous and they consist of various so called "syncretic" elements. Syncretism is a complex term which has acquired various negative and positive connotations during the course of history. I define the term as: the intermingling of seemingly incompatible elements from one or more religions. Syncretism should be seen as a dynamic, ongoing process that can either happen "unconsciously", or in full awareness in the light of power relations, authenticity, identity-formation and the rejection of a dominant hegemony. Besides this, syncretism can have pragmatic functions when it is applied to adapt to a changing socio-economic situation or in an ecological adaptation to the environment. In order to contribute to the anthropological study of religion in general and syncretism in particular, I studied religious syncretism of Animism and Catholicism in the Philippines, where both religious beliefs are found

8 The notion that all relationships are somewhere along the line based on a quest for more money and power.
9 I would say: syncretists.
10 Pious Christians
11 The island is considered the Little Apple (if New York is the Big Apple): a place where money can and should be made.

2. The Kalanguya of Ahin

The largest island of the Philippines, Luzon, is host to a great multitude of different ethnic groups, each with their own dialects and traditions. The common name for these indigenous people is *Igorots*[12] or *Cordillerans,* and they mostly occupy the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), in the centre and north of the island. Filipino is the official language of the Philippines: it is a nationalized version of Tagalog (language spoken in eight provinces). Most Igorots however speak better Ilocano than Tagalog, the language common in the Cordillera. *Kalanguya* is both the name of the tribe and the dialect present in the specific region of interest for this research.

2.1 The Kalanguya

The Kalanguya are one of the seven major ethno-linguistic groups who occupy the mountainous Cordillera Administrative Region. Until recently they were not considered a separate group, but listed as a sub-group of the Ifugao tribe. They have always been, and still are, the most unknown and by anthropologists less-studied ethno-linguistic group. Despite the lack of national and international recognition, the Kalanguya recognize their language, songs, dances and other forms of cultural knowledge as uniquely theirs (Arsenio and Stallsmith 2008). In the past, the Kalanguya faced frequent aggression and invasions from the northern head-hunting tribes, epidemics, and famine, leading to several waves of emigration. The first occurred in the early years of terrace building when head hunters from Ifugao and Mountain Region tribes in neighbouring villages attacked their settlement. The peaceful Kalanguya did not put up any resistance and fled. The invaders however, were forced to leave when an epidemic caused many deaths among them. Kalanguya legends tell that they had incurred the anger of the gods by attacking and driving the peace-loving Kalanguya tribe out of their land (Daguitan 2010: 35). These waves of emigration are the reason the Kalanguya tribe is nowadays scattered all over several provinces and regions, maintaining, however, their own dialect and occasionally returning to Tinoc, the only entirely Kalanguya-speaking municipality in the Philippines.

[12] The word *I-gorot* literally means 'people from the mountains', and although during Spanish rule it acquired a negative connotation, synonymous of 'savage, backwards', in the second half of the past century it regained its true meaning (Scott 1975, 1993).

2.2 Ahin, Tinoc, Ifugao, CAR, Philippines.

Ahin (see figure 1) is said to be the first settlement of the Kalanguya tribe. Its inhabited centres spread out over a steep valley marked by the wild Ahin river. Ahin is one of the twelve barangays of Tinoc, the Kalanguya-speaking municipality of Ifugao, province of the Cordillera Administrative Region, in the north of the Philippines (see maps 1 and 2). As many of the barangays in the Cordillera's, Ahin has one small central village, composed of circa twenty households, and more than ten smaller *sitios* scattered around the valley, the farthest at a twelve-hour hike.

Figure 1: Ahin, seen from the rice terraces (photo made by author)

The whole Tinoc region, in the high mountains of the East Cordillera, is a very isolated municipality, in many ways "cut off" from other parts of Luzon and lowland Philippines. Up to 1996, Tinoc was the only municipality in the whole country not accessible by motorized vehicles. Only in 2006 the road network was completed, leaving, however, four of the twelve barangays – including Ahin – only accessible by foot, and with no form of public transport. Some barangays are as far as a ten-hour hike from the first bus-stop along the rough, unpaved central road. To reach Ahin, one has to hike for three hours from the nearest bus-stop near the neighbouring barangay Wangwang. The village of Ahin is located in a green valley,

surrounded by steep mountains covered with pine trees, amid beautiful rice terraces, by far the most important means of sustenance for the farming villagers. Notwithstanding the hundreds of square meters of rice terraces, the Kalanguya of Ahin can only eat five months off the rice they harvest once a year. The remaining months villagers settle for the *camote* (sweet potato) and garden vegetables. Every family has at least some free-ranging chickens around their house that are slaughtered only for special occasions. Apart from chicken the village has many severely emaciated small dogs wandering through the village. Unlike in the past, today only a few villagers own pigs or *carabao* (water buffalo) since they are very expensive to keep. Their meat is distributed only during special occasions such as the *canao,* a ritual feast.

The elementary school in the central village provides employment for around ten teachers, only few of them from Ahin itself, and there is one midwife permanently present. Nevertheless, 95% of the villagers are dependent on agriculture and even the teachers have their fields or gardens where they work in the evenings and weekends. There is only a very small money economy since only a few people (the teachers and some barangay officials) are hired and paid by the government, while the rest of the villagers harvest the rice they plant themselves, build their own houses with the wood they cut in the forests, leaving hardly any necessity for having cash money. Problems arise only in case money is needed for buying medicines, paying for hospitalization or for the (higher) education of children.

In Ahin there is no electricity, no internet signal and only one old brand of cell phone has limited cell phone reception. There are however some houses with a small solar-panel capable to light few bulbs and a radio, while the school and barangay hall have water dynamos that work when the rain has been abundant. According to a study of a local researcher there are 218 households in the whole Ahin area from which 162 are below the poverty line (Daguitan 2010: 4), but in the "centre" (the area closest to the road) there are only a dozen of houses with only a few families living there. There are many houses high up in the mountains, completely invisible from the river that flows down the valley. Central in Ahin is the barangay hall, comparable to a municipal hall; a gathering place used for meetings or trainings. This is also the place to receive and host visitors. In front of the central Catholic Church there is a small square with a public washing place and clotheslines where women hang their clothes to dry (see map 2). Besides this Catholic "mother church", there are two smaller Catholic churches in the surrounding mountains. In other *sitios* (inhabited areas) of Ahin one can find a Lutheran church and at one hour away from the barangay hall, the unfinished Pentecostal church. Far most of the people officially belong to the Roman Catholic church, but according to local studies nearly half of the community still adheres to the

traditional belief system (Daguitan 2010: 41), even though they might be baptised as Catholics.[13]

[13] Christianity in general was introduced relatively late in the area. Whereas other parts of the Philippines were successfully Christianized by the end of Spanish colonization (1671 to 1896) Christian religions first came to Tinoc with the arrival of Catholic priest Fr. Silbano Castel in 1951 and American Lutheran missionary Pastor Juraine Hornig in 1960 (Daguitan 2010: 42).

3. "Do it the other way" - Practising religions in Ahin

Originally and in essence, religions have always been systems of actions, never mere systems of belief. The only belief that has ever really mattered is belief in the efficacy of the rites (Lord Raglan in Winzeler 2008: 24).

In this chapter I will focus on how, where and when both Christianity and the Traditional belief are being practised by the villagers of Ahin.[14] As pointed out in paragraph 1.1.1, the idea that religion is first and foremost a matter of belief or faith is a western ethnocentric view that seems to be in accord with Christianity and perhaps to some extent with other world religions. This is, however, certainly not the common idea throughout the world. Winzeler (2008) argues that in many contemporary tribal societies, so-called "practical" religion is far more important than "transcendental" aspects of religions, since growing crops, hunting animals and curing the sick are actually considered as being religious activities. Therefore, in this chapter I aim to avoid an ethnocentric approach towards religion that privileges words, ideas and beliefs over behaviour, by putting the emphasis on religious practices; manifestations of religion in everyday life. This will also provide insights in possible discrepancies between what people say they do and what they actually do. In Ahin, most villagers consciously choose which religion they make use of per occasion by comparing its efficacy and affordability. I will discuss the two religions separately in relation to how they are being used.[15] First, I will pay attention to Christian manifestations and in the second paragraph I will discuss traditional practices.

3.1 Christianity in practice

In Ahin there are three main Christian denominations: Roman Catholicism, Lutheran Protestantism and Pentecostalism. On various levels there are major differences on how Christianity is experienced and practised by members of the three different denominations. Notwithstanding the differences, about all their important celebrations take place on Sunday

[14] Before entering the field, I was warned by many people, scholars and NGO-staff, to never use the word "Animism" since this would remind the Igorots off the way their religion was stigmatised by Christian missionaries who were concerned with "purifying" the Christian faith and eliminating all "Animistic" elements that were both seen as "backward" and "from the devil". Therefore in these chapters I will use the term "Traditional belief" for a set of practices and beliefs that nevertheless can be described and analysed as a form of Animism from a scientific point of view.

[15] After considering everyone's opinion on the topic, I have decided that it is most appropriate to refer to the traditional belief system as being a "religion".

mornings in the form of a Mass or service.

The absence of fully-educated priests and ministers in Ahin is typical of both Catholic and Protestant denominations respectively. This can be explained by the highly isolated location of the village and numerous other villages that are situated likewise in Ifugao. The Catholics have only one priest in the whole Tinoc municipality, who tries to visit Ahin every month but usually cannot.[16] The Sunday Mass is therefore often held by lay-leaders; villagers who have obtained this status by attending seminars about Bible-study and guidelines on how to perform the service. The Catholic St. Francis church is located at a central plaza, close to the barangay hall and next to the Ahin river and a public washing place. The church is made of wood and corrugated sheets. A white cross is painted on the door, that is always locked, except on Sunday morning. The interior is plain, with only few images; posters of Mary and Jesus, a religious calendar, but no statues. The door is left open during the Mass allowing dogs and chicken to walk in freely. This is not considered problematic on normal Sundays, not even when they, especially the dogs, stand or sleep on the altar. On the day the priest from Tinoc visited Ahin however, everybody worked together to chase away all the animals. This was not an easy job, since the dogs were already used to being allowed to the church.

Figure 2: The Catholic St. Francis church on Good Friday, Ahin-centre (photo made by author).

[16] He has to serve twelve barangays every month and therefore "just having faith is not enough" as he put it himself. He also has to be in a good physical condition since reaching some of the barangays takes an eight-hour hike

Attending Mass or service every Sunday, proved to be of minor importance to the villagers. More than once informants told me that they had to work and therefore could not attend. In general it can be said that most of the time, the work on the land has priority over attending Mass, which is something people only do when they feel they can afford spending some "free time" with their friends and family. Winzeler (2008) argued that to have a special building for religious practises is not common among the believers of "primal religion". In Ahin they do have churches, but practising religion in general and public demonstrations of religious piety in particular are manifestations that are certainly not inherently interwoven with ceremonies taking place inside the church. It could even be stated that it is more important how the churchgoers act and behave after Mass and in everyday life. This is in coherence with the idea of Winzeler (2008) that in small-scale societies, religious practises are focused on practical aspects of everyday life. In Ahin, the general idea is that actions define the Christian; attending Mass or saying that you are a Christian does not. This is true for both the members of the Roman Catholic and the Protestant denominations. "Acting like a Christian", a very important part of "practising religion" in daily life, is not clearly defined. People told me that one should take his responsibility and do his duties as a Christian, attend Mass regularly, do house devotions, obey his parents, be honest, visit the sick and help the needy people. Drinking too much, stealing and gambling are things a Christian should not do. This emphasis on *behaving* as a Christian is an important factor for understanding religion in Ahin. Whenever the behaviour of one of the Catholic or Protestant lay-leaders proves not to be coherent with his preachings, this is a good reason for a Christian to "convert" to another church. In a study on religious belief in Zambia, Kirsch (2008) came to the same conclusion. He writes that members of prophet-healing churches in the rural areas of southern Zambia were very willing to change their denominational affiliation when they were not satisfied with the performance of a particular church (2008). In Ahin, an individual's actions are considered to be the most important manifestation of his "purity" and religiosity. In this line of thinking, it is not strange that people argue that, in terms of behaviour, some non-Christians of Ahin were, in fact, more Christian than some "real" Christians, . As long as one behaves morally, within the framework of "Christian behaviour" as it is conceptualised by the villagers itself, Christian faith *in itself* does not play an important role in the lives of most of the villagers. Their theological knowledge is limited and usually the focus of social and personal life is on farming in order to survive without any monetary income rather than on expanding one's

knowledge of the Bible, for example.[17]

During the period wherein I intensively shared the daily life of one of the Kalanguya families, I witnessed that Christian religion never turns out to be a priority in their lives. Like other families, they have Christian effigies and religious calendars and posters in their house and "God bless this house" is written with chalk on their front door. Nevertheless they did not worry about attending Mass, having biblical knowledge, or praying before every dinner. They used to let Yasmin, [18] their three-year old granddaughter, sing a prayer before dinner after which they would reward her with applauding and laughing. Sometimes, when Rossana, the family's (grand) mother, returned from the fields late, we would not have dinner until eight or nine o'clock. By that time, Yasmin had already fallen asleep, giving the family an excuse for not praying that night. My host-family and their Catholic friends and neighbours were neither anxious to mix their Christian beliefs with practises of the Traditional belief, when it turned out that they were more efficient for a certain occasion or ritual.

The only officially recognised Roman Catholic festivities I could witness, given the period of the year I was in the field, were those around Easter. My other field experiences of Easter were filled with extended, multi-day festivals during Semana Santa in Latin-American countries but there was nothing like that to be experienced in the barangay of Ahin. Main reason therefore were the huge preparations for the yearly cultural festival in the municipal capital of Tinoc that formed the locus of everybody's attention and time. On first Easter day we were collectively traveling to Tinoc during the time a possible Easter mass could have been held. Nobody reminded me or anybody else that today was Easter day. The only Catholic gathering that was informally planned was the Good Friday Mass, but again, because of the preparations for the cultural Tinoc days, everybody seemed to have forgotten the service. When I reminded some people of the scheduled Mass, they hurried to the church but the lay-leader who was supposed to lead the Mass did not show up. While waiting outside the church with a dozen of the most loyal Catholic villagers - it just started raining – we discussed the possibility of hiking uphill to the house of the lay-leader to remind him of the Mass, but we decided that it was too far away. Later I heard that he was too busy planting *camote* (sweet potato) that afternoon and that he had totally forgotten about Good Friday. We waited for an hour or more and then decided to organise a small calvary inside the church. A large calvary was planned, like ones that were done previous years, but because of the rain the churchgoers were not in the mood of going outside, as they explained to me. One of the other lay-leaders

[17] Again, there are exceptions. Some Pentecosts do read the Bible intensively.
[18] All names of informants are pseudonyms to protect their privacy.

who had not again received the blessings of the priest to continue his responsibilities as a lay-leader, nevertheless took on the task of leading the Mass.

Aside from this instance, Good Friday served me very well for gaining another important insight in the way how religion is lived and experienced by the villagers of Ahin. My informants were aware that on Good Friday they were not supposed to eat meat according to their Roman Catholic tradition. I had not expected this to be a problem at all, since meat was usually not available and not part of their daily diet. Nevertheless, family-members proudly remembered me of this tradition, arguing that not eating meat that day made them good Christians. Unfortunately, however, around lunch time, we were told that a carabao,[19] a water buffalo, had fallen of a hill and died. Due to the lack of technology in the village, there were no means to keep the meat fresh, meaning the meat would be spoiled within one day. One of the sons of my host-family was sent to the place of the tragic accident to buy meat for our dinner. It turned out that the whole village, every single member, was forced to eat kilos of carabao meat that Good Friday. Religious or not, poor farmers would never leave such a huge amount of good-tasting meat to be spoiled. The reactions of the family members taught me that there is always a way to get around Christian dogmas in the light of pragmatic and even opportunistic doctrines. The following dialogue was held when we were sitting around the table, before having dinner:

> Eva: "Do you think it is a problem for us to eat this meat now?"
> Rossana: "Never mind, we will just pray and we will say "sorry" to God"
> Eva: "So, it is not a sin?"
> Miranda (just arrived at the house): "Oh! Yes, that is true, it is Good Friday! But no, we do not know if this is a sin because it (Good Friday) just means that we think of Jesus' death."
> Rossana (casting a glance at three-year old Yasmin): "Oh, Yasmin is asleep already. We won't pray then. Let's eat!" [20]

These examples provide evidence for the view put forward by both Winzeler (2008) and Momen (2001) that religion in a small-scale society such as Ahin is not necessarily tied to a specific place (church) and time (official recognised Roman Catholic festivities e.g. Good

[19] There are only one or two of them in Ahin and they are considered to be very special domestic animals – also because it is very costly to raise and keep them - they are only butchered for weddings or funerals of the very rich.

[20] Informal group conversation, April 6, 2012.

Friday) but rather that it should manifest itself in a daily form of Christian *behaviour* with an emphasis on practices and rituals rather than on belief.

3.2 Manifestations of the Traditional belief

As I pointed out in the previous paragraph, Christian religious manifestations are not as daily visible and regular as one might expect. This is perhaps even truer for the Traditional belief because most of its rituals are directed towards the undoing of negative things, such as illnesses and curses, or are focused on avoiding bad luck after burials, for example. Therefore it is only in these rare occasions that the villagers may "practise" the traditional belief. Unlike in Christianity there is no weekly Mass or every-day praying required to maintain a relationship with God. Again, the same thing is true for Christian manifestations and for the Traditional belief: "people perform rituals for concrete purposes", as put forward by Winzeler (2008: 24). Also in the Traditional belief rituals are far more important than belief.

Stewart and Shaw (1994) state that religious syncretism may sometimes not be happening "consciously" and that people are not aware that they practise religious syncretism or that there is syncretism in their everyday lives. In paragraph 1.2.4, I wrote that this was my hypothesis for the villagers of Ahin as well: that syncretism had become uncontested, reproduced without intentionality as part of the "taken-for-granted habitus". It turned out, however, that in most cases, informants were perfectly aware of the fact they were in some way mixing different religious systems. This conscious "mixing" should be seen as how I described it in paragraph 1.2.3: religious elements from one or two different religions co-exist in Ahin and in some rituals and ceremonies people make more use of religion A (Christianity), while in other occasions they prefer using elements or symbols of religion B (Traditional belief). I therefore disagree with Eller (2007) that syncretism is necessarily an attempt to mix or blend elements of two or more cultures or belief systems to produce a new, third culture or system.

In Ahin, there are many reasons for the villagers to occasionally switch to the Traditional belief, even if they consider themselves Christians. It should be said however, that this "occasionally switching" is far more common among Catholics than among Protestants and especially Pentecostals. Some of them have become increasingly dogmatic shortly after converting to Pentecostalism, showing what Stewart and Shaw (1994) have named "anti-syncretism": the antagonism to religious synthesis shown by agents concerned with the

defence of religious boundaries"[21] (1994: 7). For most of the Catholics who refer to themselves as Christians, the main reason to occasionally return to their Traditional belief is a persisting illness. Usually, the family will first try to cure someone by asking the Christian God for help, which is of course a free of charge-measurement. If that does not help, villagers with enough money are these days in the luxury position of being able to consult a doctor. In the unfortunate case that the doctor's treatment is not working either, even the medical staff themselves will ask their patient to go see a *mabaki,*[22]a traditional priest, is his village. Friends and family members usually respect the decision to consult the *mabaki,* since everything is considered legal and useful as long as it proves to be effective. All the Catholics I spoke with seem to be at ease that "if praying does not work, you do it the other way". With "the other way" they refer to the rituals of the Traditional belief.

The Kalanguya believe that persisting illness may have many causes: for example, a *bibiyaw*, a spirit from the forest, may have stolen the soul of the person, causing illness. A dead forefather can also be inflicting the illness whenever he feels neglected by his offspring. A third possibility is that some other person cursed the sick (*inayak),* using the dark powers of the traditional priest. During a prayer, called *baki,* the mabaki will talk with the unseen being - natural spirit or ancestor - to see if it is willing to give the stolen soul back or to take back the curse. He will offer a chicken or pig in return that will be butchered during the ritual.[23] The

[21] Some dogmatic Protestants and Pentecosts demonise every aspect of the whole traditional Kalanguya culture, till the extent that they have burned and destroyed traditional instruments such as the gongs. Recently, this radical approach has "softened" somewhat, allowing traditional clothing and instruments as long as it is considered a "game" and there are no references to the Traditional belief.

[22] The *mabaki* is the priest and therefore the most important person in the traditional belief system. He is what Momen refers to as "the most commonly of the type known as witch doctor, shaman or medicine man" (2001: 48). His knowledge, skills and experience are essential for performing almost all rituals. In Ahin there are only three *mabaki* (March 2012), but informants have assured me that before the Christian era, almost every extended family had a *mabaki* as the family's head. The "old priest" - as he is referred to by young people nowadays - can be both man or woman. He is allowed to be married and to have his own family. His knowledge is transferred orally to his students, but only practice is not enough: being a *mabaki* is a calling. Through dreams and by reading the bile of butchered animals, the young student will know if he will be accepted by the Gods and unseen beings. After approval from above, a fellow old priest will baptise the newly ordered *mabaki* before he can start performing the actual rituals. The future of the *mabaki* however, is very uncertain. There are almost no young people interested to learn the job and the old priests themselves don't seem very motivated to teach or write down their knowledge. Some Lutherans have assured me that in 20 years, there will be no *mabakis* left. Nevertheless, the three living *mabaki* in Ahin are considered respected elders, also by Christians. Next to performing *baki*, they are asked to participate in the *tungtung*, a form of amicable settlements of disputes.

[23] The butchering of animals is a practice that is coherently interwoven with the Traditional belief. It is a serious and meaningful practice for most of the people of Ahin. At the start of an important barangay meeting everybody was waiting for the barangay captain, the head of the village, to arrive. Since he did not show up (and we could not call him because there is no cell phone signal in Ahin) the meeting had to be done without him, which caused many difficulties. Afterwards we heardd that the captain had been delayed because of an accident on the road to Ahin. While the road was re-opened directly afterwards, the captain did not pass through yet since he was busy butchering a pig, a goat and a dog for the souls of the people that had died in the accident as well as for the souls of the people who had carried the dead bodies.

baki is a highly respected way of healing diseases. My Catholic informants truly believe in its power and they know plenty examples of people praying for days without any effect, while the *mabaki* who was hired afterward successfully solved the problem.

In this pragmatically shifting to the Traditional belief, the Kalanguya of Ahin are not unique. Guadeloupe (2009) describes the pragmatic use of the traditional belief, Science, by the Caribbean people of Saint Martin. One of Guadeloupe's informants expresses exactly the same vision of most Kalanguya Catholics when she says: "When things gone wrong and the doctor can't help, the priest can't help, well, then, it is the Obeah man you turning to…[24] A little bit of everything never hurt anybody" (2009: 81). Also Kirsch (2008) describes how the respective religious choices of his Zambian informants were governed by pragmatism:[25] "Occasionally changing one's religious affiliation was considered inevitable. People in my area of research, thus, engaged in an incessant quest for religious truth and effectiveness in a highly dynamic socioreligious setting in which truth and effectiveness repredented fleeting momentums" (2008: 707).


Figures 2.1 and 2.2: The butchering of animals, mostly pigs, is inherently interwoven with the Traditional belief (photos made by author).

Other important occasions for villagers to use rituals from the Traditional belief are wedding and death rituals. The Kalanguya believe that their ancestors can either give them good or bad luck, depending on how good they are taken care of. There are many different rituals concerned with attracting the blessings of the dead. In some cases, the dead themselves will give a sign, through dreams, that they are willing to give you their blessings. I have heard many stories of people who dreamt that their grandmother or grandfather gave them a pepper,

[24] Traditional healer, probably comparable to the *mabaki.*

[25] With pragmatism, I do not refer to its philosophical meaning but to its "every-day-life-meaning": action or policy dictated by consideration of the immediate practical consequences rather than by theory or dogma.

some *palay* (rice) or another agricultural product. After such a dream, the holder of it should *hangbu* it: in a ritual he or she should butcher a certain amount of pigs and the *mabaki* should invite all ancestors to share in the food. The opposite can also occur: ancestors can also curse you or inflict bad luck if they feel you have forgotten and neglected them. In most of the cases they will warn you in a dream. In that case, the person will dream of his grandfather- or mother, acting very sad. Informants told me that, in their dream, they saw the head or body of their grandfather being eaten by worms. In these cases, family members will respond by holding a *bagua:* a ritual in which the corporeal remains will be excavated and the human bones will be carefully cleaned. One night they will leave the remains outside the grave and the villagers will play their traditional instruments, the gongs, and dance. The *mabaki* will recite an extended *baki* to invite the soul of the deceased to dance and party with them. The next day, the clean bones will be buried again. To ensure the ever blessings of the ancestors, however, they should also be recalled during more daily occasions. When I visited a Pentecostal woman together with a Catholic informant, she invited us to taste her home-made rice-wine. My companion, Rossana, did the *culting*, a syncretic prayer especially meant for blessing alcoholic drinks. Except from thanking God (Christian) for the liquor, she also invited the deceased father of our hostess to drink with us.

Whenever both religions are practised during the same occasion, this is virtually always because villagers hope that it provides blessings with more certainty. "One or the other has to listen" is the general assumption. Also the *mabaki* himself starts his Traditional rituals by asking assistance to the Christian God because: "Who knows, maybe it helps". The paradigmatic comparison between syncretists and constructivists of Droogers (2005) seems to be appropriate for the situation in Ahin. According to Droogers, syncretists point to a more manipulative, rather than submissive attitude when it comes to the relationship with God. Constructivists hold that there are multiple, socially constructed realties and similarly, syncretists have no qualms about working with multiple forms of religious reality (2005:469). Catholics in Ahin indeed seem to have no qualms about working with practises both from their Traditional religion and from the more recently introduced Christian practices. Like Crapo described, the common attitude towards religious syncretism is: "If it works, we will use it too" (2003: 261).

There is no doubt the situation in Ahin is far more complicated than this rough conclusion. In the coming chapters I will provide deeper insights in how the Kalanguya of Ahin give form and meaning to their religions. In the next chapter I will discuss how the villagers talk about religion to understand the meaning of their religious discourse.

4. “That’s our culture” - Talking about religions in Ahin

Because the natives here, when they say “don't cut those trees because there are anitos there...[26] *they will kill you!” so the people will not cut trees. But now that there is religion they will just cut the trees! That is the effect of believing the... yes. They don't fear the anitos anymore. Because according to the Western culture, the God is somewhere in Israel!”* (Luis, Catholic informant).[27]

In this chapter the religious discourse of the villagers of Ahin will be studied. By focusing on what people say about religious belief and how the topics regarding religion occur in daily conversations, I will come to a better understanding of the ways how religion matters to the villagers. First, the different dimensions of talking about the Traditional belief will be outlined and in the second paragraph I will focus on talking about Christianity.

4.1 Telling stories: Talking about the Traditional belief

The traditional belief is a phenomenon with more than one dimension. For the villagers, there is not much need to discuss certain aspects of the Traditional belief and there is also fear. It is usually only the elders who will talk about their belief, by whispering some words, probably names of Gods or ancestors. During interviews, I experienced that it is not seldom for informants to initially deny that they believe in unseen beings, while later they will tell stories about what these spirits did to their brother or friend. Particularly in cases where the people themselves still fear being in danger, they show relatively strong emotions. For an interview with the *mabaki,* my companion Johannes, three research assistants/interpreters and me hiked to his house on the top of a mountain. When we finally arrived, it was already getting dark and we probably had to stay the night. One of the interpreters, a young man, had been telling ghost stories during the hike, which had set the tone for our conversations in the house of the *mabaki* that would continue until long after midnight. While one of the sons of the priest was hitting a chicken with an iron rot before actually killing it and heavy rain on the corrugated roof made it hard to understand each other,[28] our discussion came on the delicate topic of intermarriages between *bibiyaw,* natural spirits from the forests, and human females. Especially the two female interpreters/informants reacted shocked and with fear to every new

[26] *Anitos* is the Ilocano term for *bibiyaw* in Kalanguya: the unseen beings/spirits.
[27] Group interview February 23, 2012
[28] Hitting the chicken with an iron rot is done to create the clotting of the blood, which should make the meat more tasteful. The *mabaki* had a feast meal prepared for us!

piece of information given by the *mabaki.* They were laughing nervously and started an emotional discussion between them on the possible human feelings of the *bibiyaw* males. They certainly did not act coherently with their previous statements, when they said not to believe in the unseen beings any more since "we are Christians already".

When speaking with me, people usually tried to explain their traditional beliefs, stating that "it is our culture" or "that is what our forefathers taught us". Some days it seemed like they were ashamed, while other days, the informants would proudly look me in the eye telling me this. Especially the sentence "that is our culture" is used as an explanation for practically everything. This also counts for the so-called negative cultural practices, like the past tribal wars, the revenge-system, head-hunting and the still practised *ayak*, cursing your enemy. In this case however, they would say "that *was* our culture", adding that, fortunately, Christianity changed it. Christianity does not have the power to change all the cultural practises, though. The simple reason that "it is our culture" has the strength to even reject some Christian practices that go against the traditional culture, at least for the Catholics. A similar proudness and cultural defence can be found in the work of Guadeloupe (2009). An informant of his reacts on questions about her using the traditional belief system alongside Christianity: "I keeping my Science next to my Bible. I ain't letting go of my culture for nobody" (2009:59). In Ahin, the most essential parts of these "cultural" practises are clustered around the worshiping of the ancestors, for whom the Kalanguya feel a deep respect. The Catholics will not stop worshipping their dead relatives, even though the way of doing it is not recognised nor approved by the Catholic Church. It is partly because of their respect and thankfulness that they want to express their loyalty towards their forefathers. This is a common view, as also presented by Eriksen, who, in a study on ethnicity and nationalism, argues that "if one can claim to "have a culture", it proves that one is faithful to one's ancestors and to the past" (2006:81). The other part, however, consists of a fundamental fear of bad luck, that the ancestors might inflict, in case offerings and prayers are being neglected. Even the more radical Christians, mostly Lutherans and Pentecostals, might reject performing *baki,* but they will emphasise the importance of not forgetting the dead, since "they are where we came from". This representation, and also the culture-explanation, should not be viewed as unique. According to Harrison, most nations and people employ noble readings of the dead to legitimise a transcendental identity for themselves as in "this is who we are because this is where we came from" (Harrison 2003 in Guadeloupe 2009: 202). Because of fear, shame, or – in the case of some dogmatic Pentecostal groups – rejection of traditional culture, the Kalanguya of Ahin are cautious to bring up the subject of the Traditional belief themselves. In

some cases, however, especially during group interview, some informants started their own discussion on the theme or they continued talking about a related subject afterwards. Among the topics that were often discussed are questions concerning good and bad luck and how to attract and respectively avoid it. For the Kalanguya, a lot of things are taboo, *pihyew,* mostly things their ancestors told them they should not do. The villagers believe that bad luck may come to them by not following these advices. As if they are still validating if it is all true, the villagers will pay special attention when they know a neighbour or friend does or does not take such a taboo seriously. If someone neglects it, the other people will carefully observe what happens to him or her. This is what they will talk about and if the outcome of their espionage corresponds with their expectations, they will use it to prove that the old religion is still true, that, even though they are Christianised, "these things still happen", as one young man told me. Momen (2001) argued that the link between sacred objects and taboo is characteristic of religions in small-scale societies. The notion of taboo is important in Ahin, but it is applied mainly on the non-material, on behaviour rather than on objects. The opposite, the cases where good luck can be attracted by people, are also extendedly discussed. One evening, Luis, the head of the family I stayed with in Ahin, enjoyed the special visit of the director of the elementary school. This was reason enough to send one of his children to buy a bottle of gin. The two men did their best to speak English, because Johannes and I were joining them. After laughing a lot about ghost-stories and the *bibiyaw,* they slightly changed their way of speaking and started a serious discussion about a mutual acquaintance who belongs to the Pentecostal church. The head teacher told us that the man had had a dream about his dead grandmother offering him a pepper. According to the Traditional belief, the holder of such a dream should immediately *hangbu* it, which means performing a ritual in which a pig needs to be butchered, to achieve the blessings of the dead relative. The elders advised him to do the same, but, because he was too strict in his Christian doctrines, he did not want to do a traditional ritual . Therefore, the Catholics told me, nothing ever happened. He has never received any blessings while, maybe, if he had butchered a pig, the price he got for his *camote* (sweet potato) would have been much higher.

Concluding it can be said that the traditional belief is not a single dimension subject when, and if, it occurs in conversations. Talking about the unseen beings is often accompanied with laughing, skew and jokes at the beginning of the conversation. Later on, drunk, more at ease or convinced that I will not judge them or deride their beliefs, they switch to a more serious way of talking. They may lower their voice, whisper, and sit closer to me.

4.2 Talking about Christianity

> Johannes: "But when the old priest says something, the people still listen?"
> Miranda: "yes, yes, the people request for him to do things...like happened in...June. The captain of the barangay asked the *mabaki* to drive away all the bad spirits and bring in good luck: that if they harvest, the harvest should be more productive"
> Freddy: "Yes, and if two people after marriage get no children for a long time, the *mabaki* comes. Before it was all this, especially in rituals the butchering of pigs when you marry".
> Eva: "did you butcher pigs when you got married?"
> Freddy: "No! No, I am a Christian". [29]

The way the Kalanguya of Ahin talk about Christianity is very different from how they talk about the traditional belief. Where the beliefs of their great grandparents are referred to as secrets or taboos, with a lot of uncertainty, mockery, and sometimes even shame, Christianity is a subject that is proudly talked about during conversations. The very statement "I am a Christian" is often used as a defence or explanation while talking about religion (see the dialogue above). Even though their knowledge of the Bible is very limited, [30] the Kalanguya refer to it when debating, using both sources from the Old and New Testament to strengthen their statements and opinions. Christianity is not a major topic to discuss in daily life, but still it is easily integrated in everyday conversations. Even during "drinking nights" men will sing religious songs.[31] One of the informants, probably feeling guilty, said to me: "Even if we are drunk we do not forget about Jesus". [32]

With regards to the different Christian denominations of Ahin, most of the faithful emphasise that there are no real conflicts between members of the different denominations and that they even attend each other's services, like the Christmas celebrations. Nevertheless, there are fundamental disagreements between Catholics and Protestants. Apparently, Protestants do not think there is anything wrong with the Catholic lay-leaders but they believe that the Catholics themselves do not practise what they were taught during Mass. As I pointed out in chapter 3, this is an important reason to change denominations. What the Catholics are

[29] Informal group conversation February 14, 2012
[30] This is true especially for the Catholics.
[31] The Kalanguyas are very fond of singing. Most songs they have access to are Christian songs, provided by the church.
[32] Informal group conversation February 18, 2012

more criticised for, however, is that they mix their belief with so-called "Paganism"; the Traditional belief. The Protestants being critical on this Catholic syncretism, do not judge on grounds of ontological truths, but rather because they are convinced that if the Catholics mix their practices, God will not listen and therefore it will not *work.* The Catholics, for their part, have difficulties with the dogmatic views of the Protestants. A Catholic man was telling about the omens animals can give and what it means. Somewhat disappointed and surprised, he said: "If I tell this to the Pentecostals they will not believe me".

Some religious statements refer to a combination of both the Christian- and the Traditional belief. Someone who wanted to pass an important exam told me: "I will pray and ask (*name of villager*) to make me also an *antinganting*, because my colleagues say it works".[33] With praying she means praying to the Christian God for help, but the *antinganting* is a magic amulet from the traditional belief the *mabaki* needs to bless.

[33] Informal conversation with Miranda, March 3, 2012

5. "Never mind the teachings of the Pope" - Knowledge of religions in Ahin

> Eva: "You say you are baptised as a Catholic. Do you recognise the authority of the Pope as a religious leader?"
> Mabaki: "Let me re-throw you the question. Do you belief, that if the Pope will pray for a sick person, this person will heal?"[34]

This chapter focuses on the knowledge of both Christianity and the Traditional belief among the villagers of Ahin. It will be set out that among the Catholics, knowledge of the official version of Roman Catholicism as it is put forward by the Vatican, is not very thorough, but that this is not considered problematic by the villagers. Likewise, their knowledge of the Traditional belief is limited to the things they need to know in order to survive and make a decent living.

5.1 Knowledge of and disagreement with Christianity

Knowledge of the doctrines of Roman Catholicism as taught by the Vatican is not very thorough in Ahin, which can be easily explained by the isolated location of the village. The Catholic informants I interviewed about Christianity have heard of the Pope, but do not know what the dogmas or the official doctrines are. They see no or little difference between the Old and New Testament since in both books people pray to (the same) God. The priest of Tinoc I interviewed explained that certain knowledge is very limited in Ahin because of the shortcomings of the previous priest who was physically unable to visit the village often. Most interesting however, is that priests sometimes choose to not yet introduce certain information to the communities of Tinoc. Even though it is a great part of the Roman Catholic tradition and belief, the Kalanguya do not know about the Catholic saints or patrons because this had not been taught during the first evangelisation period and now they want to introduce it gradually, to avoid confusion and misunderstanding. Furthermore, regarding information that comes directly from the Pope, for example the encyclicals, the priest said he would not make it "obvious" what the source is, because he thinks the villagers would not understand it: "When we mention this (the encyclicals) it is our effort to communicate to them at their level". [35] Trying to communicate with the villagers "at their level", seems to imply the

[34] Interview with Abel, mabaki on February 22, 2012
[35] Interview with Pollux, Catholic priest on March 1, 2012

omission of certain knowledge.

The Catholics I had the chance to get to know better were at ease with not having profound knowledge of their belief. They would often emphasise the importance of "acting like a Christian" instead of knowing what the Bible says. One man told me: "As long as we are Catholics, as we are baptised as Catholics, never mind the teachings of the Pope". [36] This principle is true also for many Protestants as well.[37] A Lutheran lay-leader even confessed that he himself does not understand much of the Bible and that besides this; he falls asleep every time he reads in it.[38]

In some cases, however, not knowing the official teachings goes hand in hand with a fundamental doctrinal conflict. I heard various discussions about "What makes you a Christian". For my informants, it is the action that defines the Christian, and not just being baptised, as it is according to the official teachings. Even if you kill, God might forgive you as long as you repent, according to the Roman Catholic teachings. My informants did not know this and thought that there is too much forgiveness in Christianity compared to the morality of their Traditional belief, where more severe and strict punishments were applied. This view points to syncretism in the way that informants do not only disagree and hang on to their own opinion even though it contradicts the official Roman Catholic doctrine, but still refer to themselves as "Catholics". They seem to have integrated a moral conviction from the Traditional belief in their personal Catholic views.

5.2 Knowledge about the Traditional belief: staying out of dangers

"The knowledge of Christianity is very limited", as put forward by the Catholic priest, but I experienced that the knowledge of the Traditional belief about cultural traditions is even more fragmented, contested and contentious. The answer of younger people to most of my questions regarding the Traditional belief was: "I will have to ask the elders". Although the cultural practices are "vanishing" - as a proud Lutheran lay-leader told me – the Traditional belief in Ahin is more vivid than in other barangays. Many people, especially Catholics, still live by the unwritten "rules" or "doctrines" from the Traditional belief even though they do not know their religious backgrounds. This is especially the case with things that "should not be done". They refer to such things as "*pihyew*", which is translated as "taboo" but I doubt

[36] Luis in Group discussion February 23, 2012

[37] Many Pentecosts however, were very proud of their knowledge of the Bible and they would use Bible citations to strengthen their points in discussions.

[38] For him, this was a clear example of how the devil influences him.

this is a good translation. [39] "Our ancestors taught us like that" is what people respond when I ask for the reason something should not be done. They have plenty of stories about people who got punished by the Gods or ancestors when they did not follow the old customs and traditions. For example there is a belief that you should never wash the meat of a butchered dog in a water-creek or water-spring because the pond will dry out completely. They believe this, because they know it happened once. Water-springs and -creeks are considered the dwelling places of the *ampahit*, the smallest unseen being. These beliefs and taboos can be placed in the light of what Winzeler (2008) describes as practices that promote environmental conservation. Anderson (1996 in Winzeler 2008) notes for example that Polynesian people have frequently used religious taboos to protect natural resources. It could be argued that the fear of the spirits' punishments is a religious belief that (unknowingly) is used to support wise environmental practices in Ahin. A notable example of such a Kalanguya practice that supports wise environmental adaptation is the belief that wild animals are considered to be the pets of the unseen beings. They will give signs to the hunters when too many of their pets have been killed.

Figure 3: One of the presumed houses of the *bibiyaw* (photo made by Johannes Renders).

In short we could say that religious knowledge is limited to what the villagers need to know to be able to escape all dangers and stay safe. They know that you should never walk close to the river while drunk or tipsy, because the *mabdang*, the souls of the unsaved drowned people,

[39] Probably, "blasphemy" is a better translation. See also Renders 2012 on morality in Ahin.

will bewitch you and convince you to join them. They know that the *mabdang* take lives of villagers every year but they do not know why those souls are not being saved. It could be argued, that also in their religious knowledge, the Kalanguya of Ahin show certain pragmatism: knowledge is important when it can be of *use* in their daily lives.

6. "Christianity is cheaper" - Giving meaning to religions in Ahin

It would be more revolutionary to recognize with David Chidester (2005) that because we confine the study of religion to a proper place – shrines, temples, mosques, and churches – we are blinded to its prominent role in various forms of popular culture (…) Perhaps this shift may help us recognize that although fundamentalist Pentecostalism and Islam have returned and are conquering the masses, this is but a minor chord in the overall symphony of Man's pragmatic religiosity" (Guadeloupe 2009: 219).

In this chapter I will focus on how the villagers of Ahin give meaning to their religious views in everyday life. This provides deeper insights in how religion is experienced and lived by the Kalanguya people. I will discuss the ways of giving meaning to Christianity first. The second part addresses the encounters between Christianity and the Traditional belief. To conclude, I will analyse some general issues regarding the religious life of the villagers. This chapter emphasises the functional character of religious syncretism as a way of adaptation to a changing socio-economic context.

6.1 Christianities: Christian actions and reward for them

Christianity is placed in a different light when so many different Christian denominations are found in a small village like Ahin. Even though members of the different churches share the same everyday life problems and can be good friends or colleagues, the teachings of their ministers are different. Everybody agrees that the introduction of Christianity has damaged the former unity of the village, dividing the villagers over different sets of beliefs and doctrines. Where there was only one religion in the past, now there are at least four mainstream Christian movements in Ahin, all of them with separate churches. About religious pluralism in his village, Luis said the following: "In Wangwang they still beat their gongs with human jawbones.[40] You ask for (name of villager), his gong is like that! Here, the Pentecostals did burn all their gongs and jars.[41] Yes… sometimes the coming of other religions is destructive".[42] Sometimes the faithful will celebrate ecumenical services, for example sharing the Christmas festivities. At the same time, however, they will criticise each other for being too dogmatic, or not dogmatic enough and accuse each other of worshipping

[40] Wangwang is the neighbour village of Ahin
[41] With "here", Ahin is meant.
[42] Luis, informal conversation on March 18, 2012

Satan, or of destroying the culture of their forefathers. One of the Christian denominations, the radical Iglesia di Cristo, even believes that its fellow Christians will not go to heaven. In Ahin, an individual's religious identity is thus formed not only in a contrast with the traditional culture, but also by distancing oneself from other Christian identities. A lot of Christians have shifted from one denomination to another, especially from the Roman Catholic Church to the Protestant sects. This has many reasons. In the first place it can be caused by the shortcomings of the previous Catholic priest, who was physically incapable of making the long journey to Ahin often enough to maintain a good relationship with his parish. The other denominations were more active and pastors put in more effort instructing and persuading the villagers.

The second reason why believers would transfer to other churches reveals a significant characteristic of the Kalanguya culture. As said before, many Catholics leave the church if they witness the behaviour of the lay-leader or priest not to be coherent with his preaching. A religious leader's immoral behaviour can be a reason to "transfer" to another denomination. On the other hand, some critical Catholics might also use the same kind of argumentation to not leave their original church. One Catholic said: **"**For us, because what I learn from the other people, from our neighbours, who were Catholic a long time ago, who transferred to other religion, their attitudes are the same! They don't change! What is the difference of transferring to another religion while your bad attitude is not changed?"[43] Luis referred to "religious politics" when I asked him about denominational conversions:

> "But I think, nowadays, because there are many religious sects, it is like politics. When others are doing something, the other sect will criticise them. So that when you summon the other members they will be transferred, it is like politics. Even if they didn't understand the philosophy or logic behind, they just join because of the sin, the actions of the priests for example. It's what the pagans, what they call the pagans, where they are Catholics, ay, pagans transformed into Catholics or Lutherans, because of some criticism from the pagans, and from the pagans done to the Catholics, from the Catholics done to other religions, because of... criticism or other wrongdoings (discrimination), they think that when you are in the religion you are almost the same as the God. Everybody has done mistakes, so you, you will transfer to another religion. It is happening (sic)" (Luis, Catholic villagers).

[43] Luis, informal group discussion February 23, 2012

It is also interesting to see that different denominations do not mock each other for not having the truth.[44] Critiques will always be addressed to people's religiosity in terms of actions and behaviour. This attitude is a strong reminder of the past Kalanguya culture, which modern Catholic and Protestant denominations share. The belief in the importance of actions goes to the extent that they might even condemn the eternal forgiveness of the Christian God. Some informants are not aware of this conviction they have, nor do they have knowledge of the official teachings of the Catholic church, for example on when someone is considered a Christian or not. They refer to the strict system of punishment their forefathers maintained: in the *tungtung,* amicable settlement of disputes, a guilty person would be severely punished by the elders, with almost no room for forgiveness. Another reason for criticising the "excessive Christian forgiveness" and emphasis on right behaviour might be the Traditional belief in the bad spirits, who would punish even the smallest transgression, sometimes by killing the perpetrator. Forgiveness was never to be given without a "payment" or offering.

Whenever I ask people what it takes to be a Christian, they will first enumerate a list of actions a Christian should perform: going to church, visiting the sick, helping the needy, obeying the parents etc. Furthermore they will say that you need to be baptised and also that having faith is very important. When the villagers are asked what it *means* to them, to be a Christian, their perspective radically changes. It seems they project the meaning and the importance of having faith, on a life that cannot be lived now: on their life after dead. When I asked a young woman for example what it means to her to be a Christian she answered without thinking: "To be saved". They will recall that they will go to heaven. The Lutheran lay-leader who does not get paid for his work told me that at least, he will get blessings in an afterlife. A woman told me that unlike before, when the ancestors where the ones waiting her upon death, now God will be waiting for her. The Protestants seem to be even more sure of these possible rewards in afterlife. They will cite the Bible wherein Jesus promises eternal life for His followers. When a Pentecostal girl confessed to me that she is doing all her Christian duties to be blessed after death I asked her if she cannot be happy in this life, since she only projects her well-being on her future stay in heaven. "Life has many problems" she told me, "sometimes we can be happy, but sometimes we are sad. Because it is very difficult and we have to work hard".[45]

[44] Maybe only the Iglesia di Cristo

[45] Anna-Maria, informal group conversation on March 19, 2012

6.2 Encounters between Christianity and the traditional belief

I argue that the meaning religion has for the Kalanguya people of Ahin, is best observed and discovered in the encounters of Christianity with the traditional belief. The differences/similarities between the two religions and the advantages/disadvantages of the introduction of Christianity informants talk about have been crucial to me in order to gain insights in the *tacit* meaning of religion.

The differences and similarities between Christianity and Traditional religion vary strongly among the Christian denominations. In general, Catholics are willing to see more similarities and fewer differences while Protestants will not recognise one similarity at first sight. After asking more questions though, every single Christian admits that *Kabunyan*, the traditional Almighty, is the same as the Christian God. The more radical Protestant sects will normally deny other religious similarities but they do refer to similarities in moral values. For example, respecting your parents is both emphasised in the Bible and by their "Pagan" forefathers.

The dogmatic Protestants and Pentecosts will follow another line of thinking from this point on: They will admit that maybe, some important moral values are the same, but theologically, everything is very different because Christians put their trust in God while the followers of the Traditional belief trust Satan and worship him. Some Pentecostals radically reject everything that belongs to the traditional belief. When I asked a young Pentecostal woman about the *mabaki*, the traditional priest, she first looked around if no one could hear us and then whispered: "Of course, daemon also has its powers". Still, I think that most Protestants might be more pragmatically though, and less theological in their rejection of mixing religions. Someone told me that it is not good to mix different beliefs because afterwards you will never know who helped you.

Catholics are sometimes as radical in pointing out similarities as Protestants are in looking for differences between the two traditions. Some people even told me that there are no relevant differences between Catholicism and the Traditional belief. They are essentially the same, according to most Catholics. They would underline their opinion saying that in both traditions they have always been praying to the same God and the prayers, that always ought to have an effect, are about the same subjects. During one of the first evenings Johannes and I were invited to eat with our host-family-to-be, little Yasmin had to be brought to bed, since she had fallen asleep in the arms of her grandfather, Luis. He stood up and carried her outside, to one of the small sheds that belongs to their house. I was surprised because I expected him to bring Yasmin to one of the bedrooms next to the living room, which are the more

comfortable rooms. When I asked Miranda, a niece who was sitting with us, why they did not sleep there, she was surprised by my stupidity: "Of course not!" she said. "Don't you know that it will bring bad luck to us, if we use that part of the house before it is blessed by either a *mabaki* or the Catholic lay-leader?" the following dialogue started when Luis and his wife, Rosanna entered the room again:

> Eva: Rossana, if you will bless the house, what will you do, a service, a prayer, or you butcher?
> Rossana: The lay-leaders will bless it, with holy water. If the owner wants to butcher pig, he can.
> Luis: No, if there are no available lay-leaders, the *mabaki* will interfere. Because, the *maba*ki is also praying good prayers, for the good of the house. He is not praying bad prayers...
> Eva: It has the same effect?
> Luis: it has the same effect with the lay-leaders. It is good for the house and its occupants (both laugh). Because when I hear the prayers of the old,[46] they are praying that the occupants will have long life, they will have good harvest, and that is the prayer also prayed by the lay-leaders... it is the same, what is the difference (giggles) it is none![47]

For each action and ritual that originally belonged to the former belief, a Christian counterpart is found and for every God or spirit there's is a Christian version as well.[48] This linking from traditional deities to a Christian counterpart, also in the case of *Kabunyan,* the Supreme Being, might have something to do with the fear of being discriminated by other cultures or for example by the church. It could be argued that for the Kalanguya people this is a way to continue worshipping the Gods of their ancestors or to "justify" their past worshipping. Another explanation is a high tolerance among syncretic people. Guadeloupe (2009) writes about a pragmatism that deals with religious differences within Christianity in Saint Martin

[46] Old priest: *mabaki.*
[47] Group discussion, February 23, 2012
[48] The *baki*, the traditional prayer, is compared with Christian prayers, even more so because in the *baki* they recall the names of the ancestors like in the Old Testament. The butchering of pigs and chickens that accompanies the *baki* is practically the same as the butchering of sheep in the Old Testament, with the small adjustment that the Kalanguyas have no available sheep and therefore use other animals. Also the different Gods and Goddesses of the traditional belief, as well as for the first ancestors and cultural heroes are linked to important people from the Christian tradition. *Bugan* is compared to either Mary or Eve, *Balitok* to Jesus and the Greek-Gods-alike are given the same roles and functions as the Apostles of Christ.

that involved an extreme tolerance of differences of faith. One of his informants said, referring to a Buddhist friend: “Rebecca doing her thing. I doing mine. If she feel that chanting to that big belly man will do her any good, that is fine with me. Is one God anyway” (2009: 66). Not everybody in Ahin is as tolerant as this informant, but during my research I often hear the statement “in the end, it is one God”.

6.3 Functional syncretism and religious pragmatism

One remarkable difference between the two religions in Ahin, that is put forward by both Catholics and Protestants is the absence of the need to butcher animals in the Christian religion. This is referred to as a great advantage. With Catholics, this is sometimes considered the only relevant difference between the two religions: to be a Christian is cheap, to be a “Pagan” is expensive. This is even seen as a disadvantage of the Traditional belief by its adherents. While interviewing the *mabaki* for example he – wrongly - understood that I wanted to become a follower of the Traditional religion and he advised me that since I am already a Christian it is better for me to stick on to my belief, since being a Christian, I do not have the burden of butchering. When I asked a Catholic man *why* he, personally, is a Catholic he answered: **“**Because we don't have... enough animals to butcher! Because when they say “you butcher five pigs, must be!” where will you get those?” According to some, Christianity is only good because it lessens the burden of butchering; it saves money which they can spend on the education of their children

As pointed out in paragraph 1.2.5, syncretism can be viewed as a kind of adaptation to the broader social environment in which a religion exists. Kammerer (in Winzeler 2008) argues that the Akha of Northern-Thailand eventually converted to Christianity because their practice of butchering a lot of animals for rituals of their traditional belief had become unable to maintain due to recent economic changes. A similar situation may have occurred in the history of the Kalanguya of Ifugao. Even though there is no scientific evidence to confirm my hypothesis, my informants have told me that during World War II, the Japanese soldiers have slaughtered and eaten all of their domestic pigs. Ever since it has become increasingly difficult to continue with the Traditional rituals that require dozens of pigs to be butchered. By the time Christianity was introduced, as one elder villager remembered, the people warmly welcomed the missionaries because they were “hard up with their traditions” (sic). Like the Akha of Thailand, the Kalanguya easily adopted Christianity primarily as a new set of customs and practices and in the same line as “practising a religion” as they were used to with their traditional customs. For most of the villagers, Christianity is still experienced and lived

"traditionally" as shown by the fact that they have integrated a moral conviction from the Traditional belief in their personal Catholic views on what makes someone a Christian.

From examples of religious syncretism and from the role religions has in everyday life it can be stated that, for the Ahin-based Kalanguya, religion ought to have a function. It needs to be effective, it should always be useful rather than logical. This quest for effectiveness is a sign for a pragmatic religious attitude, as is pointed out by Kirsch. He writes that for his informants, rituals likewise ought to be effective: "Gwembe villagers are pragmatists who carry out rituals only when compelled to do so. They seek solutions for particular difficulties rather than a general remedy to forestall all difficulties, and they have little use for simple piety as such. Rituals should be effective, but there is no point for carrying out a ritual for ritual's sake" (Colson in Kirsch 2008: 703). In Ahin, a very similar attitude is shown regarding the function of the *mabaki.* His role is to mediate between humans and the unseen beings in order to cure or heal his clients. The *baki* should always be effective and by reading the bile of the butchered animal, the *mabaki* can, immediately determine if his ritual had any effect or not. If the answers of the unseen beings are negative, if the person is not going to heal, the *mabaki* will simply butcher another chicken or pig until the bile, and with the bile the fortune, will be good. This kind of thinking has influenced also the Christian way of praying since also for the Christians, praying should always be effective. The Pentecostals are convinced that if your faith is deep enough, God will give you anything you ask for. The Catholics say they will keep praying until God will listens. The idea that God might have another plan for you is strange to many of the villagers.

"As long as it works" indeed seems to be the best motivation for the villagers to follow any religion and to perform any ritual. This is in perfect coherence with what Crapo meant with the common attitude towards syncretism: "If it works, we will use it too" (Crapo 2003: 261). For the radical Protestants nowadays this effect, the usefulness of their sacrifices, is replaced by their reward in heaven. For many Catholics the persisting illness of a family-member drives them from their Christian denomination to the rituals of the *mabaki.* The mixing of belief systems for them is 100% natural and respected as long as it works. An important disadvantage of Christianity, in contrast to its economic advantage, is that it is not always as effective as the "traditional way". Especially when "our culture" - the unseen beings - inflict the illness, only praying will most likely not work, as is expressed in the following dialogue.

Johannes: Does it matter? Is it better to be Christian than to do it the traditional way?

Luis: It doesn't matter when you select the lay-leaders or the old folks (sic).

Johannes: Because some say it is more effective, the traditional way. More result.

Eva: Abel (the *mabaki)* also said that there are some illnesses that cannot be cured by prayer...

Luis: there are some instances when, you really need the prayers of... the *mabaki*. Because the sickness will come... from other... like the Anitos, what we call the Anitos.[49]

In some cases, people will make a personal choice on how to combine the two religions in order to perform the most effective ritual. When villagers ask the help of a Christian lay-leader in praying, for example, the lay-leader will still allow them to butcher a pig, in a syncretic way of combining two traditions.[50] "Reading" the bile of the butchered pig, however, goes too far beyond the boundaries of Christianity, as it is employed by the villagers themselves, and therefore the lay-leaders will strongly discourage people to do so, arguing that it is unnecessary. A woman confessed to me, however, that after such a ritual, feeling insecure, she had secretly returned to the butchered animal after the lay-leader was gone, to still read the bile herself in order to understand if the prayer had been successful or not.

The villagers seem to be less interested in the (metaphysical) truth of their religions than in obtaining blessings and averting misfortune. It is less important to know who is right: the priest, the pastor, the *mabaki* or someone else, than to know who will be of use. In Ahin, religious syncretism is thus applied consciously, in adaptation to a new socio-economic context (e.g. the absence of pigs after WWII) and to "duplicate" the chances that rituals will have the desired effect. Therefore, I would argue that the term "functional syncretism" describes best the *kind of* syncretism I encountered in Ahin: syncretism is applied because of its *concrete function*: usefulness and efficiency.

Figure 4: Reading the bile (photo made by Johannes Renders)

[49] Informal group discussion February 23, 2012

[50] Since the butchering of animals is done in the Traditional belief to please the unseen beings.

Conclusion

Scientific and social interest in religion has grown during the last decades, putting it at the centre of various social and political debates worldwide. Defining religion has proved to be not easy and I believe we should doubt the necessity of doing so in the light of our discipline, since (postmodern) anthropologists are usually concerned with the meaning religion has in the life of people. It is important, however, to note that not even world religions are "authentic" or have fixed boundaries; on the contrary, they overlap and show shared, borrowed or implemented elements from other belief systems, as a result of cross-cultural contacts. Religions, therefore, are changing, dynamic and heterogeneous and they consist of various so called "syncretic" elements. Syncretism is a complex term that has earned various negative and positive connotations during the course of history. I define the term as: the intermingling of seemingly incompatible elements from one or more religions. Syncretism should be seen as a dynamic process that either occurs "unconsciously", or in full awareness in the light of power relations, authenticity, identity-formation and the rejection of a dominant hegemony (Shaw and Stewart 1994, Lambropoulos 2011, Droogers 2005). Besides, syncretism can have pragmatic functions when it is applied to adapt to a changing socio-economic situation (Guadeloupe 2009) or in an ecological adaptation to the environment (Winzeler 2008 and Crapo 2006).

Reading much of the literature on both religion and syncretism, I was confronted with many euro-centric and ethnocentric perspectives on religion. Winzeler (2008) and Momen (2009) describe generally acknowledged western assumptions regarding religion that do not necessarily apply to non-western societies where religion may be lived and practised in a completely different way. For example, the western approach views religion as a matter of belief or faith, while religion is as much a matter of behaviour as it is of belief. We should keep in mind that religion has both a transcendental and a practical side. The space for practical religion in "modern" western society has narrowed due to advanced technology, but in many places of the world, healing and sustenance are still two major religious concerns (Winzeler 2008). An important aspect of religion that has largely been studied in small-scale societies is the possible relationship between religious beliefs, practises and their environmental or ecological adaptive functions. Rappaport (1984) and Kammerer (in Winzeler 2008) provide evidence for the view that religious beliefs and practices have an underlying utilitarian motive, and that they promote the enhancement of environmentally

adaptive practices. As put forward by Crapo (2003), religion is part of the system of culture and plays a role in the adaptation of humans to their environment, in their struggle to survive.

With this thesis on religious syncretism, I have contributed to the theoretical debate on religion in times of globalisation, by providing some humble new insights in the formation and development of religions in small-scale societies and by describing, analysing and interpreting a pragmatic approach towards religion and the functional character of religious syncretism in Ahin. Furthermore, I have contributed to the research on modern "Animistic" religious views by investigating how the people of Ahin give form and meaning to beliefs and practices that are related to their Traditional belief. The empirical chapters of this thesis have provided answers to the central question as put forward in the introduction of this thesis: How do the villagers of Ahin give form and meaning to their Christian and Animistic religious beliefs in their everyday lives?

In Ahin, religious practices are far more important than faith. These practices are focused on practical aspects of everyday life. This is in line with characteristics of religion in small-scale societies, as put forward by both Winzeler (2008) and Momen (2009). There are several churches in the village, but attending Mass is not of crucial importance to the villagers. Instead, it is essential how people act and behave in everyday life. An individual's actions are considered to be the most important manifestation of his "piety" and religiosity. Whenever the behaviour of one of the Catholic or Protestant lay-leaders seems not to be coherent with his preaching, this is a good reason for a Christian to "convert" to another church. A similar kind of attitude can be found in the study of Kirsch (2008) who writes that his Zambian informants are willing to change their denominational affiliation when they are not satisfied with the performance of a particular church.

By doing long-term participant observations among a Catholic family, I witnessed that religious faith is not a prime concern in their everyday lives. Religion is more a tool in their struggle to survive and it is less experienced as an ontological truth. This is in line with what Crapo (2003) stated about religion playing a role in the human adaptation to the circumstances of survival. Even on Good Friday, there proved to be a way to get around Christian dogmas in the light of pragmatic doctrines.

The reason why many Catholics "converted" to Christianity when it was introduced, highlights the kind of religious pragmatism I have described throughout this thesis. According to my informants, there was a great amount of domestic pigs before World War II. During the war however, Japanese soldiers are said to have slaughtered and eaten all of their pigs. This made the rituals of the Traditional belief extremely burdensome, since they all require the

butchering of animals - mainly pigs - to please the "unseen beings". Christianity therefore was a "cheap" alternative which places conversion in the light of a pragmatic adaptation to a changing economic situation. A similar situation is analysed by Kammerer (in Winzeler 2008) about the eventual conversion to Christianity of the Akha of Northern-Thailand. It should be noticed however, that Christianity in Ahin was primarily adopted as a new set of customs and practices and in the same line as "practising a religion" as was the custom with their Traditional rituals. The Traditional belief has never been completely abandoned, because some of its rituals are simply "too effective". Therefore, Catholics in particular, are not at all hesitant to mix their Christian beliefs with practices of the Traditional belief, whenever they think this will be more effective. This quest for effectiveness is again a sign for a pragmatic religious attitude, as is pointed out by Kirsch (2008). My informants were convinced that rituals ought to be effective, both in Christianity and in the Traditional belief. After performing his ritual, the *mabaki* can immediately determine its efficacy, by reading the bile of the butchered animal. If the answers of the unseen beings are negative, he simply butchers another chicken or pig until the bile, and with the bile the fortune, is good. For some radical Protestants however, this effect, the usefulness of their sacrifices, is replaced by their reward in heaven. For them, being a Christian means to be saved after their death. In contrast, the Catholics occasionally switch to the Traditional belief when only praying to the Christian God doesn't work. "As long as it works" seems to be the best motivation for them to follow any religion and to perform any ritual. This is in perfect coherence with what Crapo meant with the common attitude towards syncretism: "If it works, we will use it too" (Crapo 2003: 261).

Sometimes, instead of completely switching, both religions are practised during the same occasion, in the hope that it provides blessings with more certainty. "One or the other has to listen" is the general assumption. Droogers' (2005) paradigmatic comparison between syncretists and constructivists of seems to be appropriate for the situation in Ahin. According to Droogers, syncretists point to a more manipulative, rather than submissive attitude when it comes to the relationship with God. Syncretists have no qualms about working with multiple forms of religious reality (2005:469).

Against my expectations, syncretism in Ahin is not happening "unconsciously" as some authors belief it often does (Shaw and Stewart 1994). Neither is it used as a path to authenticity, identity-formation or put in light of the rejection of a dominant hegemony (Droogers 2005, Lambropoulos 2001). Instead, my informants apply religious syncretism consciously, in adaptation to a new socio-economic context (e.g. the absence of pigs after WWII) and to "duplicate" the chances that rituals will have the desired effect. Therefore, I

argue that the term "functional syncretism" describes best the *kind of* syncretism I encountered in Ahin: syncretism is applied because of its *concrete function*: usefulness and efficiency. Syncretism does not have to lead to a third, new religion, as is argued by Eller (2007). I have pointed out that there is a pragmatic switching and combining of the different elements of religions in order to improve the usefulness and efficiency of the rites. Next to syncretism, I have been confronted with what Shaw and Stewart call "anti-syncretism": some dogmatic Lutherans and Pentecostals in Ahin were "concerned with the defence of religious boundaries" (1994: 7).

I expect that in their pragmatic attitude and functional application of religious syncretism, the Kalanguya of Ahin are not unique. However, further research is required to investigate the extent to which these findings can be generalised to other small-scale societies in Asia and throughout the world.

I understand that by working with the concepts of functional syncretism and religious pragmatism it is difficult not to create confusion with regard to the theoretical anthropological perspective, which underlies my research and thesis. I have mentioned before, however, that with functional syncretism I do *not* refer to functionalism as a theory. To call syncretism functional or pragmatic, is not meant to be contrary to the postmodern view in modern anthropology that people try to live their life in a meaningful way. The Kalanguya of Ahin I had the honour to meet and become acquainted with, are very friendly, hospitable and social people. Notwithstanding their pragmatic attitude towards their religions, from my point of view, they did not seem to be opportunistic people. In fact, their stories in this thesis have shown that "being a Christian" - and also the "Pagans" can be Christians in this way – essentially means behaving morally and acting in a right way, helping each other and living a meaningful life as a community.

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Appendix I: Methodology and Reflexivity

Introduction

It was 6 o'clock in the morning, the day after a graduation party. Despite the sounds of women and children pounding rice and the crowing of roosters that had started two hours earlier, I was only just waking up. In a very Dutchie-kind of way I had only ten minutes to get dressed and have breakfast before starting the three-hour hike to catch the bus in a nearby village. When I entered the living room looking for a handful of rice to eat, I stumbled over the bodies of guests, lying down on the wooden floor, probably still drunk from last night's strong local gin. Rossana, the hostess, was cooking rice on wood-fire to feed the guests who would probably not wake up before lunch. I was already on my way out, ready for the tough hike, when Rossana called me back, taking a big pan with hot water from the stove. "You will take a bath first", she said. It was not a question, but nevertheless I started excusing myself, telling her I was in a hurry to catch the bus. She ignored this completely and started walking to the shed behind the house, which served as toilet and shower. I understood that there was no way out, and that I had to at least quickly wet my hair to give her the impression that I had washed myself. I hurried to find a towel and followed my hostess. At the same time I was thinking how useless it would be to take a shower before the hike since the very tough path and the steep mountains would make me arrive completely muddy and sweaty at the bus stop. But this was the first time Rossana boiled water for me and her determination made this a serious affair. Once in the shed, she started explaining to me how I should do it; how I should wash myself. This surprised me, because she knew I had taken a bath more often, using the bucket of water. I was even more surprised when she informed me that she would help me wash my hair and that I should undress myself right now. At that moment I became seriously anxious I would miss the only bus that would leave that weekend, which would keep me from visiting a friend and from handing in my research report on time. I politely thanked Rossana for her help and told her that from here, I could take it myself. Completely against my expectations, she refused to leave. Instead, she started washing my hair while I was still wearing my clothes. I thought there was no time to waste on problematising western notions of privacy and I hurried undressing myself. But by the time I stood in front of her naked, feeling white, big and stupid, I realised that this was something beyond the boundaries of the ethnographic tolerance I had been practising. Being washed like a baby by a middle-aged woman turned out to be a true humiliating experience, but at the time I was too puzzled and

shocked to react adequately. I was analysing the whole time, *why* this was happening. Did Rossana think I did not shower often enough? Did she think that I did not know how to properly wash myself without a European shower? Would she be ashamed if her guest would arrive unwashed in Lagawe? Or was she just curious about my white body? By the time I had already asked her twice to leave, but she refused and I did not dare to make a scene because I was afraid to damage the carefully built *rapport.* The whole experience especially struck me as very strange, considering the taboo on physical contact that prevails in Kalanguya culture. The fact that in Ahin, the only public physical contact to be witnessed, was between parents and their children, made me even more feel like I was being treated as an ignorant child. I was too busy trying to understand Rossana and grasp the meaning of the situation that I forgot about my own feelings and emotions, let alone the bus I had to take on a three-hour hiking distance.

This and other experiences during my fieldwork in the Philippines have made me realise that by struggling to understand other people's complexities we are brought face-to-face with our own (Cohen 1992 in Robben and Sluka 2007). To truly understand another person's complexities, a critical self-reflection is inevitable, not in the last place because in qualitative research, the researcher itself is the research instrument (Boeije 2010). "Subjective experiences and selfhood are part and parcel of fieldwork and its result" is put forward also by Sluka and Robben (2007: 63). This is especially true for participant observation, the main method in ethnographic research. Reflexivity on the position of the fieldworker and on the methods of data collection are crucial to the verification and falsification of the findings. On the other hand, we should be aware not to lose ourselves in studies that are pure reflections wherein the fieldworker plays a central, even narcissistic role. Cohen makes the right nuance when he distances himself from the suggestion that "anthropology should be about the anthropologist's self: rather it must be *informed* by it" (1992 in Robben and Sluka 2007: 114). I agree with DeWalt and DeWalt (2009) that we should get beyond the introspection, focussing on the generalisations that can be derived from data (2011: 38-39). Keeping this in mind, I will reflect on my fieldwork in Ifugao in order to present a clear image of how the data from this thesis might be coloured or biased by my ways of describing and interpreting them as well as by my personal characteristics and identities.

Being the Other

Anthropology is known to be the study of "The Other" but it had never come to me that in the

field, in fact, I would be that Other and that this "otherness" would be a highly decisive factor in the inter-personal relationships I was about to engage in. Of course, by conducting participant observation activities, I tried to participate in the daily working activities of my informants as well as sharing in their worries and happiness. After a few weeks, I began to take part in the everyday life of the villagers and in a certain way, the expectations and uncertainties about a new day that had come, where the same to me as to my informants. I was looking forward to important village-festivities and mourned about the death of grown-up chickens as the natives did. This did not prevent me however, from being reminded of my otherness every single day. While I thought of my skin colour as only slightly lighter than the Kalanguya's skin, villagers continuously referred to me as "the white people" and they kept on being honestly surprised about the whiteness of my skin. Young children would be running around me, too shy to look me into the eyes, but always asking: "How come, that your skin is so white?". How was I supposed to answer that question? The radical differences, however, manifested far beyond skin colour, till the extent that I was even alienated by informants.[51] This emphasis on my otherness can be explained quite well by the fact that most of the villagers of Ahin had never in their life seen any "white people". Nevertheless, this was difficult for me, especially since I tried so hard to be one of them during the day, marking my difference only by writing field notes. But the fact that I was an ethnographer was a far less relevant marker of the identity they prescribed me, than the fact that I came from one of the far, modern "American" countries and that I was tall and white.

Although I did my best to fully integrate into the community, there were limits to both the levels of observation and participation I could possibly conduct. Notwithstanding the importance of living with a family as an advantage for conducting participant observation, I chose to stay in the municipal hall for the first four weeks to give the community the chance to get used to my presence. This choice was based on the villager's extreme shyness and "shamefulness"; I anticipated that it would make a host-family feel uncomfortable to suddenly have to interact with me, especially if the municipal mayor forced them to take me into their home. This turned out to be a rather good decision, since it took the villagers quite some time to get from hiding from me, to approaching me. Within two weeks, one of the families offered me a room. Especially in the first days and weeks I was "hanging out" a lot, just to make the villagers get used to my presence and to convince them that I really was a researcher instead

[51] Villagers told me that if they would dress me up in a white dress, for sure other villagers would be scared to death, convinced that I am a *bibiyaw*, a fairy from the mountains. In fact, they told, I looked more like a spirit or ghost than like a Igorot, a 'people from the mountains'.

of a gold digger or missionary. But even after moving to a private house and getting more personal with some informants, practical limitations to conduct participant observation prevailed. First of all, almost all my informants worked on the land from five or six a.m. until sundown, a rhythm I was physically unable to endure. Secondly, I had to write field notes in the morning since there was no light in the evenings due to the absence of electricity. However, the by far most important limitation I encountered was the language-barrier. Even though I could communicate with some villagers in English and with others by using an interpreter, I felt I missed lot of the everyday life and interaction between people. I tried to learn some basic Kalanguya, the local dialect, but was confronted with many difficulties. The language-barrier made me more of an "outsider" than I had been during previous fieldwork experiences. It was an additional factor making me "the Other".

Especially in the beginning, this otherness was inherently interwoven with a presumed "betterness". I was assigned an indisputable authority concerning issues ranging from child-care to magic. This made me increasingly aware of the potential influence I had on the field, raising all kinds of methodological and ethical dilemmas. I wanted to investigate practices and rituals during the Roman Catholic Mass, but when I asked a question to the representative lay-leader, he immediately wanted to know how we did it in my country, so that he could apply the same things in his church. In some cases this authority took on dangerous proportions, for example when informants started asking me for advice on how to cure a physically-disabled man. I assured them many times that I was there to learn from them, that I recognised the value of their culture and that my society or culture may be different but that it is not of more or less value than theirs. Things only started to change, when I started showing them that there are many things they do better than me. As soon as they discovered that I was not good at washing clothes by hand and cooking on wood-fire, their perspective radically shifted to the other side of the spectrum till the extent that they treated me as a child, as I have described in the introduction of this section. Again, this was a difficult position and I discovered that I had unintentionally brought my ego and even a kind of national pride with me to the field. When I look back, I think I should have acted less personal to various jokes about me and "my kind of people".

Another important consequence of the distance caused by otherness between my informants and me, was that I was treated like a third category in the Kalanguya society, both in terms of gender and in terms of morality. Powdermaker (in Sluka and Robben 2007) writes that during her fieldwork in Lesu, she was never fully classified as a woman by her informants, which provided her the advantage of being able to cross gender boundaries. This

is what I experienced as well: I was simply too different from local women; I did in no way behave like one or live by the gender rules, with the result that I was not fully classified as a woman. Even though men were sometimes still uncomfortable to be alone with me, they allowed me to drink with them, while usually, women do not drink, or drink only when they are among other women. The fact that the local moral system did not include me as one of them, was even more striking. The villagers often told me that living together or having sexual relations before marriage is against the "Kalanguya law", but in the same time they found it quite natural that my boyfriend and I were sleeping in the same room even though we were not married yet.

Doing fieldwork together

A last explanation to the experienced distance and otherness might be found in the fact that I was not alone in the field, but doing research together with my boyfriend. I had not planned it, but it turned out that I conducted most of the fieldwork together with my research companion Johannes Renders. We stayed together in the same village and the informants naturally approached us as a team; we were always invited together to eat or stay with people and it was conceived as an offense if one of us was not attending. As soon as we discovered how deeply related our research topics in fact were (morality and religion), we decided to also do most of the interviews together. It was easier for me to come in closer contact with female informants, while it was difficult to make a man feel comfortable. Therefore, it was a great advantage that Johannes and I were a mixed-sex team, because it provided the possibility to represent both the perspectives of men and women in our research. This observation is certainly not unique. In a research on sex-roles among Mundurucu society, the husband-wife team Murphy and Murphy (1974) managed to provide a unique view that placed in counterpoint the perspectives of both men and women (Murphy and Murphy 1974 in DeWalt and DeWalt 2011). Most of the interviews we did were group-interviews, because we noticed that informants were far more comfortable in such a setting and less shy to express their feelings and thoughts. It was in fact even almost impossible to do interviews with individuals given the character of the kin-based community and the fundamental lack of privacy due to large, extended families sharing one-room houses. Since most of the villagers had no or very limited knowledge of the English language, we worked with one or more interpreters, educated villagers who became key-informants in the course of time. The group interviews have served me very well because the answers are the result of the opinion of more than just one individual and above all it is interesting to observe the interactions and discussions

between the participants. A disadvantage, however, is that when the informants do not speak English, but find the subject of the interviewing interesting, they will talk about it a lot together. The interpreter only translates a short resume of the discussion, which is a shame, sine I am also interested in the discussion itself. Doing the group-interviews together with Johannes was convenient; since one of us could ask questions and the other one could take notes. Besides of taking notes of the non-auditive aspects of interviews we taped all official sessions and we shared the extensive work of transcribing them.

Boeije (2010) argued that doing research in a team can foster a higher level of conceptual thinking, raising the analysis to a higher level of abstraction (Barry, Britten, Barber, Brasdley & Stevenson 1999 in Boeije 2010). I believe that Johannes and I made sharper observations by working as a team, because our observations were complementary and we always discussed the answers and our interview questions afterwards, validating our own interpretation and assess the reliability and validity of the data (Boeije 2010), resulting in more valuable and well-considered data. Both reliability, consistency of measures used in social research and validity, being specific about what you set out to assess (Boeije 2010: 169), are important indicators for the quality of research. DeWalt and DeWalt argue that reliability in research using participant observation is difficult to assess, as it is rarely replicated. Despite of this difficulty and the fact that Johannes and I were researching different subjects in the same field, I think that doing fieldwork together, increased the reliability of our research, to a certain extent. According to Boeije (2010) the use of multiple researchers - researcher triangulation - reduces the potential bias that comes from one single person doing all the data collection. We served as each other's ethnographic mirror and that made self-reflection easier. Self-reflection is also crucial for the level of validity of the results of a research. I agree with DeWalt and DeWalt that “observations of trained, self-reflexive observers, using several different approaches to a phenomenon can achieve an acceptable level of reliability and validity and are, to the extent of the method, objective (2009: 123)”. I hope and belief to have come close to research findings that represent reliability and validity within the boundaries of scientific objectivity that qualitative research entails.

The only disadvantage of doing most of the fieldwork with Johannes is that it influenced the possible friendships I could have possibly built up, especially with women, since this was more difficult when he was around. This was also caused, however, by the absence of young women of my age, since they were all working or studying in the city, leaving only elderly people and young children living in Ahin. Nevertheless I managed to

build true *rapport* with some informants,[52] something I noticed especially among family-members I lived with the last five weeks. They were just as much concerned with a successful research as I was; helping me to get in touch with the right people, arranging interviews for me and taking me to important religious locations.

To conclude, I still think the advantages of being together in the field largely outnumber the complexities. Therefore I fully agree with DeWalt and DeWalt who write that: "Our own experience has been that having a man and woman involved in field work at the same time has provided a more balances view of community life, of key relationships and of the interaction of households and families, than we would have had if we had worked alone" (2011: 102).

By way of conclusion

I have long been questioning what caused the ongoing feeling of otherness and radical distinctiveness I experienced in the field. Part of the gap I experienced between my life and theirs was formed by the realisation that my stay in Ahin was only temporary. The relationships I have built with informants are good fieldwork relationships and I managed to maintain *rapport.* Robben and Sluka write that: "The classic image of successful rapport and good fieldwork relations in cultural anthropology is that of the ethnographer who has been "adopted" or named by the tribe or people he or she studies... (see Kan 2001)" (2007:122). Both Johannes and I were officially "adopted" by the Kalanguya of Ahin and re-named with native Kalanguya names (see appendix 2). Notwithstanding this success – as conceptualised in scholarly literature - and the fieldwork relationships and *rapport,* I felt there was a fundamental lack of shared experience and shared expectations of life that withheld me from truly identifying my Self with the Selves of informants. Fieldwork implicates the selves of ethnographers and local research participants in constitutive ways, as Robben and Sluka (2007) argue, and I think that in my case, the constitutive ways were based in personal and cultural differences and discussing them. Maybe I was confronted with the "illusion of shared experiences", as it is argued by Beatty (2010). He states that emotions are never completely shared between informants and researcher and to assume that they are, would be: "robbing emotions of the personal significance that is - as most authors would agree - their essence"

[52] DeWalt and DeWalt define *rapport* as: "A state of interaction achieved when participants come the share the same goals, at least to some extent – that is, when both the "informant" and the researcher come to the point when each is committed providing information for "the book" or the study, and when the researcher approaches the interaction in a respectful and thoughtful way that allows the informant to tell his or her story" (2011: 47).

(2010: 440). An author who came to the same conclusion is Rabinow (2007). In his reflection on field relations and friendships he concludes that both the informant as the researcher live in rich, partially integrated, ongoing life worlds. "They are, however, not the same. Nor is there any mechanical and easy means of translation from one set of experiences to the other (2007: 151)". I experienced this aforementioned difficulty and the never fully shared emotions in the field. I have learned, however, to give a more neutral shift to this presumed otherness and I feel that in relationships with informants, I have certainly moved towards a deep mutual respect, notwithstanding the awareness of the differences that exist at the roots of most interaction.

I nonetheless believe that the lack of shared understanding and presumed otherness, I experienced, was the result of me "falling off the pedestal" I was put on by the very same informants who later treated me as an ignorant child, of which the vignette in this introduction is only one of many examples. As different scholars have argued, [53] to be treated as an ignorant child, has its advantages. Ignorant children are known and even required, to ask "ignorant questions" which can certainly be of use in ethnographic fieldwork. Maybe Rossana would not have explained me so detailed how exactly to behave during our visit to one of the houses of the *bibiyaw,* had she seen me as a full adult. Adults, namely, all know that one should never shout, laugh or pee in the surroundings of certain sacred places, but children are more likely to behave inappropriate and blasphemous. My research experiences prove that being the ignorant child in the field is a stage that can last long. Too long. I believe that when my informants' perception of me had changed towards the end, this could have resulted in equal, and therefore "better" relations and friendships with Kalanguya women.. Rossana and I could both have been women, but we were not. I was a child, and in her eyes. I never grew up to be an adult. I now understand that something should have happened: a radical changing, a "breaking through", to speak with DeWalt and DeWalt (2011: 54). I should have done something that would change the informants' perception of me. I should have used duct tape and permanently fix the always-broken water-dynamo, to show that I can be of use; that I also have practical or technical insights. I should have married to better fit the Kalanguya system regarding gender and morality. But nothing of this happened and I now understand this is the primal explanation to the vague sense of "incomplete" fieldwork relations and otherness: an otherness that was both based in "whiteness" and "American-ness" but probably more significantly, in "ignorance" and "child-ness". The process of writing this reflection has made

[53] See for example Geert Mommersteeg "KOAT" lectures 2011 UU

me aware of things I would definitely not have realised otherwise. I believe that truly understanding what went wrong this time (without forgetting all the things that went very well, of course) signals good hope that I will be able to apply these lessons from my first fieldwork experience in a future research.

Appendix II: adoption form

"A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SANGGUNIANG BARANGAY OF AHIN, THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS, WOMENS ORGANIZATION, FARMERS ORGANIZATION & TEACHERS ADOPTING JOHANNES RENDERS AND EVA FRANCISCA MARIAH KRAH, BOTH FROM THE NETHERLANDS AS SON AND DAUGHTER OF BARANGAY AHIN, MUNICIPALITY OF TINOC, PROVINCE OF IFUGAO, PHILIPPINES."

WHEREAS, barangay Ahin is known to be the first seat of the Kalanguya Tribe in the Cordilleras;

WHEREAS, as part of the native culture of the Kalanguyas particularly in barangay Ahin, any visitor including visitors who lives with the tradiitons of the people of the barangay for atleast two (2) weeks or more are considered sons/daughters of the barangay;

WHEREAS, JOHANNES RENDERS AND EVA FRANCISCA MARIA KRAH have lived for seven (7) weeks w/ the people in the Ahin community;

WHEREAS, to be distinct from other names, the boy shall be named *"BAHYUN"* and the girl shall be named *"BANGANAY"* which are native names of the Kalanguya Tribe;

WHEREAS, in view of their good intent/purpose and interest to research about Kalanguya Culture and how it flourished, how do kalanguya people in Ahin look at life, the undersigned signatories hereto acknowledge them as brother and sister of the Barangay;

NOW THEREFORE; On motion duly seconded by the body, be it .....

RESOLVED as it is hereby resolved to adopt as it is hereby done Adopting JOHANNES RENDERS and EVA FRANCISCA MARIAH KRAH as son and daughter of Barangay Ahin and ti named *"BAHYUN"* and *"BANGANAY"* which are native names of the Kalanguyas;

RESOLVED further & FINALLY that copies of this resolution be given to them in good faith and other copies shall be kept in the Barangay for record purposes;

DONE this 7th day of April 2012 at Barabgay Ahin, Municipality of Tinoc, Province of Ifugao, Philippines.

Unanimously carried:

EDWARDO MARTIN
Barangay Council

ELIZABETH AWILAN
Barangay Council

FELIMON TABUNNAC
Barangay Council

JOHN YAOS
Brgy. Council

ALEX GAYAHO
Barangay Council

FRANCIS AWILAN
Farmers Organization (AFDO)

FLORENCIO TAYABAN
Council of Elders

FIDELA TAYABAN
Womens Sector

ANTHONY AWAKAN
Teaching Staff

Approved:

SAMSON BENITO
Barangay Captain