

LES SUIDÉS EN CONTEXTE RITUEL À L'ÉPOQUE CONTEMPORAINE

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Trans-temporal pigs: humans, spirits
and the temporal multiplicity of pigs
in Ifugao, the Philippines

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Trans-temporal pigs: humans, spirits and the temporal multiplicity of pigs in Ifugao, the Philippines

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ABSTRACT

In the highland province of Ifugao, the Philippines, humans and spirits exist together but belong nevertheless to two different temporal dimensions. Pigs are central for enacting relations between humans and spirits, but their exact role as temporal mediators have not yet been thoroughly explained. In this article, I ask therefore how Ifugao pigs work to connect and disconnect humans and spirits across these temporal divides. I suggest an approach to pigs that sees them as 'trans-temporal hinges' that enable the transformations of relations between multiple disparate but still co-existing temporalities. Revolving around the disputes and tensions created by the pigs I planned to butcher at a farewell party celebrating the end of my fieldwork, the article outlines the different ways in which pigs operate to engender trans-temporal relations. Looking at pigs involvement in specific human-spirit relational assemblages, I show how pigs can inhibit the actualization of a future inheritance of a house and how they can potentially enable an authorization of prestige by the ancestors. Describing their role in sacrificial animals, I demonstrate how they also can set in motion both conjunctions and disjunctions of trans-temporal differentiations, and I show how conversion to Protestant Christianity rejection of sacrificed pigs as they may put converts in touch with a demonic past. Eliciting thus the various ways in which pigs contribute to the temporalization of social life, I argue that Ifugao pigs must be understood as inherently temporally multiple.

KEY WORDS

Sacrifice,
future,
Christianity,
multispecies anthropology.

RÉSUMÉ

Porcs trans-temporels : humains, esprits et multiplicité temporelle des porcs à Ifugao, Philippines.

Dans la province montagneuse d'Ifugao, aux Philippines, les humains et les esprits coexistent mais appartiennent à deux dimensions temporelles différentes. Les porcs figurent au cœur des relations entre les humains et les esprits, mais leur rôle exact en tant que médiateurs temporels n'a pas encore été expliqué en détail. Dans cet article, nous examinons donc comment les porcs Ifugao permettent de connecter et de déconnecter les humains et les esprits à travers cette fracture temporelle. Nous proposons d'aborder les porcs comme des « charnières trans-temporelles » qui permettent la transformation des relations entre de multiples temporalités disparates mais toujours coexistantes.

MOTS CLÉS
Sacrifice,
avenir,
christianisme,
anthropologie multi-
espèces.

Autour des disputes et des tensions créées par les porcs que nous avions prévu de tuer et de découper lors de la fête d'adieu qui célébrait la fin de notre terrain, nous décrivons les différentes façons dont les porcs opèrent pour engendrer des relations trans-temporelles. En examinant leur implication dans les assemblages relationnels spécifiques entre humains et esprits, nous montrons comment les porcs peuvent empêcher l'actualisation de l'héritage à venir d'une maison et comment ils peuvent potentiellement générer une autorisation de prestige de la part des ancêtres. Décrivant leur rôle d'animaux sacrificiels, nous démontrons aussi de quelle façon ils peuvent mettre en mouvement des conjonctions et des disjonctions de différenciations trans-temporelles. Nous examinons enfin comment la conversion des Ifugao à un christianisme protestant a conduit ces derniers à rejeter le sacrifice des porcs, comme si ces derniers pouvaient mettre les convertis en contact avec un passé démoniaque. En expliquant ainsi les diverses manières dont les porcs contribuent à la temporalisation de la vie sociale, nous soutenons que les porcs Ifugao doivent être compris comme étant intrinsèquement multiples dans le temps.

INTRODUCTION

"I cannot afford to buy you an extra pig!" Tears were running down the cheeks of Maya, the middle-aged woman who owned the little house I was renting in Batad, a small village in the province of Ifugao, in Northern Luzon, the Philippines. We were squatting on the floor inside the one-roomed, stilted and grass-roofed so-called "native house" which sat behind the corrugated iron house where she resided with her child and from which she ran an unostentatious little store. We were talking about the upcoming farewell party I was planning to throw to mark the ending of a year-long fieldwork I had conducted in the village. I wanted to reciprocate the hospitality the villagers had shown me and planned to buy two large pigs that I would butcher, cook and share with my friends in the village. I had yet to decide exactly where the party should take place, and Maya's house was one possible venue. Maya was eager. She knew the event would benefit her greatly as it would enhance her social standing considerably. However, as much as Maya appreciated my suggestion for having the party at her house, she adamantly claimed that my two pigs would not be enough, and without financial capacities to buy an extra pig, she regretfully had to turn down the possibility of hosting the party.

Maya was not alone in speculating about what the party could potentially entail for them. As rumours about the upcoming event began to spread among the villagers, what started out as a seemingly innocent plan for a farewell celebration, soon developed into a source of tension and dispute between families and *sitios*¹ in the village. At the centre of all these tensions were the prospects of the two pigs I had yet to buy and the potential extra one that also other people than Maya wanted to add to those.

Knowing about the central role pigs played in the history of the area and in the social life in the village, I should perhaps have foreseen the complications my upcoming pig butchering could cause. The village of Batad is located in

middle of the Cordillera Mountains, a region known for its UNESCO World Heritage listed rice terraces and for being a place where traditional animistic practices are still thriving. Pigs are heavily implicated in the ethnohistory of the Ifugao people. They used to live in the Northern Luzon lowland valleys, but when Spanish colonialists arrived in the 17th century they sought refuge by moving uphill into the Cordillera Mountains. According to archaeological records, this period also included a marked increase in ritual feasting of pigs, something which seems to be related to the development of a ranked power system where individuals engaged in competitive ritual feasting to mobilize laborers for building irrigated rice terraces (Lapeña & Acabado 2017). This resistance to colonial powers translated later into a cultural identity partly constructed around an opposition to lowland governmental powers, where the cultivation of a local animistic religion centred around pig sacrifices to spirits and ancestors played a crucial role as alternative to the lowland Catholic church. The involvement of the Cordillera highland communities in capitalist economics has also been shaped by the continued centrality of pig feasting as events through which monetary wealth become legitimized and converted into prestigious rank (Voss 1987). The last thirty years or so, many Evangelical and Pentecostal Christian congregations have been established in the region. A main target of the proselytizing practices of these congregations have been the animistic pig practices which are seen as demonic (Remme 2019). Throughout history, then, pigs have contributed in various ways to giving shape to the socio-political dynamics of life in Ifugao, as they have in many other parts of the Philippines (Gibson 1986; Laugrand 2015; Smith 2020). As I will show, pigs still play a crucial role in Ifugao by mediating relations between humans and spirits, as means through which people demonstrate rank and gain prestige, and in the maintenance of kinship relations by being exchanged as meat.

Pigs were evidently far from accessories to social life in the village of Batad. On the contrary, pigs were inherent parts of what we could call a more-than-human social dynamics (Tsing 2013) through which humans, spirits, animals, plants came into being and transformed (Haraway 2008; Kirksey &

1. A *sitio* is a cluster of houses. Ifugao villages consist of a collection of *sitios* that lays scattered on mountain ridges, in forest clearings and amidst irrigated rice terraces.

Helmreich 2010; Van Dooren *et al.* 2016). For many in the village, the world in its fluid constellations was not considered a product of human efforts alone, but was rather “an always already inhabited achievement of heterogeneous social encounters where [...] not all actors are human” (Whatmore 2002: 3; Lien *et al.* 2018). This goes, I might add, for both those in the village who adhered to the traditional animistic practices, and for those who had converted to Pentecostal Christianity, although they differed significantly with regards to what kinds of nonhuman actors were involved and what kinds of relations with them humans should engage in.

Moreover, as a closer inspection of the social dynamics in which my farewell pigs became swept up in will reveal, my pigs, and the extra one, were closely entangled with Maya and other people's relations with the ancestral past and their imaginations, hopes for and attempts at bettering their future. The pigs had evident temporal aspects, and I suggest in this article, that in order to understand the role of pigs in Ifugao social dynamics, we need to account for the pigs' temporal dimensions. In that endeavour, I draw on contributions to more-than-human scholarship that show how animals and other nonhuman entities are, through their involvement in “becoming-with” (Haraway 2008) relations with humans, heavily implicated in the temporalization of social life (Whatmore 2002). As several anthropologists and human geographers have shown, the co-production by humans and nonhumans of the temporalities and rhythms of social life can register in various ways, such as for instance the careful attention and adaptations to the temporal polyrhythms of plants, animals and soil and the coordination of these to market developments in commercial agriculture (Brice 2014; Puig de la Bellacasa 2015; Gan 2016; Phillips 2020), more mundanely in the intertwining of the rhythms of humans, pets and house plants in the making of homes (Power 2009) and gardens (Robbins 2007; Power 2010), or through the emergence of seasonality through the intertwining of riverine, tidal and social rhythms (Jones 2011; Krause 2013). Nonhumans, be they animals, plants or others kinds, are, as these contributions make evident, often part and parcel of the temporalization of social encounters, often also in ways that stretch beyond the immediacy of these encounters (Fitz-Henry 2017; Phillips 2020).

However, while these more-than-human approaches to temporalities are helpful for attending to multispecies polyrhythms, many of them tend to emphasize the potential for peaceful and harmonious co-existence between humans and nonhumans and a corresponding synchronization of their different temporal rhythms (see Smith 2020). By looking rather at how different temporal horizons and rhythms are not always synchronous with each other, I attempt to elicit a more ambiguous view on these multispecies temporalities.

It is worth noticing here that the pigs Maya and I were talking about were, at this point, rather abstract. I had not yet bought any pigs, only speculated that perhaps it would be a good idea to do so. Neither had the extra pig materialized in any way beyond Maya lamenting its, to her, pressing absence. Despite the “speculative” quality of the pigs, they manifested as relational and affective effects, as Maya's tears

quite touchingly evidenced. What was less clear, however, was what kind of temporal properties these speculative pigs had. How could they cause such consternation even before they became present? Seeking to elicit the temporal dimensions of pigs in Ifugao, I suggest in this article, that it makes sense to see pigs as trans-temporal hinges, which Pedersen & Nielsen (2013: 122) describe as “a gathering point in which different temporalities are momentarily assembled”. I should add here that the argument I make rests on a certain notion of time different from the linear notion of time where events either precede or supersede each other as beads on a string (Hodges 2008). As will become apparent, the specific temporality of human-pig-spirit assemblages in Ifugao requires a different way of thinking about time, namely one in which time is a simultaneous co-existence of disparate temporalities related not linearly or cyclically, but transversally or trans-temporally (Pedersen & Nielsen 2013: 124). Pigs, I will argue, have a capacity to hinge together entities and phenomena of different temporalities and in this way work trans-temporally. This quality is, we should note, not restricted to actual pigs existing as manifest in the present, but is also a capacity held by pigs yet to become present.

Looking specifically at the ways in which pigs in a variety of ways partake in the social and temporal dynamics of social life in the village of Batad, I demonstrate in this article how pigs are central to the processes through which the temporal dimensions of relational assemblages emerge and transform. I do not intend here to provide a single and unified view on the temporality of pigs in Ifugao. Their multiple, contextually and situationally shifting involvements in various forms of human-spirit-animal assemblages prohibits such an approach. Rather, by taking the tensions created by the prospects of butchering pigs at my farewell party, I aim to unfold the various ways in which pigs are involved in the intersections of multiple temporal processes.

In the following I present therefore four different instances where pigs enter into human-spirit relational assemblages. First, I look at how the issue of the extra pig and the inability of Maya to provide it inhibited the actualisation of a particular future. Second, I show how my farewell pigs entered into another villager's attempt at enhancing his prestige. Third, I describe how pigs contribute to ritual achievements of specific human-spirit relational constellations, and fourth, I look at how pigs play a role in Protestant Christians' rejections of animistic traditions in order to generate a salvational future.

Showing how pigs are thus conducive in various ways to the processes of relational becoming of human-pig-spirit assemblages, I argue for the temporal multiplicity of pigs in Ifugao.

THE MISSING EXTRA PIG

The village of Batad lies in a valley where the steep hillsides are covered with irrigated rice terraces and where swidden gardens are scattered amidst and below the forest that covers the surrounding mountain ridges. Houses, some of the traditional stilt-built wooden variant and some made from concrete and



FIG. 1. — The village of Batad (Ifugao, Philippines). Photo credits: J. H. Z. Remme.

corrugated iron sheets, are clustered together in different parts of the valley, with trails running between them (Fig. 1). A river passes by further down the hill, and further up the valley, near the mountain pass, runs a partly cemented road leading towards the main town in the area, Banaue. Most of the approximately nine hundred villagers who lived in the village at the time were farmers who spent their days maintaining rice terraces, repairing terrace stone walls, planting, weeding and harvesting wet-rice as well as tending to their swidden gardens where they cultivated vegetables, sweet potatoes and other tubers and kept fruit trees. Some took up wage work for a while or studied in the lowlands or in larger towns in nearby provinces. Several families in the village turned their house into a lodge where they tended to the tourists who came there to hike and enjoy the views. Many families also kept a few chickens, had a dog or two and many raised pigs which during the day ran freely inside house compounds or along the trails.

Finding the two pigs I wanted for the farewell party would not be easy, my friends told me when I asked them to help out. Municipal elections were coming up and pigs were therefore unusually hard to come by. The candidates for the municipal council seats had bought up pretty much every pig available in the area. Handing out cuts of meat to potential voters was the only way for their campaigns to become successful. Pig prices had consequently skyrocketed, making it virtually impossible for people with meagre incomes, such as for instance Maya, to afford to buy pigs.

To Maya, this situation was potentially devastating. Her emotional response was partly due to her inability to show me the hospitality expected of her, but there were also significantly higher stakes involved, stakes that impacted her relation to the past and the potential unfolding of her future in a quite tangible way.

The native house that I rented for a couple of months, belonged to her late husband, Maggah. Maya and Maggah had moved in there when they married and lived together in the house until he got ill and eventually passed away. However, death is in Ifugao, as in many other parts of the Philippines and Southeast Asia (Cannell 2001; Appell & Appell 2003; Couderc & Sillander 2012), no final ending of life, but rather a transformation of the dead person into an ancestor. Human persons consist of two components, *odol* and *lennawa*, which translates into a corporal body and a life force respectively. *Lennawa* needs to be within the *odol* in order for the latter to live, but may temporarily leave the *odol* as it does when one dreams. When the *odol* dies, the *lennawa* of the deceased continues to live, albeit as an invisible ancestor, called *nun'apuh*. The *lennawa* thereby joins the ancestors and the hundreds of other kinds of spirits (see Barton 1946 for an overview), that together make up the spiritual world that people in the area lived and interacted with. These other kinds of spirits are referred to as *ba'i* which is often also used as a general term for spiritual beings, including ancestors, which is how I will use the term here.



FIG. 2. — Carrying the dead to the burial cave. Photo credits: J. H. Z. Remme.

Ba'i are ambiguous beings. They are for the most part absent from people's lives, but can on occasions make themselves known by appearing in people's dreams, taking the shape of an animal or by possessing the ritual experts, the *mumba'i*, who are trained and authorized to deal with them. The *ba'i* are able to influence the lives of humans positively by securing plentiful harvests and good health, but may also, particularly if offended or neglected, ruin harvests and make people ill and even kill them. It is primarily through rituals where humans invite *ba'i* to join them and receive sacrifices of chickens and pigs that the *ba'i* are propitiated. Although this conjunction of the spiritual world with the world of the living is crucial for securing good health and harvests, such close contact with the *ba'i* is also potentially dangerous since they, both *ba'i* and *nun'apuh*, are known to want take with them the *lennawa* of the living.

I want to stress here that although *ba'i* may at times become present in the here and now, the spiritual world is also and for the most part held to be located in a different spatio-temporal dimension. *Ba'i* are creatures who come from a mythical past, and ancestors are the *lennawa* of humans who used to be alive but have passed into the spiritual world. However, the past which the spiritual world is associated with is not a past that has passed for good, is rather a past that exists in another dimension, parallel to the world of the living. While both *ba'i* and *nun'apuh* therefore belong to the past, they both continue to exist albeit in a different dimension. This spiritual past relates therefore trans-temporally to the human present. Together they

make up a temporal multiplicity of overlapping but disparate temporalities. In the last couple of decades, the introduction of Pentecostal Christianity in the region has added an additional temporal dimension to the spiritual world. The various Pentecostal congregations that have been established in the area brand themselves as modern, civilized and moral in contrast to the spiritual and ancestor world which they see as uncivilized, immoral and belonging to a demonic "pagan past", as several of my Pentecostal informants termed it.

When Maggah died, then, his *lennawa* continued to live on and hover around in and near the house for quite some time. His presence there made it dangerous for Maya and her child to stay there, and she had to change her name, avoid washing and move out of the house so that Maggah would not find her. Normally, she could have moved back in when the five-days long burial rituals had been completed and Maggah had been put in his family's burial cave (Fig. 2). It is through these burial rituals that a newly deceased is eventually transformed into a *nun'apuh* proper and by that relocated both temporally and spatially to the spiritual world. However, the house had become subject to an inheritance conflict between Maggah's relatives, so Maya had to stay in her corrugated iron house.

The house was part of Maggah's *banoh*, which is items such as gold pendants, blankets, metal gongs, rice wine jars, spears and ritual paraphernalia that become the inheritance legacy when the owner dies. During the funeral rituals, Maggah's body had been carried from house to house among his relatives

for several days, and at each house they butchered pigs for the wakes. Only those who had sacrificed pigs to the wakes could make rightful claims on the *banoh*. Those of Maggah's relatives who now claimed the right to inherit the house, held that they had contributed more pigs than others and that they therefore were the rightful owners of the house. Maya too had sacrificed pigs, and she very much wanted to keep the house. Nothing was settled yet, and Maya hoped that having my pigs killed at the house could help her get the upper hand in the negotiations.

However, Maggah had been a wealthy man. Not so much in terms of money, but in terms of what counts more than money in the village, namely ownership of rice terraces. The irrigated terraces that cover the hillsides are owned individually and are the basis for the village's internal social hierarchy. Those who own the largest, best situated and prestigious fields are considered of the highest rank, *adangyan*, while those who own less or the lesser prestigious terraces are considered belonging to two lower ranks, *nawotwot mu od'odolna* (poor but have enough rice to last to make it to next harvest) and *nawotwot* (poor). However, ownership alone is not enough to gain and maintain rank and prestige. Those of higher rank must sacrifice more and larger pigs than others whenever they arrange a ritual, and if they cannot afford to do so, they easily lose the prestige they once had. Maggah owned a quite prestigious collection of terraces, and the prestige this gave Maggah allowed him, but also demanded of him, to sacrifice a lot of pigs at ritual occasions. Even when Maggah now had died, it was expected in the village that his native house should be a place where a lot of pigs were sacrificed. Now that I had plans for butchering my two pigs at the house, Maya was certain, as were others in the village, that my two pigs were not enough. Without at least one additional pig, Maggah and the rest of his ancestors would become offended and possibly retaliate by making her ill.

For Maya, her inability to purchase that extra pig was therefore of vital importance. Her future well-being, both economically, prestige-wise and health-wise, depended on that extra pig. It was only by making sure that she handled well the relations between herself and the *nun'apuh* that she could achieve this, and those relations could only be enacted through the medium of pigs.

Pigs played, then, a central role in the relational dynamics through which Maya ensured her continued life and well-being. However, it is worth stressing here that the pigs' role in this is not simply to be material symbols of the interaction between two already predefined separate entities, humans and *ba'i*. Rather, I see pigs here as implicated in what Karen Barad calls "intra-actions" (Barad 2003; Birke *et al.* 2004; Maurstad *et al.* 2013), in contrast to the term "interactions". In Barad's rendering, interactions point to a relational practice where the entities involved already exist independently of the relations and then engage in relations with each other. In intra-actions, entities rather emerge from and become through relational practices. Intra-action thus signifies "the mutual constitution of entangled agencies" (Barad 2007: 33). Human becoming is, I venture here, an ongoing and potentially shifting intra-action

where humans are "becoming-with" other beings including pigs, spirits and other humans. To Maya, the problem with the lacking extra pig, became therefore of a quite pressing concern. Her future depended on how she dealt with the past and on how Maggah and other ancestors reacted to her attempts of influencing that future. As such, my pigs and the lacking extra pig became crucial for Maya's attempt at situating herself in a particular relation to both past and future.

However, the extra pig was indeed still lacking, and she did not see any possibilities for getting her hands on money to buy it either. She could have just ignored the matter and left it at that, but when her inability to have pigs sacrificed at her house became known to both fellow villagers and the spirits, the missing extra pig drew her into a particular trans-temporal situation, shaping her relation to both the past and inhibited the actualization of a particular potential future scenario.

THE PRESTIGIOUS EXTRA PIG

While Maya was lamenting her inability to purchase an extra pig, others in the village had already made plans for how they could make use of my pigs. The house I rented from Maya was only for a shorter period as I wanted to experience what it was like to live in a "native house". Throughout my year-long stay in the village, I rented a room at a tourist lodge in a *sitio* further up the hill, and I gradually became part of the family who ran it. Agglib, the father of the family, and I had become close, so close that he often referred to me as his brother. To him, it was only natural that we too should join forces, or pigs, so that we both could achieve what we wanted. In contrast to Maya, Agglib could actually afford to add another pig or two. Being a well-known wood carver and a tourist lodge owner, he had a relatively steady income. Neither Agglib or his wife were, however, originally from Batad, but from neighbouring villages. None of them therefore had inheritance rights in any of the terraces in the valley, and they were therefore striving to achieve prestige and recognition in the village. In fact, their presence as outsiders was an underlying tension in much of their interactions with many in the village, including quite strained relationships with some of their neighbours. Part of the tension stemmed from Agglib's attempt at manoeuvring his way into the prestigious *adangyan* rank. His access to money meant that he could afford to buy pigs whenever he arranged a ritual, and he was known to push the limits of what his rank allowed him to sacrifice, trying by that to convert his economic capital into prestige. Still unable to get hold of terrace land, Agglib had actually managed to purchase some quite prestigious metal gongs and rice wine jars from a neighbouring family of higher rank (Fig. 3). The family had experienced severe illness, and treatments at the hospital and several healing rituals with lots of pigs to be sacrificed had put a serious strain on their already limited economic capital. Agglib had offered to help the family by purchasing some of their prestigious ritual objects, while also seeing this as an opportunity to gain prestige.

The problem for Agglib was that according to custom, he was not really entitled to own these gongs and wine jars. As mentioned above, such items are part of the *banoh* and are seen as attached to particular rice terraces. Whenever one inherits such a terrace, the *banoh* customarily is expected to go along with it. In practice, however, it often happens that different *banoh* objects become dispersed among siblings and sometimes they are even sold out of the family. The *banoh* objects have, however, a clear link to the past and to the spiritual world. Their old age and their connection to the spirit world is part of the power these objects hold when used in rituals. Gongs are instrumental in getting *ba'i* to come to rituals, for instance, and old jars are known to make better rice wine, more to the liking of the *ba'i*, than newer ones. In fact, many of these objects exist in both ancient and new versions, where the latter are considered both less prestigious and less ritually powerful than the former. *Nun'apuh* and *ba'i* are held to dislike dispersal of *banoh* items, and any ritual use that is not authorized by them is considered potentially dangerous. It is therefore crucial that new owners perform a ritual where they sacrifice pigs and ask permission from the *ba'i* and *nun'apuh* to own and use them authoritatively. Having recently purchased such gongs and rice wine jars, Agglib had to arrange such an authorizing ritual, but the rising pig prices during election time had become a problem for him too. He had consulted the *mumba'i*, the ritual experts, on how many pigs an authorization ritual would require, and found that if he could add an extra pig to my two, both of us could achieve what we wanted. "Two pigs are not enough for a farewell party", he claimed and suggested that if he could just buy that extra pig, that would be sufficient for both me and him.

Maya's tears had made quite an impression on me, but I understood also that Agglib counted on me. Not quite knowing what to do, I discussed the farewell party with the village's *barangay* council, and decided eventually to do as they suggested, that is to arrange the farewell party at the school ground. Thinking that the school might be a neutral place, I presented the idea to Agglib who reacted with both disappointment and fury. "How can you do this to your brother?", he said. It took us a few days to find back together, and then he revealed that to him the school ground was far from neutral since the principal actually was one of his major rivals. Having the party at the school would put him in a bad light in respect to the principal, he admitted, but added that he did understand that having the party at his house would mean that many of my informants, who he knew looked badly on him, would not attend. However, what if we did it at the school so that many people could come and I made him responsible for doing the butchering? "Then I'll be the one!", he said. Never mind the authorization ritual, that could wait. Being the one who was not only responsible for butchering pigs at his rival's home turf, but also the one having contributed with one of the pigs, that would considerably enhance his social standing in the village, and in addition his purchase of the prestigious jars and gongs would not be that controversial.



FIG. 3. — Prestigious rice wine jars at ritual. Photo credits: J. H. Z. Remme.

The pigs I had bought and the extra pig Agglib wanted to buy became in that way involved in Agglib's attempt at drawing on the authoritative powers of the past to make his claims to higher rank legitimate and acceptable. His anticipations for the future thus became present in and through these pigs, although they remained only a potential since the school ground solution to the problem restrained the full realization of that ambition.

PIGS AS TIME-TRICKERS

When the day for the farewell party came, Agglib had mobilized friends and neighbours to help out with the killing, butchering and cooking of the pigs. As people arrived from all parts of the village, the *mumba'i*, with whom I had spent a great deal of time, were conspicuously absent. Having talked to several of them in the days running up to the event, I knew why, and again it was the pigs and the issue of what to do with them that caused concerns.

"If you do not sacrifice your pigs, I will not come", said Gem-oh, one of the *mumba'i*. To him, it was clear that since I had been there researching their rituals and spiritual world, I should of course also invite the *ba'i*. He and his fellow *mumba'i* should officiate, perform their invocations so that the *ba'i* would arrive and receive what they expected of me.



FIG. 4. — *Mumba'i* putting chicken on pig to check *ba'i*'s acceptance of the sacrifice. Photo credits: J. H. Z. Remme.

We would not dare offending them, would we? I was hesitant, however. I had indeed spent a lot of time investigating the spiritual world and participated in a number of rituals together with the *mumba'i*, but I also knew that my friends in the village who had converted to the Evangelical or Pentecostal churches would not come, and actually could not eat any of the pork, if the pigs had been sacrificed to the *ba'i*. Again, tensions with regards to the pigs emerged and again these tensions were, as I will show below, related to the different ways in which the pigs became central to the enactment of trans-temporal relations.

The *mumba'i* are central for managing people's relations with the spiritual world. They have the knowledge and experience required for invoking *ba'i* during rituals and making sure that they depart from the scene after the ritual is done. While rituals related to agriculture were still held, recent years have seen a relative decrease in relation to health and healing rituals. Many of these latter forms of rituals aim to change the near future (Guyer 2007) by ritually entering into the temporal processes that both separate and connect past, present and future. For instance, ritual singing and telling of stories about how mythical characters dealt with difficulties in the past will relocate these solutions from the mythical past to the human future. It is particularly the spatio-temporal rearrangements that takes place in these rituals that enable such a form of what Moroşanu and Ringel refer to as "time-tricking", i.e. "ways in which people individually or collectively attempt to modify, manage, bend, distort, speed up, slow down or structure the times they are living in" (Moroşanu & Ringel 2016: 17). The sacrificial rituals can be understood as spatio-temporal compres-

sion, that is a situation where everyday temporal and spatial differentiations between the presentness of human world and the spatial and temporal distant spiritual world are temporarily dissolved, creating a virtual space-time (Kapferer 2005) from which new spatial and temporal arrangements can be made.

Although sacrificial healing rituals vary somewhat according to the type of illness and the rank of the sick person, these rituals follow the same common pattern. When a family has managed to acquire the required number of pigs, several *mumba'i* come to the house, often during night-time, and already by that start reversing the temporal division between night and day which is associated with *ba'i* and humans respectively. They start invoking the *ba'i* and the ancestors of the host family. When the *ba'i* arrive, they temporarily possess the *mumba'i* and are given a cup of rice wine. At this point, the pigs lay waiting outside the house, and do not directly take part in the ritual. Having completed the invocations, the *mumba'i* will eventually take with them the rice wine jars and other ritual paraphernalia, descend the house ladder and sit down in the *kolhoddan*, the stone covered ground right below the house door which is considered a highly liminal space where *ba'i* are prone to gather particularly at dusk and dawn.

During the morning, they start invoking the *ba'i* again in order to relocate the *ba'i* to the *kolhoddan*. During the invocations, *ba'i* again temporarily possess the *mumba'i* who now dance, wearing different ritual costumes such as a feathered headdress, a ritual backpack and a spear. Dancing slowly towards the pigs, the *mumba'i* performs what is termed the *ewel* which means a spatial relocation of the *ba'i*. Having completed that, everyone's attention is directed at the pigs. One of the



FIG. 5. — *Mumba'i* singing ritual songs in the *kolhoddan*. Photo credits: J. H. Z. Remme.

mumba'i takes a rooster and put it calmly to rest on the pig's back and dances over it with a hunting spear, touching the bird gently with the spear causing it to fly up from the pig's back (Fig. 4). This indicates that the *ba'i* accept the ritual offerings and that the killing of the pigs can begin.

The ritual procedures so far consist consequently of a movement of *ba'i* from their spatial and temporally distant dimension, down to the house, then to the *kolhoddan*, and further on to the pigs. The *ba'i*, who otherwise belong to the past, are now present in and near the pigs. It is not until this spatio-temporal compression is achieved that the temporal rearrangements of the victim's future can begin. The pigs are killed and put in the *kolhoddan* from which the *mumba'i* sing ritual songs about how similar problems were dealt with in the past (Fig. 5). These songs, accompanied by metal gongs and other rhythmic instruments, are held to shape the victim's future from one of illness and potential death to one of healing and well-being.

Although the pig induced spatio-temporal compression is potentially very rewarding, the close presence of *ba'i* is also, as mentioned earlier, a highly dangerous situation. It is therefore necessary to re-establish a spatial and temporal differentiation of the human and the spirit world, where again the pigs are the means through which this is effectuated.

When the *mumba'i* are finished with the ritual songs and myths, the pig carcasses are butchered into specific cuts. One part of the meat is given to the host family's relatives, another part as reciprocations for the money, rice wine, chicken or rice bundles visitors to the ritual bring as gifts, while a third part is cooked and served with rice to the visitors. A few cuts are also fried, but none of the visitors will taste these as they are sepa-

rated off from the rest and served only to the *mumba'i* and the *ba'i*. While all the visitors wait for the boiled food to be served outside the house, the *mumba'i* ascend the ladder and call the *ba'i* to join them inside the house where they eat together the fried meat before the *mumba'i* finally tell the *ba'i* and *nun'apuh* to leave. Not until they have departed, the other visitors receive their food and can eat their cuts of meat and rice.

The cooking method and the spatial location for the consumption of pig meat thus become instrumental for performing the necessary re-differentiation of the spirit world and the human world in the later stages of the ritual.

In sacrificial rituals, pigs are consequently involved in multiple and to a certain extent opposing spatio-temporal transformations. They are instrumental for "presenting" the otherwise spatially and temporally distant spiritual world, but after they have been killed, they get an opposite role of contributing to the "pasting" and "distancing" of this world in respect to the here and now of the human world. The pigs sacrificed in rituals were thereby central to the very "time-tricking" effect of these rituals, working trans-temporally in different directions to both effectuate spatio-temporal conjunctions and differentiations and of "futuring" past solutions to present day problems.

PIGS FROM THE DEMONIC PAST

While these spatio-temporal dimensions of sacrificial pigs are central to the ritual efficacy of healing rituals, the question of why it mattered so much for the *mumba'i* that my pigs were butchered in a ritual manner was also connected to a different



Fig. 6. — Cuts of pig meat for relatives. Photo credits: J. H. Z. Remme.

kind of temporal dynamics. For the farewell party also became embroiled in the ongoing tensions between those who adhered to the traditional *ba'i*-oriented practices and those who had converted to Protestant forms of Christianity such as the Evangelical and Pentecostal churches.

Although villagers who combined the traditional ancestor and animist religion with Catholicism were in the majority in the village, both the Evangelical and Pentecostal congregations were steadily attracting members. Having been the target of various attempts at conversion to Protestant Christianity for several decades, many of those who had not converted saw these churches as a serious threat to their way of living. Indeed, some were quite explicit about their appreciation for my presence there as they saw ethnographic documentation as one potential bulwark against the potential annihilation of cultural traditions by Protestants. Although I did spend the majority of my fieldwork working with those who practiced the traditional spirit-oriented religion, I had also spent quite a lot of time with members of the various Protestant congregations. The fact that, to my Protestant informants, sacrificing my pigs to the *ba'i* would make their participation morally apprehensive and possibly also dangerous, was one of the major reasons for my attempt at making the farewell party a relatively “neutral” event.

Members of the Protestant churches were adamant that their conversion was to a religion that was significantly different from the spirit-oriented one. They did not entirely reject the

existence of *ba'i* and *nun'apuh*, but referred to them rather as demons and representatives of Satan. It was necessary to distance themselves from these as much as possible and seek refuge in the protective salvation provided by the Holy Spirit. However, while recognizing *ba'i* and demons as dangerous forces existing in the present, they also conceptualized the *ba'i*, *nun'apuh* and the ritual practices related to them as somehow belonging to the past. They saw themselves as “modern” and “civilized” compared to the “pagan” traditions that belonged to “the olden days”, and staying away from sacrificial rituals was an important form of enacting that particular spatio-temporal situation. However, also for them, the pastness of the demonic spirit world related trans-temporally to the present. It was there as a co-existing potential forever on the verge of becoming actualized (Ingold 2000: 11, 12).

Pigs got a particular role in this since the exchange of pig meat is so vital for enacting relations, including kin relations. Cognatic kinship is the basis for all kin relations in the village and contributes to the wide networks of potential kin relations among the villagers. However, cognatically based kin relations are considered dormant if they are not activated by the exchange of specific cuts of meat from sacrificed pigs. When a family hosts a sacrificial ritual, the pigs are cut into pieces, some of which constitute the *bolwa'*, which are cuts that go to the husband and wife's relatives. Recipients of these cuts divide these again and distribute them further to their relatives, so that meat from a single pig offering may reach an extensive network of people, including up to several hundred people. Another part of the meat may be given as *ilang*, which refers to meat exchange agreements where two families who are not kin decide to exchange meat whenever they arrange a ritual. Families engaged in *ilang* relations are considered relatives and may for instance not intermarry (Fig. 6).

That pig meat exchange is a primary way of enacting kin relations is the source of moral quandary for converts to Protestant churches. Conversion is an individual matter, and there are many families in the village where only one or a few of the members have converted while the other still engage with *ba'i* and *nun'apuh* and sacrifice pigs. Converted members of families are often still invited to participate in sacrificial rituals, but reported that they often felt they had to reject since going there would put them in too close contact with the demons. Neither could they eat any of the meat served at these occasions since the meat would be contaminated by demonic influence. Staying away from such rituals was, however, not the hardest part of this. Even if most of them kept away from sacrificial rituals, their relatives kept sending them *bolwa'*. Nevertheless, converts had to reject also these gifts of meat since they came from pigs that had been offered to the demons. Accepting *bolwa'* meat could represent an immediate danger to them, but it could also set in motion a more temporally oriented process of “backsliding”, which was considered a morally apprehensive laps back to a way of living that belonged to one's personal pre-conversion past as well as to a pagan stage that the community should have left behind.

To the converts, then, the sacrificial pigs made the demonic pastness uncomfortably present, and staying away and rejecting *bolwa'* was, as of yet, the best available solution to them. Some pastors had suggested that they perhaps should try to purify or sanctify the cuts of meat by praying over them, while others advised their church members to best avoid it completely. Converts did so not without considerable difficulty, however, since their rejection of *bolwa'* often caused serious tensions and dispute among relatives. The sacrificial pigs represented a continuous potential for the demonic past becoming actualized as present, and this would severely inhibit their anticipated future salvation.

CONCLUSION

Relations between humans and *ba'i* are central to social life in Ifugao, so central one might say that they are constitutive to the very becoming of both humans and *ba'i* as relational assemblages. These relations have evident temporal aspects as they influence people's relations to the past and their imaginations of and hopes for their future. Pigs are at the absolute core of these processes. It is through pigs that one can attempt to live up to the expectations laid down by the past. It is through pigs that future oriented projects of prestige enhancements can be anchored in the past. It is through pigs that the ritual spatio-temporal re-arrangements can be made so that solutions to problems from the past can be "presented" and provide a healthy future, and it is through pigs, their rejection that is, that converts can distance themselves from a demonic past forever threatening to burst through and obstruct their future salvation. Within a temporal ontology consisting of disparate but overlapping temporalities, pigs become crucial as trans-temporal hinges and thus inherently part of the processes of ongoing temporalization of human-*ba'i* relational assemblages.

However, as I have shown here, they do not partake in this temporalization in any singular or unambiguous way. Rather, they are involved in temporalization in a multitude of ways that are not always compatible or provide a unified temporal orientation. They may change their role at different stages of a ritual, for instance, as they do when they first contribute to spatio-temporal conjunctions of the human and *ba'i* worlds and later are conducive to re-establishing the disjunction between these worlds. They may be involved in different temporal horizons at the same time, as they do when they are used for influencing the personal near future while at the same time being inscribed in longer term salvational horizons. As parts of the human-pig-*ba'i* assemblages, the pigs are infused contextually and situationally in a multiplicity of temporalities that makes them temporally very powerful creatures. It was perhaps only suitable, then, that a party intended to mark the ending a period of close engagement with a community, set in motion so many discussions and tensions revolving around what to do with my pigs and the possibilities and consequences of Maya and Agglib's abilities or inabilities to purchase an extra pig.

I must admit that several times before we finally got to arrange the farewell party, I regretted having decided to buy the two pigs. When the day for the party eventually came, however, it turned out to be a success. The villagers showed up, many dressed up their traditional red and black g-strings and skirts. Agglib oversaw the event and seemed as happy as ever, and when the *mumba'i* eventually also turned up, the pig meat was shared with everyone present with wishes of good luck and hopes for a return in the not so long future. What happened to Maya's house, however, remains unclear, but I am afraid my decision did not help her much in securing a much anticipated future habitation in the house she had shared with her loved one.

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