

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

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ABSTRACT ORIGINAL

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.