

Vortrag im Oberseminar
Montag, 31.05.2021

18:15 - 20 Uhr: Zoom-Meeting

Dr. Jonathan Alderman (LMU München)

The Personhood of the Andean House: Materiality, Conviviality and Envy in Rural Bolivia

In rural Andean Bolivia, personhood and community is defined by intersubjective reciprocal relations each person has with their human and nonhuman neighbours. This paper examines the role of the house as a living being and a conduit between its inhabitants and the rest of the ayllu (the rural Andean community defined by reciprocal relations between all beings). Houses commonly made from adobe materially connect their inhabitants with a sacred landscape and rituals performed at their construction create the house as a living being in its own right. For the Kallawayas, an indigenous Andean Bolivian nation, the house is an assemblage of energy with its inhabitants and the landscape, a fractal representation of the homologous structure of the ayllu.

Over time, the materiality of houses have been changing, as iron rooves and brick have gradually been replacing straw and adobe over the last forty years. The change in materiality has been particularly noticeable since 2011, when the Bolivian state housing agency began donating brick houses nationwide. The housing programme has been accompanied by a rhetoric of Vivir Bien (living well) – that these donating houses will enable people to live well. The state discourse of Vivir Bien, ubiquitous in all government programmes under Evo Morales developed as an alternative development philosophy from an idyllic vision of harmonious living cohabitation in the ayllu, the rural Andean community. However, the houses which are not guaranteed to be awarded to all members of a community who apply, appear rather to have the potential to disturb communal equilibrium, by creating the conditions for envy, as well as materially altering the house as a mediator between the household and an animate landscape.

Oberseminar

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