

Tao Sule-DuFour

Tupinikim Chegou Agora!

Ethnographic, Phenomenological Description as a Mode of Architectural Interpretation'

In this talk, I will present aspects of my doctoral research, which is entitled: 'The Sense of Architecture in Husserlian Phenomenology: The Example of a Candomblé-Caboclo Ritual of Tupinikim'. Tupinikim is the name of an autochthonous entity in Brazil, generically referred to as a caboclo. Experienced as a 'he', Tupinikim manifests himself during specific ritual practices of a Candomblé house, called the Candomblé-Caboclo of Tupinikim. Candomblé is the name of a religion in Brazil, which is based largely on the cultivation of a pantheon of Yoruba divinities called orixás, and reflecting influences of Catholicism and the beliefs of the indigenous peoples of Brazil. The manifestation of Tupinikim is experienced as his incarnation in the body of the head of the Candomblé house, called the mãe-de-santo (mother-of-saint). At the instant of his incarnation, Tupinikim is said to have 'just now arrived!' ('chegou agora!'). During this presentation, we will explore the significance of the architectural environment for one of the rituals in which Tupinikim 'arrives', called a reunião. Certain difficult philosophical and methodological issues are implicated in such a task, which might otherwise appear straightforward. We will consider these issues in principle. To address them, I propose that an explicitly Husserlian manner of phenomenological description can serve as a way to be true to the architectural understandings inherent in the experience, and at the same time function as a mode of architectural knowledge.

Tao Sule-DuFour is an architect. He trained at the School of Architecture of The Cooper Union, following which he pursued graduate research in the history and philosophy of architecture at the Department of Architecture, Cambridge University. He has recently completed doctoral research at Cambridge on the philosophy of architecture, exploring its significance for the traditional practice of ethnography.