

RECOVERING VOICES

Seminar Series in Endangered Languages and Indigenous Knowledge



Dr. Javier Carrera Rubio
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presents:

Voices of a Yanomami Myth: A Dialogical Approach to the Study of Verbal Art

Thursday November 12, 2015, 12:00-1:00pm
Cooper Room (Room E207-A), NMNH

Abstract: Ellen Basso (1986), commenting on the dialogues in South American indigenous Kalapalo myth narratives, noted that one of the more striking aspects of these narratives "is the amount and variety of quoted speech embedded in the story." Basso writes that the importance of dialogues in the narratives is such that "we must strongly consider the possibility that those narratives are 'about' dialogues." In this presentation, following Basso's insights, I will explore a number of dialogues in a Yanomami myth narrative and describe, by means of ethnography, what these dialogues are about. Following Mikhail Bakhtin, I argue that the multiple voices and viewpoints incorporated into Yanomami narrative dialogism constitute encodings of sociality and should be understood in their dynamic relationship with the context of the everyday. Finally, the presentation aims to show the fertility of a kind of analysis that foregrounds dialogical aspects in the study of Yanomami verbal art.

Bio: Javier Carrera Rubio received his PhD in Anthropology (2005) from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland. Since 1990, he has been working among the Native American Yanomami in the Upper Orinoco, (Amazonas State) Venezuela, serving as an anthropology advisor to the Yanomami association, SUYAO (Shaponos Unidos Yanomami del Alto Orinoco), the Upper Orinoco Biosphere Reserve Project for the Venezuelan Ministry of Environment, and the Yanomami Health Plan for the Venezuelan Ministry of Health. Most recently, he has been a visiting research collaborator in the Center of Anthropology at the IVIC (Venezuelan Institute for Scientific Research), and Assistant Research Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Maryland, College Park.

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