

VORTRAG IM OBERSEMINAR
LEITUNG: PROF. DR. SAHANA UDUPA
MONTAG, 05.06.2023

18-20 Uhr, Raum L-155

Dr. Julia Sauma (Goldsmiths, University of London)

Waiting to Leave: On Liminality, Marronage and Protection in the Brazilian Amazon

Abstract

The Amazon region plays, at the very least, a dual role in the Brazilian political imagination: as a resource frontier it is prominent in narratives about national wealth, economic growth and protecting national borders; as an Indigenous and “more-than-human” space it is central in efforts to shift contemporary political, legal and ecological conceptions and practices. As opposed as these positions and narratives are, they also overlap in their certainty about what is at stake: the need to protect the nation, on the one hand, the need to protect Indigenous and more-than-human lives on the other. From the very beginning of my research with quilombola families and activists in the municipality of Oriximiná (Pará State), my attention was therefore drawn to the liminal, uncertain, space they inhabited as Black Amazonians. Liminality has a personal resonance for me in multiple ways, which I will touch on in this paper, and has influenced my previous explorations of liminality (Sauma 2007, 2014) as a sociogenic space (Roberts 2015) - that is, as a space that gives rise to particular practices and conceptions of building and sustaining social relations. Working with quilombolas in Oriximiná since 2006, my understanding of the everyday practices involved in the experience of permanent social liminality has deepened, and one of the practices I have become particularly interested in more recently is what I am calling, here, “waiting to leave.” This paper reflects on some of the different ways in which “waiting to leave” emerges as a liminal protective measure for quilombolas in the Amazon - a space that is, at once, theirs, and in which they are also said not to belong.

Oberseminar