“Language, Myth, and Aboriginal Australia: Proximity Breeds Inversion and Beyond”

Tuesday, April 12, 2011 • 4:00 p.m. • Museum of Anthropology

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This talk deals with linguistic and mythic complexity among various central Australian Aboriginal societies such as the Walbiri, Aranda, Kaitish, Warramunga, and the Pitjantjatjara among whom Yengoyan has done social anthropological fieldwork since 1966. Through intertribal borrowing of certain linguistic features and realms of myth which are more complex, one finds a pattern of “Proximity breeds/yields inversion.” A comparative case of these minute processes might also be found among the native peoples in the northwest areas of California such as the Karok, Tolowa, and Yurok.