Abstract

This study analyzes, from an anthropo-semiotic viewpoint, the asülajawaa, one of the rituals practiced by the Wayuu, indigenous people who inhabit the Guajira peninsula on the border between Colombia and Venezuela. The research is based on data gathered in 1998 from participants and people with knowledge of the ritual and is interpreted using the theories of Bastide (1976), Durand (1981) and the semiotics of Greimas (1979) as a basis. For analysis, the ritual was divided into sequences in order to inventory its components and reconstruct its syntaxes. Later, in a second phase, contents invested in the ritual syntaxes are analyzed and interpreted. Conclusions are that the asülajawaa is a ritual determined by dreams, which seeks to prevent, through abstinence and purification, the fulfillment of negative premonitions and to re-establish the threatened social equilibrium.

Keywords
Ritual, rite, syntaxes, reciprocity, asülajawaa