

## **L01 Dream Literacy workshop ASA2015.**

Additional information for potential participants:

The aim of this workshop is to help researchers relate creatively and analytically to their own and others dreams before, during and after the fieldwork experience.

Workshop process:

After an introduction, in which the domains, history and significance of of night dreams in anthropological research are scanned, and with reference to the relationship between the experience of myth and dream (see references below), a choice of exercises will be offered, accompanied by a light rhythmical drumming to enhance creativity and imaginary access:

a) An exercise in experiential dream re-entry and amplification of either the remembered night dreams of the researcher or the reported night dreams of the researcher's subjects of research. *Dream re-entry* refers to simply remembering the dream. *Dream amplification* refers to 'taking the dream forward' in your imagination with a prepared question. So for example, if, in your ethnographic 'field' you dreamt at night of talking with an important informant, but you were disturbed by bad weather, this workshop would assign 10-15 minutes to your remembering the details of the dream, the dream setting and context, and subsequently we would attempt to take the dream 'forward', for instance questioning 'how would the conversation have developed if the weather had stayed good'? You then imaginatively journey via your memory of the dream, thereby creating an inner space to ask your question. The same can be done with your memory of an informant's dream.

b) An exercise in experiential dream re-entry and amplification, but now working with another workshop participant as a partner, trying to take the

original dream of the partner forward. The process is the same as described under a), but in this exercise you share your remembered night dream with your partner and they do likewise; Together you develop a question that your partner will take into their imaginative recreation of your dream. So, in this exercise your chosen partner will go back into your dream of your unfinished conversation with your informant and dialogue imaginatively with him/her and then report back to you: surprisingly interesting results can be obtained from this exercise!

c) This is a new exercise that involves developing the actual understanding of the relationship between myth and dream. The focus of the imaginative ‘journey’ will focus on your memory and thus consist of an entry into and exploration of a mythical setting, asking pre-developed question. An example of such a mythical setting that you might have experienced during fieldwork can be a shamanic journey. In this exercise you can try out the roles of shaman, participant and observer in your mind. Alternatively, you can recreate in your mind a classic tale from folk literature i.e. any of Aesop’s fables, and explore its content, plot, narrative, emotion and catharsis: i.e you could ‘become’ ‘sleeping beauty’, going into a long dream and then waking up with a new realization! This may enhance, through your own experience, your understanding of your research subjects’ systems of meaning.

Depending on time there will be sharing through artwork and discussion, and an opportunity to consider possible ways forward using such applications of dreamwork. Ethical issues will be discussed as necessary.

(see Edgar 2004: ‘Guide to Imagework: Imagination-based research methods’ Routledge 2004 Chapter 3 for a literature review at that time of the ‘social anthropology and the dream’); and for a general text on the significance of night dreams in a contemporary culture see: ‘The Dream in Islam: from Qur’anic Tradition to Jihadist Inspiration, Berghahn Books, 2011;

Also on Academia.edu and Research Gate: Edgar, Iain R. & Henig, David. 2010. Istikhara: The Guidance and Practice of Islamic Dream incubation through ethnographic comparison. *History and Anthropology* 21(3): 251-262,;

Also, on Academia.edu and Research Gate, Iain Edgar & David Henig 2009. The Cosmopolitan and the Noumenal: A Case Study of Islamic Jihadist Night Dreams as Reported Sources of Spiritual and Political Inspiration. In *United in Discontent: Local Responses to Cosmopolitanism and Globalization*. Theodossopoulos, Dimitrios Kirtsoglou & Elisabeth Oxford: Berghahn Books. 64-82.

Participation is limited to 15 people; for the imaginative exercise you may wish to bring a scarf to cover you eyes and a blanket to lie on; the exercise can be done seated also.

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