

The New Anthropology of Dreaming

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Dreams are private mental experiences which have never been recorded during their occurrence, while dream reports are public social performances which are accessible to researchers. There has been a major shift in cultural anthropological methodology away from interviewing "non-Western" dreamers in order to gather dream reports which might then be subjected to a statistical content analysis. Instead, anthropologists today are relying more on participant observation, in which they interact within natural communicative contexts of dream sharing, representation, and interpretation. In such contexts the introduction of an anthropologist's own recent dreams is quite natural, even expected. This methodological change has resulted in the publication of highly-nuanced, linguistically informed analyses of dream narration and interpretation as psychodynamic intercultural social processes. Recently, anthropologists have also become more skilled at uncovering their own unconscious reactions to the peoples they are attempting to describe. In time, perhaps, cultural anthropologists may become like psychoanalysts in the skill with which they listen to emotional dream communications of others and examine their own responses.

KEY WORDS: anthropology; dreaming; participant observer; culture.

In recent years dream researchers have become sensitive to the differences between dream accounts and dreams. While dreams are private mental acts, which have never been recorded during their actual occurrence, dream accounts are public social performances taking place after the experience of dreaming. When dreamers decide, for whatever reason, to share a dream experience, they choose an appropriate time and place, a specific audience and social context, a modality (visual or auditory), and a discourse or performance form. While some clinicians and experiential dream workers operate with the fiction that when they hear or produce a sufficiently dramatic dream report they can recover the dream itself, as if entering into a "real dream life" (Mahrer 1989:44-46), cultural anthropologists have turned their attention to the study of dream sharing as a communicative event (B. Tedlock 1987a).

Psychologists of both the psychoanalytic and the cognitive bent have, for the most part, read anthropology in order to compare the dreams of what have been categorized as "preliterate," "tribal," "traditional," or "peasant" peoples with the dreams of "literate," "urban," "modern" or "industrial" peoples. While cultural anthropologists made such comparisons in the past, today we have turned away from this labeling practice because of its use of typological time, which denies people living in other cultures "coevalness," or contemporaneity with ourselves (Fabian 1983). The use of typological time, which fictively places some people in an earlier time frame than ourselves, functions as a distancing device. An example of this practice is the assertion that there currently exists societies practicing "stone age economics." We cultural anthropologists also experience this temporal displacement ourselves, whenever we identify ourselves to our neighbors, hairdressers, or physicians as "anthropologists" only to find ourselves confused with "archaeologists," studying ancient stone tools, pyramids, and human remains. Instead of using typological time to create and set off an object of study such as "tribal dream typologies" (Hunt 1989:87), cultural anthropologists today are interested in intersubjective time in which all of the participants involved are "coeval," i.e., share the same time. The current focus on communicative processes in cultural anthropology demands that coevalness not only be created and maintained in the field, but also be carried over during the write-up process. Thus, for example, Robert Dentan, while discussing the principle of contraries in which dreams indicate the opposite of what they seem, noted that practitioners of this type of dream interpretation include "such widely separated peoples as Ashanti, Malays, Maori, Buffalo (New York) Polish-American parochial schoolgirls, psychoanalysts, Semai and Zulu"

(Dentan 1986:33). In other words, at least some Americans share this principle of dream interpretation with people living in faraway, exotic places.

The change in research strategy away from treating so-called "non-Western dreams" as totally "other" but nonetheless fully knowable objects to be gathered, tabulated, and compared with our own "Western dreams," and toward paying attention to the problematics of dream representation, communication, and interpretation world-wide has occurred within anthropology for several reasons. First, cultural anthropologists have come to distrust survey research in which "data" is gathered for the purpose of testing Western theories concerning universals in human psychology. Thus, for example, Calvin Hall's (1951, 1953) cross-cultural content analyses, in which statistical assertions about dream patterns within particular ethnic groups or genders are the goal, have been critiqued by anthropologists (B. Tedlock 1987a; Dentan 1988a). There are several reasons for this, including the fact that sample surveys aggregate respondents who are deeply distrustful of the researcher with those who are not, as if suspicion made no difference whatsoever in the validity of their replies (Scheff 1986). Further, a comparativist focus on the extractable contents of a dream report not only omits important phenomena such as pacing, tones of voice, gestures, and audience responses that accompany dream narrative performances, but is also an expression of the culture of alphabetic literacy and thus culture-bound (Crapanzano 1981; B. Tedlock 1987a; Dentan 1988a).

Another reason for the abandonment of content analyses by anthropologists is that our formal training in linguistics encourages us to reject the basic assumption of aggregate statistical research, namely, that meaning resides within single words rather than within their contexts (Dentan 1988a) (see Note 1 in Appendix). This critique rests on a basic axiom of semantics, known as the premise of non-identity, which states that the word is not an object. Dream narratives are not dreams, and neither narrating nor enacting dreams can ever recover dream experiences. Furthermore, dream symbols taken in isolation can be misleading if the researcher has not spent at least a year observing and interacting within the culture in order to gather enough contextual details to make sense of local knowledge and produce a "thick description" of that culture (Geertz 1973; Dentan 1988b:38) (see Note 2 in Appendix). Thus, rather than interpreting the language of dream narratives in semantico-referential, context-independent terms, it is more appropriate to utilize context-dependent, or pragmatic, meaning (Silverstein 1976).

Because of these considerations anthropologists no longer set out to elicit dream reports as ethnographic objects to be used as raw data for comparative hypotheses (e.g. Lincoln 1935; Schneider and Sharp 1969) Instead, we now go into the field for extended periods of time with broad sets of research interests; for example, the religion and world view of a particular society, the performance of healing, or the construction of self and personhood. By living within the community we learn not only the language but also how to interact appropriately, and, perhaps most importantly, we are present for various formal and informal social dramas (see Note 3 in Appendix). Sooner or later we cannot help but be present when a dream is narrated within a family, or to a practicing shaman, or some other dream interpreter. If this type of event or social drama attracts our attention, we make notes about it in our field journals and we may later record other such occurrences on audio or video tape. Once we have translated such texts we may ask the narrator, who may or may not be the dreamer, questions about the meaning, significance, and use of the dream account.

This shift in research strategy from directly eliciting dozens of fixed objects (dreams) to studying naturally occurring situations (dream sharing, representation, and interpretation) is part of a larger movement within anthropology in which there has been a rapidly growing interest in analyses focused on practice, interaction, dialogue, experience, and performance, together with the individual agents, actors, persons, selves, and subjects of all this activity (Bourdieu 1978; D. Tedlock 1979; Ornter 1984). Three recent doctoral dissertations in anthropology clearly display this shift from the dream as an object to the context surrounding the personal experience and cultural uses of dreaming (Desjarlais 1990; Roseman 1991; Degarrod 1989). Robert Desjarlais, during his fieldwork in Nepal with the

Yolmo Sherpa, noted a large degree of agreement among individuals concerning the meaning of dream imagery and found what he called "an implicit 'dictionary' of dream symbolism," which individuals relied upon most frequently in times of physical or spiritual distress (Desjarlais 1990:102-117). Thus, for example, dreaming of an airplane, bus, or horse indicates that one's spirit has left the body and that one will soon fall ill, while dreaming of a new house or clothes, snow falling on the body, consuming sweet white foods such as milk, watching the sun setting or the waxing of the moon all indicate future good health.

In this dream interpretation system, like many others, the experience of dreaming is believed to have a close, even causal, connection with the future life of the dreamer (see also Bruce 1975, 1979; Laughlin 1976; Herdt 1977; Kilborne 1978; Kracke 1979; Basso 1987; B. Tedlock 1987b; Dentan 1983; Degarrod 1989; Hollan 1989; McDowell 1989). However, it is important to remember that such interpretations are often provisional, that not all people in a given society place their faith in such interpretations, and that in some societies only certain individuals are believed to be able to experience prophetic or precognitive dreams (Devereux 1956; Meggitt 1962; Charsley 1973; Jackson 1978; Dentan 1983; Merrill 1987). Nevertheless, prophetic dreams and visions have often triggered anti-colonial revolts (Wallace 1959; Dentan 1986). But lest we fall into the comfortable assumption that prophetic dream interpretation systems are characteristically found in "tribal," "non-Western," or "non-industrial" societies, and only rarely in "modern," "Western," "industrialized" societies (Hodes 1989:7-8), cultural anthropologists who have undertaken substantial fieldwork within American society have found that middle-class dreamers admit to having experienced dreams of the prophetic or precognitive sort in which they obtain information about future events (Collins 1977:46, 49, 58-59; Hillman 1988:134; Dombeck 1989:89). Furthermore, the popular Western conception of dreams as predictors of misfortune or success, together with the anecdotal literature on "psychic dreams," indicates that this form of dream interpretation is far from rare in Western societies (Stevens 1949; Ullman, Krippner and Vaughan 1973; Staff 1975; Tolaas 1986, 1990; Persinger 1988; Persinger and Krippner 1989).

Labelling certain dream experiences "prophetic" or "precognitive," however, does not explain how these and other dream experiences are used both individually and culturally within a society. In order to learn about the actual use of dreaming researchers cannot simply gather examples of different types of dreams by administering a questionnaire, but must instead interact intensively for a long period of time. Thus, while Desjarlais (1990) quickly discovered the implicit 'dictionary' of dream symbolism among the Sherpa, it took him some time as an apprentice shaman to learn the precise way in which these dream symbols served as symptoms and signifiers both reflecting and shaping distress. Likewise, Marina Roseman (1986), through her active participation as a singer within an all female chorus in Temiar society, learned the precise manner in which local dream sharing through song connects the musical and medical domains of knowledge and practice. In this Malaysian society, spirit guides teach dreamers songs by singing them phrase by phrase. This dream-teaching relationship is echoed in public performance when a male medium sings a song phrase which is then repeated by a female chorus. In time Roseman grasped the fact that dream songs varied by the spirit guide source, creating formal musical genres with characteristic textual content and vocabulary, melodic and rhythmic patterns, dance movements, and trance behavior. Not only do these genres vary individually but they also vary regionally and historically. During her twenty months of fieldwork she taped hundreds of these dream-song performances, together with intricate dream narratives and interpretations (Roseman 1986, 1990).

Lydia Degarrod, like Roseman and Desjarlais, recorded the majority of her dream materials within a natural setting rather than by arranging formal interviews (Degarrod 1989). During her research among the Mapuche Indians of Chile, she gathered dream accounts and various interpretations of these narratives from several members of two families who were coping with serious stress caused by witchcraft and illness (Degarrod 1990). Through dream sharing and interpreting, the afflicted members of the families were able to express their anxieties and externalize their illness, and other family members were able to directly participate in

the healing of their loved ones. Degarrod hypothesized that these types of family interventions were possible due to both the nature of the communal dream sharing and interpreting system, which allowed for the combination of elements from different individual's dreams to be related through intertextual and contextual analysis, and the general belief that dreams facilitate communication with supernatural beings.

By studying dream sharing and the transmission of dream theories in their full social contexts as communicative events, including the natural dialogical interactions that take place within these events, anthropologists have realized that both the researcher and those who are researched are engaged in the creation of a social reality that implicates both of them. Even though cultural anthropologists have long subscribed to the method of participant observation, it still comes as a shock when they discover how important their participation is in helping to create what they are studying (LeVine 1981). Thus, for example, Gilbert Herdt reported his surprise at discovering the therapeutic dimension of his role in New Guinea as a sympathetic listener to his key consultant, who shared with him erotic dreams, taking place in menstrual huts, which he could not communicate to anyone within his own society (Herdt 1987:73-74). Likewise, the importance to anthropology of the psychodynamic process of transference, which is to say the bringing of past experiences into a current situation with the result that the present is unconsciously experienced as though it were the past (Freud 1958; Bird 1972; Loewald 1986), has only recently been fully realized and described for anthropology. Waud Kracke (1987a), during his fieldwork with the Kagwahiv Indians of Brazil during 1967-1968, kept a diary containing his personal reactions, dreams and associations. In a sensitive essay discussing these field responses, Kracke not only analyzes his personal transference of his own family relationships to certain key Kagwahiv individuals, but also his cultural transference of American values to Kagwahiv behavior patterns. Other cultural anthropologists have not only recorded their dreams and associations in their field diaries, but they have also told their dreams to members of the society in which they were working for the purpose of having them interpreted (Bruce 1975; Jackson 1978; B. Tedlock 1981, Stephen 1989).

When anthropologists have paid close attention to their own dreams during their fieldwork they have found that dream experiences have helped them to integrate their unconscious with a conscious sense of personal continuity in this totally new, even threatening, situation. Laura Nadar, for example, reported that during her research among the Zapotec Indians in Mexico, the amount of her nocturnal dreaming, as well as her ability to remember dreams, multiplied several times over her usual behavior, and that her dreams dealt almost exclusively with her experiences as a child and young adult back home in the United States. "Not only my dreams, but also my general emotional state appeared to be more related to pre-Zapotec experiences than anything else" (Nadar 1970:11). And, although she did not feel herself to be equipped professionally to analyze why her dreams were more directly related to experience outside the field situation, she states that "it was not because I was emotionally neutral about the people I was studying" (Ibid.:111-112). It is as though her dreams were reminding her not to lose her self completely, not to become possessed by Zapotec "otherness." Her dreams reassured her that she was indeed still the same person she was as a child. That there was a continuity within her self, in spite of her strong feelings to the contrary.

A juxtaposition of earlier with recent life events in the dreams of fieldworkers is also a common experience. A study by Barbara Anderson (1971) of fifteen American academics living in India reports a major change in dream content, moving from an initial retreat to earlier life events towards the establishment of a "secondary identity" that allows dreams with mixed but clearly distinct American and Indian elements. In the first month of fieldwork she and her fellow academics reported dreaming of people from their childhood - old neighbors and school friends -- whom they hadn't thought of in years. During the second month, current family members entered their dream life, but shyly and from a great distance; for example, one man's wife talked with him from a doorway. It was not until a good deal later that their dream worlds included a wider spectrum of personages and backdrops with Indian settings in which their spouses, siblings, and children mingled

together with Indians. She suggests that these dreams are the resolution of the serious identity crisis that accompanies mixed cultural affiliation.

Karla Poewe, a Canadian anthropologist of German extraction who published her memoir of fieldwork in West Africa under the pseudonym Mandra Cesara (1982:22), reported a dream in which she found herself in a position where she and a group of other people had to make a decision between fascism and freedom. For some reason, many people found themselves standing in a line to join the will of the government, while she chose to swim free of the crowd singing, "I want freedom." An official approached her and said "A very important person wants to see you," and he took her to the front of the line of people into a place off to one side. There she had to wait again, and while waiting, saw a child who had also chosen freedom. The child was playing with a cuddly animal which disappeared in the bushes. She didn't want to lose the child, but it looked around furtively then slide through the shrubbery to freedom. As she continued waiting, a gorgeously dressed elderly woman came by and stood before the mirror, saying how absurd it was to emphasize dress. The dreamer then moved away from the crowd with the realization that freedom lay beyond the shrubs, not in this line of waiting people, and she awoke. Later, as she established her second cultural identity, her dreams, like those Barbara Anderson reported, changed to include mixed but clearly distinct American and African elements.

Remembered dream images can also serve as a mirror reflecting back to the cultural anthropologist a secure sense of self-integrity and identity. Not all people are equally suitable to serve as "mirrors" however. For some people it seems to be only in the eyes of their own country men or even themselves, that they can find a mirror. Thus, Polish anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski reported in his posthumously published field diary: "Today . . . I had a strange dream; homo-sex., with my own double as a partner. Strangely auto-erotic feelings; the impression that I'd like to have a mouth just like mine to kiss, a neck that curves just like mine, a forehead just like mine (seen from the side)" (Malinowski 1967:12). Typically, mirror or double images in dreams represent an attempt to restore, retrieve, or bolster a threatened sense of self through the mechanisms psychologists have labelled "projection" and "identification" (Devereux 1978:224).

Malinowski's field diaries shocked many people because this self-proclaimed father of participant observation, the key methodology still used today in cultural anthropology, exposed his remarkable lack of participation in, and even respect for, the culture he described. He revealed his distaste for Trobrianders, with whom he lived for four years. The lack of Trobriand features in his reported dreams is particularly disturbing. In the diaries, which cover two separate one year periods, 1914-15 and 1917-18, he mentions and briefly reports twenty dreams (Ibid.:12-13, 66, 70, 71, 73, 78, 80, 82, 116, 149, 159, 191, 202, 203, 204, 207, 208, 255, 290, 295). The settings of these dreams were usually in Poland and the people who appeared most frequently were his mother and boyhood friends, including a girl friend he expressed guilt about having abandoned. While two of the dreams included colonial officers, none were set within the Trobriand culture, nor did they include a single indigenous person. Apparently, Malinowski did not successfully establish a "secondary identity" in the field, which would have allowed for dreams with mixed, but clearly distinct Polish and Trobriand elements.

In *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*, a book with the expressed purpose of critiquing both the Oedipus and dream interpretation theories of Sigmund Freud, Malinowski claims that unlike other non-Western peoples, the Trobrianders "dream little, have little interest in their dreams, seldom relate them spontaneously, do not regard the ordinary dream as having any prophetic or other importance, and have no code of symbolic explanation whatsoever" (Malinowski 1927:92). This surprising account sounds rather like the situation today in bourgeois middle-class Western society. However, reading on a bit further in the text, we find a five-page page discussion of the premonitory dreams of fishermen and kula traders, the use of dreams by ritual specialists to initiate novices and to advise their community, dreams in which women's dead kinsmen inform them of their pregnancy, and the sending of dreams by magical means to cause others to fall in love with one (Ibid.:92-96).

It appears that Malinowski's greatly exaggerated claim of a lack of Trobriand interest in dreams originates from (sic, from) his anxiety to establish the Trobrianders as exempt from repression. If indeed this were the case, it would weaken the supposed universality of Freud's Oedipus complex. However, Malinowski began with the faulty premise that in Freudian theory "the main cause of dreams is unsatisfied sexual appetite." He then reasoned that the absence of psychological repression among Trobrianders accounts for the noticeable lack of erotic material in their dreams, which in turn explains their lack of concern with dreams in general. But this scarcity of eroticism in the manifest content of dreams may, of course, bear the opposite interpretation. If anything, freedom from repression should be indicated by the presence of sexual elements, since wishes that appear undistorted at the manifest level must not have been subject to a remarkable amount of censorship. Thus, the absence of sexual elements suggests disguise, which presupposes repression.

While it is true that the majority of cultural anthropologists have been unwilling to discuss dream material, except incidentally and in passing, there have always been individuals who are not anti-psychological in the clear manner in which Malinowski was. The renowned American anthropologist Robert Lowie, for example, kept a personal dream journal for nearly fifty years (from 1908-1957), and he was preparing an essay about his dream experiences when he died. Shortly thereafter, his wife published his essay in the prestigious international journal *Current Anthropology*. Lowie was, in his own words, a "chronic and persistent dreamer" who also often heard voices or saw visions when he was lying with his eyes half-closed. He remarks that during his later years his dreams helped him greatly in understanding visionary experiences of the Native Americans with whom he worked. According to him, the difference between himself and "an Eskimo shaman who has heard a meaningless jumble of sounds or a Crow visionary who has seen a strange apparition is that I do not regard such experiences as mystic revelations, whereas they do. But I can understand the underlying mental and emotional experiences a good deal better than most other ethnologists can, because I have identical episodes every night and almost every day of my life" (Lowie 1966:379).

French anthropologist Michel Leiris, during the 1931-33 Dakar-Djibouti expedition to the Dogon and Ethiopians, recorded not only the doings of various African subjects and the strained relationships between the European members of the research team, but his own dreams. Thus, his diary entry for October 10, 1931 reads as follows: "Hard to sleep, for the others as for me, since we're possessed by the work. All night, dreams of totemic complications and family structures, with no way to save myself from this labyrinth of streets, tabooed sites and cliffs. Horror at becoming so inhuman. . . . But how to shake it off, get back in contact? Would have to leave, forget everything" (Clifford 1986:31). His September 1, 1932 diary entry opens: "Very bad night. First insomnia, then, very late, a little sleep. A dream of Z [his wife], a dream I get some mail, which makes me feel better. Then suddenly, the smell of the herbs I've had scattered around my room enters my nostrils. Half dreaming, I have the sensation of a kind of swirling (as if reddening and turning my head I were doing the *gourri* dance characteristic of trance) and I let out a scream. This time I'm really possessed" (Leiris 1934:358; English translation Clifford 1986:44). Here desire for his wife is transformed, by the odor of African herbs, into possession. And it just so happens, as his diary also reveals, that at the time, he was erotically infatuated with the beautiful daughter of the charismatic leader of the Zar possession cult he was busy documenting.

Another early cultural anthropologist, Alice Marriott, after she had been in the field for some time with the Kiowas of western Oklahoma, began having dreams with dozens of tepees mixed together with other dream elements. After experiencing this dream numerous times the tepees slowly became clearer, then larger and larger, until they swarmed around her and danced with a drum beating time to their movements. Finally, an ancient and totally blind Kiowa holy man had a dream about Marriott in which his power spirit stood on one side of her and an important religious bundle stood on the other side. He interpreted his dream as an indication that he should talk with her about the Kiowa religion. However, when other Kiowa holy men caught wind of his intention they forbade him to teach her the

religion. So, although she had exchanged what most members of the tribe considered "power dreams" (what anthropologists have labelled "culture pattern dreams") with a holy man, she was blocked from gaining further religious knowledge (Marriott 1952:74-87).

More recently, Australian anthropologist Michael Jackson, who did extensive research in the early 1970s among the Kuranko of northeast Sierra Leone, reported some of his own dreams and carefully noted the differences between a native interpretation and his own. About a month after commencing his fieldwork, and the day before he made his first formal inquiries about dreams, Jackson reported a dream of his own. In the first episode he found himself in a bare room, reminiscent of one of the classrooms at the District Council Primary School in a town where he had first met his field assistant. A corrugated iron door opened and a book was passed into the room by an invisible hand or by some other invisible agency. The book hung suspended in midair for several seconds and he identified a single word in bold type on its cover: "ETHNOGRAPHY." He had the definite impression that the book contained only blank pages. In the second episode he found himself again in the same room and again the door opened. "I felt a tremendous presence sweep into the room. I felt myself lifted up bodily and, as if held in the hands or by the power of a giant, I was taken out of the room. The hand and arms of the giant exerted such pressure against my breast that I could not breathe easily. I was borne along aloft, still being squeezed. At this point I awoke in fear from the dream" (Jackson 1978:120).

According to Jackson, the dream manifested many of his anxieties at that time, most notably his concern that he would not be able to carry out the necessary research for his thesis, and his dependence on his field assistant who was not only instructing him in the language, but who was mediating all his relationships. He also admitted to feeling what he described as a mild form of paranoia, which consisted of feelings of vulnerability, loneliness, and ignorance.

The following day he made a scheduled trip to a nearby village where he met a Kuranko diviner who knew something of dream interpretation and recounted his dream to him. The diviner was puzzled and discussed the dream with other elders who were present. They asked Jackson whether the giant flew up into the sky with him and whether or not he had been placed back on the ground. When these questions were answered the diviner announced the meaning of the dream: It signified that, if Jackson were a Kuranko, he would be destined to become a chief. The diviner added, "I do not know about you because you are a European, but for us the book means knowledge, it came to reveal knowledge." So, despite this diviner's caveat that he might not be able to interpret a European's dream correctly, his elucidation of the meaning of the dream was consistent with orthodox Kuranko formulations in which a book signified knowledge; being in a strange place among strange people denoted good fortune in the near future; being in a high place indicated the immanent attainment of a prestigious position; and flying like a bird signified happiness and prosperity.

Where the diviner's interpretation differed from Jackson's own interpretation was both at the level of exegesis and in the diviner's conviction that the dream presaged future events rather than revealing present anxieties. Nevertheless Jackson reports that these assurances helped him to allay his anxieties and that he felt that the diviner's treatment of the dream was not simply a reflection of a set of standardized interpretative procedures. Instead, it was consciously or unconsciously the outcome of sympathetic attention to Jackson's position as a stranger in his society.

In 1976 when my husband, Dennis Tedlock, and I traveled to highland Guatemala to undertake a year of fieldwork with Quiché-Mayans, we also found ourselves, early in our stay, consulting a diviner about our own disturbing dreams. In the first month of field research, on the same night, we each dreamed about Hapiya, one of our Zuni Indian consultants who, when we last saw him, was in the hospital recuperating from a gall bladder operation. I dreamed that I read his obituary in the *Gallup Independent*, which reported that he entered the hospital on October 6th and that he had been eighty-seven when he died there (both his age and the date of his hospital admission were wrong).

Meanwhile Dennis was dreaming that he was going over the transcript of a written text with Hapiya, and that he said that two of the lines were saying the exact same thing (a typical Mayan, rather than Zuni, form of semantic coupleting). Dennis, who awakened abruptly from his dream with the horrible feeling that he had been with a man who was already dead, awakened me in order to share his dream. I then narrated my own dream about Hapiya.

The next morning, we told our dream narratives to our consultant, Andrés Xiloj, who also turned out to be a trained dream interpreter. As soon as we finished narrating our dreams he immediately replied: "Yesterday, or the day before, he died. At first it seemed that he was in agony, ready to die, but when you (Barbara) said you dreamed he was already deceased, I knew it to be so." Xiloj then commenced a formal calendrical divination by asking us for the correct date of the hospital admission. It was January 22nd, which he then determined to have been *Kib' N'oj* (Two Thought) on the Mayan calendar. He spread out his divining paraphernalia and counted out groups of seeds, arriving at *Hob' Kame* (Five Death), and said: "Yes, it happened that he was alleviated a little when he arrived at the hospital, but later his sickness became more grave."

At this point we described the situation in the hospital, where Hapiya had survived an operation, but then, for some inexplicable reason, had simply been abandoned, left alone in a room with the window open. Since this action was interpreted by his family as the staff's decision to simply let him die, they forced entry into his room and massaged him, returning his breath to him, and sent for a Zuni medicine man. The healer performed the traditional sucking cure, removing deer blood and hair from Hapiya's throat so that he could once again talk.

Xiloj continued with an interpretation of our amplified account saying, "What happened to this man was not a simple sickness, and was not sent by God. It is the act of a man; because of some business or other things he has done with his neighbor the man was put to rest."

We told Xiloj that Hapiya spoke of having an enemy who wanted to kill him and he concluded, "The one who envied him is already incarcerated, he doesn't walk the face of the earth, but is in purgatory where he is being punished for his deeds. This man died before this sickness but his deed remained for Hapiya to receive."

These two dreams revealed our anxiety and guilt over leaving our previous fieldwork commitment to start up new fieldwork elsewhere. Also, as of that time we did not know whether Hapiya was dead or not (it turned out that he was), but Xiloj's dream interpretation helped us deal with what we feared was the death not only of a person we had come to deeply respect and love, but also of our own first fieldwork. We were unaware of just what we had communicated about ourselves when we shared our troubling dreams with Xiloj.

One thing was certain though, and that was that we were going far beyond the telling of our dreams as a token of friendship, a technique which George Foster utilized in his dream research in Mexico. In an essay entitled, "Dream, character, and cognitive orientation in Tzintzuntzan" (Foster 1973), he explained that he obtained his data by volunteering his own dreams, as a gesture of amity and openness, which rewarded him with comparable personal disclosures from his informants. He suggests this procedure to other investigators as a useful eliciting tool which can produce excellent field data. While it is true that the dream narratives he collected were far richer than the brief statements of the manifest content of typical dreams collected by earlier anthropologists such as Jackson Lincoln (1935), Foster, in keeping with his procedure of using his own dreams only as a field tool, neglected to record any of them in his publications. It is as though his own dream life were unimportant, and further, that the dreams he chose to relate to his subjects in no way influenced which dreams they in turn selected to share with him.

In our own situation, since we were not sharing dreams as part of a preconceived field strategy, there was quite a different turn of events. Shortly after telling our Zuni dreams to Xiloj, we were seen visiting outdoor non-Christian shrines on several occasions, thus revealing our intense curiosity about Mayan spirituality. Later, when I fell ill with what I self diagnosed as pneumonia, Xiloj divined the ultimate cause of my illness to lie in our offenses before the earth deities, and informed us that we would both die. It seems that what we thought were innocent visits to the shrines had in fact annoyed not only the human *ajq'ij* (daykeepers) who were praying there, but also the deities. We had thoughtlessly entered the presence of the sacred shrines without even realizing that we must be ritually pure before doing so.

Later, when we asked Xiloj for more details about the people who were praying at these shrines, specifically how they were trained and initiated, he replied that the best way to find out was to undertake an apprenticeship. When we asked him whether he would in fact be willing to train us, he chuckled and said, "Why, of course." During this four and a half months of formal training, timed according to the Mayan calendar, we were expected to narrate all of our dreams in order for him to interpret them. Thus, dream sharing, instead of being our methodology for recording an ethnographic subject's dreams, became Xiloj's way of instructing and reinforcing us in our training, as well as a way of checking on our spiritual, or psychic, progress. So, the dreams that we ended up gathering were our own. Only occasionally and mostly for pedagogical reasons did we hear any of Xiloj's dreams. It was not until after our initiation that we were brought dreams by various Mayan individuals for interpretation.

Twenty days into our apprenticeship I dreamed, sometime in the night between the *Wajxakeb' Kej* (eight Deer) and *B'elejeb' Q'anil* (Nine Yellowripe) on the Mayan calendar, that I was diving in a spot off Catalina Island that looked like my favorite scuba location, where I had gathered abalones nearly fourteen years earlier. I was passing through some dark plants and saw a shaft of light coming down through the water ahead, showing me a cave with a floor covered with sea shells. Suddenly an enormous fish emerged from the cave. I was scared because I thought it was a shark, but then I realized that it was a dolphin, and I surfaced.

Xiloj counted the Mayan calendar through then said, "It seems this is the family, ancestors, these are the ones who are giving the sign that the work you two are accomplishing here, and the permissions, are going to come out all right, are going to come out into the light. It is a woman who has died who came to give this notice, this sign. This dream that the fish came out over the water means the work, it's going to come out well. The light fell into the water." (This is a literal translation from a tape-recording.)

I replied, "Yes, the dolphin went up also."

"And the work is going to mate with you, to come out into the light. But I don't know if it was your mother or your grandmother who came to give the sign."

"What about the cave?"

"The cave is the tomb of the mother or grandmother who has died. Is your mother still living?"

"Yes, but my grandmothers are both dead."

"Then it's your grandmother who came."

"And the shells in the cave?"

"The shells are not shell, but -- all kinds were found there?"

"Yes."

"Then these are the red seeds, the crystal [the key contents of the sacred divining paraphernalia we would be receiving at our initiation]."

"And the dark plants?"

"The plants are like the shade. When one is in the shade the ground is somewhat dark. When one goes out into the sun, then everything is clear."

At this point Dennis told his dream of this same night, "I saw a blue-jay and put my hand out to invite it to come. The bird came and rubbed its breast against my fingers [here he gestured demonstrating that his hand was closed with his fingers in a horizontal position]. The next moment I found the bird on a blanket in front of me on its back, as if sick, and I gave it a piece of bread. When I next looked, it was gone."

"The bird means that, it seems that you are going to have an offspring. The birds, when dreamed of, are offspring one is going to have. But the offspring is as if sick; on being born, it is sick. Here, when we dream that we take hold of a bird, any kind of bird, and we put it in the pocket, or we put it inside the shirt, now we know we are going to have an offspring."

Dennis then related his second dream of the previous evening. "I was being followed by a large deer with enormous antlers when I encountered, by the right side of the road, another deer, also with large antlers, seated on the ground. When I passed this deer, it got up, but, though it had first seemed like one deer, it was now two. The left deer had the left set of antlers and the right deer had the right. The two of them, side-by-side [their sides touching], followed me."

"*B'elejeb' Q'anil* (Nine Yellow), what is this?" After a long silence, he looked at Dennis and said,

"What this dream means, what these deer are, here is the Holy World. Yes, it is the World. *Ch'uti Sab'al* (Little Declaration Place), and *Paja'* (At the Water), and *Nima Sab'al* (Big Declaration Place). The three. And these three places are already following the two of you. If you leave here, they will go with you, they won't let you go without them, they'll go on appearing to you. Two of the deer are already united, since I've already been going to *Paja'* (the One Place shrine) and I started going to *Ch'uti Sab'al* (the Eight Place shrine) yesterday. The third deer is farther away because I still haven't gone to *Nima Sab'al* (the Nine Place shrine). That will come on *B'elejeb' Kej* (Nine Deer)."

After this dream, while Dennis was in a hypnogogic half-waking state, called *saq waram*, or "white sleep" in Quiché, two small yellow sparks appeared before him in succession.

Xiloj began muttering to himself then said aloud, "These sparks are the light of the World. The World already knows you two are going to accept what you're hearing. The sparks, the light is now being given to you. Right now it's tinged with yellow, but as we go along it will clarify."

These dreams pleased Xiloj, since they occurred on the very evening when he had first visited the shrines at Ch'uti Sabal in order to present us to the Mundo as apprentices. At the time he had looked for bad omens, in both the natural world and in his own dreams, indicating that our training would not work out well. Not only did he fail to find negative omens but we had, unknowingly, produced positive ones, indicating that the ancestors (the dolphin) and the shrines (the deer) were willing to accept us. As time went by we began to have dreams with more and more Mayan cultural elements, including religious images and mountain spirits, as well as Mayan individuals, including Xiloj. Xiloj, in turn, also had

dreams which included both us and cultural items from our society which we had brought into the field with us. Some of these dreams revealed strong currents of anxiety as well as transference and countertransference between ourselves and Xiloj. Finally, on *Wajakeb' B'atz'* (Eight Monkey), or August 18, 1976, we were initiated together with dozens of other novices at the shrines Xiloj had been visiting on our behalf until then. After our initiation we were consulted as dream interpreters by Mayan people and we have continued to pay attention to our dreams, to record and interpret them in the way we were taught, in accordance with the Quiché Mayan calendar (see D. Tedlock 1990).

CONCLUSIONS

Anthropologists no longer set out to elicit dream reports as though they were ethnographic objects which might be arranged, manipulated, and quantified like items of material culture. Rather than making typological or statistical comparisons between the dreams found in so-called "Western" versus "non-Western" societies, cultural anthropologists have turned their attention to studying dream theories and interpretation systems as complex psychodynamic communicative events. By studying dream sharing and the transmission of dream theories in their full social contexts, anthropologists have realized that both the researcher and the subject of research create a social reality which links them in important ways.

Today, fieldworkers are participating within native contexts and learning not only the local cultural use of dream experiences, but also paying attention to their own dreams. This latter practice has helped them to become aware of their unconscious responses to the people and culture they are attempting to understand and describe. In time, perhaps, cultural anthropologists, like psychoanalysts, will develop the necessary skill and training to listen to emotional dream communications of others as well as to their own feelings (Kracke 1978). For, as Rosalind Cartwright and other dream lab researchers have suggested, dreams play an important part in mastering new affective experiences and assimilating them into one's self-schemata (Cartwright 1977:131-133; Palombo 1978). This particular form of self-mastery would seem to be an important undertaking, not only for psychoanalysts but for anthropologists who use participant observation as their key research methodology.

APPENDIX

Note 1. An exception to this general situation in cultural anthropology today is the work of Thomas Gregor (1981).

Note 2. "Thick description," is an ethnographic concept originated by Clifford Geertz (1973) that refers to the slow gathering of hundreds of contextual details in order to make sense of local categories of reality.

Note 3. My use of the phrase "social drama" here is different from Victor Turner's formal concept of social dramas as "units of aharmonic or disharmonic process, arising in conflict situations" (Turner 1974:37). Dream sharing as a social drama may be an harmonic, aharmonic, or disharmonic process and it rarely arises in conflicted situations.

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