Guide to Imagework

Imagination-based research methods

Iain R. Edgar

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

Guide to Imagework

Guide to Imagework is the first book to introduce a pioneering new methodology for social sciences research: the use of imaginative, experiential 'imagework' practices such as visualisation, dreamwork and gestalt. Originating in group counselling and psychological therapy, imagework techniques explore participants' imaginative resources to reveal implicit and explicit knowledge about identity, belief, culture and society. They are ideal for exploring emotional states and for accessing rich qualitative data about how individuals and cultures function. Iain R. Edgar, a leading expert on ethnographic method, has condensed top-level research theory on imagework into this practical manual which demonstrates how imagework can be used in a variety of research contexts. Complete with case studies and exercises, guidance on ethics and methods, and discussion of imagework's potential within qualitative research disciplines, it is an ideal starting point for any imagework project.

Iain R. Edgar lectures in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Durham. He is author of *Dreamwork, Anthropology and the Caring Professions* (1995), and co-editor of *The Anthropology of Welfare* (Routledge, 1996) and *Educational Histories of European Social Anthropology* (2003).

Association of Social Anthropologists
ASA Research Methods in Social Anthropology

Oral Traditions and the Verbal Arts
A guide to research practices
R. Finnegan

Applications in Computing for Social Anthropologists
M. Fischer

Reflexive Ethnography
A guide to researching selves and others
C.A. Davies

An Anthropologist in Japan
Glimpses of life in the field
J. Hendry

Guide to Imagework
Imagination-based research methods
Iain R. Edgar

Guide to Imagework

Imagination-based research methods

Iain R. Edgar

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2004
by Routledge
11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2004.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
A catalog record for this book has been requested

ISBN 0-203-49013-4 Master e-book ISBN

ISBN 0-203-56950-4 (Adobe eReader Format)
ISBN 0–415–23537–5 (hbk)
ISBN 0–415–23538–3 (pbk)

To my teachers

Contents

Foreword

There are few spheres of human life that are so central and yet so everyday and familiar as our imaginative worlds. And it is quite astonishing that this important area has hitherto received so little scholarly attention. The reporter Egon Erwin Kisch remarked at the beginning of the twentieth century that nothing is so exciting and exotic as the everyday, the usual – so it is no cause for surprise that a social anthropologist should devote himself to the study and practical application of the human power of imagination, a subject which is at the same time so near and yet so far that it has up to now been almost overlooked.

Caught in a falsely conceived rationalism, whole regions of human life were for a long time excluded from scholarly treatment, regions that appear difficult to check and to lie on the border, according to the traditional understanding of science, between exact proof and inner images. Only today, for example, with the growing interest in the functions of the human brain, have scientific questions concerning the power of the human imagination entered into the centre of attention. Whence comes the inexhaustible creative potential of our fantasy and ideas, our dreams and memories – and how can we apply it in the everyday course of research and teaching?

Iain Edgar has concerned himself with this field of study for many years, and it is to be heartily welcomed that he now here presents for the first time a comprehensive and innovative survey of most of the various applications and methods of imagework. This he does in a readily accessible form in which the reader is guided to undertake his own experiments. To draw on Iain Edgar's rich fund of experience means for the social anthropologist to devote him/herself more intensely and more deeply to human experience than s/he has hitherto thought possible. With the help of the imagework method, we can collect data about the meaning that people give their world and their ideas, but also about the

surrounding things – in short, about culture. Iain Edgar shows us how we can talk with people about their ideas by considering the images that they sketch on their wanderings. We talk with them about their dreams and daydreams, about themes that arise perhaps unexpectedly and become the object of our conversation. Thus we unfold a rich treasure of thoughts and connections that we seek to approach together with our interlocutors. 'Together' means of course that the researcher also reflects about his/her own ideas and incorporates these reflections in the context of their research.

Not only cultural differences separate us from our fellow men and women. The attempt to communicate anything to another is already accompanied by difficulties. It is always complicated to express what is thought or felt or appears before the mind's eye in words. We think not in complex formulations, such as are used in scholarly books, but in outline form and associated images. And we narrate these images in stories.

Sometimes a trifle suffices to transport us into another world. Thus a small biscuit, served with coffee, can revivify memories of one's family and childhood that one believed to be long lost, as Marcel Proust so masterly describes in his novel *Remembrance of Things Past*. It is mainly artists and writers, but also persons charged with ritual communication, such as psychologists, shamans or priests, who can make these images available to us, who can teach us to see these images, to find words, likenesses and stories for them, who can approximate our ideas and illuminate them. We talk with others about our ideas – and weave our ideas and images into stories so as to translate them for others. To do this, exchange is required, exchange amongst several people. Thus it is a natural enlargement of the repertories of qualitative research to extend experiential methods from the individual to the group, and to collect a wide selection of material from the conversations of group members and from comparisons of their ideas.

Human beings dream themselves a world – and Iain Edgar has made it possible to include this in our research. He provides us with a key that gives us access to the inner world of the human imagination, and shows us the way in which the constitution of cultures can be understood from this perspective.

Dorle Dracklé

Acknowledgements

The genesis of my practice of imagework began for me in 1981 when I was preparing to teach a session on philosophy and values for social work students. I was particularly anxious about it, and then I woke up on the morning before with a vivid idea to ask the students to make pictures of their values. During, and after the session, I was very impressed by the high levels of interactivity and communicability that this artwork technique seemed to have engendered, and slowly I began to explore such methods, resulting in this book. A Glaswegian social work student introduced me to a marvellous book of group exercises (Jelfs 1982: sadly now out of print) which included some imagework exercises that I began to use in my teaching. Therefore, I acknowledge the contribution of the 'unconscious', serendipity and synchronicity to the development of my ideas.

Over the ensuing years many colleagues, students and workshop participants have contributed to my image and dreamwork practice, learning, theorising and writing. I thank them all. David Pocock, formerly Professor of Anthropology at the University of Sussex, originally introduced me to the passion and intellectual joy of social anthropology and his idea of a 'personal anthropology' (1975; 1999) has always infused my work. Likewise, I should like to recognise the inspirational guidance of the late David Brooks, formerly of the University of Durham, Anthropology Department, to my early development as an anthropologist. I should also like to acknowledge the creative contribution of Mike Kingham, previously of the Faculty of Education, Social Work and Health, at the University of Northumbria at Newcastle, to the structural model of ethnographic dreamwork in Chapter 6. Also, I should especially like to thank Sarah Pink and Frances Maggs-Rapport for their invitations to give workshops and for their encouragement. Dorle Dracklé

helped me enormously through reading and critiquing the first draft of this book. Thanks are due to the University of Durham for their generous sabbatical support during the writing of this book. Finally, I should like to thank Charlotte Hardman for all her care and support.

Introduction

We are immersed in imagery. We have images of ourselves and images that we portray to the world. We rehearse future action and decision by imagining how things would be if we did this or that. We reflect on and evaluate the past through weighing up and sifting through our memories, just as with a set of old photographs. We can read intensity of mental imagery as compelling us to act, believe ourselves in love or to be at one with the divine. To gain tranquillity, we can learn how to image ourselves into a beautiful place in our mind (relaxation therapy), or we can meditate or contemplate the inner imagery of the self, an evoked iconography. The imagery of a nightmare can unsettle our passage through the day. Hallucinogenic drugs can be taken to see visions or nightmares, individuals may make vision quests to seek their inner identity. In all these human activities, from planning the evening ahead to the possible exploration of altered states of consciousness, we create and are influenced by the power of our inner imagery. Though we regularly translate some of that perceived imagery into conceptual thought and subsequent action, the use of our imaginative senses could be more extensively used across the full range of social science research.

Existing alongside the traditional forms of qualitative social science research, are a set of little used potential research methods that derive from experiential groupwork and the humanistic human potential movement. The study of one of these methods, imagework, including dreamwork, will be the particular focus of this book. The term 'imagework' refers to the purposeful facilitation of the imagination of respondents by the researcher/imageworker. Imagework here includes dreamwork as both seek to work purposively and directly with the human imagination. Both activities are primarily image-based. Dreamwork, particularly, refers to the purposeful use of night time dream imagery as a potential source of human data.

So far social science research has barely begun to utilise these powerful strategies that were developed originally for personal and group change but which are potentially applicable to the research domain. This book will first locate these methods within the qualitative research domain and propose a novel view of their value. Reference to the use of artwork, sculpting, psychodrama and gestalt will also be made. Even the 2000 second edition of the *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Denzin and Lincoln 2000) makes almost no mention of these methods. The chapter in the first edition of the yearbook of qualitative research on 'personal experience methods' refers only to journals, diaries, annals, storytelling and so forth (Clandinin and Connelly 1994). Nor do these methods seem to appear in even advanced focus group methods (Fern 2001). Only Stuhlmiller and Thorsen (1997) report on their use of a related method of using imagework that they call 'narrative picturing' (pp.140–9). The hypothesis underpinning my approach is that experiential research methods, such as imagework, can elicit and evoke implicit knowledge and self-identities of respondents in a way that other research methods cannot.

The range of research methods being used in social science research is expanding as both the 1994 and 2000 *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, 2000) illustrate. Likewise, the Sage series on research methodologies shows the increasing interest in qualitative research methodologies and methods. The imagework and related methods that will be described in this volume are accessible and provide the means to gather particularly rich data about a broad range of human situations. The possible use of these methods is wide, covering many fields of applied research within the social sciences, social care, education and health and also in, for example, development contexts where the use of participatory research methods, such as Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), is developing very rapidly; however, as yet, the use of imagework and related methods in their various forms has hardly been theorised, or indeed used. An exception is the use of one or two imagework activities by PRA exponents (Pretty *et al.* 1995). Only in the transpersonal research field of psychology has a beginning been really made in the work by Braud and Anderson (1998) and I explore this approach more in Chapter 2.

This book will be of particular interest to a broad range of social science researchers and students in fields as diverse as applied and development anthropology, health and social welfare research, educational research, etc. It will appeal both to undergraduate and postgraduate social science students.

Objectives of the book

1 Introduce imagework and dreamwork and a range of experiential research methods and conceptualise these, with case examples, as a research methodology, not just as another collection of methods.
2 Present an original classification of the different fields of imagework.[1]
3 Introduce other experientially based methods such as artwork, sculpting, gestalt and psychodrama.
4 Show through case-study examples, drawn usually from the author's research, the potential benefits of these methods.
5 Locate these methods within the qualitative research domain.
6 Locate the theory and practice of imagework within the historical context of projective tests, such as TAT tests.
7 Link the theory and practice of these methods to other innovative research methodologies such as the developing use of participatory research methods and arts-based research.
8 Consider the methodological issues of these research methods, such as the distinctive epistemology, and issues concerning: validity, reliability and objectivity.
9 Consider the ethical and practical issues of the use of these methods.

Plan of the book

Chapter 1 introduces the concept of imagework by defining its use in psychological and historical terms. Particularly the Sufi concept of the imaginal and shamanic visualisation practices are presented as forerunners of current imagework practice. A taxonomy of the differing fields of imagework is introduced.

Chapter 2 considers the position of imagework within the context of the qualitative research domain. Specifically I compare the use of imagework with the history of projective tests. Further, I explore imagework as a research methodology with developments within the field of visual anthropology, arts-based research methodologies and transpersonal research methods. In the second part of the chapter I introduce the first three fields of imagework: introductory, memory and spontaneous.

Chapter 3 summarises the history of anthropological interest in the dream, found almost solely in relation to indigenous peoples. There is as yet hardly any anthropology of dreaming 'at home'! Further the chapter shows the importance of dream literacy by the anthropologist studying in some societies such as with the Guajiro, studied by Goulet (1994b). Tedlock's (1987) theory of communicative dreaming is presented as a suitably holistic model for dream-orientated anthropologists to use in their fieldwork.

Chapter 4 considers methodological issues arising from my study of dream and imagework groups that would be likely to occur for other researchers. The chapter begins with a reflexive account of my prior interest in dreamwork and the dreamwork movement. Issues pertaining to textual and narrative construction are noted. Thereafter I present the methods used in the study, which were primarily participant observation followed by semi-structured interviewing. I consider the issues arising from the use of these methods and particularly the issue of the merging of the roles of group facilitator and researcher. I then consider the issues of sampling, validity, reliability and replication in relation to the study.

Chapter 5 presents the varied groupwork-based methods used in the dreamwork groups and illustrates, with case examples, the process by which these methods facilitated the evocation of meaning from dream and day imagery. These methods can also be used in spontaneous imagework and this chapter contains several examples of spontaneous imagework, including gestalt and meditation practices. The methods used by the group included: discussion and personal contextualisation; member suggestion; gestalt and psychodrama; artwork and imagework; symbol amplification (dream re-entry); meditation. The use of dream amplification methods extends the value of dream and image evocation in the qualitative research enterprise.

In Chapter 6 I offer the beginning of a charting model of how one can use one's own dream imagery as a part of one's research methodology. The focus on this use of dream imagery will be on its possible value as a source of inspiration, suggestion, hypothesis and problem-solving for researchers in the social sciences field. The chapter will illustrate the potential use of dream imagery with reference to a sequence of dream imagery I experienced during fieldwork and how I subsequently related such imagery to my anthropological project. I will propose a charting model for ethnographic dreamwork.

Chapter 7 considers the ethical issues of imagework and dreamwork as a research practice and develops a set of guidelines for safe use.

Finally I conclude in Chapter 8, that this set of practices constitutes a research methodology in its own right. Overall, I propose that researching the experience, observation, recollection, telling, meaning attribution and external artistic performance of the internal image of the subject(s) constitutes a research arena, domain or field that is of increasing importance in the holistic study of contemporary human experience. By methodology, I mean that such research draws on a distinctive epistemology, theory, sets of research questions, group and

researcher processes, research ethics and practices, issues of reflexivity and bias, questions of validity, replicability and so forth (de Munck and Sobo 1998).

Distinctive contribution of this book

Both the methods being presented and their theorisation in the research domain are innovative, and their use provides intriguing opportunities for qualitative social science, education and health researchers. I present an original classification of the different fields of the imagework method, illustrated by extensive and suggestive case examples. I analyse the potentialities, issues and possible problems with the use of these methods, focusing on methodological, ethical and practical issues. Overall, I propose that 'imaginary fields' become a research focus in fieldwork.

Acknowledgements

I think that all publications are work in progress and even a book is the same. The ideas contained in this book have had embryonic outings in some of my earlier publications and in particular some of the ideas and examples in this book have previously been published in earlier forms (Edgar 1994, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2003a and 2003b). In particular, a section of Chapter 6 appeared in my 1995 book, *Dreamwork, Anthropology and the Caring Professions: A Cultural Approach to Dreaming*, Aldershot: Avebury. I am grateful to the publisher for permission to redevelop and refocus this section.

Chapter 1

Defining the imagework method

What is imagework and how does it work?

> My dearest friend, how much longer must I watch you shrinking, diminishing before my eyes. How long will it be before you can accept that you are well again, that the operation was a success and that which you most fear has gone, has been excised. Your body is whole again, you are well – but you are not healed. You stay in this house, day after day, living with the physical scars which should be a symbol of new life, but for you they are the mark of death. You must come out of the dark and the cold, you must feel again the warmth and joy of living, you must come with me, for I am going to take you on a journey to a place of healing. It will be easy, you have only to take a few steps, out of this place, and be free.[2]

This chapter introduces the concept of imagework by defining its use in psychological and historical terms. Particularly the Sufi concept of the imaginal and shamanic visualisation practices are presented as forerunners of current imagework practice. Jung's concept of the active imagination is also crucial. A taxonomy of the differing fields of imagework is then introduced.

Imagework has variously been called 'active imagination', 'visualisation' and 'guided fantasy'. Imagework is also a powerful therapeutic method, as described by Glouberman (1989) and Achterberg (1985). Imagework has developed from the active imagination technique of Jung and the theory and practice of psychosynthesis developed by Assagioli (1965). Jung's (1959a: 42) concept of the 'collective unconscious' underpins imagework. The concept of the 'collective unconscious' represented Jung's perception that the human psyche contained impersonal and archaic contents that manifested themselves in the myths, dreams and

images of humans. Jung's idea that all humans contained a common and universal storehouse of psychic contents, which he called 'archetypes', is the core model of the unconscious that enables imagework practitioners (see Glouberman 1989: 25) to consider the spontaneous image as being potentially a creative and emergent aspect of the self. More recently, transpersonal psychotherapy has integrated the work of Assagioli and Jung to form an imaginatively based approach to therapy. Rowan's definition of active imagination suggests that:

> in active imagination we fix upon a particular point, mood, picture or event, and then allow a fantasy to develop in which certain images become concrete or even personified. Thereafter the images have a life of their own and develop according to their own logic.
>
> (Rowan 1993: 51)

The imagework method is an active process in which the person 'actively imagining' lets go of the mind's normal train of thoughts and images and goes with a sequence of imagery that arises spontaneously from the unconscious. It is the quality of spontaneity and unexpectedness that are the hallmarks of this process. Imagework has creative potential because as Clandinin writes,

> In this view, images are seen as the mediator between the unconscious and conscious levels of being. What is known at the unconscious level finds expression in a person's thought and actions through a person's images. Images are thus seen as the source of inspiration, ideas, insight and meaning.
>
> (Clandinin 1986: 17)

Indeed Jung famously wrote, 'the crucial insight that there are things in the psyche which I do not produce, but which produce themselves and have their own life' (1963: 207).

The imaginal world (or the websites of our mind)

The practice of imagework, in its visionary, contemplative and meditational forms is integral to the mystical paths of all the main religions (Happold 1963; Smith 1976). Imaginative contemplation has been central to mystical and monastic practice in Christianity through the ages (e.g. de Mello 1984) and visualisation has been a core component

of religious practice, for example, in Tantric (Yeshe 1987) and Tibetan Buddhism (Tulku 1999).

Yet, interestingly, it is in the Sufi tradition within Islam (Corbin 1966: 406) that the concept of the 'imaginal world' is most developed to define a discernible world between that of sensibility and intelligibility. This 'imaginal world' is defined as a world of autonomous forms and images which is apprehended directly by the imaginative consciousness and was held to validate suprasensible perception. Suffice it here first to recognise the possible apparent genesis of the concept of the 'imaginal world' in the Islamic theory of the visionary dream; second, to recognise that the contemporary anthropology of dreaming is beginning to develop this concept of the 'imaginal world' to critically discern the culturally diverse relationships between the concepts of the dream and waking reality (Tedlock 1987: 3–4). Price-Williams (1987: 246–61) subsumes both the capacity to dream and 'actively to imagine' within the concept of the mythopoetic function in humans. The mythopoetic function, a term introduced by Ellenberger (1970: 314), is essentially a formulation of the creative capacity of the imagination to generate spontaneous imagery which is open to interpretation. Price-Williams speaks of how in a waking dream, 'the imaginative world is experienced as autonomous … the imager does not have the sense that he is making up these productions, but feels that he is getting involved in an already created process' (1987: 248). The conceptualisation of an 'anthropology of the imagination' is separately taken up in Duerr's 'dreamtime' which argues coherently and philosophically for an integration of imaginative products within the concept of the 'real' (1985: 89–103). Price-Williams recommends that the task for anthropology is to elicit why some imaginary products gain social support and others do not. However, such a view denies the possibility of both a partial cultural structuring of the unconscious and a contextual study of the narrative account of the visual imagery.

Imagework and shamanism

Another theoretical formulation of the phenomenology and ontology of the 'world of images' derives from the study of both traditional and new age shamanism. There is of course a vast anthropological literature on specific shamanic traditions (see Eliade 1964) and deep-seated controversies as to the boundaries between traditional and new age shamanism, and shamanism and other forms of ecstatic technique such as trance, possession and mediumship. Detailed examination of these

controversies is well beyond the scope of this book on qualitative research methodology. However, shamanic world-views do present another way of viewing, along with the Sufi concept of the 'imaginal', what the Westerner would generally describe as the 'unconscious', whether that be the 'personal unconscious' of Freud or the 'collective unconscious' of Jung. Smith (1997) has tried to integrate the theory and practice of Jungian psychoanalysis with the traditions of shamanic practice. The shamanic world-view is that of the unconscious being a 'world of spirits' within which the shaman consciously, albeit in ecstatic form, interacts with his/her tutelary 'power animals' and guiding spirits. Typically, the shaman seeks wisdom for the community/people through guidance from these autonomous imaginative forms. Clearly, whether talking of shamanism or the imaginal, most Westerners will locate these discources within the context of belief systems as the experience of the shaman is evidentially unprovable in terms of the positivistic scientific method. However, most Westerners will acknowledge that they do both daydream and dream at night, and further will acknowledge that scientific REM sleep studies show that all humans do dream and, moreover, appear to biologically need to dream. The night dream is evidence of an interior arena of 'experience' within each human subject. Indeed, the dream is the only personal and universal evidence there is that there is a non-phenomenal (noumenal) world as well as a phenomenal one; the dream is the counterpoint to all our realities, yet, paradoxically we have the same sense of 'I' in the dream as we do in reality! So, the dream provides free access to all to another reality, the Disneyworld of our daytime meanderings; the exotic within if you are an anthropologist without a travel grant to fund your search for a personal anthropological Shangri-La. Moreover, this potential 'otherness' of the dream, shown by its phantasmagoric and bizarre nature, is a fruitful place through which to think of the nature of being human as all main religions have attempted to do in their theorising of dreams. For if the egoistic self is not contained only within daytime reality as the dream shows, and if said humans live in spiritual, religious or political traditions which impute value and meaning, even potential prophecy to the dream image, then the way is open to a view of the self which is not entirely shaped by ego psychology, as Jung showed in his theory of the archetype of the Self (1959c: 182; 1963); the fullness of the self becomes not encompassed by the daytime ego and the dreamworld encountered by the dreaming self becomes potentially meaningful in culturally specific ways.

Indeed, the notion of image itself is perhaps a way to connect these different traditions and perspectives. Jung, for instance, describes the

psyche as image (Jung 1966) and Achterberg defines shamanic spirits as being 'seen as images' (1985). The notion of the imaginal is clearly image-based as is Assagioli's theory of psychosynthesis. The inner image, how it is perceived and what, if anything, it appears to mean for humans is a crucial aspect of being human and in the more local setting of this book's theme, is a precious but hitherto almost unregarded data-rich, if problematic, source. An example of the power of dreams (Edgar 2002, 2004) is that it is likely that both the Taliban and Al-Qaeda leadership may believe themselves inspired and guided through dreams. Likewise, in these chapters I argue that the genesis dreams are part of the charter myth of Zionism and even that the dream of Prince Lazar, leader of the Serbian army fighting the Ottomans, on the night before the battle of Kosove Polje in 1389 became foundational to the nineteenth-century Serbian nationalistic identity. Dreams and their interpretations matter!

Imaginary fields

There are several different kinds or fields of imagework. Imagework can be as simple as asking respondents individually or in a group to imagine an image in response to a question, such as 'how do you picture a certain situation?'. I shall call this first field *introductory imagework*. Another, second field of imagework, involves guiding respondents into their memory of earlier events, such as their childhood socialisation. I call this second field *memory imagework*. A third field of imagework, such as the 'healing places' exercise, involves the use of the Jungian active imagination technique, which facilitates a spontaneous journey into the imagination. I define this field as *spontaneous imagework*.

Imagework and dreamwork are very closely related and in certain ways they overlap in that both refer to the mind's spontaneous production of imagery that people may consider is 'good to think with'. This fourth field of imagework I shall refer to as *dream imagework*. The historical, cross-cultural and contemporary use of dreams for diagnosis and healing constitutes a vast arena going back to at least Assyrian and ancient Egyptian dreamwork practices, and particularly the ancient Greek temple healing dream incubation methods described by Artimedorus (Mackenzie 1965).

The analytic processing of imagework into data can have up to *four stages*: first, the descriptive level wherein respondents 'tell their story'; second, analysis by participants of the personal meaning of their experience of symbols used; third, analysis of the models used to inform their imagery; fourth, the comparative stage when respondents compare their

imagework with that of others in the group. Each of these stages needs facilitation and can be promoted through the amplification of the imagework into art and drama etc. Meaning and insight can develop through these practices.

In using an experiential method such as imagework, it is also important to realise that while in itself imagework is a largely non-verbal activity it produces a verbal communication that incorporates the respondents' interpretations. Therefore, a respondent explaining the results of their imagework will typically relate a verbal account of their experience to the group, including the researcher. The results of imagework become a verbal communication capable of transcription and so become a 'field text' (Clandinin and Connelly 1994) for the researcher. The anthropologist/social science researcher can then analyse the culturally bound rules and social patterns discerned in the development and understanding of day and night imagery.

All the kinds of imagework that I am introducing are suitable to use with either individuals or groups. As my experience has primarily been with groups, my examples relate to groups. I realise many researchers will feel more comfortable incorporating a piece of imagework into an interview with an individual rather than using this method with a group.

Chapter 2

‘Imaginary fields’ and the qualitative research domain

> You see, it wasn’t too hard. It is beautiful, the sun is gathering strength and soon it will be hot, with blue skies – a perfect day. Now that you are outside we can begin our journey. It will be no ordinary journey, you must think of it as a ‘magic carpet ride’.
>
> Now we are on our way, we must look for a wall, a high wall, built of large stones, draped with ivy and moss. It looks forbidding but there is a breach in the wall, and we shall find it. It is a narrow gap, we must go through one at a time, keep close, do not be afraid.[2]

This chapter considers the position of imagework within the context of the qualitative research domain. Specifically I compare the use of imagework with the history of projective tests. Further, I explore imagework as a research methodology with developments within the field of visual anthropology, arts-based research methodologies and transpersonal research methods. In the second part of the chapter I introduce the first three fields of imagework: introductory, memory and spontaneous.

This chapter will consider the growing interest in non-traditional research methods such as the ‘personal experience’ methods (Clandinin and Connelly 1994) which use diaries, journals, letters etc. The use of imagework and the other experiential methods I am introducing potentially offers a significant criticism of the nature of personal and social data offered by the more orthodox research methods involved in the various forms of interviewing and questionnaires. The limitations of such methods are well documented but usually the critique is limited to the truthfulness of the respondent and issues of procedural reactivity and the implicit biases that can enter the interview process by way of race, gender, age and class dimensions. What an experiential research method such as imagework offers, is the opportunity to reach levels and

forms of knowledge not immediately apprehensible by the respondent in interview or through their participation in a focus group. The researcher then, of course, is involved in the production of experience as well as its recording and analysis. We can see that such a powerful technique from humanistic psychology can evoke neglected and avoided aspects, experiences and emotions contained within the embodied self.

This chapter focuses on presenting a description and classification of imagework as a novel research opportunity, and locating it within the qualitative research domain. Imagework and its related methods are tools through which the researcher co-creates the object of study with the respondents. The researcher influences the data produced, particularly through the facilitation of the reflective process. Yet the subtle co-creation of the research data and interpretive outcome reflect a contemporary concern of the qualitative research community (Denzin 1994; Geertz 1983, 1988). Goulet and Young define the experiential method in social anthropology as being, 'the inclusion of the experience of the ethnographer in his or her ethnography … whereby anthropologists make themselves "experimental subjects" and treat their experiences as primary data' (1994: 305). I extend this definition to include the construction of imaginative and action tasks. Experiential methods reframe the continuing concerns involved in the inherent subjectivities of qualitative research and proclaim the possibility of producing valid and even profound data through the researcher's involvement in the co-production of felt, imagined, portrayed and articulated perceptions by respondents. Moreover, the analytic issues produced resonate with contemporary debates in qualitative research concerning, for example, the limits of 'objectivity', the role and value of reflexivity, and the validity of feminist 'standpoint' epistemologies and research perspectives (Denzin 1994). Some of these issues I consider in Chapter 4, i.e. I consider 'the limits of objectivity and reflexivity'. If, as Hastrup writes, there are only 'positioned standpoints' (Hastrup 1992: 119) then experiential approaches need to build their methodological practice and analysis upon such contested epistemological premises.

Imagework and projective tests

The method of imagework will be compared to projective testing which has a long history in anthropology (e.g. DeVos and Wagatsuma 1961; Edgerton 1971). Imagework and projective testing both certainly share a common concern with articulating 'aspects of the personality … not susceptible to direct verbalisation by the informant' (Johnson 1985: 127).

The problematic use of the various kinds of projective tests, particularly TAT and Rorschach tests, will be considered, and the use of imagework, whilst related to projective testing, will be affirmed as being significantly different with respects to inbuilt cultural bias and levels of prestructuring.

There are significant differences between the various kinds of projective tests, such as Thematic Apperception Tests (TAT) and the Rorschach Inkblot Test, widely used by anthropologists in the 1950s and 1960s. TAT tests offer the respondent an ambiguous image of a social situation, such as an incomplete picture of a family group, for the respondent to imagine and define as an actual scene or story. The ambiguity of the portrayed scene allows the respondent a range of possible interpretations of what is pictured. Rorschach Inkblot Tests offer an abstract image, as in an inkblot, from which the respondent can describe 'what they see' and in so doing usually create images and patterns that reflect their own 'idiosyncratic way of interpreting themselves and their relationship to the world around them' (Mead and Wolfenstein 1955).

TAT tests suffer from being highly prestructured in comparison to imagework; while the Rorschach Inkblot Tests are too open and unspecific. Rorschach tests are very difficult to interpret in a culturally unbiased way and are now hardly used (Johnson 1985). Imagework is both less prestructured than TAT tests and less open than Rorschach tests.

TAT tests, which might for instance show a man and a woman together in a situation that could be understood in different ways, do not fully facilitate the imaginative resources of the respondent and considerably prefocus him or her on the imaginative task required. Imagework involves much lower levels of prestructuring than TAT tests. Imagework does, however, clearly involve some prestructuring, as in guiding the imagination in the various forms of imagework. While personal and social imagery evoked through imagework is undoubtably culturally specific, in principle it is applicable for use in non-Western cultures in a way that was found highly problematic with projective tests such as the Rorschach and TAT tests (Johnson 1985).

Imagework exercises could be used in Third World settings and particularly in development work. Whereas projective tests have been problematic when transplanted into non-Western contexts, imagework (due to its low level of prestructuring) avoids the problems of cultural bias that have bedevilled both TAT tests and the Rorschach Inkblot Test (Johnson 1985: 127–33). Imagework could be used to facilitate respondents' unarticulated views. For instance, with respect to eliciting villagers' views of a prospective new road development, the researcher

could ask a group of respondents to imagine the present day's activity without a road. Then the researcher could ask the group to imagine how a road would change their daily pattern of activity. Instead perhaps of a long walk each day to fetch water, villagers would be able to travel more quickly, thereby spending more time on other pursuits, but would need to gain money for bus fares. The daily water collection might be seen as a time for singing and discussion, a time when women have time for themselves. The hypothesis informing my advocacy of the imagework method is that facilitating a group to imaginatively make such journeys would provide richer data and empower muted groups such as children and women to be able to express their latent perceptions and feelings.

Imagework can be a valuable additional method to the rapidly developing use of participatory research methods, known in development contexts as Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) or Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) (Pretty *et al*. 1995). Similarities between PRA/RRA and the imagework methods include a concern with empowerment as a core value, symbol evocation as a core process, facilitation as a core skill, and suitability for use with non-literate users.

Another difference and advantage of imagework is that all but the simplest uses of imagework articulate not just a 'single frame' image such as may happen in projective tests, but rather an entire inner visual, often felt and certainly subjectively experienced, drama. When, for instance, I use imagework to evaluate a course programme and facilitate respondents/students to remember how they felt at the beginning and end of the programme and to imaginatively picture key moments of personal, academic and professional change, one is often evoking a stream of significant images that have a narrative and felt component, sequence and plot, and implicitly contain issues of self and personhood, cultural context and the genesis of personal and social change. Thus, imagework avoids many of the inbuilt weaknesses of projective tests with respect to their cross-cultural usage and limited, evocative potential. Moreover, imagework practice can choose, as we will see, to engage primarily with either the creative imagination, including the dream, or the memory.

Imagework and visual anthropology

Vision has been both a central concern for anthropology and a marginal activity. Grimshaw (2001: 9), a visual anthropologist, suggests that we 'see' anthropology as a 'project of the visual imagination'. Anthropology is concerned with the ethnographer 'seeing' for him/herself and then more usually translating the seen into the written text. Moreover, a

central concern for anthropology has been the arena of vision in indigenous society, whether that be the 'vision' of the shaman, the seer, the ecstatic, the possessed or the medium (Palmisano 2000), or the collective vision, embedded in mythogenesis (myth-making). Visual anthropology, however, has traditionally been seen as a somewhat marginal and problematical junior companion to the centrality of the observing and then writing anthropologist. There has been a 'suspiscion of images' (Banks 2001: 9). However, visual anthropology is experiencing something of a renaissance with the increasing importance and availability of video and the internet in particular. Several recent texts (Pink 2001; Banks 2001; Grimshaw 2001; Rose 2001) have further theorised this developing field. Morphy and Banks (1997: 5) speak of visual anthropology's field of interest being, 'the anthropology of visual systems, or more broadly, visible cultural forms'. My contention in this book is that the field of inner visualisation, whether that of day or night dream, especially when objectified into artwork or other representational forms, becomes a particular focus or sub-field of this area of anthropology. Moreover, I suggest that anthropology's traditional immersion in the world-views of indigenous peoples can have facilitated its practitioners into 'seeing' Western epistemological and psychological theories as being as much 'emic' (indigenous) constructions as those of the peoples they have studied. For example, when Rose (2001: 103) writes of a psychoanalytical perspective in visual anthropology and introduces this with a definition solely with reference to Freudian and Lacanian views of the unconscious, then this bias leads to closure with respect to understanding the potential riches and ways of 'seeing' the psyche.

Interestingly, many of the main concerns in the field of visual anthropology are replicated in the field of imagework and its related outputs: art, drama, dance, mask-making etc. Similar issues of representation, reflexivity, subjectivity, validity and replicability apply to the outer performance of imagework. My contention is that imagework and its 'artistic' outcomes can be usefully compared in one way to the photo-elicitation method, well known in the visual anthropology field. In the photo-elicitation method respondents are interviewed through the medium of relevant photos, either produced by the respondent or the anthropologist (Banks 2001: 87–99; Pink 2001: 68). Collier, an early pioneer of the photo-elicitation method, considered that this method opened up 'emotional revelations' and 'psychological explosions and powerful statements of values' (Collier 1967: 62), otherwise possibly unobtainable. The photo-elicitation method has been critiqued by, for example, Pink (2001: 68) as originally being conceived as providing 'social facts' that

were drawn out of or evoked through this method. More recently such evoked narratives of respondents have been seen as a response to the ethnographers' representations (Pink 2001: 68). If, often old, photographic images can evoke intense and powerful emotions for respondents, concerning, for instance, deceased kin (Riches and Dawson 1998: 24) or the ageing aspect of the life-course (Okely 1994: 50), then how much more evocative will be the here and now production of images by respondents, who then interrogate, ask questions and picture their own life experience? Okely has argued that introducing photographs into the interviews with French rural elders, conjured up a depth of felt information inaccessible to the standard interview, 'A mere tape recording of her speaking in a formalised interview could not have conjured up the greater sense of her past which we mutually created with the aid of visual images' (1994: 50–1). I argue in this book that the different methods of imagework can be an even more evocative research approach.

Art-based qualitative inquiry

Arts-based research practices seem to be growing in popularity in some areas of the qualitative research enterprise, particularly in the education field. Arts-based research '… is defined by the presence of aesthetic qualities or design elements that infuse the inquiry and its writing' (Barone and Eisner 1997: 73). Such research can incorporate poetry, the novel and drama for example into either or both the process and outcome of the research. Barone and Eisner (1997: 73–83) further define this research through the presence of seven attributes:

1 'the creation of a virtual reality'
2 'the presence of ambiguity'
3 'the use of expressive language'
4 'the use of contextualised language'
5 'the promotion of empathic understanding'
6 'the use of the personal signature of the author'
7 'the presence of aesthetic form'.

Imagework research in its various forms is not, as such, another example of arts-based qualitative inquiry as I see imagework research strategies as leading to normative scholarly and academic outcomes; however, the processes available for use within an imagework methodology have similarities with arts-based research. Imagework research practice, as we will see, uses artwork and drama, for example, as a means

of developing insight and meaning from the products of the various forms of imagework described in this book. My contention is that the amplification of meaning from inner images developed through arts-based practices can be observed, recorded, transcribed, and the participants interviewed and re-interviewed, as part of the process of imagework inquiry. However, whilst there can be a similarity of artistry in process methods between the amplification of imaginary experiences (the products of imagework) and arts-based inquiry, the outcomes are dissimilar. Arts-based inquiry typically results in some form of artistic performance whilst imagework does not.

Transpersonal research methods

Whilst autoethnography, personal narrative and reflexivity have become more mainstream in the qualitative research community (Ellis and Bochner 2000), transpersonal research methods that include the use of dreams and imagework, are as yet not well known outside their field. Transpersonal psychology, as Anderson writes, '… seeks to delve deeply into the most profound and inexplicable aspects of human experiences, including mystical and unitive experiences, experiences of transformation, extraordinary insight, meditative awareness, altered states of consciousness, and self-actualisation' (1998: 69). Anderson calls this approach 'intuitive enquiry' and advocates the acknowledged use of '… various altered states of consciousness, active dreaming and dream incubation, mystical vision and audition, intentional imaging, kinaesthetic and somatic awareness, and states of consciousness more typically associated with the artistic process than with science, in all phases of the enquiry' (1998: 76). For instance, in Braud and Anderson's edited collection Fagen writes as to how in her research on 'studying the experiences, accompaniments, and perceived effects of working with one's dreams using creatively expressive, non verbal methods', she invited subjects to try and incubate a dream that would comment on the project itself and then draw or paint it. However, the resultant dream images were not interpreted and were left to speak for themselves (Fagen 1998: 155–8).

My book, rather than focusing centrally on the use of the researchers' dreams, (though I do write about examples of this practice by social anthropologists) rather considers and evaluates the data obtained by the use of subjects' dreams and imagework practice, the latter called by Anderson, 'intentional imaging' (Ibid.). I do, however, agree with the thesis of their book (Anderson and Braud 1998) that exceptional human

experiences (EHEs), such as '… nocturnal and lucid dreams, hunches, hypnagogic and hypnopompic (twilight state) imagery, visions and hallucinations, empathy, psychic functioning, out of body experiences, and synchronicity' (1998: 262), can be incorporated into the research outcome and the reflexive practice of the researcher(s). I consider image and dreamwork suitable for use within any social science research paradigm that recognises and seeks to account for the outcomes of human cognition, imagination, emotion and intuition, within the narratively rendered orderings of group process and cultural context.

Artwork

Artwork is anyway an established, though infrequently used, method in social science research, and represents in a different way to filmmaking the externalisation of the inner image. For instance, Bendelow (1992) in her own study of the gendered dimensions of the perception of pain has used artwork as a way to access respondents' perceptions. Her study used paired sets of reproduced artwork to trigger respondents' expressions of 'beliefs about pain' and subsequently analysed the responses for gender distinctions. James (1993) used children's artwork as both an interviewing trigger and as a way of accessing their perceptions of 'significant others' in the school setting.

Benson has written about the use of artwork:

> these techniques emphasise the feeling and intuitive aspects of personality and offer a valuable way of exploring events in the group life which are not always logical or are hard to talk about in a coherent way.
>
> (Benson 1987: 213)

Artwork can be used as an addition to imagework or separately. Facilitating respondents to draw pictures from their 'inner' images objectifies their imaginative world and allows a dialogue to develop in a different way between group members and the researcher.

I have used artwork, either separately from or with imagework, to seek respondents' views of their personal life history in various respects, for example, their view of their experience of health. In the 'experience of health' example I asked respondents to draw a sequence of pictures on a large flipchart sheet of paper to represent their felt experience of their life or their experience of health during their life-course. We then made a wall gallery of their results, and each respondent had a few minutes to

talk to the group about their 'picture of health' in as confidential a form as they wished. No artistic ability was needed, and the variety of imagery was immense. Respondents might choose to present their life as a road map, a slow ascent, descent or circular journey, or even as a helter-skelter. What was noteworthy, for example, in the case of the health maps, was how broad a range of experiences people considered relevant to their experience of health. Typically, I found older respondents had a more holistic ideology of health than younger respondents, who tended to focus on a more medical view of health and so emphasised the broken bones of living more than the acute sufferings of interpersonal life events. In these examples we can see the possible benefits of using such approaches to reveal and disclose that which the respondent is only implicitly, or dimly, aware of. I write in more detail about this study later in this chapter.

Scope of imagework

Imagework for the purpose of this book includes the many imaginative possibilities of the mind. Included are memory, spontaneous imagery, dreaming, and also the use of gestalt visualisation, and in one case a meditation practice.

Introductory imagework

The first example of the use of imagework is introductory imagework. This 'introductory imagework' is designed to facilitate a group in sharing and analysing how participants are feeling about a certain situation. Such a method can be used as a part of interviewing or in group-based interviews and in focus groups. The technique simply consists of asking respondents to imagine an image that reflects the situation being considered. It is as easy as that! One example was a two-session study of personal and professional identity change among students on a vocational master's programme in social work at a UK university.

What was immediately striking about the student feedback was, first, that all of the twenty students were able to relate an image that they had pictured and, second, how 'discontented' their images were. Students particularly described 'seeing' pictures of train scenarios such as 'being in a siding', 'being derailed', 'in a tunnel' and 'I thought I was on a modern train but it's not!' Apart from the surprising amount of train imagery, other notable imagery presented was feeling 'in a fog', 'up against a brick wall' and 'climbing up a mountain without enough footholds'. I

later realised that students had previously been attending a staff-student meeting about the course and that individual and group morale at that point was low.

However, the whole point about imagework is to facilitate the movement from 'seen' inner image to articulated theme through a process of 'reading' the imagery much like one might 'read' a picture in an art gallery; and indeed, further 'readings' can be obtained by asking the respondents to make a simple external picture of their imagery and then displaying their results on the wall for further individual and group discussion. Each respondent then speaks to their picture in turn before the researcher/facilitator possibly develops a group-based analysis of pertinent themes based on comparing the individual narratives that have emerged. Further amplification of meaning from such imagery can be made by doing a sculpt, which in the above case would have consisted of inviting the group to first design and create a train station, railway line and so forth using chairs, tables and so on as props; then each person would have been asked to position themselves in a pose that represented their feeling state about their position on the course (i.e. 'being stuck in a tunnel' or 'derailed'). This can be jolly, is not difficult to facilitate (see Jennings 1986 for details), and as people talk from their positions and poses in the sculpt, new levels of insight and implicit knowledge can be revealed. It also enhances group cohesion and identity, and that in itself can facilitate richer levels of discussion, disclosure and group analysis.

So we can articulate a research process that starts with imagework and then can move on into artwork, sculpting and possibly drama. Yet at whatever point the 'experiential' process stops, public analysis by each respondent needs to begin. Themes need to be drawn out and 'read' from the imagery, and as respondents talk about their imagery, they engage the intuitive and affective dimensions of the self in a way unlikely to be achieved solely through a cognitive engagement with an interviewer/researcher. Using the binary opposition model of the brain (Markham 1989), imagework connects many people to the right-hand side of their brain, the centre for creative, intuitive and lateral thinking, while the left-hand side brain hemisphere is known to control cognitive and intellectual processes. So imagework is particularly powerful as a tool for accessing the unarticulated embodied views of individuals and groups in the research process.

What imagework and related 'experiential' research methods can achieve is the articulation of respondents' as yet dimly perceived but emotionally present aspects of self and world. So, for instance, in the postgraduate Master's programme evaluation presented above, students

speaking of their imagework articulated through this process their feelings about the nature, content and structure of the course, and their individual and group progress on it; further, they accessed their original hopes and fears for 'the course' and how their imagery reflected their intuited and existential predicament concerning 'the course' in their life in the 'here and now'. Not only did it reflect their immediate felt concern but through further experiential techniques, such as the use of art and sculpting, the process gave respondents the opportunity of 'working with' and changing their existential predicaments. When I asked respondents at the end of the session whose 'images' had changed during the course of the session, three respondents replied affirmatively: the one who had thought she was on a modern train but wasn't felt she was now on an 'express train'; another felt there was less 'fog' around her; and another felt there were more 'footholds' on the mountain.

So imagework and its amplification (artwork, sculpting and drama, updating/amplifying respondents' imagery) can evoke both significant insights into psycho-social situations and even change personal and group orientations, so becoming applicable in action-research settings. For instance, in this last example, respondents had almost no idea that fellow respondents/students felt so similarly about the course experience. Using imagework, even at this most simple and introductory level, can evoke rich levels of personal and group insight and facilitate enhanced self-disclosure and group analysis. Moreover, I find groups can be easily encouraged to develop their own meta-analysis of the imagery presented; asking respondents to 'identify common themes and significant differences' usually provides very useful analysis as respondents, if reasonably facilitated, are 'warmed up' by their personal and group encounter with the affective and intuitive aspects of themselves, something still relatively rarely encountered in contemporary Western lifestyles.

Often, before doing any kind of imagework, I do the introductory 'bowl of soup' exercise, to illustrate to respondents the immediate universal capacity of the mind to bring up a spontaneous and often valuable image.

Introductory imagework exercise: bowl of soup or 'in the soup'!

The aim of the exercise is to show that the 'unconscious' mind is always accessible; like a well of images waiting our attention. The primary intention of this exercise is as a warm-up to longer imagework exercises.

This exercise can be used to give a symbolic view on a person's current self-state, though I tend not to focus on this aspect.

The exercise can proceed as follows:

1. Ask students to imagine themselves drinking in silence a bowl of soup; alternatively this 'imaginary' bowl could be passed round a group (I prefer this second way).
2. Give people a couple of minutes to imagine the 'bowl of soup'; make sure people have been asked not to giggle beforehand.
3. Then ask people, or two or three people, to share:
   a. what was the soup?
   b. what was the bowl?
4. Typically, there is quite a variety of responses from:
   a. one person who 'flew' through the bottom of the bowl into a mountain range (an experienced traveller).
   b. others who remember a 'favourite soup' which has a particular meaning for them. One respondent spoke of a 'champagne and pea' soup!
   c. half empty bowls which can illustrate feelings of not being fed enough (I remember a mother who said she always focused on feeding others, hence her bowl was half empty).
   d. often there is a split between those who imagine their bowls with homemade (often mother's or grandmother's) soup which has values of family nurture etc. and those who have tinned soup. This contrast is 'good to work with'.
   e. the bowl itself can be of interest and is often 'special' to the person in some way: meanings and associations can be developed here. For example, a manager's bowl of soup was a very large bowl with ladle and many smaller bowls! Sometimes a part of a person's life journey can be symbolised as when an anthropologist combined in her soup image the tastes and textures of her European homeland with the smells of her African fieldwork setting.

The 'bowl of soup' exercise shows how quickly the 'unconscious' throws up an image or a set of images. Moreover, these images can be read, not always easily, as being intuitively relevant picturings of some aspect of the person's life at that time, e.g. the 'exhausted' mother. Using such an introductory imagework exercise at the beginning of a workshop session reassures participants and allows them to identify with the imagework process. Such practice is part of a sensitive and ethical imagework practice.

Memory imagework

The second field of the imagework method that I want to introduce is the memory imagework method.

Examples of memory imagework

Memory imagework can be used as part of an oral history approach. The method consists of leading participants through their early biographical memories as a way of picturing forgotten or little-considered aspects of their childhood awareness. Remembering and (re)picturing one's first experiences of a child of another race and/or gender to oneself can be powerful triggers for recollecting the earliest experience of culturally formed and/or stereotypical thinking. A pilot session, conducted with a group of twelve anthropologists as experimental subjects, involved, after a suitable relaxation exercise, a guided journey forwards in imaginative time starting with the participants' early memories/pictures of home, school and play experiences. Following the exercise discussion, analysis took place as to how early concepts of race, gender, ability and other differences were constructed. Participants' awareness came through the recollecting of others' bodily characteristics and social customs, such as table manners and joking behaviours, and their implications for the formation of self-concept and peer group formation.

Another example of memory imagework is similar in that it consisted of facilitating a group of forty participants to visualise early memories in order to assist an analysis of their implicit class awareness. So, following a relaxation exercise, they were guided to remember their early thoughts and feelings about, for example, dress, food, play, humour and significant moral advice. The material retrieved was effectively a raw psycho-ethnography that could then be subjected, through paired and small-group discussion, to an analysis of the development of personal and cultural identity, in this case with a focus towards class position and understanding. I was particularly interested in excavating their unarticulated awareness, yet embodied mastery (Bourdieu 1977) of the values and practices of a culturally specific class position.

There is probably almost no limit to the range of possible memory, and also imaginary (see next section), situations that can be 'dreamt up'. For example, recently, I have been developing and using an exercise in which respondents first imagine their original 'family' household (as long as this represents a 'comfortable' place for them; if not I advise them to think of another well known household from their childhood for this exercise) and then, as an exercise, walk around this remembered

house, and the actual task is for them to look for a specific piece of ritual and symbolic activity. The aim of this task is to gather data about 'household change over two generations' or even 'changing Western domestic symbolism'. I don't give examples so as not to anticipate their memory, but usually respondents think of mealtimes, the hearth, musical instruments or bathroom activities. Then I ask respondents to 'fast forward' into the present and imagine that they are in their current household (or again an equivalent example if their current situation is problematic) and consider the similarities and differences between their current and past households with regard to the symbolic value of their chosen ritual activity. Usually, time permitting, I ask respondents to make a brief felt-tip picture of their imaginings and then share with the group, or in pairs, the symbols used and encountered and the preliminary explanations they have for such changes. Typically, respondents talk of changes in family structures; technological developments; gender and ethnic consciousness development; secularisation; changing consumption patterns; personal and public symbolism; and a reflexive approach to the changing subject of experience. The group can then make a meta-analysis of the emerging themes.

As an example, I include two descriptions by participants who consented to share them in publication form. They come from non-English as first language speakers and I have retained the original writing.

> My original and my present home is the same, only that I moved from my original home and came back after eleven years. The image manifested in travelling through my memories of living in my original home is the image of a room with a piano. There I spent my most imaginative and happy moments, hours and days of my childhood. I could remember the sounds and smells of the room, the light and the distant voices from the garden. Learning the music I discovered for the first time a magic touch of creativity and happiness. The image discovered in my mind, connected with living in my present home (which is in the same house) is the image of my working room with my table and the computer on it. And again there is a strong feeling of happiness and creativity. Only this time there is not the music involved but writing different texts, letters, making concepts, dreaming, reading books etc. And again there is a keyboard. My English is not good enough to explain what I think is the meaning of my images. I can only say that they are of great importance for me and the finding of your exercise as well. What do they mean, two rooms in the second floor of our house? I need

an entire life to pass from one room to another. First I was a child and now I am there with my family.

With a nice atmosphere precipitated by the introduction you made to this exercise, I found myself in the house of my childhood – the first family house I could remember and where I never 'came in' after I left (I was ten then). The ritual activity that occurred to me was a family meal. We were all sat at the table and I could remember all the furniture inside it, even the colour of the tablecloth. But I had a strange sensation of lacking of space in my place. Also it impressed me that this memory image had no movement, as if I was looking at a picture that stand still. Contrasting with the same ritual situation at my actual home, I saw myself moving. Always moving. In this case it was the activity that prevails over the scenery. I actually haven't paid much attention to the objects and furniture and colours (perhaps because they were very present in my memory) and the images that always were brought to my memory in this later case were all images of movement, where I played a strong role – bringing the food to the table, bringing water, for example (curiously I don't really do this as often as to justify this image of myself). In both cases the difficulty was to look at myself. Perhaps I was feeling the ambiguity of being inside and outside a situation and couldn't be able to assume both roles. That means I took the role of the observer but could only have the feelings of the observed – in the first case I had 'lack of space'; in the recent one I was always moving (escaping?). I think that image memories, like pictures, when we try to observe them are very helpful to practise the 'art of anthropology', and an essential part of our work as anthropologists is to observe and describe and analyse the observations we do.

Both of these responses show the quality of engagement of participants in the exercise and their ability to imaginatively recreate the 'sights' and feelings that they have for these emotional spaces of their selfhood. In the first example the participant muses over the 'journey' of his life seeming to be summarised by his movement between two rooms in the same family house. The respondent hints at deeper levels of discerned meaning, undisclosed due to language translation issues. Clearly significant, even profound, emotions have been generated which 'picture' his life as a journey between two rooms on the same floor. Whilst from this first example one might not be able to gather much by way of 'data' about changing ritual activities, for example, one could follow up with

interview and discussion, and develop ideas about his (and others') perceptions and concepts of identity and selfhood, including family membership and the life-course. The self, its felt identity and internal spatial knowing, is here emotionally activated as well as being conceptually present! Affective and intuitive, as well as cognitive, dimensions of the self are then manifested, generated and released. How different would the result solely of an interview be! The remembered movement of the person through their experience (in this case of a lifetime spent moving between two rooms) and then onto the verbal level reveals their intuitive understanding in a way that a solely cognitive engagement with a question doesn't. This is the benefit of an imagework process. Indeed, respondents may even become aware of their own deep perceptions which, hitherto, they did not quite consciously grasp; the unarticulated becomes articulated; the thought waiting in the wings, may even fly into the centre of the mind's theatre!

This example shows that participants will often interpret the task in the way they choose and so offer information perhaps about a slightly different research question; however, at the very least I would contend the imaginative process opens them up for a depth of recall and evocative memorisation that will benefit any subsequent interviewing and data-collection process.

The second example shows a real contrast between the level and quality of the participant's engagement in the two remembered households; she describes this difference in terms of movement and lack of movement. Clearly, follow-up discussion around the themes of 'lack of space' and family roles would possibly evoke deeper insights into her experience of childhood and adult family identity, family and gender roles, and power and domestic space, for example. As this was a training exercise for anthropologists in the methodology, this follow-up work didn't take place.

The following third example is helpful for a different reason as it shows the reaction of an anthropologist who, unusually in my experience with this or indeed any other exercise outlined in this book, encountered emotional issues that were somewhat painful. Also it shows how they resolved this:

> I have to think a bit more about your question, but what I can say about it now, is that when I thought about it later, your instructions were very clear, you told us to look for a daily activity etc. I felt it was maybe just a lack of discipline of myself that I used the opportunity to confront myself with some personal problem. When one

> returns to one's childhood, it is maybe inevitable that some people are caught by emotional memories. All I can think of is that in the guiding instructions you can tell people that they have a choice over their imaginations and that if they meet something emotional, that they have the choice to lay that aside and choose an image that is more neutral. As images are still quiet magic and hypnotic to me, I myself felt that I had no choice, that this image pushed itself to the foreground and that I should follow it. Later, after you said that one is in control of one's imagination, that was quite a new insight to me. It has consequences in more ways. I did not consider it as a bad experience by the way, it was very revealing, but as we are not in a therapeutic environment, I felt my memories were just too personal to tell.

This example shows that sometimes participants will take the opportunity of such an exercise to do their own unfinished personal work. As our society typically offers few such occasions people often find they look at something else other than the stated task. Also, as I often in training sessions choose open-ended and quite broad imaginative exercises, perhaps this allows participants to roam rather widely on occasion. Again, however, we can see how the participant valued the experience even though she didn't contribute to the discussion at the time. A fuller discussion of the ethics of using imagework is included in Chapter 7.

A HEALTH IMAGEWORK EXERCISE

The exercise in this case was to recollect or remember one's life with respect to experiences of health and illness as a way of finding out differential models of health and well-being held by certain student populations. As part of the exercise, respondents also had to fill in a set of accompanying questions that related to their memory exercise. Reproductions of the artwork produced by the students are on my website: http://www.dur.ac.uk/i.r.edgar/.

The student work I will quote from was based on a picture of a tree. I will report in full the answers to the following questions:

1 How did you visualise your life?
'As a tree; with many branches and experiences, still growing and learning. The tree's roots also represent strong family roots and a stable basis upon which to grow and rely. The tree growing towards

the sky is also a symbolic image to express hope, ambitions and dreams for the future'.

2 What critical incidents did you remember?
'Death'.

3 What 'health' issues came up?
'Stress, pain, headaches initially, but flowing into peace, contentment and happiness'.

4 How did you portray health-related issues? What symbols did you use to show 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' times?
'Weather-related symbols were used because I feel they are very accurate in portraying emotions felt when going through good times (sunshine) and bad times (lightning). The sleeping bird represents the future goal of ultimate contentment in life'.

5 How was/is our experience of 'health' affected by the society we live in?
'Remembering mostly the bad times rather than the good; coming from a Western society, our experience of health is more focused towards the physical being: fitness, appearance; traditionally putting much less emphasis on the health of the spirit'.

6 As an anthropologist looking at your picture what do you see?
'The use of symbols from Western culture – very general symbols encompassing good and bad times with death (cross) being the only independent symbol and therefore obviously the most important issue'.

7 What ideas about health can be seen in the picture?
'The idea that the good and the bad times are linked, one following on from another. That both are needed in order to grow and reach contentment'.

Clearly these responses represent results from a single case and without full control trials we cannot know if her reactions to the task would provide different data if done a) solely as a questionnaire, b) as an interview, c) as a picture-making and questionnaire exercise, or d) as an imagework exercise followed on by picture-making and questionnaire (as was the case). However, what we can deduce from an examination of this picture (see my website: http://www.dur.ac.uk/i.r.edgar/) are the following health themes and perspectives emerging from the exercise and resulting symbolism.

This picture, in common with many of the others from the exercise, shows a marked capacity for symbolism through which to express individual perceptions of health 'careers'. The tree symbol itself is a

powerful and cross-cultural metaphor through which to express the nature of a human being. The world tree is a well-known symbol. Other symbols evoked and represented through the exercise are: the sleeping bird, sunshine and lightning. It is very common for respondents to describe healthy times through positive meteorological symbols and inversely, use of symbolic images such as rain and cloud to portray negative times. Likewise metaphors of 'ascent' and 'descent' are often used. She writes, 'The tree growing towards the sky is also a symbolic image to express hope, ambitions and dreams for the future'. Other similar symbols used in the same exercise by other students were: health experiences expressed as a series of hills with ascents for 'healthy times' and descents expressing 'unhealthy times', and in another picture we encounter a similar theme using the symbolism of a rollercoaster. The use of such symbolisation allows other respondents to empathise without the painter having to actually disclose possibly confidential health data.

However, what I consider valuable about the depth of the data revealed through these examples in this exercise are the many levels of understanding of health that emerge. Unlike in some of Seedhouse's (1986) four theories of health, we can 'see' an individual's metaphorical account of their remembered and also deeply anticipated future hopes for themselves. Moreover, these thoughts, feelings and aspirations are couched in a visually-expressed narrative which encompasses 'stress, pain, headaches initially, but flowing into peace, contentment and happiness'. Health becomes much more than pain, illness and disease episodes but includes social relationships and the thread of meaning running through her life and projected even into her future. This account is more akin to a humanistic and holistic view of health (Seedhouse 1986: 51–4) than to other Western theories of health. Each of the pictures respondents made is unique, but often utilises common symbolism (metaphors of ascent and descent for good and bad times, for example). Each is open to varying levels of analysis and meta-analysis as previously described. Each analytic level is evocative as well as interpretive so the data obtained is more holistic in the sense that it can and often does draw on the affective and intuitive aspects of the self as well as the rational.

Spontaneous imagework

The third field of imagework I call spontaneous imagework. This consists of leading a group of respondents on an imaginary journey. Examples of these journeys are written up in Ernst and Goodison (1981), Glouberman (1989), and Markham (1989). A very typical exercise of this type is for

the facilitator of the exercise, after an introductory relaxation exercise, to lead the participants on a journey. A classical form of this is to start the journey in a meadow and to lead participants over an obstacle and up a hill to a house on the hill where they meet a wise person whom they can talk to about any question that they have. An exercise like this (Ernst and Goodison 1981: 161), as found in my experience, can trigger disclosure of and work on important personal and social issues. For qualitative research purposes, this kind of exercise can be refocused to gain data concerning the subject of an enquiry. So, for example, if the researcher wished to gain data about respondents' views on any aspect of family life or social life, they would be asked to 'carry' this question in their mind and ask their 'wise old person' about this subject. Spontaneous imagework exercises can predominantly be located in an 'imaginary world', as in the last example, or they can be related primarily to the imagined world of everyday reality, as in the earlier development example where the researcher could use imagework as a way of accessing respondents' views about a prospective new road.

Imagework can just as easily be used with students in a teaching setting and the following examples are primarily teaching examples but ones that show the significant difference in kind of data achieved by such an exercise compared with more traditional research methods. This example concerns a use of imagework with anthropology students. The session was in a more vocationally orientated module that aimed at relating students' applied anthropological knowledge and skills to the possibility of a career outcome in the social work field. I invited them to imagine themselves as a social worker escorting an old female client from her last home in the community to an old people's home. They silently visualised this process, with appropriate spoken directional and timing cues from myself. The imagework process lasted for about twenty minutes and involved them imaginatively talking her through the event – guiding her around her new home, through the sitting rooms, manager's office, to her bedroom and then to the leave-taking, perhaps involving a gift and/or touch. This imaginative material was discussed and provided a focus for the subsequent question as to what 'knowledge and skills' from their degree programme were relevant? Of course, as well as the feelings and identifications raised by this exercise, considerable understanding arose concerning the nature and effects of the ageing process, institutionalisation, rites of passage, residential cultures, professional relationships, personal identity and material artefacts. These understandings helped to provide a basis for anthropology students to integrate an awareness of the extensive range of understandings in relation to such a professional

role with which their course had equipped them. They effectively generated their own different and similar inner generated case-studies. The whole session took one hour. It took place with a group of eighty students, so it can be said that the method is not solely for small groups. I conducted a similar exercise with German anthropology students 'leading them' to an imaginary refugee hostel that they were due to visit the following week and then discussing their thoughts and feelings with them.

A relatively 'quick' exercise I do in different contexts is to suggest that students consider a 'question' they have either about the educational content of the module, a possible research topic or even a more personal one in terms of their future career orientation for example. Then, once relaxed, I suggest they imagine a 'wise person', be they a teacher, friend, parent or abstract figure, and dialogue with that imaginary person about 'their question'. I usually find about 80 per cent of the students have some useful experience which can range from profound and original to trivial. Here are some accounts from a short exercise in which students were invited to think of a question about the module (anthropology of mental health, illness and drug use):

1 Report from a Socrates exchange student:

> Dark space – a man came walking (he brought the light with him). He was very tall, big, with long grey hair. It was a man I've seen before [from student's home country] and met him once. He was a Cherokee chief. I asked him why I was here – he looked at me. I tried to ask him related questions and he just looked and told me that I knew. He turned his back to me and walked away (I was in the dark and the light went with him). He suddenly turned round and said, 'Just remember [name] that this is your fieldtrip'. Now I agree with him – both the fieldtrip to England and then the fieldtrip within myself in England.

2 Written response from student whose question was 'what is mental health?'

> I imagined myself in the south of Spain; it was a summer's evening, balmy, bold, available. I walked onto the roof of a villa and entered a room in which there was a bath of cooled water. There was a flat wooden board across the bath upon which it would be possible to lay papers. My sage, Salvador Dali, sat in the bath, naked and drawing with a quill pen and ink. I asked, 'What and where will I find the answer to my

question, what is mental health?' He spun the right frond of his moustache, looked at my forehead and said, 'I'm not eccentric, I'm concentric, your answer is everywhere'. I thanked him and withdrew walking backwards, puzzled.

3 Another write-up but without an accompanying question:
The person within did not take the form of a male or female. I was guided into the 'hall of achievement' where I was shown all the creations of mankind. In another place were all the things that had the potential to be created but never were because the dreamer had forgotten the dream. A good state of mental health, I think, is being able to remember the dream and going after it, not letting it slip out of your grasp.

The following written reported experiences either contain a question or, as in the last one, describe the feeling tone of the experience:

4 I visualised my English teacher from school, Mr [name]. He was a brilliant 'down to earth' teacher who helped me a lot. He answered the question I asked about our presentation topic, and it made me think about the question in a clearer way.
5 I was distracted by too many thoughts of my own and all of the noise and movement around me to do the exercise in class. I think it is an interesting idea though and I have tried it out at home. My wise person is usually my mother or a behavioural psychologist I saw a few years ago.
6 I could see my friend. He died through a form of madness. I asked him, 'What is madness?' He spoke back saying it was within us all, but only seen as madness by society when for example his behaviour was classed as 'abnormal'. Society can change a natural drive, or individual talent, into a form of madness. This was his account of what madness was.
7 I imagined someone I knew, who I think is a wise person. He spoke to me, he listened, he reassured me. It was a relaxed atmosphere, quiet. I felt relaxed afterwards. I didn't feel like leaving that place; I felt at home. It felt like I had escaped into another world.

These written reported experiences show that from what was only a five to ten minute exercise at the beginning of a lecture on 'mental health and illness: cross-cultural paradigms', a very wide variety of experiences occurred, ranging from the personally profound and insight-

ful (nos. 1, 3 and 6), to the bizarre and intriguing (no. 2), the useful (no. 4), the useless (no. 5), and no. 7 in which the account focuses on feeling tone rather than question-outcome. Such results provide opportunities for the educator to make valuable and interesting connections between student experience and taught thematic content.

To turn such exercises into valuable research opportunities the key is to clearly formulate the question that one wants to explore. In the case of meeting a wise person, some respondents will have experiences and perceptions that surprise them and that they may find they can relate to either during the session or afterwards, thereby making the researcher consider follow-up interviews as a strategy. Really, imagework can work in three separate and related ways and I use it in all three ways: as a method of personal growth, as a teaching methodology and as a research methodology. What needs to happen is for the imagework method to be rigorously tested out, possibly using control groups to ascertain the different potential data outcomes.

One recent imagework exercise I have adapted for use from Glouberman's 'sensing life choices, making life decisions' (1989: 168–86), I call 'crossroads'. In this exercise I suggest participants first develop a question about their life that currently is of interest to them; the question can be either a small one or a large. Then they imagine the choices they have with respect to this question and I ask them, following a suitable relaxation exercise (see later in chapter in section on 'therapeutic journeys'), to visualise the different ways or paths that the different choices would offer. Then they can 'walk' down those different ways and encounter sometimes surprising material that subsequently in discussion they can relate to their intuitive expectation of life outcomes following particular decisions. Sometimes, as a variant on this exercise, participants can towards the end of this exercise imagine themselves going up in a helicopter or a balloon above the different 'ways' and see for themselves how the different paths come together later or veer away from each other. Perhaps they all lead to the same place anyway! How can this exercise be used in a research context? Well any research question that involves the issue of personal and contextual decision-making, or risk assessment, are obvious topics. People's perception of impending life changes and their expected and unexpected coping capacities and resources would manifest themselves well through such an exercise and in differing ways from a purely conceptual discussion. Participants can, for instance, visualise different courses of action and their imagined outcomes in relation to healthy and unhealthy lifestyles, relationship and career issues. Issues like 'perceptions of pregnancy,

marriage, divorce, bereavement and even death (end of life choices)' could be conjured up and worked with. Having mentioned 'death' at this point, the reader could be forgiven for thinking that that topic of all topics should be excluded from this realm of methodological practice. However, my experience of doing visualisation exercises around people's death issues are that the nameless terrors associated with this event follow largely from not looking at one's expectations. For instance, I recall a pairs exercise I did in which one spoke to one's partner as if the partner were one's death and the results were considered and profound and not as scary as might be expected.

However, talking of death is somewhat of a distraction from the perception that in fact we are all anticipating and rehearsing our possible futures during a large part of our daytime life, and possibly in our dreamtime too. We anticipate the day or evening or weekend ahead; where we might go on holiday if sufficiently time and money rich; who we might try and date, make friends with; in all these activities and countless others we are normally engaged in, we, excepting those very few who are not visual thinkers at all, imaginatively predict the possible outcomes; so, in an informal way, we do the crossroads exercise many times each day, but usually we do it in a haphazard and somewhat undisciplined form and of course normally we do our imaginative rehearsal work on our own or 'chew it over' with a friend(s).

Some memory imagework exercises can involve spontaneous imagework characteristics. For instance the previously described exercise in which participants imaginatively 'journeyed' back into their household of origin with a question or task, such as finding a 'ritual' activity, can have elements of spontaneous imagework, such as the contrast in the second example between her being immobile in the household of her childhood compared with her (desperate?) activity in her current household. Indeed, even the short introductory 'bowl of soup' exercise already described can be an occasion for a participant to exercise their imaginative 'muscles'. Once, as mentioned already, somebody just dived down to the bottom of their imaginary soup bowl and went flying to some inner mountains!

Therapeutic journeys

The most recent example of this third field of imagework entailed leading participants on a journey to take a friend who was in emotional or mental distress to a 'therapeutic place'. I will include the actual spoken journey as an illustration to show how it is done:

> We will first do a relaxation exercise: for its own sake but also to become 'more in touch' with our right-brain hemisphere, which deals with our creativity, intuitions and emotions.
>
> Okay then: first relax … breathe deeply … or imagine a safe place … or let your awareness travel through your body …
>
> Then when you are ready … imagine meeting your friend, say at a railway station or somewhere … you are going to take them to a 'therapeutic' or healing place … now in your own time: make that journey … share what is happening with them … now you are reaching the place … what does it look like? Knock on the door! You are greeted … then you go in … what's it like … have a good look round … introduce your friend … then just spend some time there … explore …
>
> Now you are going to leave … with or without your friend … say your goodbyes and return to whence you came! Come back into the room …
>
> Now briefly, make a little coloured picture of your imaginative experience … enjoy doing it … share the whole experience with a friend … or two … use your picture as a means of sharing …
>
> (Workshop handout)

Masks could be made from these journeys; dances and little dramas enacted; the amplification possibilities are almost endless.

Further questions can be asked of these 'inner journeys', depending on whether the objectives are personal growth related, education orientated (see Edgar 2003a) or qualitative research in design. In this example I was focused on the use of imagework for qualitative health and social care research.

My interest in developing an imagework exercise that consists of taking participants and their 'needy friend' to a healing community or 'place' in their imagination grew from several roots. These included recently visiting a medical sociologist friend and colleague, who had had a psychotic breakdown, in a local inpatient psychiatric facility and witnessing their perception of this facility as being profoundly anti-therapeutic. Such a perception is confirmed by the outcome of the Sainsbury (1998) study of such facilities.

I have also participated in developing a multi-disciplinary research proposal to consider service users' perceptions of their desired change. Working towards such ends necessitated eliciting service users' ideal picture of a therapeutic environment. Since then I have developed this imagework exercise as a way of developing and accessing participants'

intuitive views of their ideal therapeutic environment (although the 'journey' format is one in which the participant is apparently taking a 'needy friend' to a therapeutic place, of course really it is their own vision of such a place). I first worked with a group of mature German cultural studies students for a day and was very surprised by what I found. Most of the students developed a very politically Green perspective with their healing places located away from the city and in the country, often with water nearby, such as a lake. Access to friends was central as was developing a self-structuring programme for the day; psychiatrists and pills were nowhere in sight! Of course, a critical perspective on the results of this day workshop would say that these were probably radical German students and what did you expect! Since then however, I have done this exercise with several groups and have continued to be surprised by the themes that arise in these journeys. First, nature imagery is paramount generally; beauty has a definite place in people's constructions and oftentimes I have wondered whether I am triggering or facilitating some kind of paradisical mini-archetype latent in human consciousness, rather like Newberg and d'Aquili (1994) suggest in relation to their research on the universality of near death experiences. Certainly participants usually report very calming experiences and often meetings with significant others, such as a dearly loved and departed grandparent. Indeed, one of the slight issues with using imagework is that participants can use the opportunity to 'do' unfinished business rather than focusing on the instructions given. The following is such a case.

> Then suddenly we were in this huge soap-bubble and we were suspended above the countryside, we were gliding through the air. Inside of the soap-bubble were lots of fluffy feathers. It was calm up there, it felt like being sheltered, a place to rest, to take breath, there was clearness, facility, lots of wideness, … just being away from the real world. I held the girl in my arms and we stayed there for the rest of the 'journey' gliding through the air. Actually it was me who enjoyed this quiet, peaceful place the most … just being there was the healing aspect.

Participant's comments on exercise:

> That day we made this 'journey' I didn't feel well. I had a lot of things on my mind, I was stressed out … I guess that's why I immediately found myself in this wonderful soap-bubble without any friend who needed help … I guess I myself needed urgently such a place and

> that's why I stayed there for the rest of the exercise! That morning the healing place of the 'journey' was a real healing place for me.

For the participant this was clearly a 'healing' experience and she did have a child companion; she says, however, that she 'immediately found [herself] in this wonderful soap-bubble without any friend who needed help'. I often find that participants don't follow the instructions exactly as they may have more pressing needs for personal peace etc. This is not a problem, though, as many participants will 'do the journey' exactly as asked and from slightly different journeys experienced, such as the above, perhaps new valuable insights may later emerge when analysing the data generated. The priority is that participants meet their own needs and feel safe and experience the exercise as personally valuable. From such experiences personal meaning and a vision of self can emerge.

Additionally, I have found that participants focus on complementary health practices such as massage and yoga etc. Electro-convulsive therapy (ECT) doesn't get a look in and nobody gets drugged up by their Health Service, even for their own good. Certainly walled gardens are in, as are Roman baths, and even space stations in which global awareness can be generated. I usually find 70–80 per cent of participants can do the exercise asked for or their own variant of it, unless the room is noisy and/or uncomfortable.

I now give two examples of such 'therapeutic journeys' to give readers a taste of the potential feelings, thoughts and images that can emerge.

This first example (see picture on website: http://www.dur.ac.uk/i.r.edgar/) was undertaken and written up by a prisoner's partner, thereby articulating her feelings of concern, grief and therapeutic hope for her imprisoned husband:

> The purpose of my therapeutic healing journey was to take a friend who was in need of healing to an ideal environment, where they would be able to recover from the troubles ailing them.
>
> The friend that I took with me on the journey, who I will refer to as Jon, is in the process of being re-integrated back into society after having spent several years in prison. Jon is currently finding this process particularly problematic, having been institutionalised whilst he has been away. Although Jon has recently been moved from a high security to an open prison, where he is given day release in order to help him to integrate back into the community slowly, he still describes the experience of being 'on the outside' as somewhat unnerving. Jon often explains to me how the reason for this is the

great change in the pace of life, moving from an institution where you are told what to do and nothing ever happens in a hurry, to so much freedom where everything seems so urgent, immediate and fast. Cars are especially worrying, they rush past at such a speed, whereas in prison nothing moves more fast than another human being. Even just sitting in a café is a major event, people move behind him and in front of him freely; this he suggests makes him particularly uncomfortable. 'Inside' people don't walk behind each other – 'you always have to watch your back; if someone is behind you it probably means they are about to knife you'. It was because of the difficulties that Jon is facing that I felt I would like to take him on a therapeutic healing journey; to an ideal place, where he could become accustomed to the freedom and relax before having to deal with the pace of life 'outside'.

It was a warm sunny day with only the faintest hint of light breeze in the air, and except for the sounds of birds chattering away, and the odd car passing by on the road behind, the station seemed relatively quiet and deserted. Our journey began at a train station, situated out in the country where I felt it would be less traumatic for Jon than having to deal with fast cars and congested roads. When it arrived we boarded the train, choosing seats by the window so that we see out and watch the countryside and greenery, following the track, slipping slowly away as we moved closer towards the ideal therapeutic destination. After several hours of travelling, having spent much of our time looking out of the window and chatting, the train finally pulled up to a small red-bricked station house, alongside a clearing, with a path at the back leading up to the edge of a forest.

Following the path behind the station, Jon and I walked up to the edge and into the forest. Entering the forest brought about various changes, changes in the temperature that we were experiencing as we moved from the warm welcoming sunlight that bathed the open setting into a more secluded, slightly colder shaded environment. There were also changes in scent, with the smell of earth, damp brown leaves and pine lingering in the air. After several miles of wandering through the forest we eventually reached a large expanse of open space, in the middle of which was a small log cabin situated by the side of a lake.

Stepping into the cabin Jon and I were greeted by a blazing log fire, lighting and warming the room, making the air feel comfortable and inviting. A velvety brown settee was set further back, with a

matching short pile rug lying just in front of the fire, and decorating the surrounding walls there were old wooden bookshelves with masses of different books all jumbled up into different piles, waiting to be read. Here in this serene place Jon and I spent the remainder of the journey, using the time to relax, read books and talk. Set away from the busy, crowded and noisy outside world, surrounded by natural sounds and smells, Jon was able to relax and take the time to become accustomed to his feelings of freedom. This ideal tranquil environment, away from the cold, grey prison walls, unnatural sounds and stale smells, enabling him to find his own sense of self which would later help him in facing the world 'outside' once again.

The second example (see figure on website) is self-explanatory:

I picked up my grieving friend at his house in my little car (we always used to take trips in that car). On the journey we made a little conversation and he fiddled around with putting music on the stereo. After some time we arrived at the healing place. We drove up onto a large, circular, unpaved driveway with people walking here and there. A fountain spouted in the centre of the driveway. Everyone welcomed us as friends; an aim of the place being that one would not feel like a patient but like a visiting friend. We left the car and entered the main building. Here there was a tropical theme with real exotic plants and colourful parrots. A worker welcomed us and invited us to have a look around.

Within the building there were individual Jacuzzi rooms so that one could soak and spa alone. There were other areas with blankets and pillows in case that's what was needed. Heading out from the building there were various areas for visitors to experience. To the back, a woodland forest. To the right of this, a misty fernery with waterfalls and secluded wooden benches. My friend felt comfortable being in a space that felt as if it was made to aid his healing – this made him feel as if he was a patient. Today he wanted to go out to the park-type area and sit under a tree. This is exactly what we did. We sat against a tree trunk of expansive width and we leant against each other, saying nothing. We didn't need to speak because we both understood the situation, and he felt healed just by having his best friend there with him. When we had sat there long enough, it was time to leave. Everyone acted as if we were friends leaving a party – sad to see us go but will see us again. We got into my car and

made our way from the healing place. My friend finally felt entirely at peace, and fell asleep in the back of the car.

Such results show that many people have an innate intuitive vision of what for them, and their close friends, is a healing place and these visions seem rarely to be available as a reality in the statutory health and social care sectors. Also, there is the running example starting each of the chapters. Indeed, some of the recent literature on UK inpatient psychiatric care seems to focus less on developing a therapeutic environment and more on avoiding suicide (Bongar *et al.* 1998), violence (Royal College of Psychiatrists 1998) and sexual harassment (NHSE 1997). Whilst Utopian or visionary perspectives may suffer from a certain lack of political and financial realism, they do stimulate the debate and provide benchmarks as to what people and service users actually believe, and hope for; as such they are, ironically, foundational to any study of local stakeholders' perceptions of appropriate change, and without such elicited views how will service users relate to health sector and/or psychiatric service agendas for change?

Dreamwork and imagework

Spontaneous imagework can also be developed from dream imagework. When people in groups discuss their dreams, they frequently refer to powerful images that seem to resonate for the group; when this happens, there is the opportunity to take such an image and develop it as a piece of imagework that can further research practice. Such imagework exercises I have developed have been those of 'becoming a flying bird', 'going through a closed door' and 'being a growing bulb' (see Chapter 5 for examples). The results from these imagework exercises have illustrated the time and the nature of transitions in people's social state, personal identity, current concerns, capacity to change and ability to conceptualise the self.

So, many of the experiential exercises described later in Chapter 5 are variants of imagework, such as journeys developed from dream images, such as the 'bird' etc. Likewise the gestalt exercises and meditation exercise on dream images in the same chapter show how the profound outcomes of imagework are often combined with discussion, artwork and forms of drama. Dream re-entry, sometimes called dream amplification, is also a form of imagework. The stage is now set to embark on a consideration of dreaming and its potential for providing research data.

Chapter 3

Dreaming as ethnographic research

Where does the dream come from?

> See we are in pine woods. Do you remember the woods where we used to walk the dogs? Pines are so soothing, even the slightest breeze sings in the uppermost branches and, on wild days, while their tops are tossing and thrashing in the wind, the forest floor is quiet and still and the scent of pines is so fresh and wonderful.
>
> I think the sun must be high now, see how the light dapples on the ground. We are near the edge of the wood and soon we shall come to a meadow – a lovely English meadow with cowslips and poppies and cornflowers.[2]

The dream has throughout history been a varying source of wonder, revelation, knowledge, fallacy, delusion and irrelevance, and to this day, no-one, cognitive scientist nor seer, can either literally manifest a dream image or assert its final reality and meaning; therefore we are all students of the dream if we even care to consider such images as relevant.

The dream presents us with the most original, often surreal and incomprehensible array of inner imagery. Working with both the day and night dream involves a dynamic and analytic interplay with the inner image which is why and how I relate them within the same practice. The dream imagework field refers to when the facilitator is developing in some way the reported dream imagery of the respondent(s). Such dream reporting need not be exclusive to a dreamwork group but can happen spontaneously in discussion or can be integrated into a more general group discussion. In many non-Western cultures, dreams (Jedrej and Shaw 1992; Tedlock 1987) are treated with great respect and significance, and a basic understanding of how to develop a dream report would be valuable for researchers working in such contexts. Indeed Tedlock, in her development of the idea of a 'new anthropology of dreaming', writes:

> Today, fieldworkers are participating within native contexts and learning not only the local cultural uses 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.
>
> (Tedlock 1991: 174)

For instance, when a respondent relates a dream, they can be facilitated to 'amplify the dream' by imagining a further development of the imaginative dream sequence: for example, the nightmarish ending of a dream can be changed to a harmonious one. The use of this amplification process can be compared to more structured story completion techniques already established in qualitative research (Finch 1987). Later in this chapter I show how social science researchers, mostly social anthropologists, have used such dream imagery. The personal and group understanding of dream imagery can be enhanced through an array of experiential and artistic techniques, such as drama, artwork, dance and mask-making (Edgar 1995).

Cultural dreaming or dreaming cultures? The anthropologist and the dream

Recently the study of consciousness as a particular field in social anthropology has gone hand in hand with several anthropologists exploring their own dream imagery and the role of that imagery in the creation and negotiation of both ethnographic fieldwork and their subsequent written texts. The study of 'consciousness' has hitherto been seen largely as the province of psychology, and mainstream social anthropology has been biased towards a view of consciousness as a by-product of collective and social forces. The possible creativity and integrating power of consciousness and its influence on collective representation has been neglected. As Cohen and Rapport state it, 'Consciousness was simply not a problem, and the relationship of consciousness to either culture or social structure barely figured on the theoretical agenda' (1995: 2).

However, work by Cohen and Rapport (Cohen 1994; Cohen and Rapport 1995) has established and recognised the importance of a study of mind, both the minds of the traditional 'other' and the anthropologist's

mind. To reach the '… intimate knowledge: knowledge behind the scenes, behind the masks and roles, behind the generalities and abstractions' (Cohen and Rapport 1995: 9) that the anthropologist seeks, s/he must use 'all kinds of devices, not least our own consciousness, to imagine and then portray the consciousnesses of others' (Ibid.: 10). An understanding of the mind of the 'other' is then, in our reflexive and deconstructionist time, inseparable from an understanding of one's own mind. Of course there is a big difference in our experience of our own minds and those of others. We have direct experience of our own mind but only indirect experience of that of another. We can only hypothesise about the mentality of the other's mind based on our experience of his/her embodied narrative and its referential meaning. In contrast, in relation to our own mentation, we have privileged access to the stream of thought, emotion and image that flow across it and will typically use this more intimate knowledge of self-consciousness to make empathic connections with and hypotheses about another's mental state.

This study of the imagination of the other is not quite as impossible as many a researcher has suggested. Whilst it is true that the observer can only study the narrative and the action of the 'other' this does not disallow access entirely to the 'other's' consciousness. This is because narrative embodies image as Lakoff and Johnson showed in their experientialist view of language. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) analysed the metaphorical basis of our rationality and language. They have shown how metaphor fundamentally structures our concepts and thus implicitly our consciousness and actions as well. Metaphor works by 'understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another' (Ibid.: 5). Moreover the metaphors that structure consciousness are not arbitrary but based on everyday experience. For instance there is a relationship between the experience of spatial living, 'spatial/orientational metaphors' such as 'up/down', and human states of well-being and sickness. States of happiness tend to be expressed as 'being up' in some form and likewise being dejected or sad is commonly metaphorically described as being 'down'. There is then a continuing dialogue and relationship between physical and cultural experience and understanding of the world through a metaphorically structured, language-centred, consciousness. Metaphorical thought is therefore the basis of both dream imagery and conscious awareness. As Bourdieu says, '… the mind is a metaphor of the world of objects which is itself but an endless circle of mutually reflecting metaphors' (1977: 91). If language is primarily metaphorical in nature and communicates at least partly through imaginative evocation, then the study of narratively delineated image is central to the anthropological task. Fernandez writes:

> But these movements in anthropology have not focused as directly on the issue of consciousness in society as we are focusing here. In my view greater directness of focus – that knowing of other minds – can come about by listening to or eliciting some of the key images that, if not actually present in these minds are, at least, put forth by them and/or put into practice by them. In the study of this 'argument of images' we may well come as close as we can come to capturing the other's imagination whether that 'other' be the collaborator from the local culture of enquiry or the reader of our ethnographic interpretations of that collaboration. But the issue, as we see, is not only that of capturing the other's imagination but, as much or more, in having our own captured.
>
> (Fernandez 1995: 27)

The perception and understanding of the image is then central to both self-understanding and other-understanding. And we experience the image in its purest, least egoistical, form in the dream and possibly in vision. I (1999) suggest that working with dream imagery is a particular kind of imagework, considering various forms of imagework as comprising a research methodology (see Conclusion). This 'pure awareness' of the dream is, of course, personally and culturally mediated.

I will now introduce the subject of the anthropology of dreaming. First, I consider the history of anthropological interest in the dream, including the 'new anthropology of dreaming'; second, I present examples of the use by ethnographers of both their own dreams and those of their informants; overall this chapter asserts the significance of dream and its elucidation in modern society as a vital source of understanding and information about the culturally constituted and becoming self.

Anthropologists have historically been more concerned than sociologists with the study of dream as an aspect of the social life of the groups they studied. This probably arises from three intersecting factors. First, many of the societies they studied respected the dream and clearly acted upon the insights apparently gained from them. As Tedlock writes, anthropologists have been challenged by indigenous peoples' differing conceptions of the boundaries between reality and unreality; a majority of the world's peoples do not structure their conception of reality 'according to the simple oppositional dichotomy of real versus unreal, or reality versus fantasy' (1987: 1–2). She suggests that it is: '… a rationalist proposition that dreaming is somehow a lesser … more subjective, false, private, illusory or transient reality than the "harder", more objective, true, public, real, permanent reality of waking life' (Tedlock 1987: 2).

Second, therefore, the study of dream became a part of the holistic analysis that went towards the definition of the enterprise of social anthropology. Third, anthropologists were aware that dream and myth had similar features, both being sequences of vivid images and depending upon inner visualisation for communication and impact (Kracke 1987a: 32). Kracke regards myths and dreams as being 'closely related', and refers to Burridge's use of the term 'myth-dream' to describe the situation in societies, such as Rastafarian cults, which do not make a clear separation of the two imaginative forms. Kracke (1987a: 40) suggests that dreams resemble myths in that both have an integrating function in respect of new emotional experiences. The conscious portrayal of both myth and dream bridges primary and secondary forms of thinking and makes primary process thinking conscious. Myths have been analysed as if they were the dreams of a culture (Abraham 1955: 153–210). Moreover, as myth for Lévi-Strauss (1966: 17) is a form of bricolage, so the dream for Kracke is a form of bricolage in that the dream gathers:

> from among the day residues ready to hand, and uses them to express metaphorically an emotional conflict, and to work out (or work toward) some resolution of it.
>
> (Kracke 1987b: 38)

Kracke (1987b: 33) demonstrates in his analysis of Kagwahiv Indian Amazonian society that the Kagwahiv Indians make a fruitful exchange between the associations and interpretations made from their myths and the way they explain their dream imagery to themselves. However, as well as similarities there are differences also, as whilst 'a dream recounted ends as a narrative, a myth begins as one' (Kracke 1987b: 36).

The development of anthropological studies of dreaming

Anthropologists have therefore constantly been confronted with their subjects' concern and different evaluation of dream contents and alternative conceptions of the distinction between objective and subjective reality, such as the study of shamanic societies have shown (Eliade 1964; Krippner 1987). Traditionally, shamanic practice and vocation was often reliant on experience gained in dreams; indeed the hallmarks of many traditional shamans' calling were initiatory dreams, sickness and the exprerience of dismemberment. Moss (1996) relates how Knud Ramussen

asked an Inuit guide if he were a shaman and he replied he couldn't be as he had never been ill and couldn't remember his dreams. Moreover, the anthropological study of 'calling' and initiatory dreams has not been confined to shamanic societies; Ewing (1990) has studied Sufi initiation dreams from a semiological perspective; Mills (1994) has tried to make a 'scientific investigation' of 'announcing' dreams amongst the Beaver Indians of British Columbia. 'Announcing' dreams are believed by these Indians to show who the newborn have reincarnated. Curley (1992) has analysed religious 'conversion' dreams amongst members of Camerounian (African) independent church.

Tylor (1871: 88) began the cross-cultural interest in dreaming through his understanding of non-literate people's lack of a hard distinction between reality and illusion (Parsifal-Charles 1986: 477), and his perception that myth creation, mythogenesis, was a product of dreaming by way of animism. Freud's work in the early twentieth century stimulated the first main phase of anthropological enquiry into dreaming. Seligman (1921, 1923, 1924) sought to test the Freudian hypothesis that the latent meaning of dreams was universal across cultures (Tedlock 1987: 20). Colonial workers were invited to provide manifest dream materials which were analysed to discover so-called 'type-dreams'. This analysis was conducted without consideration of their cultural and communicative context.

Later, Lincoln (1935: 22), in his study of North American Indian dreams, developed a distinction between 'individual' and correspondingly unimportant dreams, and 'culture pattern dreams' which were significant for the group and actively pursued. Although Lincoln perhaps is given the credit for the development of a typology of dreaming based on ethnographic research (Parsifal-Charles 1986: 291), even his results are now considered ethnocentric (Tedlock 1987: 21). The 1940s and 1950s saw the development of the content theory of dream analysis (Eggan 1952: 469–85; Hall and Van De Castle 1966: 17). This attempt to quantify and consequently to analyse cross-culturally, partly reflected the culture and personality school of social anthropology. The culture and personality school of North American anthropology sought to identify and analyse core personality traits as being formed by cultural influences. This has continued into the 1980s with the work of Gregor (1981: 353). Indeed the content analysis of dreams is still used in psychological research. Catalano (1987), for example, recently sought to prove through content analysis that the dreams of emotionally disturbed adolescents are different from those of normal adolescents.

The voluminous extraction of dream symbolism by these anthropologists allowed the compilation of numerous manifest dream reports and their cross-cultural analyses for personality and cultural variables. Whilst this approach does attempt to value the dream positively as psychodynamically and culturally significant, it is, in fact, an approach that decontextualises dreams. The importance of dream narration, dream discourse and indigenous dream theory is almost entirely ignored. Moreover, Crapanzano (1975: 145–58) has argued that the ethnocentrism of the content analysis school of dream analysis is based on an epistemology that reduces language to a merely referential function.

The development of ethnopsychiatry from the 1950s onward by Devereux is another anthropological landmark in the analysis of dreaming. In his work with North American Indian groups Devereux (1969: 139–68) sought to further integrate a Freudian approach into anthropological fieldwork. He (1966: 213) applied Freudian concepts of transference and reality-testing to dream reports as well as making a critical analysis of the concept of the pathogenic dream. He was concerned particularly with the notion of causality that underpins this concept. In a study of a Crow Indian, Devereux (1969: 139) analysed his Indian patient's dream within the cultural context of the Crow Indian vision quest and showed how he himself used this cultural context for therapeutic work with this patient. Devereux's work effectively initiated the subject of ethnopsychiatry or transcultural psychiatry. For instance, Devereux was able to use in therapy his Crow Indian patient's cultural belief that success in the dream world anticipated successful behaviour in waking reality. Devereux (1969: 165) showed how the Crow Indian incorporated Devereux as therapist within the identity of a Crow Indian Spirit Being. He facilitated the patient's orientation to reality through the therapeutic use of the patient's culturally sanctioned and prolific dreaming. However, as Obeyesekere (1990: 21) has pointed out in his criticism of Devereux's culturally specific orientation, for Devereux the 'manipulation of ethnic symbols' may only provide adjustment but not introspective self-awareness or 'curative insight'.

Another psychoanalytically orientated anthropological approach to the analysis of dreams was that of D'Andrade (1961: 327–8) who analysed the function of dreams in sixty-three societies, using material from the Human Relations Area Files. D'Andrade concluded that dream usage arose out of anxiety, and that in hunter-gatherer societies, where there was a need for more self-reliance than in pastoral-agrarian societies, there was also significantly increased use of dreams. By the 1970s dreamwork was beginning to be considered within the context of the cultural system

of which it was a part. Crapanzano (1975: 145–58) analysed the metaphorical usage of saints and jnuns in the dreamworld of the Moroccan Hamadsha. He showed that personal use of particular dream symbols, and their performative function in terms of conflict recognition and possible solution were firmly embedded within the 'implicit folk psychology' of the culture.

I have already noted that the similarity between myth and dream is an abiding theme in social anthropology. Kuper (1979: 645–62) and Kuper and Stone (1982: 1225–34) attempted to apply the structuralist method of analysis of myth, developed by Lévi-Strauss (1963: 206–31), to dream. Kuper considered that the similarity between myth and dream was that both are attempts to cope with problems of reality. These authors proceed to analyse certain dreams and dream sequences as if they constituted a systematic argument which used an ordered set of transformations to reach a resolution. In their analysis they attempt to show that the binary rules that structure mythical thought can be transposed to our understanding of dream content. Whether a structuralist approach of this kind marks a major breakthrough in the understanding of the dream in society is unclear. Tedlock recognised that Kuper had succeeded in discovering 'underlying linguistically coded analytical rules' (1987: 27) within the dream narrative. However, she and others have raised various criticisms of this approach. The observance of rules does not imply that such rules generate the dream material. Kracke (1987a: 50–2), as we have seen, argues that myth and dreams are also essentially different in that myths move from verbal narration to sensory imagery whilst dreams move from imagery to narration. Hence the narrative texts of dreams and myths, whilst related as we have already seen, are still dissimilar.

A structuralist approach, which is concerned with the analysis of the 'latent' analytical binary structure of the dream, can then be a part only of the cultural understanding of dream material, particularly as it is not concerned with the importance of the communicative context of the dream report itself.

A communicative theory of dreaming

Anthropologists have continued to develop the concept of the dream report. Tedlock suggested that the manifest dream content:

> should be expanded to include more than the dream report. Ideally it should include dream theory or theories and ways of sharing,

> including the relevant discourse frames, and the cultural code for dream interpretation.
>
> (Tedlock 1987: 25)

Tedlock describes this perspective as a 'communicative' theory of dreaming. This theory has to consider the dream narration as a communicative event involving three overlapping aspects: the act and creation of narration, the psychodynamics of narration, and the culturally bounded group (emic) interpretive framework. Such a theory considers the analysis of dream as more than that of a hermeneutically based text. It is also a social and cultural process or activity with expressive and instrumental outcomes. When this takes place then, we may take seriously Herdt's proposition:

> that culture may actually change experience inside of dreams, or that the productions of dreaming do actually become absorbed and transformed into culture.
>
> (Herdt 1987: 82)

The communicative theory of dreaming then, alerts us to the importance of the psychodynamics of the social setting and the interpretive framework of the participants. The social anthropologist is concerned with the analysis of an interpretive framework which necessarily structures both narration and interpretation. The Tedlock (1987) volume seeks to redefine the boundary between the psychology and the social anthropology of dreaming. The customary distinction between psychology's field being the intra-personal and anthropology's being the social is broken down. Psychology needs to understand how the dreamer uses concepts and language which are, of necessity, culturally based to narrate dreams. Anthropology, on the other hand, has to recognise that the communication and framing of dream narratives are always dependent upon the dream theory of the culturally bounded group. Tedlock (1991) further develops her reconceptualisation of the anthropology of dreaming. She calls this the 'new anthropology of dreaming' contrasting particularly the content analysis school of anthropological dream studies with a more contextual study:

> This shift in research study from directly eliciting dozens of fixed objects (dreams) to studying naturally occurring situations (dream sharing, representation, and interpretation) is part of a larger movement in anthropology in which there has been 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.
>
> (Tedlock 1991: 163)

Such an overview of the continued interest of social anthropology and the dream would not be complete without reference to the Semai/Senoi debate and to Jedrej and Shaw's edited work on the role of the dream in African social and religious life (Jedrej and Shaw 1992). The Semai/Senoi of Central Malaysia became the subject of an ongoing debate within anthropology, which has sometimes rivalled the 'authenticity of Castaneda' and the Mead/Freeman controversies, as to whether or not they were an ideal harmonious society. Characterised as being without either violence or mental health problems, this perfect state was supposedly on account of their collective dreamwork and dream theory. The anthropologist, Kilton Stewart, based his analysis in the 1940s on a reading of Noone's fieldwork (1936, 1972), supported by limited fieldwork. Stewart's thesis (1951, 1972) was that, the Semai, by teaching their children in daily dream meetings how to live well and harmoniously, had achieved an ideal state of peaceful co-existence. This model of an ideal society, composed of well-adjusted individuals, was picked up and greatly developed by the human potential and dreamwork movements in the USA in the 1970s and 1980s (e.g. Garfield 1974). Stewart identified Semai dreamwork as the centre of their life. Domhoff (1985) severely critiqued the ethnographic basis on which Stewart had elaborated his theory of Semai dreamwork. Taylor (1995: 30), however, asserts that the 'original' Semai society lost its dream focus due to enforced settlement by the British in their 1950s campaign against communist insurgents in Malaysia. Recently, Jennings' (1995) study of the Semai concluded that whilst the Semai did indeed pay attention to the creative aspects of their dreams, and used dreams in healing and shamanic practice, this was not atypical for an aboriginal society and certainly did not amount to the profoundly dream-orientated society proposed by Stewart.

The Jedrej and Shaw (1992) edited volume of essays makes both theoretical and ethnographic contributions to our understanding of dreams in human affairs through its wide-ranging consideration, both historical and contemporary, of the often prophetically-understood use of dream imagery in that continent. This work shows that initiatory and revelatory dreaming is not confined to shamanic societies. Rather, these case-studies present many examples of initiation into the role of

diviner, medicine healer, or contemporary Christian evangelist, through people's understanding of their dreams. For example, in the case of the Temne diviners in Zimbabwe,

> Dreams are used by the 'shades' to call, test, endow, inform, instruct, guide, warn, permit, reprimand, correct and shape healers, and they use healers' dreams to reach the community in order to diagnose patients, to foretell the future, to call for the redress of neglect, to caution against immoral behaviour, and to make connections between the past and the present.
>
> (Reynolds 1992: 25)

Finally, I would refer to the significant role that the remembered dream has in the development of contemporary oppressive nationalist ideologies as in the examples of Zionism and the ideology of Serbian nationalism (Edgar 2002: 79–92). Moreover, it is likely that apparent dream inspiration and dream guidance has contributed to the development of Islamic militant groups such as Al-Qaeda and the Taliban (Edgar 2002, 2004).

Ethnographic research and the dream

Anthropologists such as Hillman (1989) have begun to value the dream in their professional ethnographic practice. Two anthropologists have described the value of informants' dreams on their understanding of their field. Levine (1981: 276–93) analysed the dreams of three of her informants for transference material concerning her own relationship with these informants. She was able to gain an increased awareness of issues such as power, asymmetry between herself and informants, poverty and dependence and the degree of gender support she was offering to one informant during her marital difficulties.

Anthropologists have frequently found themselves studying societies in which dreaming and dream interpretation is considered very important as Obeyesekere writes, 'the world of ghosts and spirits is as real as that of markets, though real in different qualitative ways than can be ethnographically described' (1990: 66). Goulet (1994a: 22) found that 'knowing how to dream' was essential for his study of Guajiro (South America) culture, and furthermore considered that dream literacy, which he included within his idea of '… the ethnographer's experiences of interaction in another lifeworld', be seen as 'viable tools of research' (1994a: 19). Goulet writes,

> As the ethnographer progressively becomes immersed into a life-world that is eminently real to the natives who construct and inhabit that world … This provides the ethnographer with increasing credibility and allows him/her to communicate at ever deeper levels about matters of great importance to the natives. In other words, a growing proficiency in dreaming, remembering one's dreams, and interpreting one's dreams according to local rules of interpretation allows the fieldworker to do better ethnography.
>
> (Goulet 1994a: 34)

Guédon in the same edited volume writes about how dream-sharing was essential to obtain deeper levels of esoteric knowledge about the Dene (indigenous people of Alaska and north-western Canada) society:

> For instance, my early questions about dreams and their connection with power elicited only vague or even negative answers. 'I've heard about it', was the best answer I would receive. I was left with the impression that if shamanism and dreaming had been present in the previous generations, this was no longer the case. The first intimations of a different reality came surreptitiously in remarks exchanged seemingly in passing: 'I dreamt about my auntie last night, she was speaking to me' … Dreams were definitely part of Dene life. When I noticed that my own dreams were becoming clearer and stronger, I began using them as a starting point for some of my enquiries, and to test the reactions of my informants. They were most rewarding. Discussion of dreams soon became a welcomed ingredient in my interviews. For the first time I witnessed people carrying on conversation among themselves or instructing children on that topic in my presence. The topic of shamanism was no longer taboo, and I was repeatedly told by several older members of the community that 'everybody who dreams is some kind of sleep-doctor, everybody has power'. These statements, offered in passing during normal conversations, had an authority of their own because they were stated as matter-of-fact. I felt at once tested and acknowledged.
>
> (Guédon 1994: 53)

Guédon finds that dream disclosure opens up the possibility of a greater degree of acceptance, particularly with respect to the Dene understanding of shamanic practice and power. Following a particular dream disclosure and after hearing the Dene interpretation of the imagery, Guédon writes, 'To my instructors the important issue was whether I could personally participate in the dream process' (1994: 54).

The Pumé, a group of traditional fishermen and seasonal nomads, living in south-western Venezuela, have a particularly important dreaming culture. Canal (1998) describes them as seeking refuge in their dreaming space as a consequence of their intense feelings of political marginalisation and their loss of hope of living again on their traditional lands.

> From now on, for them it is during night time, in the world of dreams, that important things happen. Daytime is nothing but tragedy, disappointment and waiting for the coming night, full of promises. For it is at night that the Pumé celebrate the Tohé ceremony. From dusk to dawn they sing the Tohé, they dream, they reach the blessed countries of gods and ancestors.
>
> (Canal 1998: 1)

Later, Canal writes in more detail about this other night time reality,

> The land of dreams are the ideal version of the Pumé lands. *Over there*, the Pumé possess all the imaginable riches, there's never shortage of food, but it appears by itself, with no need to be manufactured, plates and glasses are never empty, regardless of how much one can eat or drink, the Pumé are very well dressed, they have gold teeth and white skin, illness and pain don't exist, the houses are big and beautiful … there are neon signs everywhere, cars run on themselves, without petrol, there are planes and everything one can imagine.
>
> (Canal 1998:10)

As with Guédon and the Dene people, Canal found that knowing how to dream was essential to understand the Pumé culture. Following a dream she had, her Pumé interlocutors told her that their *ote* (saints) wanted her to know both their waking and dream worlds. Canal realised,

> … that one couldn't get to know and understand the Pumé lands without getting to know the *ote* lands, the land of dreams. It helped me to understand, as well, that dreams are the only way to access the knowledge of these lands in 'over there', as Pumé say. A necessary knowledge, in the Pumé context I was working in, to attain the understanding of the world and the construction of individual and collective identity.
>
> (Canal 1998: 2)

Ewing aptly summarises the fieldwork value of a reflexive and dream literate approach in fieldwork:

> But dreams also have a specific significance within the discourse of the people whom the ethnographer studies. Dream sharing as a communicative event is in many societies an important social process (Tedlock 1987, 1991). The nature and content of one's reported dreams may affect one's social status and networks. One may also be expected to take certain specific actions as a result of having experienced a particular dream. Under these circumstances, how anthropologists manage their own dreams may have a major impact on the research situation and play a pivotal role in shaping their relationships with the people they get to know during their research. Researchers who shield their own dreams and other subjective reactions from the interpretative nets of their informants may remain forever in the status of outsider. Those who share their dreams, in contrast, may suddenly find themselves insiders in unexpected ways.
>
> (Ewing 1994: 572)

Kohn (1995) writes about the value of the dreams of her principal informant during the time when this informant, Kamala, visited her in England. Coming from a remote hill village in Nepal, Kamala's awareness of cultural change seemed heightened by her experience of travel and, unusually, she shared several dreams of her homeland with Kohn. Kohn relates how '… ideas about the cosmos which many hours of taped interviews had not uncovered in the field …' (1995: 48) were shared through the dialogue about her dreams in Durham, UK.

Ewing (1994) also described and discussed the impact on her belief system of her dream experience and her recounting of her dream. She was studying Sufism in Pakistan and in her article she seriously considers the possibility that a Sufi man, regarded by his followers as a saint, had 'sent her a dream'. This experience led her to question the anthropological tradition of observational scepticism with regard to data-collection in the field. Based on this experience she began to value the possibility of belief in aspects of her informants' world-view co-existing with rigorous anthropological enquiry. Likewise Peters (1981: 16–17) has what he describes as a 'peak experience' following a dream after his hospitalisation for hepatitis in Nepal. Peters dreams of being chased by a bull, and frightening it away using a stick which becomes a snake, thereafter 'seeing' his Tamang Guru reciting a mantra. When he told his Guru of

the dream, the Guru, Bhirendra, understands the dream as his having 'saved' Peters from a rival and jealous shaman whose spirit had become the bull. Peters develops a strong transference on his Guru as he feels 'he had healed me'. However, Peters still finally understands his experience from a Western psychoanalytic perspective in which his unconscious had used the image of his Guru in a healing fashion.

The fear of being labelled as 'going native' by the anthropological community similarily kept undisclosed George's (1995) experience of dreaming during fieldwork. George describes in detail her experience of dreaming during fieldwork among the Barok people in Papua New Guinea. Her experience of informants manifestly 'knowing' the content of her dreams on several occasions, and therefore their meaning, profoundly shook her cultural preconceptions as to the dichotomy between public and private experience. On one occasion (1995: 23) she presents a divinatory dream she experienced which indicated where to dig to find the remains of a sought-after clan house. Again she experienced an informant having prior knowledge of apparently the content of her dream. The fourth and final dream she recounts is of her giving birth, followed, most unexpectedly, by the reality of a woman in the Solomon Islands giving birth in the canoe she was in.

More recently, Kassam (1999) has written about how her dream of an Oromo initiation ceremony in northern Kenya/Ethiopia, that she was planning to study, had significant personal and professional meaning for her. Interestingly she shares two emic perspectives on her dream as well as her own subsequent understanding of her dream. Kassam felt her dream symbolically anticipated, albeit incompletely, a critical incident in which she and other researchers were nearly excluded from studying this major three generational initiation ceremony, the *gadaammojjii*. She relates her understanding of the dream to the cultural world-view of the Oromo people and to Foucault's phenomenological dream theory. Finally, she asserts that, 'In a reflexive anthropology, dreams can, therefore, become a source of data and dialogue' (Kassam 1999: 9).

These examples show that the dreams of informants and even of the ethnographer himself or herself are beginning to emerge as a potential, if problematic, qualitative database. Goulet and Young write that,

> the inclusion of the experiences of the professional anthropologist in his or her ethnography is part of [quoting Jackson (1989: 4)], 'a radically empirical method', whereby anthropologists make themselves 'experimental subjects' and treat their experiences as primary data.
>
> (Goulet and Young 1994: 305)

Primary data for Goulet and Young significantly includes the dreams of the ethnographer. Anthropology though is not the only social science to have some interest in dreaming. A positive valuation of the dream is more common in psychoanalysis, though few analysts have attempted to apply this potential to the general field of social science research. Hunt (1989) is an exception in that she applies the theory of transference to the dreams, jokes, slips of tongue etc. encountered by hereself and others in the fieldwork situation. Her accounts and analysis are fascinating but remain firmly within the Freudian theoretical paradigm and utilise Freudian theory of, particularly, transference and the Oedipus complex, but also ideas of denial and anxiety.

I suggest and advise that in future, a reflexive anthropology will regard an awareness of dreaming, by informants and anthropologist(s), as a necessary part of the fieldwork task. Moreover, adopting the dreamwork movement's view of the dreamer as his/her own expert as regards any potential 'meaning' of their dream, long and expensive training will be unnecessary in achieving some possible understanding of the dream; as Kassam writes,

> The content analysis of the dream was made by two members of the culture who elucidated its [the dream] meaning by placing it in the framework of the indigenous theory of knowledge. This inverted the conventional interpreter–interpreted relation. On the other hand, as the dreaming subject, only I could see the dream's significance to the rest of my life.
>
> (Kassam 1999: 9)

I further develop the issue of the ethnographer's dreaming, participation and ethnographic process in Chapter 6.

The anthropological contribution to dreamwork

First, anthropologists have described important traditions of dreaming within indigenous and shamanic systems of belief and practice. The dream is often seen as a profound resource for divination, healing and hunting and all aspects of life both for the individual and the group; indeed there are shamans (Moss 1996: 166) who believe that nothing happens in waking reality before it has been performed first in the dreamspace, and according to Krippner and Thompson among the Northern Iroquois and the Yuma North American Indians, 'Dreaming life was

considered to be more "real" and/or more important than waking life' (1996: 94). Moreover, there is a core perceived role for dreams, certainly 'big dreams', that announce a particular religious or shamanic vocation or prefigure a spiritual lineage or reincarnation assumption and process. Understanding dreams for indigenous and often religious societies seems to be future-orientated, unlike the semiological deconstruction of the dream image by Freudian psychoanalysis. Basso (1987: 86) has attempted to marry Western and non-Western concepts concerning whether and how the dream may portray or orientate the dreamer to his/her future. Through his analysis of dreaming among the Kalapalo Indians of Central Brazil, he suggests that, 'Dreaming is also a performative event because it causes the future by revealing the dreamer's life as it is encapsulated in current aspirations, moods and inchoately understood motivations and fears of an individual' (1987: 101). Dreaming then may assist the dreamer in his or her orientation to their future and so is not separable from the creation of that future.

Second, the relevance of an anthropological approach to dreamwork can be perceived as follows. Tedlock's communicative theory of dreaming offers an approach that does not abstract the dream and its potential meaning from the social and cultural context in which it is reported. The cultural dynamics of the communication of the dream are part of the process that can be analysed. The relationships that exist within the interpersonal and group context influence the dream report and its negotiated meaning. The theoretical approaches, often latent and implicit, that govern the social construction of possible meaning from the dream narratives can, if not the object of study, then at least be perceived as crucial to the interpretive outcome. Moreover this understanding of the cultural relativity of 'native' theory or theoretical approaches to dream understanding will illuminate for the dreamworker the importance of seeing the dream and the dream account within the cultural context of the sub-group with which they are working.

Whilst the idea that the dream image and its potential sense lies within the cultural context of the dreamer may appear obvious, the actual implications of taking this approach are significant. Particularly, such an approach relegates the dreamworker's use of standard guides and dictionaries of symbol interpretation to the past as these standardised approaches prove irrelevant to working with the actual process of meaning construction within a particular interpersonal situation. Whilst such dream dictionaries may be of interest as background information and as a way of studying a society's particular evaluation of symbols, they do not significantly advance our appreciation of the actual group

and culture based construction of meaning from dream accounts. Moreover social anthropology has provided us with a wide array of dreamwork uses in different, largely Third-World, societies which make a powerful contribution to a broadening of our awareness of the potential personal, social and political use of dream imagery. As the Senoi example above shows, sometimes such examples are problematically constructed and can generate a life of their own. Social anthropology has a particular focus on the study, over time, of small-scale culturally bounded groups. This focus is holistic and seeks to understand the complexity of human behaviour through an analysis of the process and fusion of human creativity within the context of larger scale social forces. My study of dreamwork uses such an approach and shows how the human capacity for meaning-making is embedded within the cultural context.

In consideration of the history of anthropological interest in the dream it is clear that its history is composed of two themes, that of the emic and the etic, or that of the informant and that of the ethnographer. We can see how anthropological approaches to the dream have in fact both mirrored twentieth-century psychoanalytical theory and also tried to 'objectively' report on indigenous peoples' understanding of their dreamworld, a gaze that has almost completely left out any interest in the dreams of twentieth-century and twenty-first-century Western peoples!

Relevance to the research process

This chapter has shown that the dream is a significant part of the human condition and is particularly valued by indigenous peoples; elsewhere (2002, 2004) I have shown how important the reported dream is in contemporary core political conflictual situations in the world. As such the study of dreaming from an anthropological and communicative context (Tedlock) is, I would propose, central to the activity and study of the human enterprise. Moreover, the unique potential of dreamwork and its companionate practice of spontaneous imagework, is that they can make manifest the implicit and hidden aspects of human consciousness, ideology and personal and political identity. Bourdieu's notion of the 'habitus' is useful here as a sociological counterweight to the psychoanalytical theories of the unconscious. Every researcher wishes to uncover what their respondents 'really' think or believe about this or that, and the use of image and dreamwork methods is an important part of the qualitative researcher's toolkit of approaches.

Chapter 4

Methodological issues in dreamwork and imagework groups

A case-study approach

> On the far side of the meadow we shall come to a garden – I see that you have removed your jacket, you are beginning at last, to feel warm. This is good indeed. Do you see the gate? That will let us into the garden. It is one of my favourite places. You are looking at the flowers, examining them closely, talking, expressing delight – you are responding to the magic. Shall we walk on?[2]

This chapter considers methodological issues arising from my study of dreamwork and imagework groups, that would be likely to occur for other researchers. The chapter begins with a reflexive account of my prior interest in dreamwork and the dreamwork movement. Issues pertaining to textual and narrative construction are noted. Thereafter I present the methods used in the study of a dreamwork group which I co-facilitated. The methods were primarily participant observation followed by semi-structured interviewing. I consider the issues arising from the use of these methods and particularly the issue of the merging of the roles of group facilitator and researcher. I consider the issues of sampling, validity, reliability and replication in relation to the dreamwork groups studied.

Reflexivity and method

The genesis of the dreamwork groups and the associated research lies in my own long standing interest and occasional 'use' of my own personal dream imagery. For over twenty years I have often been struck by the ability of dream imagery to reformulate imaginatively situations that were preoccupying my waking thoughts. These reformulations, although often bizarre, sometimes seemed to have an anticipatory aspect to them rather as Basso (1987) has suggested. I found that occasionally by dwelling

on a seemingly powerful dream image and by turning it around in my mind and considering how it might relate to developing situations I was able to arrive at a conclusion. Such a conclusion often took the form of a decision about the direction of my life with respect to, for instance, career development or relationship issues. I then considered that the process I was conducting was a more explicit formulation of the folk wisdom to 'sleep on it' if one had a difficult problem. So for several years I kept a dream diary and consciously tried to remember my dreams. At this time I immersed myself in the work of Jung and realised that he had similarly advocated such a significant relationship to one's dream imagery. By significant he meant that it was insufficient to relate to dream imagery solely as a kind of internalised source of artwork but that through a dialogue with one's dream imagery important insights might emerge that could lead to personal change and development.

What was an off-and-on personal interest developed in two ways. First I encountered the dreamwork movement in the 1980s through participation as a member in a personal development group that included a consideration of dreams. This particular group combined bodywork exercises, meditation and discussion of members' dream imagery. The dreamwork movement itself began in the 1970s in the USA as an offshoot of the human potential or personal growth movement. At this time the publication of works by authors such as Garfield (1974) and Ullman and Zimmerman (1979) both popularised and guided groups and individuals into ways of working with their dreams. The dreamwork movement values dream imagery as being of potential benefit to the dreamer and the 'meaning' of such imagery as being accessible and understandable to the interested person (Hillman 1989: 124–31). The dreamwork movement then is democratic and empowering to the dreamer and does not depend on, for instance, professionally trained psychoanalysts. This is an important dimension as otherwise an ethnographer or qualitative social science researcher would need to have completed an expensive and lengthy analysis before they could effectively analyse any dream. Hunt (1989: 83) clearly makes this point in her advocacy of a psychoanalytically-informed social science methodology. However, a dreamwork-orientated researcher need not be such a psychoanalytic expert. The 'expert' is the dreamer themselves, and the researcher only needs to respect the dream and facilitate the exploration of its meaning in one of the several possible ways explored in this book; a similar view is taken by Tedlock (1991: 174).

Dreamwork groups are relatively commonplace in the USA but occur less frequently in Britain. The Association for the Study of Dreams

(ASD) is a relatively large international organisation which amongst its other conference and workshop activities, publishes the multi-disciplinary and peer-reviewed journal *Dreaming*. Through the group that I participated in I became interested in the linking of group process to the understanding of dream material. Second, whilst researching a therapeutic community (Edgar 1986) I experienced a significant sequence of dreams just before, during and after the fieldwork stage, which I discuss in Chapter 6. I found that contemplating these images and wondering how they might relate to the fieldwork experience was a powerful source of insight development, and assisted in my orientation to the varying stages of the fieldwork process and imaginatively prefigured core themes of my research.

The role of the self in the construction of the anthropological text has become a key concern in contemporary social anthropology. The 'objectivity' of the cultural construction of the 'other' in the written text is a central debate (Clifford 1986a: 1–26; Geertz 1988: 9; Carrithers 1990: 263–82; Okely 1992: 1–25). Indeed the issue of 'reflexivity' has become a major theme in ethnographic practice and writing (Davies 1999). An extreme and almost solipsist perspective on this debate is presented by Leach in his discussion of the significance of the author as creator of the anthropological text:

> An ethnographic monograph has much more in common with a historical novel than with any kind of scientific treatise. As anthropologists we need to come to terms with the now well-recognised fact that in a novel the personalities of the characters are derived from aspects of the personality of the author. How could it be otherwise? The only ego I know at first hand is my own. When Malinowski writes about Trobiand Islanders he is writing about himself. When Evans-Pritchard writes about the Nuer he is writing about himself.
>
> (Leach 1989: 141)

Kuper (1993: 57–9) reviews the current debate in relation to the post-modernist concern with textual authority and the creativity of the writer through a comparative analysis of differing ethnographic studies of the Kalahari peoples. Kuper concluded that the personal construction of the anthropological text is a necessary and important part of the enterprise, and needs elucidation for bias and orientation. Similarly, Hastrup, as we have seen, emphasises the importance of seeing the anthropologist as a 'positioned subject' (1992: 119). However, an aware-

ness of the particularities of the ethnographer's personal biography and history and their theoretical orientation does not preclude, for Kuper, an affirmation of the value of an ethnography in:

> providing reliable accounts of human behaviour in particular times and places. Source criticism is a preliminary to the critical use of sources, not an alternative.
>
> (Kuper 1993: 68)

My dreamwork group study is conceived and written within the context of a critical and reflexive awareness of myself as an interested subject as well as a distanced student. Indeed, if all anthropological work is in some sense a 'personal odyssey' as Wade asserts (1993: 213) then I acknowledge that dreamwork and its study offers for me and perhaps those kindred others who come to such groups, the possibility of a form of transcendence of the limitations of the dualities of ego and unconscious; self and world; present and non-present; desire and attainment; ideality and reality; knowledge and limitation. Also, imagework and dreamwork are a form of exotic travel! In a demythologised and desanctified world the dream image through its historical estimation and its personal reality becomes the sole source of an authentic and unknown, even unknowable, potential.

This, therefore, is a reflexive case-study in which I have outlined the course of my interest in dreamwork and its study and disclosed some of my own dreams. However the fact that I behaved as a participant through regularly sharing dream and personal material during the beginning round of each group contributed towards the overcoming of what Caplan calls the 'self–other' dichotomy (1988: 23). For five years I remained as a member of this self-directed dreamwork group, created mainly but not exclusively from an amalgam of the three groups that I co-facilitated.

Overall then my intention in this dreamwork group case-study is not to present an 'author-evacuated text' as Geertz describes the traditional tendency in anthropology to ignore the presence, influence and social structural position of the author (1988: 9). I acknowledge my authorship through such devices as sometimes writing in the first person and through a certain sharing of biographical information and personal gendered experience, feeling and perception within the group process itself. Indeed I admit that in a certain sense, as initiator of the idea for creating a dreamwork group and being jointly responsible for its development, the field of study itself is inseparable from my anthropological intention. I studied then, to perhaps an unusual extent, a personally initiated and

intersubjectively constructed field of study. However, in another sense ethnographers always share in the generation of their data, for as Hastrup observes 'We have realised that fieldwork itself may generate the events, that are then portrayed as facts' (1993: 176). Likewise, Clifford (1986a: 2) redefines ethnography as the 'invention of culture' rather than its representation.

Since the studied field did not predate the research enterprise the typical criticism of the anthropological enterprise as using 'informants lives and statements to produce texts' (Wade 1993: 201) is different with respect to my study. Whilst I still use the data of their groupwork lives there is a reciprocity involved in that many of my informants reported benefiting substantially from the opportunity to 'do dreamwork' in a constructed group. Indeed, as mentioned already, for five years afterwards several original group members still regularly met in a self-directed dreamwork group. Some members of the group continued to meet for a further three years.

Case-study: the dreamwork groups

I will be illustrating approaches to dreaming with examples from my main dreamwork study and so will briefly describe the constitution and operation of this group, before proceeding further. I co-facilitated three dreamwork groups with a colleague, a female freelance groupworker, in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK in 1989–90. The overall research aim then was to analyse how group members made, through the group process, cultural and personal 'sense' out of the phantasmagoric 'nonsense' of dream imagery.

These dreamwork groups consisted of three ten week groups of approximately two to two and a half hours duration. Recruitment was by local advertising, word of mouth and through a local independent training agency. The groups were held in that agency's premises. Group size was between six and twelve. All the group members were white; there was a majority of female members and most members were employed, many in social work or counselling or teaching settings. The group started the evening by each person saying how they felt in general and whether they had a dream to share. During the evening typically two or three dreams would be selected to be 'worked on'. Having a dream 'worked on' meant telling the dream and any real life context and references that the dreamer was aware of; thereafter group members discussed possible ways of understanding the dreams and action techniques derived from gestalt, sculpting, psychodrama, artwork etc. were used. Dreams were prioritised for being

'worked on' if they were repetitive, felt urgent or particularly powerful as with a nightmare, or if the dreamer had not 'worked on' a dream for a while. All such 'working on' was of course voluntary. The interpretative philosophy of the groups were eclectic and the dreamer was understood to be the 'expert' with respect to any meaning derived from the interpretative process. 'Understanding' the dream in the context of the dreamer's whole life was the experiential goal of the groups whilst 'interpretation' was considered to imply a necessary decoding of the dream's meaning from a psychoanalytical perspective.

Methods

I used two principal methods to collect data. First, I adopted a participant observer approach within the groups themselves, and, second, I did follow-up interviews with group members. With respect to the first approach, I was explicit from the beginning of the groups about being both a co-facilitator and a researcher. To this end I tape-recorded all the group sessions and individual interviews. I also kept some notes of the dream material as the groups went along though often I found this very difficult to do while maintaining a facilitative role. At the end of the session, after debriefing with my co-facilitator, I made extensive notes about the dream accounts and the interpretations arrived at and also about the development of the group and individual members' contributions. My co-facilitator was, as it happened, also studying the group process, so I had lengthy discussions with her about the development of the group and also the contribution and issues arising from our leadership styles.

In the main, group members seemed to accept my combination of leadership and research roles. At the beginning of each group, I confirmed the members' collective assent to the tape-recording of the sessions for future research purposes. Each time there was a discussion about tape-recording and agreement that at any time any member could ask for the tape to be switched off and subsequently could ask for a dream or its discussion not to be included in my analysis for research. Such a request was in fact made on several occasions and was honoured. For a dreamwork group to be successful there has to be a strict confidentiality rule and this understanding was easily transferred to the research process.

An interesting by-product of taping the sessions was that members could have access to the tapes after the group session was complete and members who had worked on a dream usually did borrow the tapes and valued listening to the discussion of their dream in a more leisurely way.

However tape-recording, seen as symbolic of my research by the group, was not universally welcomed. One group member in the interview session was quite critical and angry about '*this*' as he referred to the same tape-recorder in the interview:

> 'The most interesting thing was the tape recorder … i.e. *this* … At first I was rational and felt okay about it but as the group went on I felt it intruded on it … I felt your research was intrusive … I thought you were manipulating it [the group] for the research … I felt a split between the idea that people have come together for the group and you have brought the research [need] to the group … I am wondering why I am feeling antagonistic to your research when I also brought my own needs and issues to the group … therefore why am I feeling this?'

I try to answer and justify myself, and then the group member says,

> 'The confidentiality didn't worry me … perhaps it was envy … this springs to my mind now that you were going to get more out of it than me.'

This example shows that for at least one member there was, whatever the reason, considerable animosity towards me as a researcher. Indeed, with this member conflict about my facilitative versus directive role became an issue during the second group. After finishing the facilitation of the group I kept in contact with many of the group members partly through the ongoing dream group and circulated articles and my 1995 book of the study. Feedback was then only positive, including from the member just quoted above.

At one level I was, however, able to combine both facilitation and research roles. This was only possible because of the co-facilitator who shared the work of facilitating the groups. Since we usually divided our tasks into one of us taking a more active facilitation role and the other observing and timekeeping this allowed me every other week to concentrate entirely on observing the group process. Several of the group members were also skilled in groupwork and for considerable periods the groups ran themselves with minimal intervention from us. At times, however, the role of facilitator meant an absorption in group process that hindered a more distanced receptivity to the unfolding of the group's life. Having a tape-recording certainly meant that the words of the groups were not lost and even transcribing these tape-recordings months and

even years later brought the feeling of the sessions back to me. As Hastrup reflects:

> Fieldwork experience has become memory before it becomes text … the actual dialogues feed the discourse infinitely. Although fieldwork took place some time in an autobiographic past, the confrontation continues. The past is not past in anthropology; it is an ethnographic present.
>
> (Hastrup 1992: 125)

Since I was at the outset primarily interested in recording dream narrative, interpretations reached and the individual and group dynamics pertaining to them, it was not such a hindrance to have a record that was primarily aural.

The second method used was that of interviewing all the group members and these interviews took place after the groups had ended or when an individual had ceased to attend. Interviews were semi-structured. The interviews took place either at my workplace, at members' homes or latterly at my house. Each lasted approximately one hour.

Gender was an issue in the research process. I suggest later that the mixed gender of the group was significant. For example, three female members working in one session in a small group shared a 'faeces' dream that they would not have felt able to share in a large mixed gender group. More significantly, the third group especially became focused around issues of women's emotional needs in and out of heterosexual relationships. At this point criticism was voiced by some female group members towards male members for their relative lack of self-disclosure. As a male in the group I was, of course, in a similar position to the rest of the minority of males, except in so far as I was also a co-facilitator. Moreover, the group was co-facilitated with a female groupworker. My gender in the research process was probably most manifest in the interviews with some female members when I felt less than confident in pursuing very intimate and emotive issues for them when they emerged. For instance, when one female member referred to having 'blue pencil' dreams about other group members I didn't follow this up. However, my male gender may have assisted male group members sharing in the interview situation their vulnerabilities about relationships with women. One male member, for instance, shared a sequence of several dreams he had experienced, prior to the group, in which he had been pursued by witches.

Theoretical issues

The dreamwork groups studied involved only a relatively small number of people and it is perhaps rash to generalise from them. However, in so far as the dreamwork groups were self-selected they represent a cross section of the kinds of people in the West who are likely to be currently interested in understanding their dreams. Members had different characteristics in some respects such as age, occupation and gender but also had had some experiences in common. For instance, several members had considerable groupwork experience and there was evidence of interest in Jungian, transpersonal and gestalt approaches to understanding dream imagery.

Judging by my general experience of dreamwork groups I think that these group members were not unrepresentative and that their repertoire of group and interpretive processes are probably likely to be typical of other actual and anticipated dreamwork groups. In Britain, and in advanced industrial societies with a common historical past, in this general way there is likely to be a continuum of approaches to understanding dream imagery (see Edgar 1995: 18–29). So, although my study does not claim to offer a definitive account of the characteristics of all British or European dream groups, it does offer an indication of the kinds of questions that can be asked, and the possible repertoire of processes and approaches likely to be found in such groups. It is in this sense that I think the study was in fact representative. Clearly though there are other ways of working with people's dream imagery other than in groups. Individuals in any research setting can be asked and encouraged to share any recent or possibly relevant dream imagery. Often, and particularly as we have seen in Chapter 3, in long term participant observations settings with indigenous peoples, people regularly share their dream images and a dream and image literate researcher will be able to more fully participate in ensuing discussions.

Moreover the study is reliable in the sense that the data is available for re-analysis by another researcher because it is available on tape. The participants could, at least in theory, be re-interviewed. It is, however, much more difficult to assert that another researcher would reach the same theoretical conclusions as I did. Clifford (1986b: 99) points to this dilemma by reference to the markedly different readings of Samoan culture by Mead and Freeman, and we have seen in the last chapter the long-term dispute over the Senoi/Semai dream data.

The key issue with respect to validity of the data is whether and in what sense the dream narration is an 'authentic' representation of the visual imagery of the dream. Later in this chapter I consider exactly

what is being narrated in the groups. However, the validity issue was not such an issue as I first thought, since my object of study was then not the actual study of the dream or internal image itself, but rather the group and individual understanding of the imagery, and the processes by which that understanding was reached. Indeed the problematic aspects of the narration of the dream also represent, as I show, the insight that the narration itself, as in the case of other social accounts, represents the first stage of interpreting a dream. Validity in this study then consists in the authenticity of the attribution of cognitive meaning to visual experience, rather than in the authenticity of the reported dream image. Since the test of validity of data is primarily based on the 'adequacy of the evidence offered in support of them' (Hammersley 1992: 69), I have presented later some of the dream narratives and some of the accompanying discussions verbatim or almost so. I have aimed to ground my theoretical assertions about dreamwork within a context of relevant, concrete and empirically verifiable events (Hammersley 1992: 62–9) and the events in question are the social processes of the dreamwork groups. I presented a 'data-rich' (Bell 1993: 30) as well as a reflexive analysis. Indeed, at times I have, through use of verbatim transcription, allowed the multivocality of the members to represent itself within the text. So, on occasion, I have let the words of the members evaluate the group.

In relation to the formation of categories and themes of the eventual analysis I followed primarily a grounded theory approach using 'constant comparison', as suggested by Glaser and Strauss (1967: 45), to elicit relevant categories. Theoretical categorisation has grown from an immersion in the descriptive parts of the analysis. This is a typical feature of theorising from an ethnographic base as Hammersley writes:

> … most views of theorising that have informed ethnographic methodology are inductivist, in the sense that they treat theory as emerging out of the description of particular events. Such an approach views description as (at least) the first stage in the development of theory.
>
> (Hammersley 1992: 22)

Finally my study of dreamwork groups is a study of the 'other' in an unusual sense. Whilst 'doing anthropology at home' is now commonplace (Jackson 1987: 1–15) and has been integrated into mainstream anthropological theorising and practice, it is often still the case that identifiable social groups like gypsies (Okely 1983), police (Young 1991) and the

very frail elderly (Hockey 1990) and their behaviours provide the source of the 'other'. In my study the bounded group consists of the dreamwork groups and their individual and collective relationship to a perceived unconscious. It is a 'self-declared group' in the sense that Hastrup uses the term (1993: 174). Whilst the hidden, the implicit and the 'unconscious' can be a focus for any anthropology, as indeed it is in Obeyesekere's study of Sri Lankan ecstatics (1981), it is perhaps somewhat novel for the study of dreaming, dream narration and dream interpretation in the Western industrialised world to be the ethnographic focus, although the work of Hillman is similarly focused on the US context (1989: 117–41). Whilst I share with my respondents their language, cultural history and conceptual structure, the group confronted the 'other' of the phantasmagoric and bizarre world of dreams and dreaming. My study then was of that personal and social encounter with the 'other', or the exotic within.

The cultural dynamics of narration

In this section I intend to analyse and to illustrate the process of transformation that is at the heart of the understanding of dream and internal imagery; a transformation which sheds light upon the nature of our understanding both of ourselves and the world. The process of transformation I am referring to is that between the perceived internal image – the dream image – of the dreamer and its translation into a social and personal meaning for the individual dreamer. Researchers studying dream and inner imagery are likely to experience such issues.

Dream interpretation consists of several stages. There is the recollection of the dream by the dreamer and the subsequent filtering of the original imagery into what Kracke (1987b: 36) describes as 'language-centred thought processes'. This filtration of imagery into thought is an act of translation which begins the construction of meaning. It does this by relating the visual imagery to the cognitive categories of the dreamer's culture. Such cognitive categories carry implicit ways of ordering and sequencing time and space, person and action that inevitably begin to define and delimit the possible readings of the text or narration.

Brown (1987: 155) presents this translation through the Freudian distinction between primary and secondary process thinking. He argues that dream imagery is immediately translated from primary process thinking into secondary process thinking upon recollection. The dream audience can receive only the verbal text of the dream even if that text is embellished by drawings and paintings of the dream imagery. Often

the dream narration is already the beginning of an interpretive process insofar as the dreamer will be associating with and categorising the sensory imagery. The dream has thus become a text available to an audience, and is now open to hermeneutic analysis (Ricoeur 1970: 5). Kracke (1987b: 35), however, rejects this approach altogether. He thinks that it negates the continued involvement of the dreamer throughout the interpretive process. This arises because the dreamer is him or herself associated with and affected by the dynamics of the group.

The dream narration is then a social act which both expresses and creates social affinity and meaning. There is, however, still a gap between imaginative thought and speech. Herdt uses the idea of discourse frames to express this perception. In the Sambian society of New Guinea, Herdt found three different discourses within which dream sharing took place. There was public talk, secret talk and private talk. Each of these discourses was structured in differing ways in relation to 'cultural rules, premises, expectations – frames that organise behaviour' (1987: 59–61). Public discourse was the most common, during which anyone in the social group could be present. Secret discourse referred to the communication of ritual secrets and was sexually segregated. Private discourse concerned personal secrets, typically about sexuality.

The question of the importance of knowing which parts of dreams are not being shared is clearly demonstrated in the following example. An entertaining incident from one of the dreamwork groups that I studied arose when the group split into three small groups of three or four members to discuss recent dreams. It was only in this situation, as I pointed out earlier in this chapter, that it was possible to share a recent dream involving faeces. With much laughter the three women concerned admitted during feedback to the larger group that unless they had been together in a same gender group they would not have shared that particular dream content. Examples of group members not disclosing sexual contents of dream images, particularly when they referred to other group members, were commonplace and emerged in the subsequent individual interviews. The not-narrated can then be as significant as the narrated! Such examples show how important knowledge of both implicit and explicit group and social processes are to the interpretation of disclosed dreams. As Tedlock in contrasting her idea of a 'new anthropology of dreaming' with the comparativist content analysis school writes:

> … 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 alphabetic literacy and thus culture-bound.
>
> (Tedlock 1991: 162)

Narrative theory also distinguishes between different features referred to in the totality of the narration. Genette (1988: 14) distinguishes between the 'story', which refers to the finished set of events being referred to; the 'narrating' itself, which is also a key feature of the communicative theory of dreaming; and the 'narrative', which refers to the product of that event, be it a written or oral text of some kind. I agree also with Mattingley that:

> Narrative offers meaning through evocation, image and the mystery of the unsaid. It persuades by seducing the listener into the world it portrays, unfolding events in a suspense-laden time in which one wonders what will happen next.
>
> (Mattingley 1998: 8)

My discussion of the following narrative issues occurring in the dreamwork groups studied are perhaps typical of those likely to be encountered by researchers studying such 'imaginary fields'.

Narrative issues in the dreamwork groups

Dream narrations in these groups were replete with instances that illustrate the actual process of the translation of primary process thought into secondary process thought. Two examples will suffice to illustrate this processing as it occurs during narration. Throughout this section I shall quote extensively from the transcripted dreams of group members. To distinguish narration of the actual dream from the dreamer's commentary during the narration I have put the first in italics and the second in normal print. Throughout I have also generally omitted punctuation such as commas and fullstops when quoting from the transcript so that transcript excerpts are not encumbered with too much implicit grammatical analysis by the author. Also, pauses by the speaker are shown by three dots and I have retained the use of question, quotation and exclamation marks.

The first example describes a dream which was narrated to the group by a female member. In her narration she describes a dream in

which she experienced feelings both of jealousy and concern about being rejected by her partner at a party. The dream narrative went as follows:

> *I woke up crying … I was at a party in L. with a group of friends …* and I have recently been to a party over there … *I was with S. who is my partner* though it is difficult to describe the relationship *and I came into the room and he was talking in quite an intimate way with someone … a woman … whose face I could not see … and I thought he is going to kiss her … and he kind of bent over and kissed her … I was directly behind her and* I wasn't sure if in the dream he actually saw me or not … I think he did see me *he sort of scooped this woman up and went off to a different part of the room … and I thought I don't like this … and I didn't know what to do about it and I sort of followed him about the room and we did this kind of dance round the room with him and this woman and each time we got close he would move away again and he was enjoying himself … this being wrapped up in this woman … and I thought what can I do about this and vaguely seeing someone I knew but I thought I don't want to be with him as he is ugly … and* then I woke up … crying … really upset … even though really S. was staying in my house that night … not in my bed … I didn't want to see him to get a cuddle … it was as if it had really happened and I blamed him.
>
> What was disturbing *was this dancing away and me not knowing how to handle it and me saying it was okay for him to be having a nice time and enjoying himself* but it also wasn't alright … it wasn't really as if he was trying overtly to avoid me … it was almost a taunting quality but so subtle … he wasn't being overtly angry or provocative but he was aware that I was there and he was moving away from me.

The above dream narration illustrates several issues. First the narration begins with the statement '*I woke up crying*'. This places an emotional frame around the forthcoming dream narration. The disclosure that the dream had such a powerful emotional effect on the dreamer keys the group in to expect emotional expression and an emotional tale. The statement that the dreamer '*was at a party in L.*' is followed by the comment that she has recently been there to a party. Implicitly the group is being told to expect reference to the actual party as well as to the dream party. It is also being indicated that the dreamer has already begun to think about the possibility of meaningful connections between the 'real'

and the 'dream' party. She refers to her partner but indicates that she cannot describe the partner in a simple way or at least not the person's role in her life. This partner was known to one or two group members and the dreamer's awareness of this may have led her to be careful about her definition of this person's role in her life.

The narration continues with a description of perceived action by the partner, but this action was unclear to the dreamer, 'I thought *he is going to kiss her*' indicates a lack of certainty as to the actual meaning of the action. Further on the dreamer indicates more uncertainty by saying 'I wasn't sure if in the dream he actually saw me or not … I think he did see me'. This uncertainty indicates either a lack of a certain awareness in the dream itself or a subsequent lack of clarity in the remembering process, due possibly to the emotional significance of the perceptions involved. The narration continues with two references to 'sort of' as in '*sort of scooped this woman up*' and '*I sort of followed him*'. Both uses of 'sort of' indicate a vagueness as to the actual act and may be avoiding a fuller definition of the feelings accompanying that part of the recollection and narration.

The dreamer then indicates the dance they did by saying '*this kind of dance*', indicating with gesture a form of dancing. The dream narration continues with her recollected perceptions of her thinking in the dream until the dreamer describes herself as waking up crying. Her immediate emotional response was to identify the content of the dream with her current relationship with her partner. On waking, the dreamer clearly carries over the hostile feelings generated or mediated through the dream and its immediate recall. She attributes these feelings in the present to her relationship with her partner. She says 'it was as if it had really happened and I blamed him'.

The narration continues with the dreamer elaborating both the dream action and her daytime personal response to her partner's behaviour. She defines 'what was disturbing' and evaluates which behaviour in the dream 'wasn't alright'. Clearly at this point the narrator is responding to her remembered dream imagery as if it was real, though at no point in this narration does she identify her partner's behaviour in the dream with his behaviour in 'real life'. This example shows that the narration is clearly different from the original dreaming experience and it is obvious that such an original experience can never be directly replicated. What is however demonstrated through this narration is that it is a narration that has been translated into 'language-centred thought processes' (Kracke 1987b: 36). Throughout the telling, the dream imagery is

presented in a form which is recognisable by group members and with acknowledged emotional responses, which members could understand. The narration is reconstructed during the telling to the group and illustrates the problems of translating imagery into exact linguistic concepts, hence the inexactitude of words used, such as 'sort of'. Furthermore, physical gesture, laughter and the narrator's consciousness of the group's awareness of her personal situation are features of the narration. Also, particularly near the end, narration, emotional response and critical discussion become fused.

The dream audience has then participated in much more than an objective telling of a dream. There can be no realist or mimetic stance with respect to dream narratives. The narration 'fixes not the event, but the meaning of the speech event' (Ricoeur 1981a: 199) for the narrator, before further amplification of the dream's meaning by the group and the narrator. Indeed the narration, in this instance, is a presentation of a kind of visual play involving a common drama of love and betrayal with which the group can easily identify. The narration offers a potential 'ensemble of references' for the group and the narrator, as Ricoeur (1981a: 202) describes a hermeneutic perspective. The party in the dream being narrated can stand for all parties experienced by the group. The world of the narration would become then 'the totality of references' (Ricoeur 1981b: 177) opened up by the narration.

The second example of a dream narration illustrates again the construction of the narrative by the narrator:

> *It was a horse race meeting … also a fairground meeting and a race was about to take place … the horses' names were very unusual … there were only three horses and then the odds went up … one was 10–1 … one was 100–30 and the other was 12–1 and* these were ridiculous odds and no bookie would give such odds as they would be bound to lose money … *and the colours were yellow-blue-yellow and their numbers were in those colours and I said I must get a bet on and I went to the bookie's place* and it wasn't a normal bookie's place … *and it was like a roundabout and these three horses were represented by three parrots … a yellow and a blue and a yellow and they were whizzing around* as if they were on a fairground carousel *and I was itching to place my bet on one of these three horses or on all of them as I was going to make a pile of money … and there was no bookie there and the race was about to start* … like missing the boat again.

This dream narration shows some similar points. We see again a running commentary by the dreamer that contextualises the dream imagery as bizarre. The narration stresses that the betting odds being offered by the bookie were 'ridiculous odds and no bookie would give such odds'. The betting place was not a 'normal bookie's place'. The whizzing around of the parrots is conveyed in metaphorical terms 'as if they were on a fairground carousel', clearly an interpretation of the kind of movement noted in the dream. The metaphorical description of the parrots as being like a fairground carousel enters into the dream narration as part of the dream and becomes a part of the dream text heard, learnt and remembered by the group. That text, constructed and mediated by interpretation, association, daytime cognitive categorisation, omission and embellishment becomes the dream text of the group. The humour and gesture of the narration are part of the text experienced by the dream audience and later discussed and 'worked on'. I will show later that posture and gesture are consciously read by group members particularly in gestalt interpretative mode.

The dream narration was sometimes interrupted, like this dream snippet which was narrated thus:

> 'It's just a snippet … it was frightening … *I was walking down the street … suddenly through a gate came a horrible head of an awful dog … it came over but was held by a leather strap.*'
> '*Was it a Rottweiler?*'
> '*It was a pointy type of Rottweiler.*'

An insignificant interruption maybe and one that can be held not to have significantly influenced the narration. Yet it illustrates that the audience is active and anxious to begin fitting the reporting of visual imagery into an understandable idiom, one that is 'good to think with'. The Rottweiler perhaps currently stands at the apex of UK dog demonology.

The narration is a moving feast. The next example shows the difference between two dream narrations of the same dream made in the same meeting. On this occasion the italics represent the first narration, the italics inside brackets the second telling and the normal script the accompanying commentary.

> It's a recurrent dream … most dreams I have are bad … one theme in the dream is to do with houses … the other theme is trying to start on a journey but I can't … two themes came together which is quite worrying … *people* (*maybe it was one man*) *were actually*

destroying my luggage that I had piled into a van … I was getting ready to start … I was in the house … I was really furious with the people … I picked up and threw the telephone at them through two windows … the wires got entangled and the house caught fire (*all these wires under the floor caught fire and there were the lines of fire all over the road*) *and was collapsing around me … I got outside … got my luggage onto the van* (*I was rushing around trying to get me and my luggage into the van*) *… people were firing … they were shooting at the van … I was trying to shield myself … I run towards another door* (*the door – the door* [emphasised] *in the dream reminded me of the front door of my old school … it was a very old door*) *then suddenly I found myself* (*holding an old blanket or cloak … I thought the blanket would shield me*) *holding a few months old child … but the baby is able to articulate a whole sentence which I wrote down in the dream but I don't remember it …* there are two themes that often come up … I am thinking about this dream a lot.

The first telling or narration of this dream occurred in the beginning round when group members shared important events in the last week and mentioned if they had any dreams to 'work on'. This member signified at the beginning of the session that he wanted to 'work on' the dream and that it was an important one as it was both a recurrent dream and it had some nightmarish qualities, for instance the fire and the being shot at. The second telling comes after another dream has been 'worked on' and is noticeable as being longer and with greater self-disclosure. More detail is given, as in: '*I was rushing around trying to get me and my luggage into the van*' or '*holding an old blanket or cloak … I thought the blanket would shield me*'.

In the second narration the narrator's association of the door in the dream with his remembered old school door is conveyed. Also a second dream is referred to in the second telling which begins to detail the original description of this dream as a repetitive dream.

Different tellings at different times even within the same evening show well the contextual nature of dream and image narration. The dynamics of narration then become part of the available text of the dream. The second and more elaborated telling can be due to a greater trust in the group and in the progress of the group's formation during the session itself. This session was only the second session of the second group and the narrator was telling his dream to the group for the first time. Alternatively the variant tellings can be analysed as structural transformations of an 'original' dream. Kuper (1983: 153–75) has analysed different dreams of a subject over a two night period and

presented a structural analysis of the progressive transformations of the oppositional themes in the dream sequence. However, the material in the present two renderings of the one dream, whilst clearly different and embellished, suggest rather that the extended second telling is due to a development of recall, and a greater trust in the group following a discussion about another dream, rather than being significant as a structural transformation of the original dream.

The often bizarre nature of dream imagery and its patterning is itself problematic for its translation into the daytime categories of cognitive thought. Part of the following dream shows the narrator struggling with a description of what was at the time for her 'the indescribable':

> *I was out in the country … there were no trees … lots of hills long grasses … I was with lots of people …* I don't remember who they were … *there were a couple of horses who were with us … we were watching birds … at one point I looked up and there was this enormous bird … vast … absolutely stunning … I was looking at it totally amazed at how beautiful it was … its wingspan was vast … brown and white patterns … as I looked at it … it became two … one layer almost came off and flew away from it …* I can't explain it very logically … *but it was as if it had two layers … I think at that point I was on a horse … and it started to gallop.*

The bird in the dream is described as splitting into two in a rather amoeba-like way. The surreal quality of dream imagery is well-known and such imagery has been influential in the development of modern art.

Narration of a dream image involves a social construction of the imagery both to oneself and to the narrator's perception of the group. The following example shows the dreamer reinterpreting her feeling about the image to make it more acceptable either to herself or to the group:

> *I was in the train of someone very famous … a pop star or a king … someone who carried great presence and I was part of the entourage and I was travelling the whole time … I was arriving just before this great person … I was arranging hotel bookings etc. … and I was bathed in his reflected glory and I felt terribly self-important* or rather I didn't but I played the role of being self-important as really it was quite boring.

At first the narrator exhibits pleasure with the feelings of self-importance engendered through the role experienced in the dream.

However, she swiftly redefines her sense of self-satisfaction with the role, to harmonise more exactly either with her own sense of self or with her desired image within the group.

The next example shows the narrator 'playing to the group' and having an investment in the group's perception of herself as a sexually attractive person:

> *I was going round in various groups levitating above everyone and then ducking down when things were good and interesting … I was levitating above people's heads and there were two gorgeous men and I went down into that like a shot!*

The narration of this dream showed the narrator as a 'free spirit', as she later defined the wish fulfilment aspect of this dream for her. The description of the men as '*gorgeous*' and herself as going '*down into that like a shot*' presents herself to the group as sexually or romantically interested. The presence of the group and the narrator's awareness of themselves and their role and image in the group are then crucial to the formation of the narrative of the dream.

Overall then the narrative of the dream or of the imagework experience in the group is significantly different from the original experience of the dream or fantasy material. Even in its remembering the imagery is processed into the categories and forms of our culturally constructed existence. Association and embellishment, censorship, the desire for privacy and exhibition all influence the rendering of the tale of the dream. The dynamics of the dream audience, the degree of trust, prior friendship, shared values and length of time together all contribute to the 'narrating' and hence the 'narrative' itself. Hence there is no final or original or definitive dream text itself, rather one of many possible renderings in a powerfully defining group and cultural context.

I have written elsewhere (Edgar 1995) as to the importance of an understanding and an analysis of the group process and group life as being an essential part of dream interpretation. Dream narration does not occur within a social vacuum. Dream narration needs an audience and which parts of the dream and how the dream is narrated will depend upon the totality of the group climate. Trust, security and effective leadership are clear prerequisites for full disclosure of the remembered dream imagery in narration. As one dream narrator said, 'disclosing to a safe group of people is vital as it verbalises how you are feeling and you may not know how you are feeling'. This quote well indicates the importance of the subjective feeling of safety in the facilitation of self-disclosure. The quote also shows that through narration the memory of

the dream is enhanced and also that the narrative process itself promotes awareness of current feelings. In this way feelings are made manifest both to the narrator and to the group. The implicit feeling is made explicit through narrative and positive audience participation. So, affective awareness follows the articulation of the 'embodied image' (Csordas 1990: 160).

This cultural reworking of the original dream imagery has been considered by Obeyesekere. He suggests that we utilise cultural forms to weave the dream imagery into a narrative plot, which he calls 'emplotment':

> This term [emplotment] enables us to designate the process whereby the dream thoughts are creatively organised into a narrative that can, in some instances at least, stand on its own as a story. To miss this is not simply to miss something significant about dreams; it is to miss understanding an aspect of cultural creativity that can transform deep motivation into narrative.
>
> (Obeyesekere 1990: 267)

The construction of a communicable and ordered narrative out of the bizarrely ordered fragments of often ill-remembered dreams confronts participants and a researcher with the fundamental experience of narrative creativity as well as with a confrontation with the 'preobjective' self (Csordas 1990: 5). The experience of first defining the dream image to oneself and then translating the imagery in all its multi-various and potential definitions into a communicable linguistic entity goes beyond baffling and taxing the imaginative resources of the dreamer. It transforms the most subjective of experiences into an object for viewing and absorbing by the group as well as by the original dreamer. This process of objectivisation, of the self becoming an object within and for the world, as defined by Csordas (1990: 40), reaches its zenith in such dreamwork groups. The dream imagery, on occasions, is transformed into artistic statement and performed dramas. Such an objectivisation of the self was noted by group members, as the following quote shows. One of the members describes the dream as 'a story or picture and therefore the dream is out there and can be worked on quite safely'.

This chapter has demonstrated some of the likely issues to emerge for the researcher groupworker in facilitating a research-orientated dreamwork group. Along with Chapter 3 the vital role that the dream has in a reflexive qualitative research practice is shown. Moreover, the study of 'imaginary fields' refocuses and re-theorises the core methodological issues of narrativity, validity and reliability.

Chapter 5

Amplifying the data through groupwork methods or making 'sense' out of 'nonsense'

> We have been walking for some time, we have talked a little, but, above all, we have been companionable. Have you noticed we have been steadily climbing uphill? I was hardly aware of it. The sun is still hot, how far have we come? Do you see how the landscape is changing, how strange, I cannot see the garden, it should be at the bottom of the hill, but I cannot see it. The trees are different now, they are small and thorny, they look cruel, vicious – walk well clear of them. I think we must go on for I cannot see the way back.
>
> It is getting late, the heat is going out of the sun, the air is cooler. We are still climbing. It is becoming very rough underfoot. There are rocks, look where you are walking, be careful not to fall. It is getting colder, the light is fading fast, I think, but I must not say, we are lost. How did we get here – how shall we get home?[2]

This chapter will present the varied groupwork-based methods used in the dreamwork groups and illustrate, with case examples, the process by which these methods facilitated the evocation of meaning from dream and day imagery. These methods can also be used in spontaneous imagework and this chapter contains several examples of spontaneous imagework, including gestalt and meditation practices. The methods used by the group included: discussion and personal contextualisation; member suggestions; gestalt and psychodrama; artwork and imagework; symbol amplification (dream re-entry); meditation. An assumption throughout this book and particularly vital in this chapter is that such groupwork methods as I am presenting develop and amplify the perceived meaning of the evoked images experienced by participants during both dream and imagework. As participants will typically not fully, if at all, understand how to generate and ascribe meaning to the evoked images of him/herself, the use of groupwork methods is recommended. Professional groupworkers can be used to supplement the researcher's skills,

just as a researcher might engage a groupworker to lead a focus group. The research aim is the further elucidation of the personal and cultural meaning of the images for participants. These groupwork methods are instrumental in this process and are transferable to other imagework situations. I provide in this chapter some detailed examples and analyses. I also present the use of binary analysis as an implicit part of the group reflective and analytical process.

This chapter particularly illustrates and sets out the processes of cultural creativity applied to dream narration in the groups. I intend that the material in this chapter shows the actual movement from 'nonsense' to 'sense' for the dreamer/narrator. The cultural and processual creation of meaning is evident in many of the following examples. After the narration of the dream the narrator experiences, on occasion, the evocation of meaning which is satisfactory and relevant to her/him. Satisfactory meaning can be experienced through the subjective felt understanding of the participant when the idiomatic wordplay within the group relates directly to the dreamt and remembered image. Such an a-ha moment resembles an arrow hitting the bullseye! There are examples of such a-ha moments for participants in the following examples.

If culture is the ascription and negotiation of meaning to everyday events, then dream and imagework, and particularly the use of action techniques within the group context, such as gestalt and psychodrama, illustrate in an exemplary way the processual, interactive and negotiated nature of cultural creativity. Moreover, what is significant as we review this verbal and affective generation of meaning is how meaning and the ability to make connections between external events and internal imagery (memory and imagination) is often buried and repressed within the body of the person, that is the 'socially informed body' (Bourdieu 1977: 124). Bourdieu's work illuminates the way in which the body contains implicit knowledge. He shows how social values are retained and contained in the posture, gait and gaze of their possessors. It is no accident that totalitarian institutions spend so long inculcating cultural forms, like British boarding schools in their emphasis on 'good manners'. The body is then 'treated as a memory' and:

> The principles em-bodied in this way are placed beyond the grasp of consciousness, and hence cannot even be made explicit; nothing seems more ineffable, more incommunicable, more inimitable, and therefore, more precious, than the values given body, *made* body by the transubstantiation achieved by the hidden persuasion of an

> implicit pedagogy, capable of instilling a whole cosmology, an ethic, a metaphysic, a political philosophy, through injunctions as insignificant as 'stand up straight' or 'don't hold your knife in your left hand'.
> (Bourdieu 1977: 94)

In this chapter I aim to show how group process and groupwork method can reveal the 'implicit' and repressed knowledge of the self. In this way Bourdieu's concepts, particularly of the body, explain how the social is written into all aspects of our lives and so provides a conceptual link between the 'worlds' of humanistic groupwork methodology and the social sciences.

In the research groupworker's toolkit of methods, conversation is basic and suggestion is one aspect of talking.

Suggestion

Suggestion effectively means the ability of a member to ask the dream narrator for either further information or to 'suggest' looking at the dream or a part of it in a particular way. Any question in the form of, 'what colour was …?' or 'how did you feel when …?' or 'how do feel now about …?' or 'have you considered how X might relate to Y in your daytime life?' includes both a question being asked for more information, to flesh out the narrative, and also 'suggests' a possible avenue for enquiry by the dreamer. Suggestion can be more directive and 'suggestive'. For example in a dream where the dreamer had dreamt of having a baby, in contradistinction to her daytime intention, a group member asked her the question, 'What do babies mean to you?' and the dream narrator replied, 'Love, food, too much responsibility'. Sometimes the suggestion made is very directive as in the following example. A male dreamer has the following dream:

> *I was in a shop that I couldn't get out of … I was stuck … the customers wouldn't go … they kept coming in … it was five o'clock … I was trying to push them out and lock the door … and they wouldn't go …* [now he says the dream is fairly easy to understand] *… the dream led into there being two couples … I was on holiday in America I think … there were two men and women … I was one of the men … I didn't know the others … I had some exams to revise for on Monday and the dream was on Friday but I was inveigled into going on this trip and I went … I had to go through the customs … and there was a desk in the sand and all the bureaucracy and I put down a document dated the*

thirtieth of November … customs officer said 'this is out of date … you can't go' … by this time the other three had gone on … one woman was walking off the boat and I waved and shouted 'hey this sod won't let me go through and I will have to go back' and they just walked on looking over their shoulders and then the man on the table just disappeared and I thought I can go now and I ran out and the boat has gone.

Y.: Perhaps the boat leaving and your being missed was your wish not to take responsibility for decision-making … the women went and the decision was made for you.

D.: That is the situation to a T! Also I thought there I am stopped officially and I am saying 'I am coming back' and the decision is taken out of my hands.

This example shows an interpretive suggestion being made by a group member, based on their extensive knowledge of the person's life situation. In this case the interpretation was accepted, but this was not always the case.

Discussion and personal contextualisation

The researcher groupworker needs to be able to facilitate insightful discussion and the amplification of the dream/image narrator's story. Meaning develops through group and social processes and my following examples show this facilitated process. The ability of the group to perform 'successful' image and dreamwork depended on members' self-disclosing and, in particular, on the narrator of the dream giving contextual information about current and past events in their life. In the following dream the symbolism is about 'moving house'. The female dreamer begins by saying the dream takes her back into scary feelings; she tells the dream as a story. She can see parallels with her own life:

It is a mix of things … real and other people's doing … *I go to my parents' house … I haven't lived there long … mother tells me she is going to move … I am quite surprised … mother says to father … 'you are getting old … you will have to stop all this physical work around the house' … the back garden is in complete disarray … they are digging up paving stones in their paved garden … they don't know where they are going … they have no other place … I feel confused … they seem crazy*

to be digging up the paving stones and to be moving … I decide to go along with it … I don't feel it would achieve anything by discussion … mother is being very angry about digging up the paving stones … I am helping … I am sifting through the fibrous soil and taking out bulbs … I am not leaving anything behind.

The narrator then continues to give information about her life that is clearly vital for any attempt to understand the dream imagery:

> This dream occurred the day after my house was put up for sale … therefore the material is half real! I have lived in this house for many years and I have brought up a child in it … [she then talks about moving from her own house and about how very panicky and insecure she now feels] … I have a much stronger reaction than I imagined … I am shaken … I am having these feelings as I am talking … I feel fear and uncertainty … [she tells how she remembers how she got to her house] … it is the first place I have felt secure in … previously my accommodation has been rented … my parents are alive and are not moving … it is a bizarre idea that they should be moving … they are very rooted … my parents have lived in their present house for X years and before that in a house where I grew up for Y years … my parents' view of me is that 'she' is always doing unpredictable things … it's just her … another crazy thing! I feel my house is an anchor … it feels really scary … I can't pull up the anchor until I can sell the house … I can't do something new … in the dream there were bulbs … my parents wanted to move everything with them … even the bulbs.

In this example, perhaps surprisingly from the first session of the first group, the dreamer gives considerable personal biographical information to the group. In this example the information allows the group to focus on the dream imagery as being likely to represent, albeit in a changed and distorted form, the dreamer's feelings aroused by her proposed house sale. The feelings of 'being uprooted' are later described in the 'Gestalt' section in this chapter. This dreamwork example shows how dreamwork evokes deep emotion which is central to the everchanging experience of the human condition. Images convey potential and actual emotions. Qualitative social research is concerned with the human experience through time and space in all its holistic splendour!

In the following discussion of another dream we can see the evocative

process between suggestion and insight that leads to a set of understandings about the dream by the dreamer:

> I stayed in bed one morning … it's only a snatch of a dream … it's about my teeth … they are not a constant anxiety but I do have a fear of having my front teeth smashed … I do have crowns that I am self-conscious of … *the dentist in the dream has put new teeth on … so I feel relief that I shall have teeth to cover the gaps … then I look in the mirror and I see they are my mother's teeth … when I look in the mirror I realise they are greyer … this seems okay for a while till I realise that the new teeth are much greyer which will show people that the original teeth were crowns too.*

The following is an edited version of the ensuing discussion. D. is the dream narrator:

D.: I am thinking about being without teeth … about being raw and exposed and about people knowing there is something false about you.
Q.: Did she bite?
D.: It's not about biting … The dentist knew they were mother's teeth … my relationship with my mother is okay but distant … usually dreaming about teeth is about your own ageing … typically teeth falling out is about ageing … there's a lot about image and about being real … I had a fear of breaking my teeth and it did happen … I had an X accident and I lost my front teeth … Lots of people visited and I was freaked about not having any teeth … Why this fear about not having teeth? It must mean something about not taking care of myself and as it was an accident it was okay to have lost them.

The narrator then talks about the ugliness of having no teeth:

D.: Something is rotting.
Q.: Like being a toothless hag.
D.: Yes … I was glad to have my mother's teeth rather than being toothless … it feels sad to have ended up with something not quite right … I remember my mother taking her denture out of her mouth and cleaning it … I didn't want my mother's teeth … I want my own teeth undamaged … there is something about pretence … it was a double pretence … as I had had the crowns first.
Q.: What is being covered up?

D.: [laughs] It's about not being truthful … about pretending to be something that I'm not … pretending to be more whole … more perfect than I am.
Q.: Putting on a good front.
D.: That really fits in with work … It's about the front … about pretending to be together … it's about this job I am supposed to be doing … I haven't been feeling together at all dealing with everyone else in emotional crisis.
Q.: It's about being strong.
D.: At work it's about me taking care of everyone else … and who takes care of me?

D. talks about her feeling of pretending and of 'being strong' at work. There is nowhere at work for her to explore this, nowhere for her to get attention:

D.: There is a limit to how long I can go on putting up the pretence … I have had a real battle getting the management to realise that workers needed their own support … I feel the management had not been supportive or understanding of these needs … sometimes I blame myself and think that I ought to be able to manage.
K.: I feel D. has had to wear it [the mask] for everyone else … like you are wearing the teeth … you are wearing it for everyone else in the workplace.
Z.: You are the only one being 'shown up' [like teeth].
D.: That is exactly like it is … I feel I am carrying it for the 'consumers' and in order to get the situation changed I have had to be very real about myself … and with people who I haven't felt responded sympathetically.
Q.: You have to be mother?
D.: Yes … I have to be mother to the whole fucking world … that's what it feels like … and yet I don't know how to stop.
J.: The image of biting is coming across for me … that is the opposite of nurturing … softness.
A.: It's like the nurturing I am really missing … I am also not being very caring about myself … but there is this sudden surge of anger … it is the resentment about giving out and not getting back … and the lack of response from other people.

D. then talks about the dentist and her feeling that she is receiving second best concerning the teeth in the dream:

Q.: Just like in the organisation.
D.: They're not good enough … both the teeth and the work support are pretty shoddy … second best … shoddy … it fits but it's not very good.

Then D. talks about not being happy in general at work and a member suggests the 'mother's' teeth are invasive in some way:

D.: What I can pick up there is the invasive bit … about boundaries … I feel really overwhelmed and there is nowhere for me to go … a friend is staying with me and has made dramatic disclosures about their Y. [reference changed] … also someone I know has been attacked [reference changed] this symbolised the last straw for me … so the invasiveness bit symbolised for me the awful side of humanity … it seems to be overwhelming and I am feeling overwhelmed by it.
Z.: How can we resolve this within the time and prepare D. for leaving the group this evening?
D.: As I think about it I feel angry about it and don't think it is good enough … I am angry … it is quite hard for me to be angry … I feel it is difficult to confront … to say I want and I deserve something better … I feel he [the dentist] is doing his best but it is not good enough.

D. then speaks to the 'dentist' as if they were there (see 'Gestalt' section later):

D.: I don't trust you enough to really give me some nice teeth. I want some really splendid teeth … I can have the best crowns in the world.
U.: Are you going to ask him to do it or go somewhere else?
D.: I don't trust him but it feels really threatening to go somewhere else and to start all over again and to take this big risk … and all these dentists are men! My real dentist is very nice … so it's about not settling for things that aren't good enough.

In this discussion about the 'meaning' of the dream and of how the imagery may relate to 'reality' there is a process of question and suggestion and development of insight for the dreamer. This is not purely a result of suggestion by group members, as is shown at the beginning by the dreamer rejecting the avenue of enquiry suggested by the question 'Did

she bite?'. The dreamer knows about the 'typical' connection of teeth with ageing but doesn't exactly pursue that theme in relation to her own ageing process. Rather she connects the imposition of the teeth with the loss of teeth in an accident and particularly focuses on the theme of the 'falsity' of the teeth. Then she talks about falsity and in response to a question about 'What is being covered up?' talks about putting on a 'front' at work. The idea of a 'front' is suggested by a member and the dreamer says that really 'fits in with work'. The next stage sees the dreamer sharing her perception that she is 'being strong' for other people at work, particularly other workers. The 'teeth' symbol now is explicitly connected with that of the 'mask' or 'persona'. In response to the question 'You have to be mother?', the dreamer replies, 'Yes … I have to be mother to the whole fucking world'. The dreamer here is identifying with the 'motherness' of the teeth being inserted into her mouth in the dream and recognising that that is how she feels in her work setting. Following a suggestion that 'boundaries are being invaded' (i.e. mother's false teeth in her mouth), the final level of interpretation reached is that feelings of being overwhelmed by events in the world, the patriarchal world, are manifest. Feelings of anger are articulated and finally the dreamer is facilitated to affirm her 'first class' value and her right to have first class teeth fitted.

This example illustrates very well the progression of insight through different levels in response to suggestion and interpretive questioning. There is a transformation of the image of the 'teeth' to their being seen as representing the 'front' or 'persona' (originally the persona was a Jungian formulation). The word 'persona' then is expanded to refer to 'mothering', perhaps 'inappropriate mothering', and finally, the identification with 'mothering' changes to a feminist articulation of anger at patriarchal abuse. Resolution is achieved through self-affirmation.

Any of these levels of insight, which expand in terms of scope of reference from the personal to the global, could be seen by the group as equating with 'meaning' for the dreamer. 'Sense' then has been derived from the 'nonsense' of the dream. A series of themes, connected to life events and intense emotion, have been derived from images. The interpretation of the 'teeth' image is through reference to biographical data and to the physical context of the teeth as being in the 'front' of the mouth; being a 'social front' to others as well as being a functional piece of equipment for the mastication of food. In that sense the understanding of the 'teeth' symbol relies on a public and culturally specific symbolism that evaluates the significance of teeth, and particularly the gendered nature of 'attractive' teeth, in certain

ways. Our teeth are perceived in Westernised culture as being a part, and a very important part as evidenced by the amount of cosmetic dentistry, of our social front to the world. The social construction of our teeth as a 'dental object' has been analysed by Nettleton (1992: 18–28). The 'mother' image in this dream and its discussion are again personally contextualised. The dreamer states that 'my relationship with my mother is okay'. Hence that possible avenue for exploration is not pursued. The 'mother' symbol instead is connected with her 'overwhelming' set of feelings of responsibility for others, particularly in her workplace. The 'mother' symbol is identified with care and responsibility for others, and it is critically interpreted not as being a fulfilling aspect of herself but rather as an inappropriately acquired set of responses which she would like to divest herself of. Feeling like being a 'mother' to the 'whole fucking world' is a problem to her.

There is a translation here from a reference to the personal mother to the 'archetypal' mother as Jung (1959b: 81) defines the 'mother archetype'. As Jung states, all archetypes have a potentially positive and negative aspect and here we can see a negative, or partly negative, rendering of that set of feelings and roles identifying this archetype for the dreamer. We see here then the dreamer concluding with a feminist critique of herself for coming to adopt such a 'false' persona and for identifying with such an inappropriate 'mother' role in relation to the world. However, her self-criticism is deflected, expanded and refocused into a generalised anger with the abuse and rapacity of the male in this society. The conclusion is self-assertive and affirms her autonomous self-hood and her rights to the best. The socially constructed transformative and evocative process hinges on a series of transformations engendered by the interaction of the dreamer with the group: teeth = front = mothering = lack of self-care = anger at men = affirmation of self.

Whilst this example comes from a personal growth dreamwork group, it shows how a researcher groupworker can use dream imagery to elicit profound emotion and personal identity issues in relation to a workplace issue. Can you imagine the difference in data between working with such a dream image and a standard interview! If the research aim was to explore, for instance, a gendered analysis of current workplace experience or similarly, a work-life balance question, then such use of dream imagery is invaluable for enabling and amplifying the emotional reality for the woman concerned.

Group member association

Member association with the dreamer's narrated imagery was a two-edged affair. Whilst an empathic understanding and identification with the imagery and with the possible meaning for the dreamer was perceived as supportive and developmental, as is shown in the last 'teeth' example, the reverse could be true. Members could 'jump in' with their own associations and projections and thereby confuse the process for the dreamer. This was a group 'problem' discussed and addressed in terms of needing to 'respect the dream'.

In the group the practice was developed of introducing a possible line of enquiry and suggestion by the phrase, 'if that was my dream I …'. Such an approach is also recommended by Ullman and Zimmerman (1979), and Cushway and Sewell (1992). Occasionally there seemed little connection between the dream imagery and the resulting interpretive and supportive discussion. The following example is another 'tooth' dream and makes the point that dream imagework evokes significant emotionally informed issues that are created and generated through both the imagework and groupwork process. Meaning is not just 'read' from declared images but made too! The following example shows well the length of a 'journey' that a dreamwork group member can travel, through 'nonsense' and into an unexpected 'sense'.

> *In church at choir practice there is the vicar and me and two other singers and I am waiting for it to start … perhaps other people are still to come … and I am clenching and unclenching my jaw … like that and I am aware that there is a filling in a bottom molar and there is a filling in a top molar and they are touching … and then I am aware that there is a piece of metal coming down …* [T. starts crying a bit] *and um it actually comes down and gets trapped in the bottom one and I am still clenching and unclenching my jaw … and I am almost tempting fate doing it tighter every time to see if a hook of metal is going to trap into the bottom molar and do this and sure enough I do it till they lock together and the only way I can open my jaw is by pulling out the bottom filling and I sort of go …* [makes noises] *and the tooth underneath crumbles and the whole mouth feels full of bits … and I am leaving the church and going into a small room and I look in the mirror … and there is a huge filling in a load of bits and then a few hours later …* I have a sense of a few hours later … *there are still a few bits of tooth coming out and it feels just horrible and the tension is just horrible* and I have this thing about metal in my mouth and I had an earlier

dream about silver foil in my mouth and it is not the physical pain it is the tension … waiting almost for a physical shock.

There followed a clarifying discussion. T. represents the dreamer. A short gestalt exercise followed and involved the dreamer identifying with 'feeling what it was like being her mouth'.

A member asks about the issue of 'fault', saying:

A.: It [tightening her jaw till the tooth crumbles] seems to be what you wanted … you were testing it out and it was your fault … you brought it on yourself.
T.: This time yes … not always in the other ones [previous similar dreams].

Then the dreamer is offered the opportunity 'to be the crumbly teeth'. She doesn't want to do this, and another member 'doubles'[3] and so acts as if she were the dreamer: TT. is the 'double' of the dreamer (T.).

TT.: I am falling out … I am losing my grip and I am very insecure and wobbly and my contact with the living tissue … stop me if this isn't right … I am falling about into T.'s mouth … and I have given up … I am useless.
T.: Thank you it is really helpful to see … the thing I find really hard is the metal and the hardness of the tooth and the softness of the mouth and that really shakes me and sets my teeth on edge.
X.: It's harder and shouldn't be there and is out of place.
T.: Something shakes my whole being and it is the whole idea of eating chewing gum and a friend coming up and chewing onto the frame of your teeth and expecting it to be soft … it is the hard/soft thing … really horrible.
Y.: There is no pain around this, is there?
T.: Not the physical pain, it is the trauma … same with the foil on the tooth … it's not the pain it is … [she becomes silent].
X.: Things seem insecure with your teeth falling out … and any minute something is going to happen.
T.: You are almost tensing yourself for something to happen.
P.: It is as if it is an alien body in the softness of your mouth that shouldn't be there … it's like you are putting it to its final test … to see what it is going to feel like and I am wondering where this hook is coming from.
T.: It came out of the filling … there is a hook in the top molar … it sort of grew coming down and it was very small [she demonstrates].

Y.: What made you cry?
T.: When I was talking about the metal in the tooth [T. is still shuddering and upset].
P.: Do you want to look at these two sides of yourself … the hard and the soft?
T.: I recognise I have both sides in me … over the last few months I have come to terms with the darker side of me and recognising it … giving it more space like the soft side … saying 'we love one another, don't we?' … I have been angry and voiced more difficult things than usual … is this the soft/hard thing? … yes … as the soft is the more accommodating side and the hard side says no … actually that has pissed me off for many years … I was afraid to express feelings that weren't positive and it is new to feel that that is alright and that I can relate to the hard and the soft … the accommodating and the not accommodating sides.
I.: That is rational but what about the horror of the metal in the teeth … can you associate the picture with anything else outside?
T.: I made a connection yesterday … the night before the dream I had an experience of some boys barring the way whilst I was cycling and one of them grabbed my bum … and today I made this connection and I was happily cycling along and I saw these four boys and I went headlong into the situation … and afterwards I was quite shaken … I had to get down off the bike and I felt quite vulnerable … and that has shaken me and then I had the dream that night.
F.: You said you should have foreseen it.
T.: I was talking about it and I felt I wasn't to blame and I was really angry about it [still crying a bit] … why should I have to look out all the time? Why can't I just feel open?

A member then suggests that she is making a connection between the 'fault' in her tooth dream and the real life threatening incident. The dreamer says she is not sure if the two are related.

T.: I'm not sure if the dream is related to this incident.

Here the dreamer voices her concern that the possible interpretive connection is illusory. The dialogue continues:

Q.: The mouth mirrors the vagina … think of the tongs they use and the stitches … there is a connection with your bum that they got hold of.

I.: Holding the bum is an invasion of your body … an assault … I can feel a lot of anger and guilt around that that has been around for a long time with you … you would have felt the incident was your fault.
Q.: Is guilt the hook?
H.: Are you hooked on guilt?

There is no affirmation by T. of this.

Q.: [Talks about as a nurse] How you feel responsible for their sexual harassment.
T.: [Talks about why feeling so] vulnerable when they are only thirteen-year-olds … when I am really shaken it is my teeth that shake with fear hence the connection between fear of boys and tooth dream?
I.: So the teeth are 'on guard' like a portcullis.

T. then talks about her recurrent dream where she is drinking champagne and the glass shatters in her mouth and she keeps picking bits out. Then the dreamer, deciding to 'work' on this interpretive avenue, elects to act out her feelings and speak to the harassing boys and uses a cushion to express her feelings in a cathartic way. Other members 'double' for her:

F.: Shouts at the boys, [role-playing 'being T.'] Fuck off, go away, leave me alone, get your filthy paws off my bum.
T.: Says they will carry on '*daring*' [to invade her space].
T.: [In tears] I don't feel strong enough … I still feel too small and vulnerable.
T.: [Coming out of the drama by now] I feel when you two are speaking that it is penetratingly real and I want to speak at them like that but I don't have the strength to say … but it feels very real and if I put it in my mouth it will … I will crumble.
X.: [Suggests to T.] Can you tell those boys quietly what you feel? [T. does this.]
P.: [Becomes the boys, saying] We had a good laugh … you looked really cute coming along there.
T.: I am not here to look cute for you I am just here to live my life … I should be able to do what I want.
P.: I didn't mean you any harm … it was a good laugh.
T.: But you intruded.

The discussion continues with the expression of anger towards such kids and then a discussion of how women can protect themselves from such verbal and physical harassment.

Binary analysis of dream report

What began with teeth imagery ends with issues of gendered geographical space and personal security. Working with dream images is a journey into the unknown sometimes, and apparent data about subject X can transform into expressive data about subject Y. The evoked and worked image is a doorway into the hinterland of the self, wherefrom 'new things' may emerge. Whilst I don't consider emotionally-rich images to be reducible to binary analysis, such an analysis can capture the path of the logical development of ideas (as did Kuper 1983). I offer this analytical method as an interpretative possibility for the researcher groupworker. Interestingly the group with this dream report developed for themselves an embryonic structuralist analysis consisting of oppositions linked by analogy and homology. Structuralist theory has used binary analysis (Fox 1975: 99) as an analytic device. Binary analysis is a way of reducing and organising the cultural complexity that confronts anthropologists when analysing or comparing societies. Structural analysis, such as in Lévi-Strauss's story of Asdiwal (1976: 146), posits certain structured logical features underlying cultural activity and conceptualisation. These are deemed to be universal to all cultures. In the 'Mythologies' Lévi-Strauss (1970: 10) seeks to establish a framework of 'laws' determining mythical creation in human society. Part of this logical structure is the analogous sequence of paired oppositions. Among the most commonly found sets are, heaven:earth; raw:cooked; sacred: profane; and male:female. These binary oppositions are connected into a system by the principle of analogy (Leach 1970: 27). For example, Needham suggests that these oppositions:

> need not be connected by qualitative resemblances between individual terms, but instead they are connected as homologues (a:c and b:c) in a classification by analogy.
>
> (Needham 1979: 66)

Such constructions claiming to reflect the universal features of human understanding are open to criticism about their usefulness. Sperber writes that such anthropology is in danger of having 'constructed a structural model without an object' (1975: 68). Leach (1970: 53) also later questioned the usefulness of the approach of binary analysis and Douglas (1975: 250)

is critical of Lévi-Strauss's reliance on binary analysis. Certainly anthropology can use binary analysis to organise cultural phenomena into an identifiable pattern or formal model. Yet the conclusions drawn can vary. Needham writes that the only test of a successful model is: 'the degree of success in rendering social facts coherent and intelligible' (1979: 58–9). An admirable example of the use of binary analysis as a part of a cultural analysis of dream is Carrithers' (1982: 29–45) study of the dreams of a monk in Sinhalese culture. In his analysis, which relies extensively on binary analysis as an ordering and classificatory device, he shows how the monk both dreamt within the religious imagery of the Buddhist order, of which he was a member, and also understood this imagery through the lens of Buddhist morality and religious cosmology. Likewise Ewing (1990) shows how Sufi initiates similarly understood their dream imagery within a religious and cultural context.

I use binary analysis as a way of structuring and making intelligible the interpretive flow of the above discussion. The appropriateness of such an analysis at this point is due to its resonance with the way that the narrator and the group began to structure their explanations and associations to the narrated dream imagery. The extended example above again shows several interpretive processes occurring in the group. In the first part there is the connection, facilitated by the group, of the imagery of the dream in a subjective way. The imagery is thought to refer to the duality or set of opposites within the personality of the dreamer. The key opposition is that of hard: soft. Within the discussion of the dream imagery, the opposition between the hard teeth and soft tissue is developed; there is the opposition between natural and unnatural in which the 'natural' is the tooth and the 'unnatural' is the metal filling. The opposition between the soft mouth and hard tooth is developed by an invitation from a group member for the dreamer to look at that opposition with reference to their being two sides of herself, the soft and the hard side. The dreamer interprets this opposition in terms of the tension between the loving, caring and nurturing side and the assertive side that is able to deal with conflict and can voice difficult feelings:

> … the soft is the more accommodating side and the hard side says no … I was afraid to express feelings that weren't positive … I can relate to the hard and the soft … the accommodating and the not accommodating sides.

The dreamer re-expresses this opposition in terms of 'accommodating' and 'not accommodating'. At this point the dreamer declares a possible connection between the dream imagery of that night and the harassing experience of the day before. At first she declares that this connection may not really be related to the imagery, there being no clear 'hook' for the projection. However, shortly afterwards, she identifies the connection in terms of her feeling that her teeth shake with fear, and this gives her the connection between 'teeth' and the frightening experience of the day before. With this information the group leaves the previous interpretive format and takes a more social and political, even feminist stance in relation to reclaiming physical space, not dental space, for all people and particularly women. The 'crumbling teeth' which appear at one point to become a metaphor for her current non-assertive and 'crumbling self' are turned in the ensuing role-play into an assertive voice in her mouth claiming her rights and exposing her criticism of the boys. Further oppositions have then emerged, particularly those between male:female; and danger:safety. The opposition between inside:outside becomes an analogy at two levels, between that of the accommodating self:the non-accommodating self and also the feminist:non-feminist self; passivity and assertiveness are also being polarised. However, the opposition inside:outside also resonates with the possibilities of a subjective:objective interpretive reference for this dream. Overall we see then an emerging system of binary classification, partly articulated by members. I present these in Table 5.1.

This set of oppositions, linked by homology and analogy (Needham 1979: 66), are evident in the text. Yet change in attitude and the affirmation of the self are being enacted in this dramatic re-staging of a crumbling mouth and a harassing incident. The soft passive and non-assertive accommodating self is being changed into an assertive self. In the individual interview with this member, after the groups finished, in

Table 5.1 Table of oppositions

soft mouth	:	hard metal
natural	:	unnatural
soft nature	:	hard nature
accommodating disposition	:	non-accommodating disposition
inside	:	outside
crumbling	:	hard
female	:	male
feminist	:	non-feminist
internal referents	:	external referents
psyche	:	world

answer to the question, 'Has the group affected your life?', she said, 'Oh yes, particularly my reaction to conflict … it has underlined my avoidance of conflict … and made me value confronting conflict.' This dream narration and discussion show several important features along with that of the issue of how a dreamer associates or projects onto their imagery both before and during the narration and discussion of the dream. This example also shows the implicit and beginning development of a structuralist analysis of the dream text by the group, and included within that text, the set of external referents identified by the dreamer with the aid of the group.

Both these examples of 'teething' dreamwork illustrate the representational processes involved in rendering a visual experience meaningful through the dynamics of narration, group process and the metaphorical playing with meaning that became the hallmark of this group's interpretive style. And the use of binary oppositions in the last example demonstrates the system of epistemological dualism embedded in Western cognition itself.

I would argue therefore that these examples illustrate clearly the cultural re-working of dream and visual imagery within and through the group process. Meaning is created, the self is represented and invented in new, and often disturbing garments. Consciousness becomes its imagery and opens up new fields of potential mental and affective connectedness. Such new fields, encompassing both the narrator's mind and the consciousness of the group, are not, however, limitless. Meaning is not evoked from outside its context. Interpretive possibilities are those already dormant within modern society's repertoire of potential meaning for material objects and cultural processes. A tooth, whilst capable in these groups of becoming a lived metaphor evoking, symbolising and representing a gendered personal identity and relationship, remains a tooth firmly within the terms understood normally in society. The interpretive and representational processes recorded then are culturally contextualised and pertinent to our modern or post-modern society, not any society.

Particularly, this last example shows for the researcher groupworker that the meaning achieved through dreamwork is not solely intellectual but can and often is change affirming for the member/respondent. Meaning, identity, attitude, emotional awareness, all can be seen to emerge, develop and change through the facilitated group process. The researcher groupworker can 'capture' and even facilitate such emergent aspects of the self, in the interests both of their investigative work and also for the well-being of their respondent members.

Psychodrama and sculpting

Psychodrama and sculpting are powerful group strategies that do need training in before use in the qualitative research context. I only outline their use for this reason. Psychodrama is a kind of role-play or re-enactment of some past or possibly future situation. Such a dramatic re-creation of past or possible events is a group-based activity initiated in the 1920s by Moreno (Brazier 1991: 2). In the drama the group members are used to act the different roles of a particular situation concerning one of their members. Since a 'typical' psychodrama evokes strong emotion concerning basic human experiences like loss, love and fear, these feelings of the rest of the members of the group will be evoked. Facilitating respondents to do a psychodrama in a therapeutic situation may allow the respondents to rehearse and often to experience a form of catharsis about an unfinished aspect of their own personal lives. Such a process of involvement may, and often does, generate new insight and reformulation of the concept of self. In a different way the experience for respondents of considering how their dream image might relate to their present situation may, on occasions, generate a fresh perspective on their personal and social preoccupations and on those of others involved.

In a psychodrama the director negotiates the development of the drama with the subject of the drama, the protagonist. The protagonist describes the interpersonal situation they want to work on and gives information to the group about the participants in that situation. The protagonist chooses from the group, people s/he wants to represent the identified people in the situation. If it is a family situation s/he may choose parents, a grandparent, siblings and their own children, partner etc. After the actors have received sufficient information to dramatise the story the psychodrama or enactment takes place with the director checking its authenticity with the protagonist who usually plays themself to begin with. Thereafter the drama can be developed in any imaginative form. The protagonist can take over being a parent or a sibling, for instance, and speak and act from that position. If a new character is referred to, perhaps an aunt, the play can shift to enacting an imaginary scene between the protagonist, the aunt and whoever. The 'dead' can come back to life and the living can speak to the 'dead'.

Sculpting involves a group member using some of the other group members physically to represent past or present relationships in the former's current family, family of origin, or a significant group such as a work group. The person doing the sculpt arranges the key people to display how he or she feels or would like to represent the group or family

in question. So a sculpt may display the whole gamut of feelings in relationships whether they be togetherness, security, conflict, anger or hurt. Alliances and hostilities in a group can easily be shown by using typical motifs such as 'the clenched fist' or 'hugging', and the spatial representation of people through closeness and distance is a powerful way to express feelings. The 'sculptor' may be very surprised by how s/he places significant people in his/her life, such as siblings or parents. The 'knowledge' that he/she represents in the sculpt may be surprising, and may show feelings and perceptions that have until this point remained unacknowledged. The evocation of such unacknowledged perceptions through the use of techniques such as sculpting and psychodrama, if utilised by a researcher, would allow them the opportunity to access significantly deeper perceptions than an interview or questionnaire normally allows. Perceptions of which the respondent is barely conscious can then become conscious.

Psychodrama is a powerful form of working and small-scale dramatisations were quite often done in the dreamwork groups. For instance there was the re-enactment of the situation of the dreamer asserting herself towards the harassing young boys, described in the previous section. Sculpting was not used with these dreamwork groups but is reported in Cushway and Sewell's work on counselling and dreamwork (1992: 68).

Gestalt

The gestalt approach in the group was very important as it was a valuable technique regularly used in working with the dream imagery. Gestalt therapy was the creation of Fitz Perls (1969). His theory rejected the notion of an unconscious and focused on a concern with the person 'getting in touch with the here and now' and 'being in touch with their feelings'. Dreams in gestalt theory are 'the high road to integration' rather than Freud's 'high road to the unconscious' (Houston 1982: 44). Each part of the dream is seen as a part of the person that potentially they can get in touch with through dreamwork. Even an insignificant part of a dream is an opportunity to develop a further emotional integration of the various aspects of the self. Perls has written:

> The dream is an existential message. It is more than an unfinished situation; it is more than an unfulfilled wish; it is more than a prophecy. It is a message of yourself to yourself, to whatever part of you is listening. The dream is possibly the most spontaneous

> expression of the human being, a piece of art that we chisel out of our lives. And every part, every situation in the dream is a creation of the dreamer himself. Of course, some of the pieces come from memory or reality, but the important question is what makes the dreamer pick out this specific piece? No choice in the dream is coincidental … every aspect of the dream is a part of the dreamer, but a part that to some extent is disowned and projected onto other objects.
>
> (Perls 1969: 27)

Gestalt therapy is an action approach to re-experiencing the self in a more complete sense. Hence in gestalt dreamwork the dreamer is advised to see each part of the dream as a part of themself. They are asked to identify emotionally with all or part of the dream imagery. Hence they speak of their dream not as about something 'out there' and impersonal but rather they would say, 'I am the …', speaking always in the present tense. Often the dream narrator uses two chairs or cushions, one to sit in when 'being the dream', and one when they are themselves. Effectively this allows them to dialogue between different aspects of themselves and this can be a powerful and cathartic experience.

As the gestalt method used is such a typical and important method of working with dreams, I will give two further examples, plus an additional example of a form of group gestalt. Moreover, basic gestalt practice is easier to learn than psychodrama. In the following bulb example I will present the gestalt exercise and the ensuing discussion. Gestalt can be seen as a form of spontaneous imagework as it involves a directed imagework experience.

The dream of bulbs has already been presented earlier in the chapter, in the section on discussion and personal contextualisation, and relates to the dreamer's parents moving house. In the gestalt exercise the dreamer (F.) is encouraged to imaginatively be the 'bulb(s)' that at the end of the dream are being dug up by her parents. In her memory of the dream this is a relatively insignificant part of the dream. The transcript includes questions and suggestions from the group as to ways of understanding the dream imagery:

F.: I am a bulb … I'm rather a nice shape … full of nourishment … food for the future … a bit magical … I go into the ground … stay in the ground … through the winter … just in the ground … suddenly it is spring … I really grow … emerge spectacular … absolutely incredible … splash of colour … bright vivid colours …

really beautiful after the winter … I make a spectacular display … it's really good [emphasised].

I.: How do you feel about being dug up?

F.: I feel really scared … there are no roots only a bare base … I feel a bit sick at the thought of being dug up … I have only a brown paper coating … it's a bit yellow … layers taken off.

I.: How do you feel about mother?

F.: I don't feel secure with mother … I don't know why she is digging me up … I have no sense of being taken care of … it's a bit brutal … I don't know where I am going to go … will I grow as well? It's very threatening.

D.: I have a sense of your having been in the ground a long time … of your losing your roots … of feeling a bit forgotten … of not having slabs on top … slabs are like tombstones.

I.: Where do you want to be?

F.: I don't want to be in the garden … I want to be somewhere more open with no garden wall/fence … I want to be in a grassy area … so when I come up I've got a contrast with the colours … I want some space … it would be quite nice to have some trees there … it feels quite safe with some trees there.

T.: There would be really strong tree roots.

F.: Yes … I would like some beech trees … they feel protective but not constricting … I would want some water … quite a large lake … I feel insecure … a bit bare-skinned … no brown paper … I have got to have my head and neck out … I don't want to be too deep underground … I want some air … not too deep in the dark … if it is too deep I start to feel I am suffocating … I can't get my flowers and leaves up … I have a partnership with the soil … as long as I'm not buried too deep … we have a kind of truce.

Q.: You have got a good relationship going! [laughter] What do you do for the summer?

Later F. spoke about some of the issues that had come up for her through the exercise and began by talking about her relationship with her mother:

F.: I am trying to accept the interdependence bit … I have fears about dependency and then I react the other way … I need to accept interdependence without being frightened of it being dependency … I couldn't bear the paving stones … I valued darkness and springing into colour.

X.: [Asks F. to explore] She who was digging you up.
F.: I didn't feel protected … felt exposed … didn't feel safe … didn't know what she was doing … no sense … something precious being transported somewhere nice … the feeling of not being cared for was predominant.
X.: She is not being kind to you in moving?
F.: Not taking care of self.
Q.: Not leaving anything behind.
F.: It felt a destructive thing to be doing … this digging up … not taking care of things … like smashing … don't know why I felt angry.
F.: [Now talks about the house she lived in before her present house] … I had to leave … then I moved into my present house which was not where I wanted to be … I have a lot of anger about having to move … [tape not clear] there is a driven quality about mother … about her driving my father and me that fits in with how I see her.

The above example well illustrates the dreamer's capacity to imaginatively identify with 'being a bulb'. She was able to 'get in touch' with a set of feelings about 'uprootedness' and began to articulate where, as a bulb, she would like to be. Her present feelings of vulnerability became manifest and the theme that emerged for her was the issue of dependence, independence and interdependence, particularly in relation to her parents. The identification with the bulb and the bulb's imagined relationship with the soil became, during the exercise, a lived symbol for the relationship between herself and her mother in particular. Whilst originally, in the dream and its narration, the bulb image had appeared unimportant, through this gestalt identification the bulb symbol had been 'grown' in the dreamer's mind and a range of perceptions and emotions triggered and experienced through participating in the exercise. In fact the bulb symbol was adopted the following week as the first imagework exercise for the group, with powerful results from the identifications experienced.

Such a visual and affective identification by the dreamer/narrator with one or more of the dreamt and narrated symbols is typical of the process encountered in these groups. Another reality is being generated in the group session, as clearly the narrator 'knows' she is not in reality a bulb. Rather she is involved in a ritual evocation of a fantastical reality which she joins through the supportive work and facilitation of the group. Normal reality is suspended in the ritual space and time constructed by the group. The candlelight and softened atmosphere of the meeting

encourages this suspension of reality. The dreamer and the group 'warm up' to this imagined reality. Buried feelings are allowed and encouraged to emerge and are approved by the group. 'Being a bulb' is a ritual transformation of the self, an interior play imaginatively enacted within the group space. She is not really a 'bulb' as she speaks as a 'human bulb' who 'feels a bit sick at the thought of being dug up', and who can again transform herself from the 'growing bulb' into the 'bulb being dug up by her mother' which is clearly a symbol for her relationship with her mother in real life.

This is not a social discourse, a simple conversation with others about moving house and her relationship with her mother. The monologue and occasional dialogue has a different and ritual dimension. Evocation, invocation and identification flow through the spoken words. She starts, 'I am a bulb … I am rather a nice shape … full of nourishment'. Such spoken sentiments articulate a profound metaphorisation and articulation of the self. The imaginative creations represent a spontaneous playing with metaphorical meaning and its possible relationship to normal reality. The choice of the bulb, derived from the dream image, is typically full of almost endless possibility. The bulb is the seed and it is her imagination, encouraged by the group, that develops this remembered image into a kind of mini-archetype and lived metaphor. This development of a lived or root (Turner 1974) metaphor allows the possibility of a transformative experience to be engendered. In this sense it is a ritual process and occasion that allows the evocative development of a symbol in a controlled and managed space. She becomes the bulb which in its changing place becomes her existential predicament of moving house and her unsatisfactory relationship with her mother. Indeed in this presented text we can see whole seasons pass by as in:

> I go into the ground … stay in the ground … through the winter … just in the ground … suddenly it is spring … I really grow … emerge spectacular … really beautiful after the winter.

Transformation then has occurred, feelings evoked and expressed and an imaginative change process facilitated. This text reports another reality which is taken seriously and encouraged by the group. Group members have played a central role in this movement, asking questions, making suggestions and repeating key phrases. The group is a significant part of the communicative context which enables an articulation of satisfactory and emergent meaning.

The second example was a particularly powerful experience for the dreamer. The dream went as follows:

> *I had bought a car … a black one … I think a Ford Escort but I am not sure … I am very pleased with it … it is a good buy and the inside is very spacious … it has pine-clad walls and windows as well … after a while something strange happened about this car … I realised it was a hearse* [a significant transformation from car to hearse takes place here] *a converted hearse … and there is a body in it as well … hidden away in the roof … concealed and at some point it might slide down some kind of ramp … at first I don't recognise this body … it is in formal morning suit with top hat and striped trousers and that kind of stuff …* that part of the dream stops there … and picks up with something more understandable to me in relation to my X. dying *and so it switches to Y. place* as my X. was born there and the ashes were returned there … *in Y. I am at P. castle and I know we have to bury my X. … and there is a salute* you know when they fire the cannons at one o'clock … *that happens and I look over the battlements and there is a red stone church or buildings close by and I know that is T. near where my X. was born and the scene switches there and there is some problem about doing the service for a few hours and meantime I discover there is only the first name on the coffin … there is only the first name on the coffin … I am really upset about that as it could be any such* [first name] *and it isn't and then I wonder what we are doing anyway burying X. as he has to be cremated* and the dream goes onto something completely different and is unconnected and so it ends there.

T. is the dreamer in the ensuing dialogue:

T.: I woke up a bit like when you are a kid and a hearse drives by and it makes you feel superstitious about whether death is coming.
Q.: Who was the body?
T.: It wasn't my X. I think it was my husband because it had a [colour] beard.
F.: You said the hearse was a good buy!
T.: Yes I got that as well … I was certain it was a good buy … he had on the clothes he had on when we got married. [Long silence for thirty seconds.]
F.: That sounds quite confused … you don't quite know where you are.

Q.: Does your husband represent your father?
T.: No … he is I think … God it is complicated … I thought if he represented anything it would be … [she speaks very quietly here].
P.: Has that aspect of you died?
T.: It [that possible interpretation] doesn't resonate.

Here we see a tacking back and forth as possible meaning avenues are offered up for exploration by the group but the dreamer/narrator doesn't necessarily accept them. Rejection occurs when the imaginative idea suggested 'doesn't resonate'. This resonating or not resonating is controlled by the narrator as the only 'facts' in the situation are being conveyed and constructed by the narrator her/himself. S/he therefore controls the production of an acceptable narrative of the self.

F.: Is it significant you are going on a journey?
P.: Were you driving?
T.: It was my car … I don't remember driving.
K.: It feels an excitement about it … it is a gripping time.
P.: With pine cladding inside … [laughter].
T.: It was very blond pine … I suppose it could be 'pining' [sounds as if T. has a sad insight here].
Q.: It was a car with character.
T.: A multifarious car.
Q.: The car was you?
T.: Yes.
D.: You were sure it was a Ford Escort?
T.: Yes I think so. When I got it buying a car was a fairly liberating thing to do … When I missed [my husband] it was partly missing the car … I had to face that.
F.: When he was at home that was the 'death' of him!
I.: It was an Escort?
T.: You are going too fast for me. It was the death of him? … Oh right! … when he came home … [It takes a moment for the dreamer to connect with what was suggested.]
F.: You didn't really miss him? If you were going to be something in the dream which bit would you pick?
T.: I suppose the car.
F.: Not the body.
T.: No … no.
Q.: How do you feel as the car?

T.: Uhm I have a secret … Oh goodness me I am quite a flashy car … quite smart … I cut a good figure you know as cars go.
I.: Fast?
T.: I don't like that one … I don't have a sense of speed … people are in awe of me but I don't really know why that is … I feel very kind of substantial.
F.: What's it like … having a secret?
T.: It's like it's mine … something that belongs to me … it's quite powerful and precious as it belongs to me but it is getting quite heavy … the roof is not very strong … I don't know whether I can keep this secret going … it feels like there is lots of room inside … loads of space … quite bright and light but it is empty.
F.: Where are you going?
T.: Following my nose … I can see lots of different roads and I can go down any one of them.
Q.: Is that body pressing down?
T.: Yes a bit. I am not like a hearse as I haven't declared the body … it's a secret. People don't see me as a hearse … but I know I am. [big sigh] That's had quite a powerful effect … I feel I might be dangerous [emphasised] … it has more to do with what I seem to be and what I am … I am puzzled about that … I don't see myself as a hearse … so it upsets me that people behave as if I am normal.
F.: Do other people see you as a hearse?
T.: They see me as one … they do but I don't … people don't know about the dead body.
P.: How do you feel about this body descending from you?
T.: [sighs] I am pleased it has gone … it's ah … it's the body that makes it a hearse … I don't like to be a hearse [sighs, it is clearly difficult for her].
Q.: You don't have to keep a secret anymore.
T.: It doesn't matter about the secret.
F.: What's going to happen to the body? You have completely got rid of it? … it's gone … you have been carrying it a long time.
I.: Do you want to say anything to the body?
T.: [crying] Yes … I would like to say a little bit … [much sighing/silence]. You have got a beard. [G. acts as a body; puts a black jacket on the body.] I didn't know who you were … I didn't recognise you.

There are long silences and I didn't catch everything, but my notes say that it was about T. not loving him but he loving her; she spoke in a muted way but with no anger; said goodbye to him and let the body

slide away. This was very emotional for her and the onlookers. T. says, 'I felt I shouldn't have got married'.

In this dream narration and accompanying gestalt exercise, the theme of death is powerfully present with the image of a recently dead close relative and the car as a hearse with a dead body in it. The dreamer recognises that in the dream it is her husband who is the dead body in the hearse. A question allows the dreamer to confirm that 'the hearse was a good buy'. The suggestion is made that the dreamer should consider whether the dead person represents some part of herself that has died. The dreamer rejects that subjective avenue. The cue to the 'interpretation' begins with the punning on the word 'pining'. The dreamer says she 'could be pining'. It is unclear as to whether this is pining for herself or a part of her or a 'dead' relationship or an actually dead person. She is invited to pick a part of the dream imagery, to do a gestalt identification with it. She chooses the car image and straightaway recognises that she has a secret and is apparently surprised that she is 'quite a flashy car … quite smart … cut a good figure'. This identification with the car begins to reflect her self-perception and she continues by musing on having a secret in the car. Then, although it was impossible to recognise it from the tape, she, in her imagination, tips the body out of the hearse. At this point the dreamer becomes very upset after having shed the dead body of her husband. In the ensuing dialogue that she makes with the dead body she speaks tearfully and emotionally about lost love and the imbalance of love between them.

In this dream narration and gestalt exercise it is clear that unexpected and embodied emotions were raised for the dreamer and their articulation to the group was significant. In the individual interview the dreamer spoke about this event as follows:

> I would have to look back in time to see when but my sense is … it [the above dreamwork] was important in my detachment from my husband … a process of defining myself almost for the first time in my life otherwise I always have been in a relationship … and I am now already in a process of clarification … of stocktaking … standing back … as to what is me and what is him … and if on my own what is me … what would I do? Who am I? If I was on my own how would I do … it is not clear if I am in a relationship all the time … I'm not sure who is supporting who … when I seem to need to know who I am and what I might be capable of and that suddenly became part of my agenda and that dream and the way I worked on it … it was very powerful … I think it had an energising effect on that process

> and I couldn't ignore any more that my husband was in the hearse and in mourning/morning suit … I could have put it to one side if I hadn't worked on it … but because I had made it public and worked on it and involved others in it … it had consolidated its importance. The importance of that time was making a public declaration that I didn't love my husband. I think that was correct … *the dream gave me a vehicle to say that* … I had said that to myself but not in public.
> X.: Did that influence your life?
> 'I told him eventually.'

This second example particularly shows how emotionally unexpected and indeed emotionally disturbing the contents of a gestalt exercise can be. Although the dreamer had some 'secret' insight into her present feelings for her husband she had not shared them publicly, and this act of definition to others generated change in herself and her relationship with her husband. As she said in the interview, 'it was very powerful … it had an energising effect on that process and I couldn't ignore any more that my husband was in the hearse and in morning/mourning suit'. The dream gave her then a *vehicle to say that* and the pun on the word vehicle is I think unintentional! The 'secret' knowledge of the body, as Bourdieu (1977) uses that notion, is triggered into consciousness by the gestalt exercise and the reflective process on the dream. Whilst the manifest content of the dream is quite clear insofar as the image of her husband is precise, the context of her husband as 'being dead' yet paradoxically dressed as for his marriage brings into play a crucial contradiction of marriage and death in one and the same scenario. The dreamer is almost forced by the dream and the ensuing gestalt exercise to confront the paradoxical imagery and delve into whatever existential meaning they might hold for her. That meaning is her current emotional response to her husband and her view on the original act of marriage itself. Moreover 'being the hearse/car' is an active identification with a dream symbol that confronts her with unexpectedly positive imagery of herself as, 'quite flashy … [cutting] a good figure'. The affirmation of self present in this part of the session is in contrast to the deeply sad and tearful expression of feelings when she is dialoguing (talking) with the 'dead husband'. Also 'being the car' allows her to change the imaginative situation and develop her feeling response as she does. She allows the 'dead body' in the hearse to slip out, and experiences the relief of being unencumbered with it. This imaginative letting go of the image of her dead husband in his marriage suit enables her to dialogue with him and so confront her own present feeling state. Particularly, the gestalt process

allows the dreamer to construct an acceptable narrative of her domestic predicament both to herself and others. This gestalt exercise again illustrates the process of the generation of narrative meaning both to self and others.

The final gestalt example I offer is a form of group gestalt. The dream was a recurrent dream:

> people were actually destroying my luggage that I had piled into a van … I was getting ready to start … I was in the house … I was really furious with the people … I picked up and threw the telephone at them through two windows and a room … the wires got entangled and the house caught fire and was collapsing around me … I got outside … got my luggage onto the van … people were firing … they were shooting at the van … I was trying to shield myself … I run towards another door then suddenly I found myself holding a few months old child … but the baby is able to articulate a whole sentence which I wrote down in the dream but I don't remember it.

In this section I want to show how the group members imaginatively identified with the 'child image' in the dream and then, from that position, gave a response to the dreamer. The dream involved the man trying to start a journey, throwing a telephone, a house catching fire, people shooting at him and holding a few months old baby. X. is the dreamer:

F.: I want to give you a message about that baby … when you were talking about the baby I had a powerful connection about it … it is very hard to say … but I am the baby and I am love and I am open … also take me with you.

G.: The feeling I had was that if I were the baby and you want to desperately protect me … the message is that I am a tough baby and I don't need so much mollycoddling as you think I need.

P.: That is interesting and is in direct contrast to the feeling I had which was 'protect me … nurture me … that is what I need'.

Q.: I have a feeling of peace and strength around the baby … thinking of Christ as a baby asleep in the storm in the boat … as this baby I want to say I feel safe with you … you will look after me.

H.: I feel the same … I know you are already cherishing me and thank you.

J.: You protect the baby instinctively even though bullets are flying … the baby wants to make the changes … the baby wants to come out … baby's message is 'get me out of the closet'.

T.: I catch something like that the baby is saying it doesn't matter that you haven't a particular message as the message is 'trust the wisdom of the child'.
X.: Thank you.
I.: The brightness and sunshine of the child struck me in contrast to the darkness and the fear … like a pool of light in the dark … an interesting symbol to meditate on.
Y.: It is something to do with a new beginning … a new opportunity … amidst all the chaos is the seed.
X.: That is nice as I feel just absolute chaos and turmoil inside of me … nice thought that there is a still focused part.
F.: I feel it is not just an ordinary baby but one with a voice with skills way beyond its years … a very special quality.
O.: This may be facetious … now you have no phone there is no-one to intrude … phones are a terrible thing and now you can relate without the phone interrupting.
X.: That is an interesting thought … thank you very much everyone … that is very helpful as the child is the one thing I couldn't understand as it was an absolute puzzle and it does fit in with what I need to do in my life.

This exercise involved each group member giving the dreamer the message that they imagined the child would have given and, because of the emphasis on members' imaginative experience, it can be viewed as a form of spontaneous imagework. As can be seen, the messages given are contradictory. Interestingly a male member says 'I am a tough baby and I don't need so much mollycoddling as you think', whereas female members stress the nurturing and caring needs of the baby. The result of this exercise is best expressed in the dreamer's own words later in the individual interview:

> It was about nurturing the child in me … maybe about mourning my lost childhood and nurturing the child in me … I have been doing transactional analysis recently … I easily slip over into either my frightened child or angry parent in terms of my emotional reactions … hence this conflict as to what I do with my needy child … this has undone part of the value of this dreamwork through my needing to nurture this child and then I feel one of my problems is that I get into this needy child syndrome … maybe I am in touch too much … the dream made me feel I was okay … a lot of my adult life has been about proving myself and getting

> acceptance such as by qualifications and travelling and living abroad and becoming an X … you can be accepted as a child … accepted as being rather than as doing … that insight is important and I bring it with me into this situation … for instance working on the dream allowed me to relax and to say to myself get on with what I was doing … it legitimised and authenticated my choices … the dream was a milestone in terms of my life … rather than something coming out of it … my life was taking shape … I was doing things with my life … I got a lot of insight from the dream and the work gave me an insight and took away the fear and gave me a feeling of acceptance.

The interview statement is clear as to the value of 'working' on the dream and also the child image. The dreamer identifies the 'child' image with his lost intuitive self, that he has now made sacrifices for in order to reclaim this part of himself and so seek 'wholeness'. Overall the gestalt exercises analysed here allow the dreamer, with facilitation, to identify with the dream symbol and experience in the 'here and now' the potential multiple referents of that symbol. How much there is invention and projection onto the symbol, particularly in the group gestalt case, remains an open question. However, the transcripts do show the creation of meaning in action. The process of association and identification of meaning with the imaginative and metaphorical symbolism is the crux of dream and imagework. Gestalt practices are particularly effective at evoking buried insights and emotions of the self and in so doing leading to new formulations, and anticipations of resolutions of core human dilemmas. Moreover during gestalt exercises in dreamwork, the sense of self is expanded to include an imaginative identification with all parts of the dream. In the exercises the dreamer/narrator 'acts as if' they are the dreamt symbol. This reformulation of the self can be powerful in reshaping the boundaries of consciousness. Moreover, for the researcher groupworker these examples open up the idea of studying the 'becoming self' and not just an attitudinal snapshot given by a question and answer interview process.

Gestalt then is a technique of 'self-construction' as Jedrej and Shaw (1992: 14), drawing on Foucault's concept, observe in their review of anthropological studies of the cultural role and construction of the social meaning of dream use in contemporary and traditional African societies. Gestalt, and the other experiential techniques presented in this book, allow a playing with the self through which the personal and cultural identity of the narrator is invented, rehearsed and sometimes affirmed

and legitimised through the group process. This invention of self occurs through the interplay of both the ontological and cultural aspects of the self. Dreams manifest the available ontology of the self in a multitude of colourful symbolic forms which are already potentially charged with implicit and embodied personal and cultural meanings. These symbolic forms suggest original pathways towards identity construction previously unknown by the person. The car as we saw becomes a hearse, an escort, and also a 'good figure' through which the dreamer/narrator can explore hidden meanings using the cultural symbolism of cars in modern society. The remembered and dreamt metaphor becomes a living metaphor for the narrator and for the group. The construction of meaning is fused with the performance of social action. Meaning, social action and power intersect, as Jedrej and Shaw argue (1992: 8). Moreover the self is acted upon by the group as well as in the private fantasy world of the individual. Such a re-identification of the self is not without personal and even cultural consequences. In particular the group gestalt exercise on the 'baby' symbol, which has just been described, allowed the entire group to imaginatively identify with the dreamt and narrated images. In this sense gestalt exercises involve the transformation of a remembered visual image into a metaphorical summary of core attributes of the self or, as I have defined this result, into a 'mini-archetype'. Such a process also would occur using psychodrama as a process.

Further imagework practices

I have already suggested that the preceding gestalt exercises can be seen as a form of imagework as they focus on directed imagework activities. In this section I will describe some spontaneous imagework activities that grew out of the dreamwork encounter. These imagework exercises were open-ended and lacked a structure excepting the metaphorical theme that had arisen during the group process and the consideration of participants' dream imagery.

Imagework exercises that I led in these groups were based on motifs or images that developed spontaneously from group members' dreams. Such examples of imagework are a member's 'being a plant bulb' in their imagination, another 'being a bird' and finally 'going through a door' in the mind. In the last case two group members had coincidentally dreamt of not going through a door during a recent dream. I will now show by means of an example the impact and value of using this approach as a research as well as a personal growth technique. In the example the imagework exercise was based on the dream of a member which she had

worked on during the session. In the dream she had dreamt of a vast beautiful brown bird with a very large wingspan. During the dream sequence the bird had become split into two layers and one half had flown off. This had been experienced as a powerful dream image, both by the group and by the dreamer. Two weeks later another group member dreamt about her son, and about her being about to fly off with him, using some lively leather wings. The initial discussion and sharing of recent dreams that week seemed to include lots of references to travelling. Another mentioned that all her recent dreams had been about travelling. We decided then to do an imagework exercise to explore this theme of travel in the group. I led this imagework exercise. Following a relaxation exercise, I suggested that members could become any bird they liked and then I followed on with a set of spontaneous travel instructions with long intervals in between my speaking in order to allow members to go where they wished. Probably the imaginative experience lasted about twenty minutes in total and on this occasion had not been prepared, but had developed 'spontaneously' out of the themes and imagery around in the group. The range of experiences people have during these exercises is very wide. One member became an owl and couldn't get going until they had found (imagined) a puffin to go with; another was a bird in the Andes mountain range; another was a swallow and flew off to Capri; another a soft brown bird sitting in a tree; another a brown gull going to Portugal; another became a Canadian goose and migrated down the west coast of the United States of America.

The example I will now consider involves another member who in this fantasy journey became a parakeet bird and flew over the jungle. The following is their description of their imagework experience transcribed from a tape recording of the session following the fantasy exercise. The member had been somewhat disconcerted by their experience and decided to share it at the end of the actual exercise:

> Basically I was a parakeet … I lived in a garden in Sydney, Australia … together with a great many of my family … and I was flying in response to instructions to go a long distance … I flew to the coast … a tropical region and then it was a bit drastic … I disintegrated and my integrity could not be retained … and I became … I spread out as bits and pieces of head, feathers, claw etc. over a jungle and I became a jungle and then of course I could not come back and at that point I decided I could not cope with this and I went quite deep inside and surfaced again later … I took all that home with me and by the time I had finished looking at it I had become happy

> being a jungle and felt very much at home as that there … but I was totally unable to follow instructions … I was a disobedient bird!

The member concerned said that she had 'got a lot out of' the exercise but had been disturbed by the experience. Another member suggested to the first member that she had found 'her place' and the first member thoughtfully said 'yes'. That was the extent of the disclosure during that session. Several months later I interviewed her. In the intervening period the member had shared to the group that she had decided to finish her marriage and had negotiated a separation from her husband. She had become much more open and expressive in the group and according to herself she was living her life much more authentically in general. The following quote is from her description and reflection on the exercise several months later in the interview.

I ask this member about how she had understood this guided fantasy and she said, 'I have arrived in the jungle and I am very pleased to be here and it is just amazing!' I asked her about the connection she now made between herself and the jungle image and, after describing how horrendous the experience had been, she said:

> I exploded … I wiped myself out but it was meant to be like that … [and going on she spoke about the] jungle entity itself … all sorts of different components … all growing and moving … nurturing each other … tangled … full of unseen but not necessarily dangerous things … but it was an exciting environment … it was full of sound and potential … full of growth … it was precarious possibly but I don't myself feel precarious.

I asked if that description of the jungle reflected how she now felt about her life and she emphatically said, 'yes', and that she felt 'she had shed a lump of concrete and had great energy levels now'. This sequence shows that whilst, in this example, the image sequence experienced had been frightening at the time, the dreamer had reflected upon it and had come to see how the experience of being suddenly transformed from a small bird in a family of birds into a jungle represented metaphorically her own transformation from being married for many years into being in a separated state. The frightening image of the jungle had become a very positive image for her. The example from this piece of imagework shows imaginatively the time and nature of a transition in the person's social state, personal identity, capacity to change and ability to conceptualise the self. I discuss the ethics of using imagework as a research methodology, referring to the imagework example above, in Chapter 7.

Meditation and dream re-entry

A meditative technique was only used once in the groupwork process. This involved a relaxation exercise, the opportunity to choose a previous 'good' experience in life, and finally the introduction of this developed meditative state into a recent dream experience. This type of exercise can also be seen as a form of imagework. The meditation went as follows:

> Go into your inner space … relax your body and be open … let your body relax … become aware of the breath … become aware of preoccupations and as you breathe think how you want to deal with the preoccupations … breathe them out … spend two to three minutes letting go of those preoccupations … go back to a time in life when you felt very centred and very true to yourself … try to recall in detail what is going on in your life … what is happening? … what are you doing? … how are you behaving? … how does it feel to be behaving in this way? … being really true to yourself … what image or sound or colour can you associate with being centred? … let one come to you … in your imagination take yourself into a dream that you have talked about tonight … what does that dream want of you? … how does it reveal your true self? … come back to an awareness of the group with the awareness you have found.

Group members experienced this meditation, led by my colleague, as very positive and commented as such in the individual interviews. The following are two examples of the experiences people reported after this meditation:

> I remembered being on a marathon course in Amsterdam … felt very energised at 4.00 in the morning and everyone was flagging and I got everyone dancing and I was dressed in golden white clothes and I took this image into the dream and I took the golden me into the dream and took the me that was in the dream and was the rejected one and I took the other two and we made a circle around her and she was in the middle and she was brown and S. was blue and the party girl was there and she was red and I was golden … then I brought the other people from the party in and they made two circles round us outside and then everybody put one hand on the person in front and one hand on the person on the side of them and it was like a healing web … I feel quite choked about the woman being in the middle.

This example of a narrated dream re-entry relates to a 'jealousy' dream in which the dreamer sees her male partner intimately dancing with another woman (p.73). The meditation exercise involves a dream re-entry stage in which the 'good' sense of self evoked by the meditation is 'taken into' the dream. This 'good' sense of herself is represented by her as being dressed in 'golden white clothes'. As this 'other' self the dreamer is able to 'redraw' the dream imagery and reach a more acceptable conclusion to what we saw had been a very distressing event. The dreamer draws two circles of people around the rejected dreamer. All the people in the circles touch each other making for the dreamer a kind of 'healing web'. This 'healing web' probably refers to a reconfiguration of emotion in herself in relation to her previous emotional experience of the dream imagery. She can be seen as regaining power in the imaginative situation by redrawing and completing the sequence of imagery in a way more acceptable to herself.

The next example of feedback from the meditative exercise refers to the following dream and its immediate discussion. X. is the dreamer:

X.: I was on an escalator … I was with my flatmate and I was very angry with her … there were things that I really had wanted to say to her for a long time and she was just saying yes, yes and that is all.
I.: What things exactly?
X.: Things like I am not putting up with this any more … I have had enough of it and I am moving out and I am not just here for your defensive and aggressive statements … she was wearing a hat.
I.: Is that how you were feeling?
X.: It was … we were very good friends and we moved in together … but this was not a good idea … I have lots of annoying habits … it is better now but still there are irritating aspects.

Her feedback from the meditation and dream re-entry was as follows:

> It feels really good [about the meditation and centring image] … I was on the escalator in bathing shorts and it was hot and I felt so free … saying I am free and I can do what I want … I haven't thought back to that time and I feel really good to be that sort of person.

In the individual interview the dreamer referred to this experience in the following way:

> In the dream about my flatmate on the escalator … it was about getting anger off my chest … it was a really good experience to have worked on in the meditation … in the meditation you could do what you really wanted … in the dream I then felt fantastic as I realised I didn't have to take on all this stuff … the dream reflected real life … the dreamwork really affected my behaviour as I changed my behaviour … I found I was being too accommodating to avoid conflict with my housemate … it was really good … in the meditation you had to take out a word and I took out 'free' and I realised I had not had this … realised I could change … I felt empowered to change.

The above example shows well the change effect of the meditative process and dream re-entry and subsequent discussion. The dreamwork during the session evoked a connection for the dreamer between the dream imagery and her present anger and frustration with her flatmate. The meditation evokes a strong self-perception that allows her to feel in control of the situation through decision and anticipated future action. The dreamer describes this process later as 'feeling empowered'. She feels she has gained power within her domestic situation through the whole dreamwork process. Buried feelings have been actively related to her perception of her relationship with her flatmate, and at the same time her manner of coping with her present situation reflects her understanding of her personality patterns, and their strengths and weaknesses. Again, the use of such meditative techniques by a researcher groupworker can plumb the implicit and emerging aspects of self, rather than aspects of the well-known self!

The methods described in this chapter show a range of applications of creative action-based groupwork techniques derived often from the humanistic groupwork tradition. They range from the less to the more complicated. Discussion and personal contextualisation is the articulation of a straightforward process. The use of some of the techniques of gestalt and psychodrama, as outlined in this chapter, do not need lengthy training, but rather a willingness to experiment within a structured and safe group environment. Artwork (described earlier), meditation and imagework can be used sensitively, again without extensive training. Overall these methods can, as shown, evoke 'other realities' from the imagery generated and these 'other realities' present emotionally-rich and metaphorically expressive data in visual and cognitive forms which might otherwise be inaccessible to qualitative researchers.

Chapter 6

Charting ethnographic dreaming

> It is nearly dark, we should stop; walking is becoming too difficult and dangerous. We must find shelter and sit down while we think what we should do. I do not know what has happened, how I have brought us to this place. It is dark, very dark. I can see a few stars, the numbers are increasing, there are thousands, millions. Worlds and worlds just out of reach. I am very afraid but at the same time I cannot help but wonder at this sight. This ink-black sky, the worlds beyond our world, time beyond our time. Are you afraid? You seem very calm and still. I will not speak out loud of the sounds I hear, the fears that grip me, the guilt I feel. You are quiet but I can sense your own fear. I can say nothing – I can only pray in silence. I do not like the noises of the night. I cannot say this to you.[2]

In this chapter I want to offer the beginning of a charting model of how one can use one's own dream imagery as a part of one's research methodology. The focus on this use of dream imagery will be on its possible value as a source of inspiration, suggestion, hypothesis and problem-solving for researchers in the social sciences field. The chapter will illustrate the potential use of dream imagery with reference to a sequence of dream imagery I experienced during fieldwork and how I subsequently related such imagery to my anthropological project. I will propose a charting model for ethnographic dreamwork.

Dreamwork case-study

This case-study seeks to explore the relationship between dream imagery and the production of an ethnographic text. I shall present a sequence of my dream imagery whilst engaged in ethnographic work, together with the insights derived from that imagery. I will endeavour to show

how these insights are connected to the results of my research project and to certain aspects of the social and therapeutic world of the community. I kept a dream diary which I integrated into my fieldwork diary, whilst Seremetakis (1989) kept separate diaries for her dreams and her fieldwork whilst doing ethnography in Inner Mani, Greece. My hypothesis is that dream imagery is a relevant source of data and that 'imaginal thinking' (Kracke 1987b:52), as discussed earlier, in the form of myth, dream and art can be a valid form of knowledge.

The community I studied was a therapeutic community for disturbed adolescents in Britain (Edgar 1990). The community consisted of twenty staff and approximately fifty residents. Residents came from all parts of Britain. Almost all were in the care of local authority social service departments and most had previously been in other forms of residential care, such as children's homes. Many residents were of above average intelligence and all were defined as being delinquent or socially disturbed. The community defined itself as a therapeutic community and was modelled on principles set out by Bettelheim (1974), Jones (1968) and Kennard (1983). Central to these principles were both an emphasis on psychodynamic theory, and the use of social processes as therapeutic constructs such as democratisation, permissiveness, reality-confrontation and communalism (Rapoport 1960). Small and large encounter groups were a central feature of the community.

I lived in the community for one term in 1981 and subsequently wrote an anthropological thesis specifically analysing the community's use of myth, ritual and symbol in the construction of the therapeutic milieu of the community. I was alert to the potential value of dream imagery as being indicative or suggestive of the meaning of external sense data through having kept a dream diary on and off for many years and having studied Jungian psychoanalytical theory in the past. Typically I was orientated to viewing dream imagery as providing possible evidence of 'emergent possibilities' (Tedlock 1987: 5).

However, what is important is the impact of dream imagery on the dreamer, in this case an ethnographer, and the congruence and synchronicity of at least parts of the imagery with central preoccupations of the community in question. With these provisos I will embark on a description of the dreams, seven in all, and indicate the ideas I derived from a consideration of them. Parts of the dreams remain unclear to me and I shan't be exhaustive in my conjectures.

The first dream (18 May 1981) occurred two weeks before going to the community. I dreamt,

> I was in France … going up a tower or lighthouse … I was unsure about going up this tower and about the weather and what kind of day it was … I reached the top and found it was an island with a community on it and a small town there … I went into the town … I wanted some coffee but had little money … I went back to the lighthouse … water was coming into the lighthouse … I met a young man who invited me to his house.

Apart from the anxiety and uncertainty that the dream displays about my going to the community, this dream alerted me to the notion that the community was in some way foreign and an island.

The separateness of the community was an important aspect both with regard to the functioning and identity of the community and to my subsequent involvement and study of it. Geographically and socially the community was quite separate from the rest of the community and this contributed to its distinctive identity. The community was situated in a large Georgian country house three miles from a town. Staff and residents lived on the estate. Interaction between residents and the wider community was highly controlled and normally residents only went into town in groups with staff. They would have to receive special permission to go alone. There were no social or sporting arrangements for residents with the local community. Residents lived in the community either for most of the year or for all of it, depending on the availability of their external familial situation. The social separateness of the community was sustained most clearly in its daily life with the inversion of key social norms through the adoption of a therapeutic community philosophy. An example of this would be the opportunity for residents to say anything they wished to any staff member, resulting in frequent verbal abuse (permissiveness: Rapoport 1960). However, this was balanced by the expectation of residents and staff to openly confront residents with how their behaviour was perceived by others in the community (reality-confrontation: Rapoport 1960). Insulation from outside forces was of course not total, but did provide the base on which the distinct identity of the community and the sense of specialness experienced by residents was founded (Edgar 1990). My dream alerted me to the potential foreignness of the community, particularly as I had made no prior study of therapeutic community theory and in that sense was unprepared for the novel experience that living for a time in such a community was to prove. The possible significance of dreams in the initial stages of fieldwork has been attested by Anderson (1971), Kracke (1987a: 70–1) and Hunt

(1989: 34–5). Whilst Anderson brilliantly analyses the adaptive processes of dreaming during the experience of culture shock and change, Kracke and Hunt refer to the disorientating effects of culture shock in cross-cultural study, citing dream imagery containing themes of disorientation, anxiety and bewilderment. Moreover, Goulet (1994a: 22–3) writes of how he began to dream and understand his dreams within the cultural idiom of Guajiro (South American Indian) society. He even realises through participating in the daily morning dream discussions that he should cut off his beard if he does not want to be 'blamed' the next time a sheep loses hair and dies. In Guajiro dream theory:

> white men are represented as sheep. It appeared to me [from listening to their dreams of him having a shaven face] that family members and neighbours were saying: 'Either you or your counterpart in the animal world will lose hair. If you insist on keeping your facial hair and an animal dies, you will be responsible for that animal's death'.
> (Goulet 1994a: 23)

Goulet knew:

> enough about the allocation of responsibility for occurrences of misfortune in small-scale societies to appreciate that it was just a matter of time before an animal in the locality would become sick, lose hair and die, making me liable to accusations from the owner.
> (Goulet 1994a: 23)

So he shaved and so showed the community that he was 'prepared to take accounts of dreams seriously and to act upon them as a *reasonable person*' (Goulet 1994a: 23). Goulet and Young (1994: 313–14) suggest that the 'ethnographic record shows that when participation in the society of others is maximised, fieldworkers have experiences in dreams and visions that reflect their absorption of the local realities'. Conversely, Tedlock (1991: 166–7) correlated Malinowski's lack of interest and respect for the Trobianders' dream interests, as expressed in his diary, with his apparent lack of general respect for their culture. Also, Tedlock points out that Malinowski's apparent inability to dream himself of the Trobiander Island people showed a limited ability to emotionally participate in the society.

The second dream (1 June 1981) occurred on my first night at the community, and, combined with the circumstances of the dream, was very vivid. I dreamt of:

> A nuclear explosion twenty miles away towards a nearby large town … I ran out of the main community building with the Director and I lay down close to him … I privately prayed and considered running behind a tree … I speculated on the radiation damage being done to myself by the nuclear explosion … then the shock waves from the explosion reached me.

At this point I woke to find a huge thunderstorm happening outside, in 'reality'.

Next day I found out that many residents had been woken by the storm and had spent time watching it. Reflecting on this conjunction of storms I felt that my experience in the community was to be a 'tremendum' in the sense that, for me at least, great and deep change would happen. When I reflect on the many outcomes to date of my involvement in that community I can affirm that perception as accurate.

The other inclination I gained from reflecting on that dream was the beginning of an awareness of the importance of the Director to me. He was a friend of the course leader at Newcastle Polytechnic where I had just been appointed and he had been presented to me by that friend as a charismatic leader. My first impressions of him the day before had confirmed my impressions of a powerful person with strong and often iconoclastic opinions. The dream presented a picture of my closeness to him at a time of great threat. My subsequent relationship with him was crucial both for my stay in the community and for the eventual development of my thesis. I quickly developed both an admiration and an awe of him due to his evident powerful ability to work with residents and dominate the staff group, the latter not without some conflict. I listened most carefully to his words, his metaphors and his use of emotions in the daily community meetings. He clearly dominated the community and was the most frequent and powerful speaker in the community meetings. Also in his writing, he clearly expressed his belief, called by him 'focal leadership', in the importance of the charismatic leader as being a central figure for the adolescent group to work through their parental authority transference. I have often thought of the psychological nature of my own transference upon this man. In some ways my resulting Master's thesis, with hindsight, was primarily about his power and influence in the community, through his control of the social identity of the community and in particular his definition of therapy and what was to be considered as therapeutic in the community. In meetings he would often define which residents were progressing well and which weren't and which relationships between residents were positive. In such

ways he was able to control residents' and to some extent the staff's own definition of themselves. He had considerable rational-legal authority in many areas of the community's life, as in appointments of staff and entry/exit of residents.

As I detached from the community I became aware of the contingency of his power and his psychodynamic interpretations. What at the time felt akin to revelation would become in time opinion, and yet the memory of that power was crucial to understanding his influence on staff and residents.

The third dream concerned a male applicant for a place in the community. Coincidentally, I had been the social worker of this fifteen-year-old boy in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK for the two years preceding his application. I had worked with the problem between the boy and his stepfather until the level of animosity and actual violence led to the boy's reception into Social Services care. Almost straight after finishing my job as a social worker I started my fieldwork stay in the therapeutic community. The boy was by this time placed in an assessment and reception centre where his future was being considered. The dream occurred about ten days before his interview with the community. I knew that an application for him to come to this community was possible but at the time of the dream was neither aware of the interview date nor had I been consciously thinking about this particular ex-client. The dream portrayed:

> *The boy was stuck in a spaceship circling the earth seventy-two miles up in space … the boy drops a message to earth which lands at my feet … I go to a nearby Royal Air Force base which sends up a plane to rescue him.*

This dream speaks both of the affinity that I had with this boy and of the boy's predicament. What I didn't know at the time was that the boy had in reality been languishing and stagnating in the reception centre and, as so often is the case, he had been increasingly becoming involved in delinquent activities due no doubt in part to the delinquent peer group influence.

This dream had a consequence in that I spoke about it to some staff and residents, and because I had been this boy's previous social worker, a status reinforced by the dream image, I was invited to his interview. Such an invitation was exceptional as the admission interview for this community was regarded with great importance and normally all categories of short-term visitors would be excluded from the interview.

So I attended the interview and in the end the boy was admitted. He stayed there for nearly two years.

This dream did not exactly lead to concept formation in my resulting thesis. However, it impressed upon me the need of many adolescents for therapeutic opportunities such as this community offered, in contra-distinction to the regimes that many children and adolescents experience as being 'in care'. Personally it also linked my previous work as a social worker with my study of the community. The coincidence of my different roles for this boy were also highlighted by the dream. I had been both his social worker and also involved in his transition into the community, and this combination seemed peculiarly well expressed in the dream image that I have recounted.

The fourth dream (4 August 1981) also spoke of coincidence. I dreamt:

> *that one of the female residents was climbing up with me and my family above a seaside Roman fort … it was too steep there and she was knocked down by a boulder and fell into murky water … I tried to save her … I thought I had caught hold of her but found it was only a pillow and she drowned.*

The very next day the daily community meeting, which was an hour long encounter group with all the members of the community present, was concerned with the fact that during the night someone had thrown a cardboard box into this same girl's room and she had burst out screaming and woken the whole house up. What struck me about this dream was the possible synchronicity of the internal dream image and the external social situation. Obviously there are differences too, but the internal and external situations contain the same person or their image, a fearful situation for that person and either an object (the cardboard box) or a person (the girl) being propelled through the air. Jung's theory of synchronicity is expressed in several of his writings and he describes it here as:

> synchronicity, a concept that formulates a point of view diametrically opposed to that of causality. Since the latter is a merely statistical truth and not absolute, it is a sort of working hypothesis of how events evolve out of one another, whereas synchronicity takes the coincidence of events in space and time as meaning something more than mere chance, namely, a peculiar interdependence of objective events among themselves as well as with the subjective (psychic) states of the observer or observers.
>
> (Jung 1951: xxiv)

This dream, like the two before, made me feel closely related to both the conscious and unconscious life of the community at that time. A further relationship can be suggested between the concept of synchronicity as being helpful in indicating a different order of coincidence, and a mode of therapeutic interpretation used in the community. The community had a basic Freudian orientation. However, the community did not analyse residents' or staff's dreams but did seek to make meaningful links out of disparate experiences. Elsewhere I have described the therapeutic stages anticipated for the residents (1990). In the fourth stage which I have described as 'understanding' I suggest that:

> There was an assumption that each person's experience was significant for everyone else in that people share similar emotions and mentalities. Residents' ability to empathise with each other was developed in this way and links were sought between seemingly disparate events such as the theft of clothes and residents' fear of the loss of senior residents at the end of the year.
>
> (Edgar 1990: 48)

Perhaps there is a link between the suggested synchronicity of my dreaming and community events, and the above mode of interpretation. The Director himself was aware that the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious life of the community was unusually close.

The following three dreams occurred after I had left the community. I dreamt vividly about the community for many nights. I only recollected the one image (fifth dream), '*that of taking a table to the community from the East End of London*'. The notion of the table had particular significance both for the community and for my experience of that community. The dining tables themselves had been specially chosen and made apparently by the only firm in the UK that made tables with thick oak table tops with an adzed surface. However, whilst these tables were impressive and seemed to be valued by residents in the way that residents protected the tables from cup markings, the tables personified a key element in the therapeutic structure of the community. I have described this aspect of the community's therapy as the 'myth of symbolic compensation' (1990: 53). This mythogenesis was:

> the continual assertion by the Director that the whole physical environment of the community was imbued with therapeutic meaning for the resident. For example the kitchen/dining room area was described by the Director as replicating, at a symbolic level,

> the good feeding experience that the fortunate infant experiences with its mother. Such replication was achieved through the attention given to the possible meaning for the disturbed adolescent of each and every object and decoration in that environment.
>
> (Edgar 1990: 53)

The tables were especially clear examples of this mythogenesis and were used by the Director, when talking to visitors, as evidence of the special environment of this community. Moreover the layout of the tables was considered important in that the pattern was like a squared 'S' shape to assist in continually mixing residents up and preventing small group ownership of particular tables. Just next to these tables was the 'buttery' which was the only source of refreshment for both staff and residents outside mealtimes. So the 'table' was important in a number of different ways to the community. What was located on the table was also very important not just for nourishment of body. I have already referred to the 'myth of symbolic compensation'. Tables were also key objects in the regular community feasts. Feasts were one kind of calendrical ceremony that I have described (1990: 53) as being crucial in the cultural creation and identity of the community.

The above brief analysis of the symbolic usage of 'tables' in the community is important in attempting to understand my dream image of 'taking a table' to the community once I had left. At the time of the dream image I had not begun my subsequent analysis of the community. The way I 'interpreted' the dream at that time made me aware that I had something to offer the community, although I did not know what that then was. I can now see that my Master's thesis was a description of that community at that time. The idea of my 'laying out', as on a table, those symbols for public view seems to me now to fit well with the dream image.

The sixth dream occurred three or more months after I had left the community and just prior to my revisiting it. I had written an initial report on my perceptions of the community and at the time of the dream I was unaware of how favourable a reception my report would receive. Of the actual dream all I was able to recall was meeting the Director and a bright sun shining at our meeting. When, a little while later, I met the Director I well remember our meeting because after he had read my report the Director said how well I had understood the community. His saying this triggered a profound mental image that I recall as being like seeing a 'golden well of images and symbols flowing through it'. Simultaneously I felt this image of a golden well seemed to represent

the creative source of the dynamism of that community and was in some way linked to the Director's charismatic leadership.

I resolved to attempt to describe and analyse this creative use of symbolism. Subsequently I chose social anthropology as a disciplinary base for this study, because of its partial specialisation in the study of small-scale societies, using participant observation methods. Moreover social anthropology particularly studies the conscious and unconscious use of public symbolism and ritual practice. I felt that this community resembled an almost pre-industrialised Third World society through its geographical isolation linked to its inversion of certain social norms. I was impressed by its cultural creativity, for instance, in its particular calendrical structuring of time. The community had developed its own forms of celebration for Christmas and other seasonal events as well as developing its own 'special' celebrations such as the end of term summer feasts. The origins then of my initiation into anthropology and into writing a Master's thesis, that would attempt to analyse the social constitution of a specialised world of therapeutic symbols, I can trace to my experience of the above mental image which in turn was pre-indicated by that part of the sixth dream that I can recall.

The final dream (24 August 1982) occurred at a time when I was negotiating with the community to undertake a further one year period of study of the community. This proposal came to nothing finally due to the Director's departure from the community. The dream contained images of difficulty in reaching the community by train and that my ticket was not valid due to a strike. Then the Director and I easily walked halfway up a hill. We then went into a Green Dragon pub, after which the ascent up the hill either stopped or became more difficult again. The dream indicated or reflected the more problematic engagement that I had with the community at that time as well as representing the continuously friendly and supportive relationship that I had with the Director. I can only begin to speculate on possible understandings of the 'Green Dragon' image.

In the third part of this chapter Table 6.1 presents a charting approach with which to think through the concept of 'ethnographic dreaming'.

Overall the table aims to chart the correspondences between the key dream imagery and four other dimensions. The table is composed of five columns and seven dream analyses, summarised from the preceding dream reports and discussion presented in this chapter. Column three represents the key dream images, as perceived by myself. Column one relates the dream imagery to my explicitly or implicitly felt relationship issues at that time. For instance the first dream is related to my concern with

Table 6.1 Charting model of ethnographic dreaming

Dream relationships	*Dreamt physical qualities*	*Dream imagery*	*Time column*	*Dream analysis*
1 Relationship with strangers	distance	lighthouse island	pre-fieldwork	reality orientation
2 Relationship and security	energy movement need for safety	nuclear explosion Director	fieldwork	reality catalysts
3 Relationship and rescue work	warmth movement	spaceship message Royal Air Force	fieldwork	reality linkages
4 Relationship and supportive contact	gravity	climbing drowning	fieldwork	reality linkages
5 Relationship and reciprocity	space movement	table gift	post-fieldwork	reality sensitisers
6 Relationship and power and approval	light	Director	post-fieldwork	reality catalysts and prompts
7 Relationship and barriers	gravity movement resistance emotional distance	train journey barrier pub uphill journey	post-fieldwork	reality blocks

foreignness and strangers; the second dream shows my then preoccupation with security and bonding with my key contacts in the field of the community. The final dream illustrates how difficulties and barriers to my future research involvement with the community had emerged but had not entirely blocked my relationship with the Director of the community.

The table also presents in column two the dreamt 'physical qualities' and can be used to show how the physical world represented the social world of the community, or at least my experience and perception of it. Space, movement, energy and gravity are key physical qualities that metaphorically represented, in my emic interpretation, human emotion and social interaction. I considered that the sunlight in the sixth dream seemed to represent insight. Likewise I thought physical space could represent emotional distance (seventh dream) or the need for safety (second dream).

Column four represents the time dimension of the fieldwork; that is the three phases of the fieldwork: pre, during and post. Column five represents the possible utility of the dream imagery in formulating links between the ethnographic process and the observed and experienced reality. Hence I experienced the first dream of a foreign island as orientating myself to an approaching or emerging reality. The second and sixth dream had catalytic effects on my consciousness that prompted me to embark on new ventures in relation to my study of the community, and indeed to my subsequent academic development as an anthropologist. The third dream linked my experience of the community to the hitherto separate reality of 'being' a social worker prior to my going to the community. The fourth dream facilitated my reflection on the issue of synchronicity and the integration and dynamic relationship between the inner and outer aspects of community life. The fifth dream sensitised me to the issue of reciprocity between myself and the community. The relationship themes that I am articulating did not, of course, emerge at once following the various dreams, rather they emerged in my consciousness over some subsequent period of time.

Conclusion

Overall I would contend that these dream images were good for me to 'think with' and orientated me to the emerging field of relationships and social structures that I was engaging with in the various phases of my fieldwork and subsequent analysis. Valuing dream imagery is also congruent with a post-modern and reflexive stance towards the

anthropological enterprise. 'All ethnographers are positioned subjects', as Hastrup (1992: 119) observes, and dream imagery can illuminate the personal, cultural and structural features of such a positioned stance.

So, I argue paying attention to dream imagery is useful as a way of 'catching' emergent realities that are in some sense 'waiting in the wings'. The dream represents implicit knowledge that can prove informative during the process of ethnography.

As I have commented earlier, anthropologists need to study and try to understand their own consciousness, including their dreams, to understand the consciousnesses of others, and the dream is a part of that self-consciousness waiting to be understood. Erich Fromm (1955) once described dreams as unopened letters to oneself! This book hopes to facilitate the opening of such letters as part of the reflexive project in qualitative social science research. The chart in this chapter can be used and adapted as one way of working with one's own inner imagery in the interests of a broader and more profound study of any human situation.

Chapter 7

Ethical and practice issues

> How much time has passed? What shall we do when it is light? No-one knows where we are. The night is terrifying – and beautiful. Can you hear a noise, not a night noise – what is it? Something is moving nearby, keep very still.
>
> We did not wait till the morning. We were found, rescued, returned. Who was he – shall we ever know?[2]

Clearly the use of the different kinds of the imagework method require familiarity with their use and skill in their application, though arguably a researcher could observe an imagework practitioner using such a method, rather than using it him/herself. The concern with careful use is important as such a method can reveal latent feelings and unrealised intuitions that have often only been partially made conscious or possibly even repressed.

It is possible to consider the ethical issues surrounding image and dreamwork according to the different *fields* of imagework that I have presented and described. *Introductory imagework* really has no special ethical issues in that the researcher solely asks for an image instead of a concept as in 'how do you picture this situation?' as opposed to 'how do you feel about this?' or 'what do think about this?'. However, specific training programmes in these hitherto 'therapeutic' methods do now exist.[4] Moreover, introductory imagework is not difficult to use. A couple of training sessions with colleagues and a facilitator should suffice.

With *memory imagework* issues may arise as to possibly difficult emotional memories and even as to whether such memories are correct or not. I will shortly deal with the issue of emotionally difficult memories. I think social science researchers may easily discount the value of these methods out of fear of triggering uncontrollable inner experiences;

however, my experience of facilitating dozens of groups, often including large student groups, is that almost everyone has well-developed defences against uncontrollable inner stress and indeed mostly participants either report considerable and sometimes great benefit from these exercises, or a proportion just don't or can't participate. I have run a large number of basic 'life map' exercises, before I started adapting these exercises for social research, in which participants remember their lives before making pictures of key remembered events and then talking of their journey. I only once recall a female participant having a difficult time as she remembered a forgotten experience of being abused as a child; she did talk this through with me. However, I have known social work students in a child abuse lecture experience similar traumatic memories. Life may not be fully controllable but it can be manageable. The guidelines on how to do an imagework session, described later in this chapter, should avoid any unnecessary emotional grief and pain.

In *spontaneous imagework*, as we have seen, participants do encounter the unexpected and the bizarre and the unknown; that is part of the value of these approaches! Almost always though, as in the 'healing journeys' examples, participants have reassuring and helpful experiences. They gain an opportunity for reflection and potential insight in an emotionally secure group environment. They are assured that they have control over their ventures (see guidelines later in this chapter). Moreover, spontaneous imagework can be similar to our night dreams which are a universal of human experience, whether individuals remember them or not.

In *dream imagework* we certainly encounter the bizarrely exotic and phantasmagoric within. These 'letters to oneself' as Fromm (1955) described dreams can be seen being 'unopened' in Chapter 5. Likewise, I have shown (Edgar 2002) how recorded dream imagery underpins major contemporary conflicts in Kosovo/Serbia and the Near and Middle East. Dreams may well be experienced by contemporary Islamic militants in groups such as Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, as being inspirational and giving practical guidance from (their understanding of) God/Allah (Edgar 2002, 2004).

Dreams exist in humans and unless people suffer from recurrent nightmares, as in post-traumatic stress disorder, people in the West, when they do remember their dreams, usually find them somewhat surprising and sometimes interesting; whilst those who practise a study of their dreams may come to find them an ongoing source of insight. Certainly, as we saw in Chapter 3, anthropologists and sociologists working in societies where dreams are valued may find themselves obliged to relate

to the indigenous perspective(s) on dreams. Overall, the case-studies of dream imagework presented in Chapter 5 show the value of the remembered and exercised dream both for personal growth and for gathering more intuitive, affective and emergent data about people.

The overall ethics of using such approaches are important. An imagework methodology should only be practised within accepted social science ethical guidelines. Christians (2001: 138–40) summarises the main codes of ethics for professional and academic qualitative research communities as consisting of four main guidelines: informed consent, opposition to deception, privacy and confidentiality, and accuracy. Any research activity using imagework and its associated techniques should meet normative requirements in these areas. Informed consent requirements can be met through the careful explanation of the processes to be involved, though it is important to note what Parse has called 'lingering true presence' (see later: Parse 1995: 82). Deception is obviously important to avoid; whereas normal expectations of privacy and confidentiality can be maintained and are especially important in research activity that aims to elicit 'deep' data from respondents. Accuracy is likewise equally important, with the proviso that, as explained in Chapter 5, respondents may have interesting problems in how they categorise and describe their experiences.

Clearly some researchers will feel that the imagework method is unacceptably intrusive and raises power issues that are very problematic. However, whilst I would propose that an experiential method, such as imagework, has as its intention, the gathering of in-depth data, I would argue that any data-collection method involves intrusion and can provoke problematic self-disclosure. Even a simple interview can suddenly trigger a sensitive area for the respondent and leave the researcher with ethical considerations in terms of how to supportively handle the resulting situation. Johnson and Griffith (1998: 212) suggest that all interviewing technologies are primarily concerned with enabling respondents to 'open-up', particularly with respect to complex concerns. Some ethnographic methods, such as photo-elicitation, particularly seek, in a similar way to imagework, to open up the respondent to dimly perceived or remembered emotional depths (Collier 1967: 67). The methods I have outlined will sometimes be a catalyst for significant disclosure, yet the negative aspects of disclosure can be greatly prevented by making participation voluntary, by the sensitive explanation beforehand of the task and technique to participants, and by similar aftercare. Moreover, participants can be asked again, following an imagework exercise, if they wish their contribution still to be used as part of the research findings.

Both examples of imagework that I have quoted in this book as being difficult or emotionally uncomfortable for participants eventuated in integrative outcomes for those people. In Chapter 2 the participant in a 'household' exercise used the opportunity to confront herself with some personal problem, saying, 'When one returns to one's childhood, it is maybe inevitable that some people are caught by emotional memories'. This participant didn't share her experience, but clearly felt the experience was overall welcome and integrated it, having learnt that she could control her inner imagery:

> Later, after you said that one is in control of one's imagination, that was quite a new insight to me … I did not consider it as a bad experience by the way, it was very revealing, but as we are not in a therapeutic environment, I felt my memories were just too personal to tell.

The other example, from Chapter 5, showed how an imagework exercise, that of 'becoming a bird' and based on a participant's dream image, led to her first being a parakeet and then, in flight, dissolving into a jungle! This participant felt at one point that she was having difficulty coping, and as previously quoted,

> I became a jungle and then of course I could not come back and at that point I decided I could not cope with this and I went quite deep inside and surfaced again later … I took all that home with me and by the time I had finished looking at it I had become happy being a jungle and felt very much at home as that there … but I was totally unable to follow instructions … I was a disobedient bird!

This example shows that even the apparently very threatening experience of 'disintegrating' as a bird and becoming a 'jungle' had a very positive outcome for her that I described. Also, both these examples show that a proportion of participants will go their own way with an imagework exercise, as our culture seldom provides readily available opportunities for people to work creatively with their imagination whilst being facilitated and supported in a safe group or one to one environment.

However, it is important to be aware that the creative, emotional and cognitive influence of an image may not be completed, as we have just seen, within the timespan of the session. Parse, as part of her 'Human Becoming Theory', has called this after-effect, 'lingering true presence' (1995: 82). The evocative power of a symbol may engage the mind in an ongoing process of self-enquiry; therefore, it may be prudent for the

researcher, as well as ensuring that their respondents finish the task at ease with any imaginative results, to make follow-up individual or group interviews available.

Some topics may be inappropriate for imagework, certainly in groups, and there is an appropriate literature on researching sensitive issues that would be relevant to the use of imagework methods (Renzetti and Lee 1993). However, one advantage of using imagework is that it allows respondents to discuss potentially sensitive material in a coded way that allows them to retain their privacy. People can, for instance, verbally or in their accompanying artwork, refer to 'bad times' by using stereotypical images of unhappiness such as 'bad weather' and as a result retain their privacy and their understanding of their meaning.

I outline a set of guidelines for this work.

Ethical/safe practice guidelines

- Explain everything beforehand: go through each part of the exercise, so there are no surprises 'on the way'.
- Give clear permission to people that they don't have to do the session if they don't want to.
- Ask, 'any questions?' after introducing the exercise and before doing it.
- Develop trust from the beginning; open body gestures, clear quiet voice tone; reassure continually that 'they' are in control throughout the exercise and including during the sharing; it is their journey.
- Plan the timing of the session and have enough time for each part of it; don't try and do too much. Go through each part of the session in your mind beforehand. Prepare yourself.
- Practise with friends/colleagues beforehand, if you wish.
- If you feel really unsure about doing this exercise, as opposed to your 'normal' level of apprehension before doing a new type of exercise, then either don't do it, or choose a safer format.
- Talk through 'self-care' issues with respondents first. Emphasise:
    - They are in control of all parts of the process. They can guarantee their confidentiality by what they choose to share with others; symbols have many meanings and associations, and their multivocality is a real assset for both eliciting ideas and retaining confidentiality.
    - If they are unhappy, ill, worried or preoccupied, then advise members not to do the exercise, or particularly look after themselves.

  - Advise people that if they become distracted in an exercise then they can gently bring their wandering attention back to the subject.
  - If someone encounters a 'difficult' memory or image then advise them that they have a choice either to go on with the exercise or stop and imagine something more pleasant. However, remind people that their images and accompanying feelings and thoughts are *theirs*. Also, be clear that difficult feelings can be triggered by any 'outer' event also, for instance the look or smell of a flower. Moreover, this subject of difficult memory/image recall can be gone into in more depth and discussion facilitated as to the possible long-term value of dealing with difficult memories that can suddenly intrude into consciousness at any time; is the 'unconscious' good at timing in all cases?

- Be 'around' afterwards, or have a colleague around, to provide support if needed though my experience is that such support is rarely ever needed; watch carefully to see if anyone is looking upset at the end.
- Facilitate everyone sharing their feelings and experiences that have been evoked by the exercise, at least in pairs, so that each person has had the opportunity to tell 'their' story.
- Pace the visualisation process by doing the visualisation at the same time as the people you are facilitating. Make sure you leave plenty of time during the visualisation for people's imaginations to work.
- Don't allow any interruptions: put a very clear message on the door and even an object like a chair to block late entrants! There is nothing so disturbing as a late entrant in the middle of an imagework exercise.
- Consider using an introductory warm-up exercise, such as the 'bowl of soup' exercise described in Chapter 2.
- Likewise, consider using the 'needy friend' technique described at the end of Chapter 2.

So overall, my contention is that imagework, including dreamwork, is a vital part of human being and becoming and to avoid these imaginative worlds on the grounds of very largely unrealistic fears, is to seriously and unnecessarily limit the scope of human enquiry.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

> Now I can look back on that time and I can see how it was – the advent of your healing. I can see now that it was necessary for you to take that first step, a step that signalled your intention to return to life. It was necessary for you to go somewhere safe and familiar – and what better place could there be than a summer garden. It was necessary for the mind to be filled with beautiful, living, fragrant images, for your lungs to be filled with pure, clean air, for your soul to be filled with hope.[2]

I have presented and argued in this book that imagework, including dreamwork, is a highly effective set of strategies in the qualitative research domain; moreover, a set of practices so far barely used by such researchers; finally, however, I want to argue that this set of practices constitutes a research methodology in its own right. Overall, I propose that researching the experience, observation, recollection, telling, meaning attribution and external artistic performance of the internal image of the subject(s) constitutes a research arena, domain or field that is of increasing importance in the holistic study of contemporary human experience. By methodology, I mean that such research draws on a distinctive epistemology, theory, sets of research questions, group and researcher processes, research ethics and practices, issues of reflexivity and bias, questions of validity, replicability and so forth (de Munck and Sobo 1998).

I argue that the epistemological basis to the imagework methodology and the associated issues stemming from the nature of studying and even conjuring inner realities, mark out this method as a distinctive methodology. In Chapter 1 I showed the deep roots from which imagework has developed; various sources can be traced for the imagework method, beginning in the mystical practices of many religions, particularly in

the notion of the imaginal in Islam, in shamanic traditions and within the twentieth century, the concept of the collective unconscious and the practice of active imagination developed by Jung.

The imaginary fields of imagework are not susceptible to a simple interrogation by the positivist methodologists; inner worlds and experiences influence outer worlds and experiences as this book has shown in a number of ways: the influence of dreams on anthropologists and their informants; the challenging experiences encountered by participants in my dreamwork group; the impact of imagework experiences such as the ideal visualisation of a 'healing place' journey. If social science research ignores the visual nature of inner realities, then the study, for instance, of altered states of consciousness (ASC) and exceptional human experiences (EHE) becomes fraught and open to the accusation that all inner realities are fantastical and worthless as evidence as they cannot be represented and simply replicated.

There are issues of access to these hinterlands of the imaginative self; imagework researchers study and facilitate reports, narratives and expressive performances; as we saw in Chapter 4, Herdt showed how the Sambian people of New Guinea sorted their dream imagery into three kinds, public, private and sexual, and so related them differently and to different people depending on the kind of imagery. Yet, only a positivistic tyranny might consider that all informants are liars; even scientific data needs interpreting and couching in a metaphor-based language (see Lakoff and Johnson 1980). The validity of imaginative accounts will always be a concern but not sufficiently to discount the need to assess their overall integrity. As I suggested earlier in Chapter 4, validity in imagework refers to the authenticity of the attribution of cognitive meaning to visual experience, rather than to the authenticity of the reported dream image. The reported dream or daydream image is never precisely accessible but as we have seen (Edgar 2002) some of the most dangerous situations in the world today are partly generated and sustained by reported dream accounts. As I have earlier written, it is very likely that the Al-Qaeda and Taliban core leadership and many militant members are inspired and felt to be guided by what they consider to be divine guidance expressed within their dreams (Edgar 2002, 2004). Imagination and dreaming are a part of our cultural experience and we need to overcome some of the perceived problems in relation to traditional ideas of validity as otherwise the qualitative research enterprise will be limited.

How *representative* are dream images and their understanding by participants and researchers? As I wrote in Chapter 4, although my

studies do not claim to offer a definitive account of the characteristics of all British or European dream and imagework groups, they do offer an indication of the kinds of questions that can be asked, and the possible repertoire of processes and approaches likely to be found in such groups. It is in this sense that I think such studies are in fact representative. Certainly almost all humans think imaginatively, remember and daydream in pictures on occasions, and REM sleep studies have shown us that all humans dream each night, even if most of us forget our dreams; moreover, all cultures have distinctive approaches to understanding their night dream imagery: from the general forgetfulness of the Western perspective, except for some psychoanalytical practitioners, to the common spiritual approaches found in religions such as Islam, Tibetan Buddhism and Hinduism, which all grant some dreams a superior ontological status to that of daytime reality (Edgar 1995).

So, it is not the representativeness of the hidden dream or day image that is the issue, but rather how representative is the social and personal interpretation of the dream. And that is evident from the reported discussions and the observed actions of the dreamer/imagework participant.

Likewise, emotions are engendered and encountered, named and owned through image and dreamwork as we have seen successively throughout this book. Emotions, of which there are many, but perhaps a few core ones, albeit culturally-mediated, such as fear, anger, attraction, sadness and happiness. These emotions, apparently embedded within images, may often be caused by external events but they are experienced and processed within culturally-bound rules, by the knowing subject, often in interaction with others. They are an aspect of consciousness that a person may feel prior to their recognition even of such a feeling. Imagework facilitates the knowing expression of the personal and cultural unknown, half-known and well-known. I have shown, particularly in Chapter 5 how the meaning of images is developed through narrative and artistic expression. Imagework then, as a methodology, is related to arts-based and transpersonal research.

Imagework as we saw in Chapter 3 adds significantly to the development of a *reflexive* approach to the research process; an ability to relate to one's own internal imagery, be it day or night, sharpens the intuitive facilities and develops rapport with both one's own emotional processes and those of informants. As Tedlock (1991: 174) wrote, in future perhaps anthropologists will become dream and image literate (my words) in their study of the 'other'; first then, know your own 'other'! Also, within the language of psychoanalysis, transference and counter-transference can be acknowledged and considered, even with some basic experience

and attentiveness to image flow. We can learn to know how images work within us and through us. We need to understand the power, relevance and meaning of human imagery; it is part of being human, this capturing of the emergent realities of self and society. I have shown how reality and understanding partly emerge through the dream and imagework process. Through narration and action, the theorising and practice of imagework flow together. We can theorise our methodology as we proceed with its practice, as often we are confronted in imagework with the unknown. So, imagework is a creative process in which the implicit can become the explicit and the affective dimensions of self become integrated into the narrative, unlike in other qualitative methodologies, which tend to, with exceptions such as the photo-elicitation method, deal solely with or at least evidently prioritise the cognitive.

Imagework facilitates the evoking and analysis of the implicit theory of individuals and groups; the 'habitus' of the social unconsciousness that Bourdieu speaks of. We saw in Chapter 2 in the discussion of the therapeutic journey experiences how most of the German students developed a very politically Green perspective with their 'healing places' located away from the city and in the country, often with water nearby, such as a lake. Access to friends was central as was developing a self-structuring programme for the day without an availability of psychiatrists or pills. How different such journey contents would be for a Nepalese villager or a Bedouin nomad. Imagework can then be used to study emic and implicit theories of self and society, as well as individual idealisations.

Group and researcher process is an important reflexive focus in qualitative group-based research, such as with focus groups. Elsewhere, I (Edgar 1995) have focused on group process issues and how these can determine and influence the data outcome. The dynamic interactions and concealed and revealed expectations held by group members and researcher are crucial to what is said, how it is heard and explained and remembered. Trust and confidentiality are key to participants' emotional openness and without emotional openness little of interest will emerge. Such issues are even more crucial when the inner self is being processually shared through image and dreamwork. Safety through emotional trusting is all.

Safety, trust and confidentiality are at the heart of the distinctive ethical dimension to all forms of imagework; I have summarised these issues in the previous chapter; my position is that often the apprehension of the critical viewer of imagework practice as a qualitative research methodology, is unfairly based on the fear that any movement inwards

by the informant into their imaginative world might just trigger the onset of a minor or major psychosis. Clearly, I would not recommend imagework with psychotic patients; however, my research experience is that whilst occasionally (as in the two examples offered in the previous chapter) participants may have uncomfortable experiences, even these participants normally benefit in the short and medium term. Moreover, for the vast majority of participants there is a real personal and often academic benefit from the facilitated experience, and group and personal analysis of their imagery. Besides, any situation can trigger emotion; I have observed in a lecture given by a colleague on child abuse, several women start crying from the lecturer's solely academic content. Likewise, a researcher studying the experiences of bereaved carers six months after the death of those they had been caring for, found he was dealing with profound and unresolved grief reactions in his interviews. Any human experience can generate emotion, take the smell of a rose, for example. My position is that not to undertake imagework as a research methodology is to seriously deprive participants of possibly important experiences and also to limit the research opportunity. I advocate appropriate process ethics as outlined in a set of guidelines in the previous chapter. Social science researchers need skill facilitation in these areas as Tedlock (1991: 174) recommended in relation to developing dream fluency in the field.

So my argument is that a 'new' research methodology, such as imagework, offers the opportunity for researchers to further study the personal and social world of the respondent and so obtain a blend of cognitive, affective and intuitive material, known, dimly known, implicit, suppressed and even repressed by the conscious mind. Overall I have shown the way that imagework, one of several potential experiential research methods, offers researchers the means to access the latent knowledge and unexpressed feelings of respondents.

I have partly provided a detailed guide for the beginning practitioner of the imagework method; also, I have proposed a way forward for imagework practice as a part of the research process in the social science arenas, and I have outlined a basic typological framework for imagework practitioners/researchers. Experiential research methods such as imagework can be utilised in part or on their own in research practice in such diverse fields as health and social care, social sciences, education, development and even administration, business and marketing. The imagework method is particularly effective in accessing participants' implicit awareness of such areas as individual and collective vision development, personal and cultural identity formation and change, interpersonal dynamics, attitudes and ideologies, and organisational culture.

While the application of the imagework method may be considered innovative, the principles, ethics and practices governing the organisation and analysis of data derived from this method remain firmly within the established qualitative domain. The way is open for further studies using these methods, perhaps in controlled and cross-cultural studies, and from different social science research paradigms, that would compare the value of such experiential methods against the use of more traditional research methods, such as long-term fieldwork.

Overall, in this book I have argued, with suggestive examples from my own imagework groups, that imagination-based research methods constitute a coherent research practice and methodology. Moreover imagework as a particular research practice can be related to and integrated with other innovative research methodologies, such as transpersonal (Braud and Anderson 1998), participatory (Pretty *et al.* 1995) and arts-based research methodologies (Norris and Buck 2002).

Notes

1 First and differently conceptualised in 'The imagework method in social science and health research', *Qualitative Health Research* (1999) 9, 2: 198–211.
2 The running quotation at the beginning of the chapters is a narrative from a 'therapeutic journey' exercise explained in more detail in Chapter 2.
3 'Doubling' is the action in psychodrama when one of the group, not the protagonist or director, goes behind the protagonist and imaginatively speaks as they feel the protagonist is 'really' feeling and thinking. Also there can be one 'double' with the protagonist throughout the psychodrama.
4 I occasionally run training courses: I am aware of an imagework training agency based in California that offers distance and personal training in the use of 'Interactive guided Imagery' (http://www.interactiveimagery.com). I have no direct experience of it.

References

Abraham, K. (1955) 'Dreams and myths: a study in folk psychology', *Clinical Papers and Essays on Psychoanalysis*, New York: Basic Books.

Achterberg, J. (1985) *Imagery in Healing*, Boston: Shambhala.

Anderson, B. (1971) 'Adaptive aspects of culture shock', *American Anthropologist*, 73: 1121–5.

Anderson, R. (1998) 'Intuitive inquiry', in W. Braud and R. Anderson (eds) *Transpersonal Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, London: Sage.

Anderson, R. and Braud, W. (1998) 'Appendix A: synopses of five transpersonal approaches to research', in W. Braud and R. Anderson (eds) *Transpersonal Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, London: Sage.

Assagioli, R. (1965) *Psychosynthesis*, London: Mandala and Psychosynthesis Research Foundation.

Banks, M. (2001) *Visual Methods in Social Research*, London: Sage.

Barone, T. and Eisner, E. (1997) 'Arts-based educational research', in R.M. Jaeger (ed.) *Complementary Methods for Research in Education*, Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association (AERA).

Basso, E. (1987) 'The implications of a progressive theory of dreaming', in B. Tedlock (ed.) *Dreaming: Anthropological and Psychological Interpretations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bell, D. (1993) 'Yes Virginia, there is a feminist ethnography: reflections from three Australian fields', in D. Bell, P. Caplan and W. Karim (eds) *Gendered Fields: Women, Men and Ethnography*, London: Routledge.

Bendelow, G. (1992) 'Using visual imagery to explore gendered notions of pain', in R. Lew and C. Renzetti (eds) *Researching Sensitive Issues*, London: Sage.

Benson, J. (1987) *Working More Creatively with Groups*, London: Tavistock.

Bettelheim, B. (1974) *A Home with a Heart*, London: Thames and Hudson.

Bongar, B., Berman, A., Maris, R., Silverman, M., Harris, E. and Packman, W. (1998) *Risk Management with Suicidal Patients*, New York: Guildford.

Bourdieu, P. (1977) *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Braud, W. and Anderson, R. (1998) *Transpersonal Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, London: Sage.

Brazier, D. (1991) *A Guide to Psychodrama*, London: The Association of Humanistic Psychology in Britain.

Brown, M. (1987) 'Ropes of sand: order and imagery in Aquaruna dreams', in B. Tedlock (ed.) *Dreaming: Anthropological and Psychological Interpretations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Canal, G. (1998) 'Memory, oblivion and experience among the Pumé Indians (Venezuela)', unpublished paper based on *Les pumé et leur rêves. Étude d'un groupe indien des Plaines du Venezuela*, Paris, Éditions de Archives Contemporains.

Caplan, P. (1988), 'Engendering knowledge: the politics of ethnography' (Part 2), *Anthropology Today*, 4, 6: 14–17.

Carrithers, M. (1982) 'Hell-fire and urinal stones: an essay on Buddhist purity and authority', in G. Krishna (ed.) *Contributions to South Asian Studies*, 2, Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Carrithers, M. (1990) 'Is anthropology art or science?', *Current Anthropology* 31, 3: 263–82.

Catalano, S. (1987) 'Developmental differences in the dream content of normal and emotionally disturbed adolescents', unpublished D.S.W. dissertation, Boston College Graduate School of Social Work.

Christians, C. (2001) 'Ethics and politics in qualitative research', in N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, London: Sage.

Clandinin, D. (1986) *Classroom Practice: Teacher Images in Action*, London: Falmer Press.

Clandinin, D. and Connelly, F. (1994) 'Personal experience methods', in N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, London: Sage.

Clifford, J. (1986a) 'Introduction: partial truths', in J. Clifford and G. Marcus (eds) *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Clifford, J. (1986b) 'On ethnographic allegory', in J. Clifford and G. Marcus (eds) *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Cohen, A. (1994) *Self Consciousness: An Alternative Anthropology of Identity*, London: Routledge.

Cohen, A. and Rapport, N. (1995) 'Introduction: consciousness in anthropology', in A. Cohen and N. Rapport (eds) *Questions of Consciousness*, London: Routledge.

Collier, J. (1967) *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Corbin, H. (1966) 'The visionary dream in Islamic spirituality', in G. Von Grunebaum and R. Callois (eds) *The Dream in Human Societies*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Crapanzano, V. (1975) 'Saints, jnun, and dreams: an essay in Moroccan ethnopsychiatry, *Psychiatry*, 38: 145–58.

Csordas, T. (1990) 'Embodiment as a paradigm for anthropology', *Ethos*, 8: 5–47.

Curley, R. (1992) 'Private dreams and public knowledge in a Camerounian Independent Church', in M. Jedrej and R. Shaw (eds) *Dreaming, Religion and Society*, Leiden: Brill.

Cushway, D. and Sewell, R. (1992) *Counselling with Dreams and Nightmares*, London: Sage.

D'Andrade, R. (1961) 'Anthropological studies of dreams', in F. Hsu (ed.) *Psychological Anthropology: Approaches to Culture and Personality*, Homewood, IL: Dorsey.

Davies, C. (1999) *Reflexive Ethnography*, London: Routledge.

De Mello, A. (1984) *Sadhana: A Way to God: Christian Exercises in Eastern Form*, New York: Image Books.

De Munck, V. and Sobo, E. (1998) *Using Methods in the Field: A Practical Introduction and Casebook*, Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira/Sage.

Denzin, N. (1994) 'The art and politics of interpretation', in N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, London: Sage.

Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (1994) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, London: Sage.

Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (2000) *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (second edition), London: Sage.

Devereux, G. (1966) 'Pathogenic dreams in non-Western societies', in V. Grunebaum and R. Caillois (eds) *The Dream and Human Societies*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Devereux, G. (1969) *Reality and Dream. Psychotherapy of a Plains Indian*, New York: International Universities Press.

DeVos, G. and Wagatsuma, H. (1961) 'Value attitudes towards role behaviour of women in two Japanese villages', *American Anthropologist*, 63: 1204–30.

Domhoff, G. (1985) *Mystique of Dreams: A Search for Utopia through Senoi Dream Theory*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Douglas, M. (1975) *Implicit Meanings: Essays in Anthropology*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Duerr, H. (1985) *Dreamtime: Concerning the Boundary between Wilderness and Civilisation*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Edgar, I. (1986) 'An anthropological analysis of Peper Harow therapeutic community with particular reference to the use of myth, ritual and symbol', M.Phil. Thesis, University of Durham, UK.

Edgar, I. (1990) 'The social process of adolescence in a therapeutic community', in P. Spencer (ed.) *Anthropology and the Riddle of the Sphinx: Paradoxes of Change in the Life Course*, ASA Monographs 23, London: Routledge.

Edgar, I. (1994) 'Dream imagery becomes social experience: the cultural elucidation of dream interpretation', in A. Deluz, and S. Heald (eds) *Anthropology and Psychoanalysis: An Encounter Through Culture*, London: Routledge.

Edgar, I. (1995) *Dreamwork, Anthropology and the Caring Professions: A Cultural Approach to Dreaming*, Aldershot: Avebury.

Edgar, I. (1997) 'The tooth butterfly: rendering a sensible account from the imaginative present', in A. James, J. Hockey and A. Dawson (eds) *After Writing Culture*, ASA Monographs 28, London: Routledge.

Edgar, I. (1998) 'Using experiential research methods: the potential contribution of humanistic groupwork methods to anthropology and welfare research', in I. Edgar and A. Russell (eds) *Anthropology of Welfare*, London: Routledge.

Edgar, I. (1999) 'The imagework method in social science and health research', *Qualitative Health Research*, 9, 2: 198–211.

Edgar, I. (2001) 'Cultural dreaming or dreaming cultures? The anthropologist and the dream', *KEA: Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften*, 13: 1–20.

Edgar, I. (2002) 'Invisible elites: authority and the dream', *Dreaming*, 12: 79–92.

Edgar, I. (2003a) 'Beginning with images: an introduction to imagination-based educational methodologies', in D. Dracklé and I. Edgar (eds) *Learning Fields Vol. 2: Current Policies and Practices in European Social Anthropology Education*, Oxford: Berghahn.

Edgar, I. (2003b) 'Encountering the dream: intersecting anthropological and psychoanalytical approaches', published in a special edition on 'Culture and Therapy', *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 3, 2: 95–101.

Edgar, I. (2004) 'A war of dreams? Militant Muslim dreaming in the context of traditional and contemporary Islamic dream theory and practice', *Dreaming*, 14: 21–9.

Edgerton, R. (1971) *The Individual in Cultural Adaptation*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Eggan, D. (1952) 'The manifest content of dreams: a challenge to social sciences', *American Anthropologist*, 54: 177–98.

Eliade, M. (1964) *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (W. Trask, trans.), London: Routledge Kegan Paul.

Ellenberger, H. (1970) *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry*, New York: Basic Books.

Ellis, C. and Bochner, A. (2000) 'Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity', in N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, London: Sage.

Ernst, S. and Goodison, L. (1981) *In Our Own Hands: A Book of Self-Help Therapy*, London: The Women's Press.

Ewing, K. (1990) 'The dream of spiritual initiation and the organisation of Self representation among Pakistani Sufis', *American Ethnologist*, 17: 56–74.

Ewing, K. (1994) 'Dreams from a saint: anthropological atheism and the temptation to believe', *American Anthropologist*, 96, 3: 571–83.

Fagen, N. (1998) 'Images and symbols', in W. Braud and R. Anderson (eds) *Transpersonal Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, London: Sage.

Fern, E. (2001) *Advanced Focus Group Research*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Fernandez, J. (1995) 'Amazing grace: meaning deficit, displacement and new consciousness in expressive interaction', in A. Cohen and N. Rapport (eds) *Questions of Consciousness*, London: Routledge.

Finch, J. (1987) 'The vignette technique in survey research', *Sociologist*, 21: 105–14.
Fox, J. (1975) 'On binary categories and primary symbols', in R. Willis (ed.) *The Interpretation of Symbolism*, ASA Studies 2, London: Malaby Press.
Fromm, E. (1955) *The Sane Society*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
Garfield, P. (1974) *Creative Dreaming*, New York: Ballantine Books.
Geertz, C. (1983) *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretative Anthropology*, New York: Basic Books.
Geertz, C. (1988) *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
Genette, G. (1988) *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, New York: Cornell University Press.
George, M. (1995) 'Dreams, reality, and the desire and intent of dreamers as experienced by a fieldworker', *Anthropology of Consciousness*, 6, 3: 17–33.
Glaser, B. and Strauss, A. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
Glouberman, D. (1989) *Life Choices and Life Changes through Imagework*, London: Unwin.
Goulet, J. (1994a) 'Introduction', in J. Goulet and D. Young (eds) *Being Changed by Cross-Cultural Experiences*, Ontario: Broadview.
Goulet, J. (1994b) 'Dreams and visions in other lifeworlds', in J. Goulet and D. Young (eds) *Being Changed by Cross-Cultural Experiences*, Ontario: Broadview.
Goulet, J. and Young, D. (1994) 'Theoretical and methodological issues', in J. Goulet and D. Young (eds) *Being Changed by Cross-Cultural Experiences*, Ontario: Broadview.
Gregor, T. (1981) 'A content analysis of Mehinaku dreams', *Ethos*, 9: 353–90.
Grimshaw, A. (2001) *The Ethnographer's eye: Ways of seeing in Anthropology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Guédon, M. (1994) 'Dene ways and the ethnographer's culture', in J. Goulet and D. Young (eds) *Being Changed by Cross-Cultural Experiences*, Ontario: Broadview.
Hall, C. and Van De Castle, R. (1966) *The Content Analysis of Dreams*, New York: New American Library.
Hammersley, M. (1992) *What's Wrong with Ethnography?* London: Routledge.
Happold, F. (1963) *Mysticism*, Middlesex: Penguin.
Hastrup, K. (1992) 'Writing ethnography: state of the art', in J. Okely and H. Callaway (eds) *Anthropolgy and Autobiography*, ASA Monographs 29, London: Routledge.
Hastrup, K. (1993) 'The native voice and the anthropological vision', *Social Anthropology*, 1, 2: 173–86.
Herdt, G. (1987) 'Selfhood and discourse in Sambia dream sharing', in B. Tedlock (ed.) *Dreaming: Anthropological and Psychological Interpretations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hillman, D. (1989) 'Dreamwork and fieldwork: linking cultural anthropology and the current dreamwork movement', in M. Ullman, and C. Limmer (eds) *The Variety of Dream Experience*, Wellingborough: Aquarian Press.
Hockey, J. (1990) *Experiences of Death*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
Houston, G. (1982), *The Red Book of Gestalt*, London: The Rochester Foundation.
Hunt, J. (1989) *Psychoanalytic Aspects of Fieldwork*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
Jackson, A. (ed.) (1987) *Anthropology at Home*, London: Tavistock.
James, A. (1993) *Childhood Identities: Self and Social Relationships in the Experiences of the Child*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
Jedrej, M. and Shaw, R. (eds) (1992) *Dreaming, Religion and Society in Africa*, Leiden: Brill.
Jedrej, M. and Shaw, R. (1992) 'Introduction', in M. Jedrej and R. Shaw (eds) *Dreaming, Religion and Society in Africa*, Leiden: Brill.
Jelfs, M. (1982) *Manual for Action*, London: Action Resources Group.
Jennings, S. (1986) *Creative Drama in Groupwork*, Bicester: Winslow Press.
Jennings, S. (1995) *Theatre, Ritual and Transformation: The Senoi Temiars*, London: Routledge.
Johnson, A. (1985) *Research Methods in Social Anthropology*, London: Edward Arnold.
Johnson, J. and Griffith, D. (1998) 'Visual data: collection, analysis and representation', in V. de Munck and E. Sobo (eds) *Using Methods in the Field: A Practical Introduction and Casebook*, Walnut Creek: Altamira Press.
Jones, M. (1968) *Social Psychiatry in Practice*, London: Penguin.
Jung, C.G. (1951) *Foreword to the 'I Ching'* (R. Wilhelm, trans.), London: Routledge.
Jung, C.G. (1959a) 'Archetypes of the collective unconscious', in *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, vol. 9, part 1, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
Jung, C.G. (1959b) 'Psychological aspects of the mother archetype', in *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, vol. 9, part 1, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
Jung, C.G. (1959c) 'The psychological aspects of the kore', in *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, vol. 9, part 1, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
Jung, C.G. (1963) *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, New York: Random House [quoted edition 1977, London: Fount Paperbacks (Collins)].
Jung, C.G. (1966) *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung* (second edition, vol. 13), London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
Kassam, A. (1999) 'On becoming an Oromo anthropologist', *Anthropology of Consciousness*, 10, 2–3: 1–12.
Kennard, D. (1983) *An Introduction to Therapeutic Communities*, London: Routledge.
Kohn, T. (1995) 'She came out of the field and into my home: reflections, dreams and a search for consciousness in anthropological method', in A. Cohen and N. Rapport (eds) *Questions of Consciousness*, London: Routledge.
Kracke, W. (1987a) 'Encounter with other cultures: psychological and epistemological aspects', *Ethos*, 15: 58–82.

Kracke, W. (1987b) 'Myths in dreams, thought in images: an Amazonian contribution to the psychoanalytic theory of primary process', in B. Tedlock (ed.) *Dreaming: Anthropological and Psychological Interpretations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Krippner, S. (1987) 'Dreams and shamanism', in S. Nicholson (ed.) *Shamanism*, Wheaton: Theosophical Publishing House.

Krippner, S. and Thompson, A. (1996) A 10–facet model of dreaming applied to dream practices of sixteen Native American cultural groups, *Dreaming*, 6: 71–96.

Kuper, A. (1979) 'A structural approach to dreams', *Man*, 14: 645–62.

Kuper, A. (1983) 'The structure of dream sequences', *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, 7: 153–75.

Kuper, A. (1993) 'Postmodernism, Cambridge and the great Kalahari debate', *Social Anthropology*, 1,1: 57–71.

Kuper, A. and Stone, A. (1982) 'The dream of Irma's injection: a structural account', *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 139: 1225–34.

Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. (1980) *Metaphors We Live By*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Leach, E. (1970) *Lévi-Strauss*, London: Fontana.

Leach, E. (1989) 'Writing ethnography', *American Ethnologist*, 16, 1: 137–41.

Levine, S. (1981) 'Dreams of the informant about the researcher: some difficulties inherent in the research relationship', *Ethos*, 9: 276–93.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1963) *The Structural Study of Myth*, New York: Basic Books.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1966) *The Savage Mind*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1970) *The Raw and the Cooked: Introduction to a Science of Mythology 1*, London: Jonathan Cape.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1976) 'The myth of Asdiwal', in C. Lévi-Strauss (ed.) *Structural Anthropology 2*, London: Penguin.

Lincoln, J. (1935) *The Dream in Primitive Cultures*, Maryland: William and Wilkins.

Mackenzie, N. (1965), *Dreams and Dreaming*, London: Bloomsbury Books.

Markham, U. (1989) *The Elements of Visualisation*, Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element Books.

Mattingley, C. (1998) *Healing Dramas and Clinical Plots: The Narrative Structure of Experience*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mead, M. and Wolfenstein, M. (1955) 'Introduction to Part 5', in M. Mead and M. Wolfenstein (eds) *Childhood in Contemporary Cultures*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mills, A. (1994) 'Making a scientific investigation of ethnographic cases suggestive of reincarnation', in D. Young and J. Goulet (eds) *Being Changed: The Anthropology of Extraordinary Experience*, Ontario: Broadview Press.

Morphy, H. and Banks, M. (1997) 'Introduction: rethinking visual anthropology', in M. Banks and H. Morphy (eds) *Rethinking Visual Anthropology*, London and New haven: Yale University Press.

Moss, R. (1996) *Conscious Dreaming*, New York: Crown Trade Paperbacks.
Needham, R. (1979) *Symbolic Classification*, Santa Monica: Goodyear Publishing.
Nettleton, S. (1992) *Dentistry, Pain and Power*, Buckingham: Open University Press.
Newberg, A. and d'Aquili, E. (1994) 'The NDE as archetype: a model for "prepared" neurocognitive processes', *Anthropology of Consciousness*, 5, 4: 1–15.
NHSE (1997) *Summary of Health Authorities' Target Dates to Secure Acceptable Standards of Segregated Hospital Accommodation*, London: NHS Executive.
Noone, H. (1936) 'Report on the settlement and welfare of the Pre-Temiar School of the Perak-Kelantan Watershed', *Journal of the Federation of Malay States Museums*, (Part 1).
Noone, H. and Holman, D. (1972) *In Search of the Dream People*, New York: Morrow.
Norris, J. and Buck, G. (2002) 'Editorial: explanation through conversation', *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, XLVIII, 3: 203–6.
Obeyesekere, G. (1981) *Medusa's Hair*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Obeyesekere, G. (1990) *The Work of Culture*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Okely, J. (1983) *The Traveller-Gypsies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Okely, J. (1992) 'Anthropology and Autobiography: participatory experience and embodied knowledge', in J. Okely and H. Callaway (eds) *Anthropology and Autobiography*, ASA Monographs 29, London: Routledge.
Okely, J. (1994) 'Vicarious and sensory knowledge of chronology and change: ageing in rural France', in K. Hastrup and P. Hervik (eds) *Social Experience and Anthropological Knowledge*, London: Routledge.
Palmisano, A. (2000) 'On the theory of trance: the Zar cult in Ethiopia', *KEA: Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften*, 13: 119–36.
Parse, R. (1995) 'The human becoming practice methodology', in R. Parse (ed.) *Illuminations: The Human Becoming Theory in Practice and Research*, New York: National League for Nursing Press.
Parsifal-Charles, N. (1986) *The Dream: A Critical, Descriptive and Encyclopaedic Bibliography*, West Cornwall, CT: Locust Hill Press.
Perls, F. (1969) *Gestalt Therapy Verbatim*, Lafayette, CA: Real People Press.
Peters, L. (1981) *Ecstasy and Healing in Nepal: An Ethnopsychiatric Study of Tamang Shamanism*, Malibu, CA: Undena Publications.
Pink, S. (2001) *Doing Visual Ethnography*, London: Sage.
Pocock, D. (1975) *Understanding Social Anthropology*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.
Pocock, D. and MacClancey, J. (1999) *Understanding Social Anthropology* (revised edition), London: Athlone Press.
Pretty, J., Gujit, I., Thompson, J. and Scoones, I. (1995) *A Trainer's Guide for Participatory Learning and Action*, London: International Institute for Environment and Development.

Price-Williams, D. (1987) 'The waking dream in ethnographic perspective', in B. Tedlock (ed.) *Dreaming: Anthropological and Psychological Interpretations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Rapoport, R. (1960) *Community as Doctor*, London: Tavistock.
Renzetti, C. and Lee, R. (1993) *Researching Sensitive Topics*, Newbury Park: Sage.
Reynolds, P. (1992) 'Dreams and the constitution of the self among the Zezuru', in M. Jedrej and R. Shaw (eds) *Dreaming, Religion and Society in Africa*, Leiden: Brill.
Riches, G. and Dawson, P. (1998) 'Lost children, living memories: the role of photographs in processes of grief and adjustment among bereaved parents', *Death Studies*, 22: 121–40.
Ricoeur, P. (1970) *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (Dennis Savage, trans.), New Haven: Yale University Press.
Ricoeur, P. (1981a) 'Model of the text; meaningful actions considered as text', in P. Ricoeur (ed.) *Hermeneutics and the Social Sciences*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Ricoeur, P. (1981b) 'The question of proof in Freud's writings', in P. Ricoeur (ed.) *Hermeneutics and the Social Sciences*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Rose, G. (2001) *Visual Methodologies*, London: Sage.
Rowan, J. (1993) *The Transpersonal: Psychotherapy and Counselling*, London: Routledge.
Royal College of Psychiatrists (1998) *The Management of Violence in Clinical Settings: An Evidence-based Guideline*, London: RCPsych Research Support Unit.
Sainsbury Centre (1998) *Acute Problems – A Survey of the Quality of Care in Acute Psychiatric Wards*, London: Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health.
Seedhouse, D. (1986). *Health: The Foundations for Achievement*, Chichester: John Wiley.
Seligman, C.G. (1921) 'Notes on dreams', *Sudan Notes and Records*, 4: 156–61.
Seligman, C.G. (1923) 'Type dreams: a request', *Folklore*, 34: 376–8.
Seligman, C.G. (1924) 'Anthropology and psychology: presidential address,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 4: 13–46.
Seremetakis, C. (1989) *The Last Word*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Smith, H. (1976) *Forgotten Truth*, San Francisco: Harper.
Smith, M. (1997) *Jung and Shamanism*, New York: Paulist Press.
Sperber, D. (1975) *Rethinking Symbolism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Stewart, K. (1972) 'Dream Theory in Malaya', in C. Hart (ed.) *Altered States of Consciousness*, New York: Doubleday.
Stuhlmiller, C. and Thorsen, R. (1997) 'Narrative picturing: a new strategy for qualitative data collection', *Qualitative Health Research*, 7, 1: 140–9.
Taylor, J. (1995) 'Debate on the Legacy of the Senoi', *Association for the Study of Dreams Newsletter*, 12, 2: 30–34.

Tedlock, B. (1987) 'Dreaming and dream research', in B. Tedlock (ed.) *Dreaming: Anthropological and Psychological Interpretations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tedlock, B. (1991) 'The new anthropology of dreaming', *Dreaming*, 1, 2: 161–78.

Tulku, T. (1999) 'Lucid dreaming: exerting the creativity of the unconscious', in G. Watson, S. Batchelor and G. Clayton (eds) *The Psychology of Awakening*, London: Rider.

Turner, V. (1974) *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Tylor, E. (1871) *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art and Custom*, London: John Murray.

Ullman, M. and Zimmerman, N. (eds) (1979) *Working with Dreams*, Wellingborough: Aquarian Press.

Wade, P. (1993) 'Sexuality and masculinity in fieldwork among Columbian Blacks', in D. Bell, P. Caplan and W. Karim (eds) *Gendered Fields: Women, Men and Ethnography*, London: Routledge.

Yeshe, L. (1987) *Introduction to Tantra*, Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications.

Young, M. (1991) *An Inside Job: Policing and Police Culture in Britain*, New York: Clarendon Press.

Index

Note: roman numerals are used for the preliminary pages, and are included in the index, e.g. Jelfs, M. x. The use of (*Table*) after a page locator denotes a table in the text, e.g. 128–30(*Table 6.1*)