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DREAMING AND “THE UNSEEN” IN AFRICA AND IN MUSLIM WORLDS

CALL FOR PAPERS

This online workshop seeks to trace the connections between dreaming and the world of “the unseen” from comparative and multidisciplinary perspectives. Its main aim is to explore how in Africa and in Muslim worlds people dream the invisible, which constitutes part of everyday experiences and religiosity¹.

Al-ghayb in Arabic is an emic concept related to the imperceptible world, populated by divine or demoniac entities,² and a central conceptual tool for meaning-making in Muslim worlds. The ability to see what lies hidden -for example in dreams- is crucial to mystical experiences, and the invisible is more highly valued than the perceivable world.

Dreams have been studied in anthropology from the beginning until today. Among historians³, archeologists⁴, and scholars of literature⁵, there has been increased recognition of dream studies⁶ and, more broadly, night studies⁷ in recognition of the social and religious dynamics produced in the realm of the night.

¹ Bubandt, Rytter, Suhr, 2019.

² Bubandt 2012; Drieskens 2006;; El-Zein 2009; Khan 2006; Pandolfo 1997, 2018; Spadola 2014, Taneja 2013.

³ Beradt 1985 ; Lavie et Kaminer 2001 ; Wilmer 2001.

⁴ Goblin and Nowell 2017.

⁵ Chimombo 1989; Constant 2008.

⁶ Mageo and Sheriff 2021.

⁷ Brofen 2013; Crary 2007; Galinier and Monod 2010; Palmer 2010.

Concerning Africa⁸, Muslim worlds⁹ and their diasporas¹⁰, various topics have been studied, such as dream incubation or *istikhara*¹¹, dreams of God,¹² martyrdom,¹³ conversion¹⁴ and, more recently, the role of dreams in jihadist proselytization¹⁵.

Following recent scholarly moves¹⁶, the aim is to challenge scholarships that present religions as separate blocs and not within a common analytical frame. Dreams of the Prophet, Jesus, the Qur'an, and the Bible, will shed light on Muslim encounters with various Others in different settings. This conference will inquire how Muslim dreams change when they integrate the new Christian imaginary.

The objective is to foster an international discussion for developing tools for analyzing how individuals experience everyday religiosity in Muslim worlds and about ways of sensing invisible spirits and the divine.

Contributions might cover the following topics (but not exclusively): ethnographic case studies about visitational, inspirational and investiture dreams; conversion dreams; Christian-inspired dreaming in Muslim worlds; conversion dreams and jihadism; gender, dreaming and the unseen; representations of dreams and the unseen in art and popular culture; and sources for dreams study (digital dream reports, dream books, dream diaries, literary dream reports). Visual and art-based approaches and methods are welcome, and short films that relate to the topic will be screened.

Authors are invited to send an abstract (max. 300 words) and a short bio (100 words) to Amalia Dragani at the following email address: amalia.dragani@ufl.edu. Since the online workshop (scheduled for **May 3, 2021**) will be international, the official language will be English. However, papers may be presented in English, Italian, or French. Paper proposals are welcome from both experienced scholars and PhD students. Selected papers will be published in an edited volume or a special issue of a scholarly journal.

The deadline for abstracts is **March 10, 2021**.

⁸ Pype 2011; Jedrej and Shaw 1992

⁹ Crapanzano 1975; Edgar 2011; El-Aswad el-Sayd 2010; Lorry 2003; Mittermaier 2011; von Grunebaum 1966.

¹⁰ Balzani 2010, Qureshi 2010.

¹¹ Edgar and Henig 2010.

¹² Pouresmaeil 2012.

¹³ Sirriyeh 2011.

¹⁴ Fisher 1979, Abdullah 2019

¹⁵ Iain 2011.

¹⁶ Soares 2006, 2016.

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