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Recapturing the Shadow: Dream Consciousness, Healing and Civil War in the Borderlands Between Northern and Southern Sudan

Akira Okazaki*

1. Dealing with power: epiphanies and dreaming in contemporary Sudan

Good evening, everybody. It’s a great honour to give a lecture here in memory of Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard. This kind of occasion is usually dedicated to the celebration of ‘individual’ work and thoughts. But I do not believe my thoughts are fully my own, because many people have shaped them. Some of them are here now: my teachers, colleagues and also my parents. But it’s the Gamk people who have been most influential for many years in shaping my thoughts on human nature.

I am not saying this as a ritual of modesty. The significance of otherness in the formation of personhood is one of the main themes of my lectures. In fact, by the main title ‘Recapturing the Shadow’, I am suggesting that we should not forget our own ‘shadow-selves’. On the other hand, by the notion of the self-contained individual, we cannot explain how we are constructed by others and how we are not individuals but ‘dividuals’.

The same thing can be said in relation to Evans-Pritchard, or EP as he was known to most. I am sure that many anthropologists, like myself, still

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1 [Editorial Note: When we asked Professor Okazaki to contribute his unpublished paper to our journal at the end of his professorship, he suggested the text of his speech delivered in 1999, when he was elected to the first Evans-Pritchard Lectureship, though with some hesitation over the date of the lecture. We have decided to publish it because it deserves to be of lasting value and easily accessible to anyone.]

2 This paper is a part of the text actually delivered at the Evans-Pritchard Lecture in 1999 at All Souls College, University of Oxford. The Lecture consisted of a series of five lectures and this paper is the first one. Other four lectures are summarized at the end of the paper. The text has remained unpublished. I am grateful to Professor Sir John Vickers, Warden of All Souls College, for giving his unconditional consent to publish the text in this web journal.
strongly feel EP’s presence within themselves. This gentle form of ‘spirit possession’, as it were, also explains how the human being is relational rather than self-contained. Moreover, because, as Tom Beidelman said, ‘there are no topics on which EP did not make an important contribution’, we have to cope with his spirit again and again. In fact, he wrote about an incredibly diverse range of topics such as history, politics, kingship, kinship, marriage, sex, sacrifice, religion, magic, witchcraft, dreams, obscenity, trickster tales, dance, ‘double talk’ or more. And yet EP himself is almost invisible in his curiously transparent texts. So we tend to raise the same question as in the case of Shakespeare: who is this author? But probably the question itself is irrelevant, as EP himself suggested in the words he wrote a week before he died: ‘...though it may seem odd ..., I have always taken it for granted that any contribution I have made to knowledge is not mine but God’s through me, *Nisi dominus*.’

In the present lecture, I sketch several strategies employed by ordinary people for dealing with power in contemporary Sudan; that is, prophecy, divination, spirit possession and dreaming. Then, these strategies are compared with entirely different ways of dealing with power; that is, arms and cultural consciousness, which are employed by the Nuba people. Then, in order to elucidate the social significance of dreams, I look at anthropological arguments on dreams and examine EP’s contribution to the sociology of knowledge/ignorance. And finally I give an outline of all the lectures.

First of all, I turn to the context of today’s lecture; that is, contemporary Sudan. In 1938, EP delivered the following words about the Southern Sudan at a conference on colonial administration:

To understand native feelings we have to bear in mind that the Southern Sudan was conquered by force and is ruled by force, the

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threat of force, and the memory of force. The moral relations between natives and Government provide the most fundamental of administrative problems, for the natives have to integrate into their social system a political organization that has no moral value for them.\footnote{E. E. Evans-Pritchard, ‘Some Administrative Problems in the Southern Sudan’, \textit{Oxford Summer School on Colonial Administration}, Oxford, 1938, p. 76.} Unfortunately his words are still relevant (or perhaps more relevant than ever) to the current situation of the whole Sudan. Indeed, the Sudan is still ruled by force. On the other hand, the people have developed a variety of strategies for coping and dealing with such power and affliction. An early case is the Nuer prophet called Ngundeng. His prophetic message is, Douglas Johnson says, still considered relevant and is valued beyond his original audience.\footnote{Douglas Johnson, \textit{Nuer Prophets: A History of Prophecy from the Upper Nile in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries}. (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 1994, p. 353.} And Mahdism was, at least initially, a form of resistance to power. The \textit{zaar} spirit possession cult in the northern Sudan can also be considered, as Janice Boddy suggests, as a form of response to dominant powers in people’s memories.\footnote{Janice Boddy, \textit{Wombs and Alien Spirits: Women, Men, and the Zaar Cult in Northern Sudan}. (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press), 1989.} And, among the Uduk and the neighbouring peoples, a form of divination, or what Wendy James calls ‘ebony oracle’, is spreading. This method is also used to reveal the invasion of foreign powers and to ‘indicate how these should be dealt with...’.\footnote{Wendy James, \textit{The Listening Ebony: Moral Knowledge, Religion, and Power among the Uduk of Sudan} (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 1988, p. 336.} And among the Gamk people, dreams are used for similar purposes, as I will discuss in detail next week.

I think there is something common to these forms of strategy. In prophecy, possession, divination and dreaming, something important is suddenly revealed, like an epiphany, without one's own intention or consciousness. The point will become clearer when I compare the Gamk ‘strategy’ for dealing with power with the Nuba one. Both the Gamk and the Nuba peoples are living in a state of civil war in the borderlands between northern and southern Sudan. But their strategies are quite different.

The Gamk live in the Ingessana Hills located in the southern region of
the Blue Nile Province. Evans-Pritchard made a field trip to this border region in 1926, when he was 24, and documented the linguistic and cultural heterogeneity among the peoples of the region. He also noted the devastation caused by slave raids. In fact, this is the region where slave raids were rampant until well into this century. Even today, the people and resources of the Ingessana Hills are exploited by the northern Sudanese traders. And also the Gamk villagers’ farmlands are seasonally invaded by large herds of northern pastoralist groups. These invaders regard the Gamk as ‘unbelievers’ and often treat them as second-class citizens. Recently, the Hills have become battlefields of the (second) civil war. In 1990, many villages in the Hills were attacked and plundered by southern guerrillas. So the Gamk have now been exposed to violence from both sides: north and south.

For many decades, the Gamk people have been confronted with enormous anxieties and sufferings. But they insist that dreams can reveal to them potential threats from various kinds of power, so that people can take precautions against imminent dangers. Therefore, dreams are of great concern to the villagers. Actually I had no special interest in dreams when I began my fieldwork, but my field notes were rather disproportionately filled with data on their dreams: such as discussions about dreams among themselves and the social action taken due to dreams. Moreover, there is a special group of comedians or clowns, and these playful people are given the name ‘dreams’. Thus, though very odd and apparently confusing, clowns and dreams are referred to by the same term ‘dreams’ (caalk). Their playful activities are socially and ritually important. It was therefore apparent that I would fail to understand an important aspect of Gamk social life if these dream matters were not adequately dealt with.

There are many serious dream cases concerning various kinds of demons. As I shall discuss in detail next week, these demons are related to people’s experiences of exploitation, violence and seduction. Most of the healing rituals take place when people are visited by dreams and realise that there is a problem which may have dire consequences. Then, people intensively discuss the problem and cross-check many dreams that have visited other villagers. In this process, dreams also act as a touchstone for people to reflect on past experiences and present concerns. And finally,
based on these discussions, healing rituals are carried out.

What is important here is that dreams can reveal latent social problems in the community as well as one’s own moral ambiguities. Equally, dreams enable people to make sense of their situation. So people can transform the situation by ritual means in order to overcome the uncertainties and hardships of life in the borderlands. So their attention to dreams or, I should say, dream consciousness is an important means to deal with power. In other words, in broad daylight the Gamk people may not stand up to powerful dominators and exploiters, but, in the night, they are able to put up a strong resistance to these ‘demons’ that are in fact power in disguise.

Now, let’s turn to the Nuba case. The Nuba Mountains are also located in a more central part of the borderlands between northern and southern Sudan than the Ingessana Hills. They have also been subjected to severe discrimination, exploitation and marginalisation. But, unlike the Gamk, the Nuba people are not keeping a low profile any longer but now taking up arms to fight against the oppressive northern regime.

However, this did not happen suddenly. Political movements among the Nuba people began during the 1950s. In the 1970s, a group of Nuba students formed a new clandestine organisation, called ‘Komolo’. A number of cells have been created throughout the Nuba Mountain areas and beyond. The organisation encouraged its members to join the political organs of the government in order to, they said, ‘control from inside’. It also created cells among the armed forces, the police, the security services and the prison service. But Komolo had a stronger tendency to promote Nuba identity than other Nuba parties. Other parties are trying to become non ethnic but regional or national parties. By 1984, splits in the Nuba movement were becoming more evident. Komolo leaders realised that there was no sign of a lasting solution to the issue of the Nuba people, and opted to join the organisation called SPLA (Sudan People’s Liberation Army) and took up arms.8

Now their activities are no longer secret. Let me briefly quote several passages from an article on the aims and activities of the Komolo

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organisation:

– to maintain the Nuba’s culture and heritage and to make the Nuba culture widely known.
– to fight and eradicate bad traditions in Nuba society which led to dissoluteness and subservience.
– to collect contributions from its members in order to help students who could not continue their study, to support those arrested and provide them lawyers, and, if a member is imprisoned, support his family.
– to establish a library which contains all the books concerned with Black and African literature and liberation movements around the world.
– to spread cultural awareness and to fight against tribalism and religious extremism among the Nuba.

The strategic use of ‘culture’ by disadvantaged ‘indigenous’ peoples is now often seen as an important part of their struggle for physical, economic and political survival; particularly the claim to have a distinctive culture is often considered essential in the court. However, the Nuba people are fighting on the real battlefield, not in the court. So, not surprisingly, their claim to have a distinctive culture has provoked the northern regime to execute so-called ‘holy war’ (Jihad). As a result, some of the Nuba groups have been brought to the brink of extinction. Yet the problem is that to have such an essentialised self-consciousness, whether individual or group, is not only to invite actual attacks but also to have fears for its preservation and a sense of vulnerability, as David Parkin argues. I think this kind of fear is also one of the reasons why arms are taken up by those having self/cultural consciousness among the Nuba.

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Now the point is clear: the Nuba are promoting self and cultural consciousness, whereas the Gamk are promoting dream consciousness. The Nuba are taking up arms, whereas the Gamk are carrying out rituals. In other words, as a form of resistance, either cultural consciousness and arms, or dream consciousness and rituals are employed as a set. Of course, Southern Sudanese groups such as the Dinka and the Nuer are very conscious of prophecy (if not dreams) and, at the same time, they are taking up arms and having cultural consciousness. So the Gamk/Nuba contrast shouldn’t be taken as a typical one.

The problem is that people tend to see this contrast from an evolutionist perspective, as evident in the following questions: Why are Gamk/Nuba strategies so different? Does this simply mean that the Gamk are not yet awaken to such consciousness? Is it a matter of time before they also take up arms and ‘liberate’ themselves, not ritually but actually, from oppression?

Recently, I have had a couple of opportunities of giving a talk about the Gamk people in front of Sudanese political leaders. But, whenever I mention dreams as a means of dealing with power, they laugh, not loudly but laugh. Perhaps, they are more science-minded than some anthropologists. To them not only dreams but divination, spirit possession and any rituals may well appear to be a matter of illusion or superstition, not a real and effective means of political struggle. So it is not surprising that they do not appreciate local religious practices but try to enlighten and liberate their people from ‘superstitions’. The problem is that Western development volunteers and even some anthropologists tend to follow suit. Few anthropologists challenge the enlightenment discourse openly, even though they have studied local religious practices and appreciated their importance. So I would like to state clearly that, for the Gamk, dreams and rituals are useful and even irreplaceable.

But I am not saying that dreams and rituals are useful for everything. In fact, in an armed struggle, dreams and rituals may not work well, but in a moral struggle, they may well work like ‘magic’. I actually witnessed this in 1991. I participated in a communal healing ritual, which was carried out after southern guerrillas had attacked the Gamk villages. I shall deal with this ritual in the fourth lecture. After this ritual, I saw most of the
villagers clearly relieved of painful memories caused by the guerrilla attack. I said to myself, what is happening here? Until that moment, I must say, I was not very serious about Gamk dream consciousness. Indeed, this made me explore more fully the Gamk experience of the shadow, which will be discussed in the third lecture.

There is an important point to be mentioned in relation to epiphanies; that is, a social aspect. The term, epiphany, can be mistaken for an individual or personal experience. But, because one cannot fully control this kind of experience, it is often seen as a divine message or a socially significant event. In the case of prophecy, as Douglas Johnson says, ‘A prophet’s message is not delivered fully formed... It is developed and elucidated through dialogue, debate, and the analysis of events.’ So what is important is the social formation of prophecy rather than prophecy as an event. Likewise, among the Gamk, as I have mentioned, some important dreams prompt people to discuss the problem revealed in dreams, to cross-check many dreams that have visited other people and to reflect on past experiences and present concerns. In this sense, the social formation of the narrative inspired by dreams is more important than the dreams themselves. But such a social significance of dreams was not noticed by earlier British anthropologists at all. Let me briefly review their early studies.

British social anthropologists have generally dismissed dreams as irrelevant to their enquiries because ‘dreams have no social value’. However, the dream was one of the central issues for early British anthropologists. According to Evans-Pritchard, ‘Victorian and Edwardian scholars were intensely interested in religions of rude peoples... because they faced a crisis in their own.’ The dream was, then, the focal point of their arguments. Very roughly, the arguments were that dreams gave man the idea of his own soul or ghost, which in turn gave birth to the idea of spirit and, hence, religion. Since such causal connections, Evans-Pritchard comments, cannot be proved, ‘a logical construction of the scholar’s mind is posited on primitive man, and put forward as the explanation of his

12 Douglas Johnson, ibid., p. ix.
beliefs’.  

In fact, Tylor was misled into saying that ‘primitive man’ cannot distinguish waking perceptions from nightly illusions, or even saying that ‘the entire life of primitives was nothing but a long dream’. Then, Lévy-Bruhl disagreed with Tylor and called his argument a ‘psychological illusion’ theory. Lévy-Bruhl says: Primitives distinguish perceptions in dreams from those in the waking state and ‘even recognise different categories of dreams, and attribute a varying degree of validity to them... Instead of saying, as people do, that primitives believe in what they perceive in the dream, although it is but a dream, I should say that they believe in it because it is a dream. The “illusion” theory does not suffice.’ He then asks, ‘How do we account for the fact that, knowing well that the dream is a dream, they should nevertheless rely upon it?’ He argues: ‘This cannot be explained as a mere psychological process effected in the individual.’ He then suggests: ‘we are obliged to take into account the collective representations which make both perception and the dream something entirely different for the primitive from what they would be for us’. Then he delivers a strong criticism of positivistic discourse:

Our perception is directed towards the apprehension of an objective reality, and this reality alone. It eliminates all that might be of merely subjective importance, and in this it is in contrast with the dream. ...But with the primitives there is no such violent contrast as this. Their perception is oriented in another fashion, and in it that which we call objective reality is united and mingled with, and often regulated by, mystic, imperceptible elements which we nowadays characterise as subjective. In this way, in fact, it is closely related to the dream.

This passage was, however, misunderstood, or perhaps simply not read, by most of the anthropologists. Even in a recent book on anthropological

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14 Evans-Pritchard, ibid., pp. 23-5
studies of dreams (such as the one by Tedlock), Lévy-Bruhl’s arguments about dreams are still misunderstood or perhaps not read at all.\textsuperscript{17}

An exception is Evans-Pritchard, who is a self-confessed diligent reader of Lévy-Bruhl’s books.\textsuperscript{18} Certainly, as Evans-Pritchard argues, Lévy-Bruhl’s disproportionate representations of ‘irrational’ and ‘mystical’ aspects of the life of ‘primitives’ give an exaggerated impression of the difference between ‘them’ and ‘us’.\textsuperscript{19} But, as I have suggested, we can also read in his writings a radical critique of modern European dogmatic thought.

In the 1910s, from a different perspective, dreams became again the focus of interest. W.H.R. Rivers encountered Freud’s dream theory in his \textit{Traumdeutung} in the course of treating shell-shocked soldiers at Maghull Military Hospital, and this led Seligman, who had joined Rivers in this wartime psychiatric work, to send Malinowski in the Trobriand Islands a letter encouraging him to work on dreams.\textsuperscript{20} Rivers may have considered dreams indicative of the complexity of the human mind.\textsuperscript{21} But, it is doubtful that Seligman took the same kind of interest in dreams as Rivers.\textsuperscript{22} In any case, their studies of dreams had little impact on other anthropologists. After Evans-Pritchard’s account of Zande dreams and Raymond Firth’s account of Tikopia dreams, British social anthropologists almost stopped dealing with them.\textsuperscript{23}

Mary Douglas says, EP admired Lévy-Bruhl and took his work as his starting point. She also says, EP’s ‘life plan of intellectual effort had already been mapped out very clearly in the three essays’ published in Cairo

\textsuperscript{17} Tedlock, ibid., p. 2.
\textsuperscript{19} Evans-Pritchard, ibid, pp. 78-99.
\textsuperscript{22} See, for example, C.G. Seligman, ‘Note on dreams’, \textit{Sudan Notes and Records} 4, 1921, pp. 156-61, and. ‘Anthropology and Psychology: Presidential Address’, \textit{Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute} 54, 1924, pp. 13-46.
in the 1930s.\textsuperscript{24} I do not entirely agree with her, but I do agree that the following statement, made in 1934, may be taken as a summary of the theoretical interests and the field in which EP intended to work:

...any sound or sight may reach the brain of a person without entering into his consciousness. We say that he ‘hears’ or ‘sees’ it but does not ‘notice’ it. In a stream of sense impressions only a few become conscious impressions and these are selected on account of their greater affectivity. A man’s interests are the selective agents and these are to a greater extent socially determined for it is generally the value attached to an object by all members of a social group that directs the attention of an individual towards it.\textsuperscript{25}

In this quite ethno-methodological statement, EP suggests that knowledge is socially constructed through selective attention directed by society. On this ground, Mary Douglas says EP intended his work as a major contribution to a sociological theory of knowledge. But EP also suggests that any sociology of knowledge goes together with ‘sociology of ignorance’. Towards the end of the same essay, he mentions: ‘Perhaps Lévy-Bruhl’s most important contribution to sociology is to have shown that ignorance, like knowledge, is often socially determined...’\textsuperscript{26} To EP, probably, social anthropology is not simply a way of studying otherness but also a way of realising one’s own socially constructed ignorance through studying otherness.

Here, I think EP is suggesting a \textit{raison d’être} of anthropological thinking or, I would say, ‘anthropological consciousness’. And, my argument is that the anthropological way of realising oneself through otherness is quite similar to ‘dream consciousness’ or what the Gamk do with dreams, in the sense that it is a way of realising one’s own socially constructed ignorance through the experience of otherness.

Anthropological consciousness and dream consciousness both involve imagining. But, like the term ‘epiphany’, the term ‘imagination’ can easily

\begin{footnotes}
\item[26] Ibid., p. 34.
\end{footnotes}
be mistaken for an intentional operation. Ruskin considers, ‘the true function of the imagination is, paradoxically, not to imagine – in the sense of inventing or transforming – but to see: to see the reality which is concealed by habit and the phenomenal world’. Rodney Needham suggests, ‘imaginative consciousness’ occurs when the brain is in a state of inattention or when it is not focused on a deliberative task. David Parkin notes, moreover, it is not essential to be self-conscious in order to be creative. In this sense, the lectures seek to explore Gamk ‘creativity’ in dealing with power and pain. To return to the Gamk-Nuba contrast, I would suggest, while Gamk dream consciousness may make people aware of socially constructed ignorance, Nuba cultural consciousness makes it rather difficult for them to become aware of it.

Finally, let me now give you an outline of what I am going to talk about in the remaining four lectures. But, at the beginning of each lecture, I shall also try to summarise previous lectures in order to make it easy for those who have missed them to follow my argument. So please do come even if you miss one or two.

In the next lecture, entitled “Gamk” and “Ingessana”: the making and unmaking of identities in the borderlands’, I deal with two different kinds of notion of identity. One is the identity formed in relation to the outside world; that is what we usually mean by the term ‘ethnic identity’. The other one is the identity formed in relation to Gamkland. I call it ‘ontological identity’. I first explore the people’s historical and political experiences in relation to the outside world. I then suggest that one of the reasons why Gamk villagers have been able to ‘survive’ in this precarious borderland, despite influences and threats from the outside world, is because they have constantly reconstructed themselves in relation to

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changing situations. In this relation, I explore the shifting implications of the term ‘Gamk’ and examine the problematic notion of ‘identity’. Then, I turn from external problems to internal social issues among the Gamk: that is, how they can maintain social relations and village unity, while they have been immersed in political and economic discourses from the outside world. I then introduce the Gamk notion, *korek e gaam*, which I translate ‘the discourse of the Hill (which also means the community)’. This is the idea that the Hill provides rains and fertility on condition that sociality, reciprocity and unity are duly promoted among the villagers. I show how they are committed to it by describing their seasonal, agricultural and festival activities. On such occasions, reciprocity and co-operation are vigorously promoted, and the hill community is revitalised. I argue that their commitment to the Hill discourse should also be recognised as an attempt to defend themselves against external powers. I also argue that they would have been unable to share dreams if sociality was not kept promoted.

In the third lecture, entitled ‘Kuuth – Shadow (self): ancestors, demons, clowns...and moral imagination’, I turn to an ‘invisible’ aspect of their world or, in Gamk, *kuuth* ‘the Shadow’ (which shares the stem with the well-known Nuer term *kwoth* ‘spirit’). The Gamk term ‘the Shadow’ is used in various ways: the human Shadow, the people in Shadow (ancestors) or the world in Shadow (which is inhabited by a variety of agents such as demons, the dead, the deity or God). The human Shadow is vital to one’s survival. It operates to bring dreams, which can reveal a hidden aspect of the world. It also discloses one’s own dilemmas and problems, which one may not have been fully aware of. Importantly, the Shadow is considered not as an integral part of the self but as ‘a lifelong stranger within’, like the physiological metaphor ‘anti-body’. Why the Gamk insist that the dropped Shadow must be recaptured in order to survive is not because it should be ‘integrated’ into the self or put into the control of the self. But it is because the Shadow can open the otherwise closed and self-centred person to others and a wider world including the Shadow world. Furthermore, I suggest that there is another ‘stranger within’ the community: that is, a group of clowns called ‘dreams’ (let me call them ‘Dream players’), who play the leading role at certain rituals and act as mediators and transgressors as
well as whimsical clowns. I discuss many curious similarities between characteristics of the Shadow in dreams and the Dream players in broad daylight. I then elucidate a special kind of experience; that is, just as the Shadow in dreams enables people to suspend the taken-for-granted world, so the Dream players, by performing their mimicry play, enable people to see themselves and their social values from a different perspective. I also suggest many similarities between my understanding of the Gamk clowns and EP’s discussion of the Zande trickster, Ture.

In the fourth lecture, entitled ‘The sociality of dreams: sharing nightmares and healing rituals’, I deal with a number of cases concerning dreams and illnesses. First, I illustrate how such a case is treated by different types of healers and how dreams come to be shared as mutual knowledge among the villagers. Then, I examine each case. In particular, I document in detail recent serious cases concerning demons derived from people’s recent experiences: such as exploitative mechanised farm labour, the seductions of luxury goods, the encounters with alien pastoralists and the attacks by southern guerrillas. Most of the healing rituals take place when people are visited by dreams and realise that there is a problem that may have dire consequences. On these occasions, people intensively discuss the problem and crosscheck many dreams that have visited other villagers. In this process, dreams also act as a touchstone for people to reflect on past experiences and present moral concerns. Then all such stories are woven together into a narrative. By investigating the formation of such dream narratives in detail and elucidating the complex temporality involved, I show how the narrative and the ritual together enable the Gamk to make most of the situations repairable, to make a new situation acceptable and, eventually, to make life itself worth living. Finally, I suggest, the process of dream-sharing, moral-reflection, narrative-formation and ritual-healing is not only peculiar to the Gamk. I compare Gamk cases with the case of nation-wide moral-reflection, or soul-searching, in the formation of the Diana story and a media-led ritual-healing process occurring two years ago, and argue that nightmares have to be shared in order to find a cure.

In the fifth and final lecture, entitled ‘“Con-science” under threat?: power and shadow-selves in anthropology’, I first try to reconsider some
important issues in broader contexts. For example: the comparative study of the notions of self in relation to the status of dreams; the Gamk notion of Shadow and the psychoanalytic notion of the Unconscious or alter ego. Then, I reconsider the notion of the Shadow and its relation to the nature of knowledge involved. The notions of ‘shadow’ or ‘darkness’ are always used negatively in positivistic discourse. I ask what kind of world, and what kind of knowledge, then, modern European thought has tried to produce. I answer by asking what kind of knowledge anthropology could claim to produce. Then, by turning again to the Dream players, I suggest that part of the knowledge the anthropologist tends to produce can be closer to that produced by the Dream players, as well as by dreams in sleep, than to positivistic knowledge. It is because both the anthropologist and the Dream players enable people to know the unknowable through defamiliarisation: that is, ‘making ourselves (and what we take for granted) strange’. It is the knowledge that should be considered complementary, if not contrary, to positivistic knowledge.

Finally, I suggest shifting statuses of otherness in anthropology and shifting implications of ‘we’ in anthropological writings with the increase of non-western anthropologists. And I argue that the recent repression of otherness in anthropological discourse has reduced its self-critical power of defamiliarisation. Does this lead to a ‘shadowless’ positive world? Richard Rorty proposes considering ‘a picture of intellectual and moral progress as a history of increasingly useful metaphors rather than of increasing understanding of how things really are’.30 The Gamk villagers would also agree with him, if his ‘metaphor’ were translated as the Shadow. In this sense, probably we all need to keep on ‘recapturing the Shadow’.