



# THE LEGACY OF BRONISŁAW MALINOWSKI IN PRESENT-DAY SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES:

*On the Centenary of the Publication of  
Argonauts of the Western Pacific*

September 26-27, 2022

Kraków

I N S T I T U T E O F S O C I O L O G Y J A G I E L L O N I A N U N I V E R S I T Y

The hundredth anniversary of the publication of the monograph, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* presents an excellent opportunity to reflect upon its significance for contemporary social sciences and humanities. This was Bronisław Malinowski's first report on his Trobriand Islands fieldwork during which the most important assumptions of his ethnography were formulated and tested. Many important works have already been devoted to the life and work of Bronisław Malinowski. Recognized in first order should be the biography by Michael Young (also published in Polish), as well as works by Adam Kuper, Petr Skalnik, Robert Thornton, and other historians of anthropology.

For many years, projects housed in the Section on Social Anthropology at the Institute of Sociology of the Jagiellonian University have played a very important role in this field. Those projects were inspired by Malinowski's student, Andrzej Waligórski (to whom we owe the publication of *Argonauts of the Western Pacific in Polish*), and subsequently developed by Andrzej Paluch and his associates. These endeavors have also included a reflection on the Polish context for the emergence of Malinowski's anthropology; the philosophical foundations of his works and other theoretical threads have been traced, among others, in the volume, *Malinowski Between Two Worlds: The Polish Roots of an Anthropological Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, 1988). Mention should also be made of the 13-volume Polish edition of the collected works of Malinowski (directed first by Andrzej Paluch, and later by Janusz Mucha) as well as the publication of his *Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*, annotated and edited by Grażyna Kubica. This conference is thus inscribed in a long-established tradition of research conducted at the Institute of Sociology of the Jagiellonian University.

We invite you to reflect upon how the life and the oeuvre of Bronisław Malinowski influenced the social sciences and the humanities. We further pose the question of how the *Argonauts* author can be read today from the perspective of current research trends and the everchanging social and cultural reality. We aim for a critical expansion of the interpretational framework of Malinowski's body of work by referring to the achievements and analytical tools of the social sciences and humanities.

**We propose the following themes:**

**1. Reflection on the Polish context of the life and work of Bronisław Malinowski**

Although Malinowski's biography has already been much researched and described, there is still room for new analyses of his life and heritage, especially in the context of his relationships and collaboration with his Polish students, including Feliks Gross, Józef Obrębski, and Andrzej Waligórski.

**2. The importance of Bronisław Malinowski for the formation of the identity of the humanities and social sciences in Poland**

We encourage reflection upon how Malinowski influenced Polish academia. What caused his work to resonate to a greater or lesser degree in various disciplines of the humanities and social sciences? How has interest in his work changed over time?

**3. The importance of Bronisław Malinowski's method of intensive fieldwork for the methodological and theoretical development of social sciences and humanities**

Malinowski's first fieldwork monograph, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, set a pattern for later ethnographies. We invite discussion on how this pattern later changed while continuing to maintain the essence and spirit of his ethnography. To what extent is his ethnographic oeuvre still inspiring – both textually and visually? It is also worth considering how this anthropologist's *Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term* can be viewed from the perspective of the contemporary development of autoethnography.

#### **4. Reinterpretation of the legacy of Bronisław Malinowski in the context of contemporary social and philosophical thinking in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries**

We aim to analyze how Malinowski's work can be read in the context of contemporary social sciences and the humanities. How has it influenced mid-range theories in relation to economic anthropology (critiques of capitalism), linguistics (theories of linguistic pragmatics), or other fields such as psychology or sociology?

#### **5. The concept of "practical anthropology" by Bronisław Malinowski and his vision of the role of anthropologists in a changing world vis-à-vis contemporary problems with engagement by scholars**

In the 1930s, Malinowski's "field" was mainly Africa and a subject of his reflection was the problems resulting from contacts between Africans and colonizers. Among other aspects, he took under consideration the governing of African nations. Nowadays, various forms of engagement by scholars and their political entanglements are subject to critical reflection. Hence there is a need to examine and evaluate Malinowski's work from the viewpoint of contemporary thinking on multiculturalism and postcolonialism.

#### **6. The concept of sociocultural change in the late works of Bronisław Malinowski in the context of present-day theories of culture**

Malinowski's later writings, devoted to the problems of cultural change, illustrate an evolution of the anthropologist's views on the relationship between the culture of colonizers and that of colonized communities. His perspective was informed by the dialectics of cultural influences. The matter of cultural change still remains one of the most important topics in contemporary theories of culture. We propose looking at this body of Malinowski's texts on culture against the backdrop of 21<sup>st</sup> century theoretical diagnoses made in this regard.

#### **7. The author of *Argonauts of the West Pacific* as an iconic figure in cultural texts**

It is worth analyzing the literary (e.g., Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Agneta Pleijel), theatrical (e.g., Krzysztof Garbaczewski), and cinematic representations (in documentary and feature films) of Bronisław Malinowski. How is he

represented and what underlies his popularity as a hero of cultural texts?

**We encourage representatives of the social sciences and humanities to participate in the conference. Please send abstracts of your papers (250 word maximum, in Polish or English) to the following address: malinowski2022@uj.edu.pl by April 30, 2022.**

**Papers may be delivered in Polish or English.**

**The conference fee is 300 PLN (including meals and conference materials).**

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