"Fifty Islands That I Have Never Seen and Never Set Foot on"

The Importance of Bronislaw Malinowski for Comparative Literature

Maja Nazaruk

Introduction

A thinker who infiltrated the discourse of (post-) modern literature, history, psychoanalysis, without failing to notice his numerous contributions to anthropological studies and *culturologie*, Bronislaw Malinowski – in the nostalgic drama in his insect-ridden tent in the heart of "savage" villages and primitive societies – has been a vociferously biting critic, "Oriental Father Figure" and cross-disciplinary mover and shaker. The author of this article wishes to advance common understanding of Bronislaw Malinowski in the context of literary studies.

Namely, it is my aim to demonstrate why Malinowski's writings merit to be co-opted into the literary corpus, an argument which strengthens similar echoes, constructed by Clifford Geertz (1988), Robert Thornton (1985), Andrzej Zawadzki (2001), Grazyna Kubica-Heller (2002), Harry C. Payne (1981), and others. We have unquestionably seen that his writing contains fragmentary literary aspects, *enretissés* with cultural lingo and much empirical and linguistic data; however, the importance of Bronislaw Malinowski for comparative literature has not been directly examined.

I am interested in showing that by telling us about the 50 islands, which we have never seen and never set foot on, Malinowski opened Pandora's box of questions for culture-driven inquiry and exploded society's armchair imagination, concerning ancestral roots of civilization.

In a second line of investigation, I will show thematically the issue areas which make Malinowski's writing very much in sync with debates in modern literature: these will concern thematic aspects in his writing (nostalgia, erotic, freedom, and civilization) as well as strictly literary culture study domains of analysis (reflexivity, rewriting of experience, hybridity, transtextuality, reference).

It will, hopefully, become clear that Malinowski's travels to the Trobriand Islands in 1914 have shaped the becoming (*devenir*) in the humanities and mirror the permanence of the very issues which concern and haunt modern comparative literature.

It is not clear how to accomplish this agenda, considering that Malinowski has been on a lonely endeavor appreciated only by a handful of anthropologists. While his work has been a rite of passage in academia in that it trespassed human boundaries of what is possible in research, Malinowski is a read for cross-disciplinary specialists in the field who combine fieldwork, analysis of identity, we-they cleavages, and subliminal interpretations of the subconscious.

Malinowski offers a corpus which is difficult for reading: his diary is chopped with short indicative statements, memories, and flashbacks, tension from his sensual and sexual position, arrogant culture-specific irritation at alterity[1]. The writing is not cohesive and it is hardly "prose-writing," although it meets the criteria of intimate writing with instinctual drives and self-projections. The diary is a travelogue and it would probably earn more currency in current blog-writing cultures than at the time of publication, although it has lent itself to stimulating a *froissement piquant* in conservative academia.

The cultural monographs ("Argonauts of the Western Pacific," "Coral Gardens," "Paternity among a Savage Society," "Customs in Melanesian Society") are not any less "easy" to read for literary persons. As anthropological examinations of cultural phenomena they are "heavy" and "obtuse," constructed on terminology which is alien to literary experts, because they have not invented themselves as anthropologists to become readers.

Nevertheless, this corpus is extremely rich and can be deconstructed in a coherent fashion. Once the message is decrypted, the surrounding word cleavages and linguistic structures provide an untouched pristine world, which only sense, curiosity, and intuition can penetrate. To embark with Malinowski and to fly with him, a reader needs to embark on an epistemological mission, underpinned by a sense of vivid inventiveness.

A more conservative view would have it that Malinowski has become at the very least a transtextual reference to 1) methodological research and 2) field writing. Whatever the case, I am interested in stepping one step further to include him into literary

1 The argument on the myth has been accomplished by Ivan Strenski (1987). He argued that the roots of Malinowski's myth-making can be traced to German idealism and the notion of *Lebensphilosophie*, which he preferred in comparison to the English culture with its "lack of enthusiasm, idealism, purpose" (1987). Germans had "purpose, possibly lousey … but there is an élan, there is a sense of mission" (Kubica-Heller 2002: 208). Strenski (1987) mentions in particular the concept of *lili'u* (myth-making leitmotif), which Malinowski had co-opted as a vehicle for his humanist and romantic project. The *lili'u* were important stories told in the circle of Trobriand society.

myth-making, as a form of self-conscious pursuit into human evolution (society and mind), desire, and alterity. Aside from an interest in the object of study (anthropology), Malinowski becomes a *subject* for analysis, interpretation, and storytelling.

Imagination

Malinowski's importance relies in his ability to draw within us powerful images, sensations, concepts invoking faraway worlds, presenting to our senses things that have never been perceived in reality. Malinowski's timeliness lies in his schedule for his adventure: by engaging in his writing he was bringing into our living rooms experiences of the exotic, which have never been told before. While this is common currency in today's world, linked through phone lines and Google, Malinowski's adventures photographed the world for a community at home, which lived to hear his stories.

Not only did Malinowski implant images of "savage tribes," "primitive societies," "exchange systems" (*kula*), "shell bracelets," "matrilineality" but he also transgressively pierced through some of the most intimate matters of these societies, concerning paternity, kinship, sex, and gender. These interventions showed audacity and courage as well as inquisitiveness, playing on the horizon of expectations of the repressed societies at home, who were at a literary *carrefour* addressing Freud's writings on *libido* and the subconscious.

From a technical perspective, Malinowski's imagination represented a sort of resourcefulness at addressing new unforeseen circumstances, such as finding himself ousted from Europe in 1914 due to his passport of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, or inventing methods to fight boredom while tenting in Papua New Guinea mainly by reading bad novels, playing with "boys" and the "hooligans" (Polish: *dranie*), and documenting every stage of his adventure in the much private space allowed by the diary. Malinowski's imagination pushed him to become a visionary and invent a new tradition, claim the territory, and become its chair at the London School of Economics (chair of Social Anthropology).

If one considers imagination to mean creative ability, it is clear that his diary became the ultimate shock of the anthropological community, shaking it even after his death with his provocative *auto-dévoilements*. Malinowski left a gift at his death and the diary is the reason for much confusion in cultural studies. But it is crucial for one reason only: that it deconstructed ethnographic research as a subjective science, rejecting the rigid, fixed, inflexible structures of objective methodological research.

Malinowski's text is replete with examples of imaginary élan, vital from descriptions of participant observation (e.g., the Trobriand men loading the boats onto the lagoon and other elements of *kula*, note-taking) to descriptions of physical features of local topography and shooting stars. The aesthetic qualities of the descriptions are profound, touching the inner core and ascending into a unique plane of apprehending reality. They are translatable with difficulty between the Polish-English patois in which the original text is crafted but project the vertical aspect of "soul" and "introspection." It ought to be added that the Polish diary published by Kubica-Heller (2002) includes a number of poems written during years of exile, crystalizing the sense of existential immediacy with a transhuman sentiment for life.

Malinowski's imaginary leaps were meaning-producing and led to a heightened understanding and knowledge. He provided narratives (stories) which deployed the opening into a discourse – by role playing in his own storytelling, Malinowski circumscribed a discipline and became its sole guardian. The scenarios which were created in the Trobriands were like make-believe situations for the inexperienced, hence heightening their desirability and originality. Malinowski's experience was better than pure fantasy and fired the imagination of the community.

Nostalgia in Exile

One of the features of Malinowski's narrative writing has been his nostalgia tied to his exilic position bursting with liminality, or the state of consciously or unconsciously being suspended "on the threshold" between existential planes. Malinowski's liminality had its roots in his ethnic isolation – he was a Polish national with an Austro-Hungarian passport who was making a career in Britain and North America. He was largely misunderstood, and he often downplayed his ethnic background to free himself from the chains of ethnic belonging, to prevent stereotyping, just the same stereotyping which he used to circumscribe the position of the natives, the double-edged sword.

Malinowski's "homesickness that causes physical pinning and a wistful regret of the past" (Dickens 1979), was a reaction to the possibility of identity dissolution. By reaffirming his ties he was escaping disorientation, acquiring coordinates but also accessing the possibility of new perspectives. It

was in a sense a submergence in a period of scrutiny for central values and axioms, leading to self-understanding, reflection, and behavioral evaluation.

To use the vocabulary on nostalgia by Tamara Wagner (2002), Malinowski is hardly "affected, sentimental or falsifying the past through strategies of forgetting rather than recollecting." There is definitely no sense that this quality in Malinowski is in any way pathological or pathetic, as suggested by some researchers (Lowenthal 1989). In fact, Malinowski's nostalgia actualizes his human dimension and depicts his strength of character for having balanced these tipsy emotions. It is a workable term that designates a set of feelings. Malinowski is created as more subtle than before for admitting to these transient moments of attachment. It must be said that Malinowski's nostalgia is positive: he is not crying for the times lost, he is far from being pathological but only proudly and rightfully admitting his connectedness and yearnings to another metaphysical, cultural, and social plane.

In his diaries, there is a very pronounced outcry for his origins, which he relates to his hometown Cracow. The ancestral meaning of this city is quite important in Polish culture. Cracow was the city where kings of Poland have been buried and where they held their reign. Cracow's university dates back to 1364, being one of the oldest ones in Europe. It has until now competed for first place status with Warsaw. Its long-winded traditions determine the caliber and acumen of its students, nurturing upcoming elites into the world. Cracow was an academic centre, just like London, Bologna, or Paris.

To emerge from Cracow university offered an elite position, which Malinowski could not completely consume when he went to the West, because it was considered "Other" and perhaps even related to the backwardness of the East European economy, its lower mongering classes, and folkloric peasantry. Poland, using Said's typologies of self-other, represented the place of a pastoral novel, not a busy crossing point for cultural exchange of an *affaré* kind, and it certainly carries these stereotypes until today for the untrained or uncultured mind, who does not see that it produced thinkers, artists, playwrights who mediated its very sensitive buffer position between East and West. Malinowski (cited in Young 2004: 3) expresses his nostalgia for his university town when he attests:

> If I had the power of evoking the past, I should like to lead you back some twenty years to an old Slavonic university town – I mean the town of Cracow, the ancient capital of Poland and the seat of the oldest university in Eastern Europe. I could then show you a student leaving the medieval college buildings, obviously in some distress of mind, hugging, however, under his arm, as the only solace of his troubles, three green volumes … *The Golden Bough*.

The very image of a young Malinowski, platonically in love with Frazer's "Golden Bough" (1890) while sitting under an arcade of the great university gardens, or before the steps to its medieval churches on the cobblestone roads of the Old City, projects the image of Malinowski's sensibility and acute attachment both to his hometown, to his university, and to his new nascent infatuation – anthropology. Going to London consisted of an overlap of traditions and Malinowski was intellectually and personally prepared because he experienced the world of academia at this same level of concentration. He could not refuse his roots, his nostalgia for his younger days and its rightful place is substantiated by this commentary.

Malinowski's yearning for the past in an idealized form is a rewriting of the tropes in Romantic literature. His "pain, ache" (*ἄλγος – álgos*) at homecoming (*νόστος – nóstos*) is, however, the marker of something new which is happening in the advent of a globalized world, which Malinowski anticipated and foreran.

Malinowski's nostalgic attachment extended itself in the diary through repeated comments about his mother – who was the tie to the homeland as well as the tie to his heart. One's attachment to a mother represents a cultural leitmotif in certain cultural circles, if not in all cultures. In Malinowski's case, the relationship has been strengthened through years of reading aloud of texts, which the mother carried out at his bed when he was ill. The mother demonstrated maternal love when she filled the gaps in his educational curriculum, when he was away from school, ill, or living in the country side in the Carpathian Mountains. She read aloud to him mathematical treaties until his early years in university. The junction between the object of love (his studies) and the person whom he loved the most (his mother) created a unique bond, which was unbreakable and which dictated his attached whispers and gasps in the diary.

Some critics have argued that Malinowski's description of "mother," "homeland," and his affects were largely clichéd, generalized, and stereotypical (Rapport 1990; Zawadzki 2001). I would argue that Malinowski's message has been lost in translation and that the poor, inadequately translated and censored copies of his writing, disseminated by his former wife, have done violence to our understanding of the person behind the mask. For instance,

only the last two notebooks of his travels have been translated in English in the diary, when in fact there had been an entire corpus of intimate writing produced before the Trobriand Islands, unreleased in the "official languages" (the diary from Mailu, the British period, the Canary Islands, etc). In addition, the French translation of the diary has been based on the English translation, furthermore reducing effectiveness of translation and resulting in semantic and cultural loss of meaning. An example from an undisclosed excerpt on this topic is found in his Polish diary (Kubica-Heller 2002: ?♦?):

> Metaphysical thoughts – hopeless pessimism. "Warte nur, balde ruhest du auch" [Goethe's "Wanderers Nachtlied": "Wait a little and you will rest in peace"]. Consolation in the thought of immanence. Evil, destruction – on a morning walk, I see a butterfly with colored wings which dies a poor death. – The beauty of the external world is a worthless play-thing. Mother i s n o l o n g e r. My life pierced with pain – half of my joy perished. – I feel all the time regret and terrible sorrow, the same when I was a child and I parted with Mom. I defend myself with shallow formulas, I close my eyes – but tears all the time (26. 06. 1918).

Nostalgia and liminality are features of literature in today's society and Malinowski was among the pioneers who experienced geographic displacement, cultural dislocation, and divorce from roots and new fads. Malinowski transtextual presence – his wanderlust and his border-crossing persona – explain the tensions within this set of feelings, because they are always opposed by something else, more important. Yet at the end, the narrator returns from his odyssey and emit a tear for times past. This leitmotif haunts modern literature since the times of Homer. Malinowski's storytelling presents one added variable to the puzzle of human understanding and recreates a sort of myth.[2]

Erotic and Sensuality

Self-revealing aspects of the diary open a venue for the exploration of the *erotic* in Malinowski's biography. The sexual sphere has occupied much space in his writing, consciously and subconsciously. Malinowski himself admits in a preface to a thesis on "Hunger in Tribal Society" that the two fundamental instincts in society are sex and hunger, and, furthermore, mentions that he himself has written several books with the word "sex" contained in the title concerning the former. While this may be British tongue-in-cheek humor, it is clear that he was a reader of psychoanalysis and knew Freud's theories, which can be extrapolated from his in-depth analysis of kinship and paternity in "savage" society and his work on tribal customs in Melanesia.

Malinowski's letters manifest philosophical contemplation concerning the aesthetics of sexual desire, sensuality, and romantic love. Malinowski is not debating erotism – there is no clear-cut thesis on the subject matter – however, he is expressing subconscious slurs of fancy and fondness, lust and predilection, being consumed entirely by his appetites, while performing his meticulous ethnographic duties of data collection. For instance, this is what he says about the interference of his feelings for his wife vs. the indigenous women (Kubica-Heller 2002):

> Sometimes I shake from cataleptic thoughts thinking about E. R. M. I always try to turn the problem around and think about her and about whether men's bodies awaken in her the same crude instincts. This pours cold water on me and I physically shudder (30. 05. 1918).

Malinowski attempts to find harmonious unification not only between bodies but between knowledge and pleasure (Kubica-Heller 2002):

> I have to have an absolute system of forbidden formalities: I can't smoke, I can't touch a woman with suberotic intentions; I can't betray E. R. M. in thoughts and remind myself about past relationships, or think about future ones (05. 05. 1918).

Malinowski's letters to Elsie Masson, documented in a book by his youngest daughter Helena Wayne, show a desire to elope, confide, and to grow by the bedside of the beloved through her illness (Multiple sclerosis) and to her death (Wayne 1995). The two volumes of letters between Bronio and "Elżusia" (Polish variant of Elsie) chronicle the meetings and extraordinary marriage in the period 1910–1935.

As an opposition to this, using Bataille's vocabulary, one may say that Malinowski's entanglement with indigenous women in the Trobriands – a treason of the feelings described and entrusted by the marriage – showed a way of dissolving boundaries between human subjectivity and humanity. There was no clear sign of crossing lines, however (to our knowledge), but it is evident that Malinowski's di-

2 The argument on the myth has been accomplished by Ivan Strenski (1987). He argued that the roots of Malinowski's myth-making can be traced to German idealism and the notion of *Lebensphilosophie*, which he preferred to the English culture with its "lack of enthusiasm, idealism, purpose" (1987: ?♦?). Germans had " purpose, possibly lousey … but there is an élan, there is a sense of mission" (Kubica-Heller 2002: 208). Strenski (1987: ?♦?) mentions in particular the concept of *lili'u* (myth-making leitmotif), which Malinowski had co-opted as a vehicle for his humanist and romantic project. The *lili'u* were important stories told in the circle of Trobriand society.

ary is imbued with desire, conserved in the material artefacts left by the scribbles. An example of such a "mental slip" – a form of literary transgression driven by the *Wunsch* – is Malinowski's self-analysis before a women-figure in the tropics (Kubica-Heller 2002):

> A beautiful and well-built girl is walking in front of me. I am looking at the interplay of muscles on her back, her overall forms, her legs, and the beauty of her body, that much hidden from us Whites, spectacular: I am overwhelmed. I will possibly never see the play of muscles on the back of my own wife, as much as on this animal (19.04.1918).

The description is endearing. It is a sensual piece of narrative poetry, capturing the beauty of the Otherness, which Malinowski's Other also ostracized and called by epithets such as "bloody niggers." Other is, therefore, mitigated, brought closer through the eye (I) gaze and human touch, introduced into our inner-depth as subject of desire, being simultaneously object of hate. It is not important that Malinowski is looking at a woman who is an ideal of beauty, because the gender is not important. His attraction goes beyond gender. It looks towards a common humanity in all of us, and a platonic ideal which transcends maps and which he found in this portrait.

On the surface, Malinowski's transgressions (see, e.g., Kubica-Heller 2002; Diary 19.04.1918) seem to undervalue the merit of his theoretical work, by documenting the weakness vis-à-vis taboos, presupposing a man in conflict with himself. It would be, however, foolish not to judge Malinowski as a complex human, with solid drives and impulses, of which this is a mere token. Malinowski's triumph lies in the harmonious mitigation of such voracious drives and the canalization of this energy towards an industrious career and engaged personal life.

Freedom and Civilization

Malinowski is author of a largely unknown and unconsumed political science treaty published in 1944, under the title "Freedom and Civilization." This work completes Malinowski's contribution of engagement to the community by calling for an abolishment of totalitarianism, as his reaction to the Nazi regime. The work oversees the foundations of the concepts of "freedom," "slavery," and their salvation in a new democratic order. There is absolutely no link to this work in any of the literature mentioned by literary criticism. This is in part explained by the fact that it does not fall into the agenda of neither literary studies nor anthropology, being hence "obsolete." However, the powerful human values and rights agenda around the notion of "war and peace," "peace-building," "peace and conflict studies," which Malinowski is presenting, is highly idealistic (although rooted in Hobbesian social contract) and very much visionary for his time. It completes the *esquisse* of his heterogeneous portrait of social and cultural engagement.

The constitution of the text begins with a prelude which addresses the issue of freedom ("Why we fight"). Malinowski identifies and promotes freedom at the level of semantics and its relation to subjective experience. By designating a fork between freedom, values, and needs, he portrays a portrait of freedom in all aspects of bondage and cultural determinism. The agora is discussed as the place where freedom and democracy is valued, without failing to mention its antecedent forms such as the nation-state and nation-tribe. Finally, Malinowski addresses the question of war and slavery.

Hybridity, Transtextuality, and Reference

Malinowski's contribution to comparative literature emanates from his unique ability to infiltrate discourse in areas such as legal studies, philosophy, modern languages, and political science. Malinowski has become over time the reference to many such works for the following reasons:

1. The demonstrated research methods which were co-opted by the social sciences (fieldwork, participant observation).
2. The diary which opened Pandora's box on intimate, confessional writing, destroying the premises of objective scientific works by showing the need to inject subjective values into the research process.

Malinowski has acquired authority, as he gained prestige by joining the ranks of international programs, teaching not only at the London School of Economics and at Yale University– his home institutions – but also by holding seminars in Rome, Oslo, and Paris. One such institution, which recognized his work, was the University of Harvard, who awarded him in 1937 an honorary degree.

Malinowski's reference position is interesting. Despite his wide acclaim he is largely unknown and ignored by the uneducated population who receives mass education in university, unless the students brush against anthropology in their course work. Even then, experience shows that his message is not

disseminated as clearly as would have been hoped for. He represents belonging to a largely unknown nation in the eyes of a self-centred ignorant Western perspective in an Edward Said sort of argument, as mentioned earlier.

Malinowski is only a delectable subject to the ardent specialists, who try to unearth the link between writing and ethnography, or ethnographic methods. It is clear that there are such and they have done great leaps to advance familiarity with this obscure subject – many of them come from institutions which Malinowski is affiliated to. Yet, much normative work must be done to apply Malinowski to the curriculum, so that he would be studied on an equal footing along with Copernicus, Chopin, Marie Curie.

This unfamiliarity is also due to Malinowski's chosen field of study: anthropology is outside the court of Walmart consumers. It takes some discretely refined individuals, who are globe-trotters and cultural specialists (intrigued by population transfers, *métissages ethniques*, language, borders, folklore), to be interested in what he had to say and the terms he coined. Even then he is a victim of academics, who try to pigeon-hole knowledge and do not appreciate the "idea of him" as a blurred genre, an experiment in social science. That topic, Clifford Geertz (1980: 165) has been known to discuss in-depth:

> A number of things, I think, are true. One is that there has been an enormous amount of genre mixing in intellectual life in recent years, and it is, such blurring of kinds, continuing apace. Another is that many social scientists have turned away from a laws and instances ideal of explanation toward a cases and interpretations one, looking less for the sort of thing that connects planets and pendulums and more for the sort that connects chrysanthemums and swords. Yet another is that analogies drawn from the humanities are coming to play the kind of role in sociological understanding that analogies drawn from the crafts and technology have long played in physical understanding. Further, I not only think these things are true, I think they are true together; and it is the culture shift that makes them so that is my subject: the refiguration of social thought.

Malinowski presented himself as a pioneer of a refiguration of social thought by projecting his travels and inventing a discipline. The idea alone of reinventing his life, by undertaking a second PhD shows a determination and a belief in joining dots on the sky in an unprecedented manner, outside the formulae of social *moules*.

The hybridity of Malinowski's writing lends itself to reference-building. Malinowski practiced multiple genres – from the pedagogical to the political to the literary, not mentioning the cultural or anthropological. His anthropological monographs were not only statements of situations from the field with generalizations about cultural underpinnings but portraits of an indigenous society. They were succinct. They were profound. They were replete with metaphor and metonymy. They provided impressionist visions of a society, arrested by the photographs (visuals), which underscored the works. The blending of visual-theoretical-linguistic the visual, theoretical, and linguistic gave Malinowski's monographs a multilayered corpus, which informed the reference-making strategies of his works.

Malinowski's reference-building emanates also from his transtextuality. His writing is the absorption of antecedent texts and transformation into another (Kristeva). In this way, we notice his deconstruction of the knowledge of Avenarious and Mach, and the application of Cartesian methods of inquiry into field studies by inventing the method of *participant observation*. His texts are peppered with unconscious or automatic quotations (centred on the "self"), anonymous formulae about bad novels, rhythmic models of amorous fragments of social language. But Malinowski constructs a new world in the diary (and the monograph) – one for which coordinates were unknown in the scientific community. The geographic location of his research mixed with his buoyant wit, streets smarts mixed with creative flair, led to the formulation of masterpieces, which he tells as stories to the literary persons who recycle his work for discursive strategies. Malinowski writing is indeed a kind of Pynchon's tapestry,

> which spilled out the slit windows and into a void, seeking hopelessly to fill the void: all the other buildings and creatures, all the waves, ships, and forests of the earth (being) contained in this tapestry, and the tapestry (being) the world (Pynchon 1982: 10).

Reflexivity and *réécritures*

Malinowski's work lends itself towards an elaboration of reflexivity. Reflexivity refers to self-consciousness in writing, looking back upon oneself as a source of inquiry and investigation, the mirror image of oneself, self-reference. Reflexivity is all: a turn into the deeper self which denudes, and a hypothesis into the construction of meaning.

This aspect of Malinowski's writing made him the centre for culture studies and anthropologists alike. It was rooted in the oxymoronic conflict between the objective standards of anthropology as a discipline, on one hand (the oath sworn in the name of education and science), and the subjective nature of the expository writing contained in the journal. The transgressive moments, which provided high-

lights in the subsection above concerning the erotic, were among the many issues which became pierced through this approach.

Malinowski was a reflexive subject by design. His diary documents how he questioned himself repeatedly. An analysis of his various types of writing shows the strategy of "rewriting" of experience (*réécriture*), which is used to reformulate concepts, happenings, and impressions as a result of first contact in the tropics. In essence, he was constantly revisiting his position and reformulating his bearings. This at the very least resulted in self-critique and temporary readjustments to the reality at hand. The rewriting, which consisted of *ratures*, cancelations of thought, management of impressions, elaboration of themes, and semantic fields, showed how the text breathes and acquires saliency.

Conclusion

Through a brief analysis of literary themes which qualify Bronislaw Malinowski, it was the intent of this brief text to show how his writing indeed falls into the realm of comparative literary studies, not only *culturologie*. The literary traces of his *fantasmes imaginaires*, his deeply rooted sense of nostalgia, and his exuberant erotic impulses formulated a revisionist postmodern subject at grips with an ever-changing Europe, on a quest to find the antecedents of human social behavior in "savage society."

My argument was furthermore strengthened by outlining the key literary strategies adopted by Malinowski in the careful plotting of the *mises en intrigues littéraires*, of which he was author; namely: the notions of hybridity, reference, transtextuality, reflexivity, and rewriting of experience.

Malinowski described for us the 50 islands that changed his life. Indeed, his reflexive descriptions exploded the imagination of the scientific community by offering the promise of unattainable worlds and realities, of which he was embodiment, for his person not only for his *récits farouches*. If Malinowski's diary had so much uproar in anthropology (mainly concerning the neutrality of autobiographical writing), is it not time to discuss the anthropologist-as-author in the domain of comparative literature?

References Cited

Dickens, Charles
1979 Little Dorrit. Oxford: Clarendon [1857]

Frazer, James G.
1890 The Golden Bough. A Study in Magic and Religion. London: Macmillan.

Geertz, Clifford
1980 Blurred Genres. The Refiguration of Social Thought. *The American Scholar* 49/2: 165–179.
1988 Works and Lives. The Anthropologist as Author. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Kubica-Heller, Grażyna
2002 Preface. In: G. Kubica-Heller (ed.); pp: 5–36.

Kubica-Heller, Grażyna (ed.)
2002 Brinisław Malinowski. Dziennik w ścizłym znaczeniu tego wyrazu. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie.

Lowenthal, David
1989 Nostalgia Tells It Like It Wasn't. In: C. Shaw, and M. Chase (eds.), The Imagined Past. History and Nostalgia; pp. 18–32. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Malinowski, Bronislaw
1922 Argonauts of the Western Pacific. London: George Routledge & Sons.
1944 Freedom and Civilization. (Ed. by A. Valetta Malinowska.).♦ New York: Roy.
1967 A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term. (Pref. by A. Valetta Malinowska; Introd. by R. Firth; Transl. by N. Guterman; Ind. of Native Terms by M. Bick.) London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Malinowski♦, Anna Valetta
1967 Preface. In: B. Malinowski; pp. vii–xi.

Payne, Harry C.
1981 Malinowski's Style. *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 125/6: 416–440.

Pynchon, Thomas
1982 The Crying of Lot 49. Toronto: Bantam Books.

Rapport, Nigel
1990 "Surely everything has already been said about Malinowski's diary." *Anthropology Today* 6: 5–9.

Strenski, Ivan
1987 Four Theories of Myth in Twentieth-Century History. Cassirer, Eliade, Lévi-Strauss, and Malinowski. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press.

Thornton, Robert J.
1985 "Imagine Yourself Set Down …". Mach, Frazier, Conrad, Malinowski, and the Role of Imagination in Ethnography. *Anthropology Today* 1/5: 7–14.

Wagner, Tamara
2002 Nostalgia and the Victorian Novel. National University of Singapore / University of Cambridge <http://www.victorianweb.org/genre/wagner/1.html> [04.03.2012]

Wayne, Helena (ed.)
1995 The Story of Marriage. The Letters of Bronislaw Malinowski and Elsie Masson. Vol. 1: 1916–20; Vol. 2: 1920–35. London: Routledge.

Young, Michael W.
2004 Malinowski. Odyssey of an Anthropologist 1884–1920. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Zawadzki, Andrzej
2001 Nowoczesna eseistyka filozoficzna w piśmiennictwie polskim pierwszej połowy XX wieku. Kraków: Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Prac Naukowych "Universitas". (Horyzonty Nowoczesności, 18)