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Bronislaw Malinowski: The Influence of Various Women on His Life and Works

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Bronislaw Malinowski: the influence of various women on his life and works*

HELENA WAYNE (MALINOWSKA)

Bronislaw Malinowski, my father, was strongly influenced by women all his life: by his Polish mother, his two British wives, his women pupils; by women not his pupils with whom he had intellectual friendships; and by the women of various nationalities whom he loved. He also had three daughters, of whom I am the youngest.¹

He depended on women to an unusual degree, and I think that this dependence had its origin in his relationship with his mother. She was one of those supporting and self-sacrificing mothers who have throughout history stood behind eminent men.

She was born Józefa ("Josephine") Łącka and in 1883, at the age of 35, married Lucjan Malinowski, professor of Slavonic Philology at Cracow University in southern Poland. This was in the days when Poland was still partitioned, and that part of the country, Galicia, was a semi-autonomous state within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. A year after the marriage, the nearly middle-aged couple had their only child, Bronislaw Kasper, nicknamed Broniek or Bronio.

Józefa Malinowska's family, the Łąckis, was not an academic one but numbered among its members senators and high-ranking officials, and at least one successful businessman. The Łąckis, like the Malinowskis, belonged to a social class, which had, I think, no exact equivalent in other European countries, between landed gentry and nobility, but certainly not aristocracy.

The Łąckis were part of a large clan; several of them owned modest country estates and my father, without brothers or sisters, had the companionship through childhood and youth of many maternal cousins.

Bronio—this was the nickname he continued to use all his life—felt much closer to his mother's family than to the Malinowskis, as indeed he felt incomparably closer to his mother than to his father. Bronio rarely mentioned my grandfather, Lucjan, to his English friends, and yet Lucjan was an eminent scholar in his field of Slavonic philology, indeed a man to be proud of. In his day he was well known in Polish and German academic circles not only as a philologist but as an ethnographer in his special area of Silesia. He and his work are well recognized in Poland today.

Audrey Richards told me that Bronio often and vehemently disparaged Lucjan to her, saying he was stern, distant, and did not try to understand his son. I can make no judgments on that; I really don't remember hearing anything about my Polish grandfather when I was a child—I must have, but I don't remember it—whereas our Polish grandmother was a real "presence" to us children. We never knew her, as she died a year before our parents married.

She was a woman of outstanding intellect, great determination, and utter devotion to her

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gifted son. She was a handsome young woman, with a small corseted waist and ringleted hair, as photos show. As she grew older she got heavy, wearing her gray hair back in a tight bun, but she kept her upright carriage and her face retained its good looks, the broad brow, penetrating eyes, and large well-shaped mouth.

Lucjan Malinowski died of a heart attack at the age of 58 when Bronislaw (who was to die in the same way at the same age) was only 14. The family had been living on Cracow University grounds, but widow and son had to leave this home and thereafter lived in various flats in central Cracow. They were always rather hard up. A professor's pension was not very generous: there was, however, some family money.

A constant problem was Bronio's health. He had been a sickly child and once nearly died of peritonitis; he had especially severe trouble with his eyes. He had entered one of Cracow's best secondary schools, the Jan Sobieski Gimnazjum, but remained there as an internal student for only a year before his eyesight became so bad that he was threatened with blindness. For the rest of his school days he was an external student, working at home, having for much of the time to lie in a darkened room, his eyes bandaged. His mother took him through his schoolwork in all his subjects, including Greek and Latin, which she had to learn in order to be his guide.

Of course others, including his teachers and fellow pupils, read him through his courses, but his mother bore the brunt of it. Without her he could never have completed his schooling, which he did brilliantly despite these handicaps, and he never forgot it. The story became a sort of legend in our household.

In 1902 Malinowski went straight on from school to Cracow University, living at home, his



Figure 1. The infant Bronio and his mother Józefa.

mother often taking in boarders to extend their income. Some of these boarders were fellow students of Bronio's to whom this forceful and intelligent woman became a substitute mother.

Bronio's eyesight and general health recovered somewhat and at various times between 1899 and 1906 mother and son, at the behest of the doctors, made shorter and longer journeys south in search of mild climates and sun. (They were already well traveled in the countries of Central Europe.) They went to North Italy; along the Dalmatian coast; above all to the Mediterranean, to Malta and Sicily, and North African countries; to Madeira and then for a stay of several months in the Canary Islands.

These journeys had a strong influence on Malinowski, who later wrote that from that time, from about the age of 16 onward, he had begun to "leave" Poland, to cut his ties with his native land. These journeys to exotic places were part of the foundations of his very cosmopolitan nature; and of course such travel in the crucial years of his late adolescence reinforced his deep attachment to his mother.

But I must not make it seem that his emotional life was centered only around his mother. Besides the network of relatives I have mentioned, Bronio had many other friends, including, as he grew older, a group of young men friends notable for their intellectual and artistic gifts, almost all well known in Poland today and some, such as Szymanowski the composer and Witkiewicz, writer and painter, with wider reputations. Arthur Rubinstein writes about this group in his charming autobiography. It is not my intention here to discuss this circle in detail, but just to say that these young men were intensely interested in, and involved with, women and there is no doubt that Malinowski began his—to him always essential—love life early.

Malinowski graduated from Cracow University with the highest honors in the Austrian Empire. (A little footnote here: in 1908, at the impressive graduation ceremony in his sole honor in Cracow he was presented with a large gold and diamond ring from Kaiser Franz Josef; my father had it made up into a brooch and, alas, my mother lost it at some time in the 1920s!) His university subjects had been mathematics, chemistry and physics, and finally philosophy. His Ph.D. thesis on Avenarius and Mach was in philosophy.

It was now, in 1908, that he decided to change the course of his studies and develop his new interest in anthropology. He had been reading German and English anthropological literature and, I would guess, had been influenced by the ethnographic work of his father and his father's colleagues.

He went on to Leipzig University, where his father had obtained his doctorate, to attend the famous courses on *Völkerpsychologie* taught by Wilhelm Wundt. Between 1908 and 1910 Malinowski spent three terms at Leipzig, working also in economics under Karl Bücher and in the chemistry labs of Wilhelm Ostwald (though I am not certain if Ostwald was himself in Leipzig at that time).

He soon made an international circle of friends, many of them music lovers like himself, and among these friends there was a woman who is important to Malinowski's story, not as an intellectual influence, but because she was instrumental in that most important step in his life, his decision to come to England.

She was Mrs. Annie Brunton, a South African, considerably older than himself, not highly educated, a pianist who was in Leipzig for further training. They traveled around Europe together, in Germany and to Switzerland, and then in 1910 she moved to London for a year or so of music study there.

Malinowski had made only one brief visit to England, with his mother, but for many reasons had an exaggerated respect for England and things English. Annie Brunton's move to London gave my father the impetus to do the same. He felt he had an anchor there, a home to go to, and as he wrote later, living with her there he felt for the first time like a settled, even a married man.

Some years after his arrival in England Bronio wrote to a Polish woman friend, Aniela Za-górska, a cousin of Joseph Conrad and translator of Conrad's works into Polish, and also at one point Malinowski's English teacher. He set out to explain to her the reasons for his change from the natural sciences to social science, and the reasons why he had come to England.

He had, he wrote, "a highly developed Anglomania, an almost mystic cult of British culture and its exponents" and he also wrote: "I have the impression that if I hadn't met Mrs. Brunton I would never have taken up sociology [here I have to add that I don't agree with him on this] nor would I have become to a certain extent Anglicized." One can say that it was Annie Brunton who brought Malinowski bodily into the English-speaking, English-reading world from the relative obscurity of the Polish language. I needn't stress what a difference that made to his entire career and to the dissemination of his ideas. It gave him a world stage.

My father divided the years 1910–14 between England and Poland, making his mark in British anthropology, studying at the London School of Economics (LSE) under Seligman and Westermarck, reading at the British Museum, and publishing his first anthropological works in both languages; and having love affairs in both countries. Annie Brunton, surely a mother figure to him, went back to South Africa, and though they continued to correspond and she is often mentioned in his published diaries, her influence was really at an end.

Józefa Malinowska came to London to visit her son frequently in the years after 1910. An old lady I once knew remembered her well as a great personality, self-contained, sure of herself, a person of consequence who knew it; even awe-inspiring to my then very young friend. She had a good command of European politics, and used to argue, especially about the position of Russia and the probability of a war, with one of her son's early English friends, Isabel Fry, the educator, and sister of Roger Fry. Bronio's friendship with Isabel, which lasted the rest of his life, was one of his platonic and intellectual friendships with women: another such long-standing one was with Ursula Grant Duff, daughter of the amateur ethnologist Lord Avebury and granddaughter of General Pitt Rivers.

I don't know what my grandmother's early education had been: probably at home, perhaps at a convent school. She spoke German, of course, but her second language was French, as it was for most educated Poles in those days. She hardly spoke English but could read it. A little notebook of hers has survived, in which in her exquisite handwriting she translated, obviously for Bronio, brief excerpts from *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* by Spencer and Gillen and from *The Golden Bough*.

Józefa's last visit to England was shortly before Bronio's departure for Australia, and then New Guinea, in June 1914. They expected to meet within a couple of years, but they never saw each other again, as she died in January 1918 while he was on his second field trip to the Trobriand Islands. All through those intervening years his British friends, especially Seligman, tried to keep mother and son in touch, despite the barrier between opposing sides in the war.

Malinowski heard of her death six months after it happened, in June 1918. In his personal diary and in his letters from the Trobriands he poured out his grief, his "furious regrets and guilt feelings," as he wrote.

Every small detail reminds me of Mother . . . a mother in the full sense of the word, from whom one has taken all ideas and feelings in childhood, and who loved one beyond everything with a fanatical devotion . . . I imagine what Mother felt, during these war years, of longing, of suffering, of foreboding . . . I recall the countless occasions when I deliberately cut myself off from her so as to be alone and independent—I never was open with her, I never told her *everything* . . . She was perfectly unselfish, so extremely intelligent and capable—What value has [my work] if I shall never be able to speak to her about it?

Audrey Richards, herself, so she told me, much influenced by the Freudian revelations that burst in on her in her youth, said to me that when Bronio first read Freud he was overwhelmed, he felt that he was a complete case of the Oedipus situation, and that this explained so much in his complex and often tortured personality. Certainly, as I said earlier, this profound attach-

ment to his mother influenced his feelings toward other women. Whether it explains all his neuroses, as he seems to have thought, is another matter.

He expected women to be intellectually equal to men; he expected both his wives to be his co-workers; and I must say he gave his daughters the gift of never feeling that women are inferior to men. That was by no means a common gift in my youth.

When Malinowski reached Australia in 1914, war had been declared, but, though technically an enemy alien as an Austrian subject, he was able to go on to New Guinea for his fieldwork, thanks to the high recommendations he had brought with him from British anthropologists, and thanks also to several influential Australians, including Sir Baldwin Spencer of Melbourne (of Spencer and Gillen fame) and Sir Edward Stirling of Adelaide.

In mid-1915 Malinowski returned to Australia from his first six months in New Guinea and with Edward Stirling's direction saw his first New Guinea publication, *The Natives of Mailu*, through the press. The Stirlings had a beautiful daughter, Nina, and in the few weeks Bronio was in Adelaide they fell in love and he proposed to her, too hastily. I think it was his first engagement.

Then he returned to New Guinea, this time for his first long period specifically in the Trobriand Islands. No diary exists for this year, and letters between him and Nina Stirling, which might have been informative about his fieldwork, have not survived.

On his next return to Australia in 1916, Malinowski settled in Melbourne to begin working up the Trobriand field material he had collected so far. His chief mentor was Baldwin Spencer and he also saw again another academic whom he had met on his arrival in Australia in 1914, Sir David Orme Masson. Thus he met Masson's younger daughter Elsie, my mother.

Elsie Rosaline Masson, the ERM of Bronio's published diary, was then aged 26 to his 32. She was training as a nurse at Melbourne Hospital. The year before her fiancé had been killed at Gallipoli, and deeply affected as she was by his death, she wanted to do something practical in the war; her ultimate aim was to go and nurse at the front.



Figure 2. Malinowski and (left to right) Hedwig Khuner, Elsie Masson, and Mim Weigall at the Khuners' house in Melbourne, 1917.

She was Scottish-English by blood and her family background was academic on both sides. Her father had left Scotland with a new bride at the age of 28, called to the Chair of Chemistry at Melbourne University. Among the relatives who remained in Scotland were many other professors in the fields of medicine, English, and music as well as several writers.

Elsie, and her sister Marnie (who was later to become a distinguished historian of Australiana: their brother became Professor of Chemistry and eventually Vice Chancellor of Sheffield University) had a broad education, mostly at home; they traveled in Britain and on the Continent, and were both amateur musicians.

Elsie lived for a year (1913–14) in Australia's newly opened Northern Territory, and from there wrote newspaper articles that were turned into a book, *An Untamed Territory*, published by Macmillan in 1915. This year gave her firsthand knowledge of the life of some of Australia's Aborigines. Bronio was impressed by her book and soon after they met asked her to help him with his work: and so they started to collaborate in the few hours she could snatch from her hospital training.

Elsie was also agitating, through the legislature, for changes in the severe conditions of work imposed on nurses then; and she was engaged in debates and, literally, soap-box oratory, in favor of conscription in Australia. Her family certainly disapproved but in her new friend, Malinowski, Elsie found support and admiration, although he, as an enemy alien, had of course to stay away from all politics.

Raymond Firth, who knew her well, has described Elsie as "a woman of rare intelligence, sympathy and understanding, loved and respected by all who knew her." She was also vivacious and full of humor, and, in the difficult years of the illness that was to afflict her, a person of the greatest endurance.

She was very attractive, slender, slight, with high cheekbones, green eyes, and a lovely smile. Her red-brown hair was remarkable, thick and heavy, worn long for most of her life. When Bronio went back to the Trobriands he designed, and even learned how to make, tortoise-shell combs for her. He was very proud of these skills: I well remember her wearing these combs even after she had had her hair "bobbed," as they said then.

In Melbourne Elsie and Bronio became the center of a small circle of intellectual friends who called themselves "The Clan"; a circle quite apart from Elsie's family friends with the exception of Elsie's closest woman friend, Mim Weigall, whose intellectual development really began with her meeting with Malinowski. Bronio and Elsie's friendship was at first only a working relationship, "a stern acquaintance" as he called it, as she helped him with his Trobriand field notes; it was only after several months, in 1916–17, that they fell in love and tentatively began to discuss marriage.

There were many objections to Malinowski from the Masson parents; and though they respected his intellect, they did not really like him. A scandal precipitated by Baldwin Spencer did not help matters. He had discovered that Bronio was still engaged to Nina Stirling in Adelaide, and what's more had had several other flirtations in Melbourne, and he reported this to the Massons. The battles that developed around this were not settled before Bronio again left for the Trobriands in October 1917, and it was Elsie who had to smooth matters, and especially to pacify Spencer, whose influence in British anthropology could have made him a dangerous enemy. One can see Malinowski's fears about this in many entries in his published diary, but I have no evidence that Spencer ever used this personal knowledge to the detriment of Bronio as a scholar.

Letters between Elsie and Bronio flowed from and to the Trobriands, and he proposed to her by letter in New Year 1918. He had still not had the resolution to make the break with Nina Stirling, and it was she who finally made it in the summer of 1918.

The second and last Trobriand field trip ended in October 1918 and Malinowski returned to Melbourne. In the following months Bronio and Elsie were able to wear down Orme and Mary

Masson's resistance to their marriage. In later years, I must add, the Massons became reconciled to Bronio and, of course, very proud of his achievements.

In March 1919 "the penniless Pole" and "the English Miss," to use two of his phrases, were married in a drab ceremony in the Registry Office in central Melbourne. It was not an elopement, as has been said; parents, sister, and some friends were there. But there were no celebrations afterwards, no reception, no honeymoon; the couple just walked away hand in hand down Collins Street.

It was a civil, not a religious, wedding because neither of them were Christian believers. Bronio, like most Poles, had been brought up in all the rites and beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church but lost his faith at an early age, an instance where his devout mother's influence failed. Elsie and her family can be described, *tout court*, as atheists, not as far as I know believing in any revealed religion, though living their lives by the highest ethical and moral standards. In later years Bronio sometimes described himself as a humanist and/or reluctant agnostic who wished to believe but could not.

In the year after their marriage the Malinowskis stayed on in Melbourne, continuing work on the Trobriand material. Both were struck by that worldwide plague, the Spanish flu, and having survived it, had an idyllic holiday in the Australian bush. Poland became an independent country, and they both got Polish citizenship.

In March of 1920 they sailed for England to a quite uncertain future, Elsie expecting a child, and they never saw Australia again. Settling in Poland was very much in their minds, and Elsie had begun to learn Polish. She was a good linguist (not an outstanding one like Bronio) but Polish seems to have defeated her.

Their next three years were unsettled. They spent some months of 1920 in Britain where Malinowski renewed his intellectual and academic ties and Elsie, staying with relatives in Edinburgh, gave birth to a girl named Józefa Mary after her Polish and Scottish grandmothers.

The Malinowskis' next move was to the Canary Islands, much loved by my father from the visits of his youth, where they lived for a year in a country villa in Tenerife. This was the happiest time of their life together. Bronio finished his first Trobriand monograph, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, and Elsie acted as aide and critic, not least with his style. She also continued with her own writing, short stories of a Conradesque nature. And she was, as she remained, a devoted and intelligent mother.

In 1921, Malinowski went from Tenerife to England to see to the publication of *Argonauts*, that most influential of books. Routledge accepted it within three days of receiving the manuscript, and, as we all know, its appearance in 1922 made his reputation.

In late 1921 the family left the Canaries for the South of France and their second daughter with the very Polish name of Wanda was born there. The Malinowskis, especially Elsie, would have liked to have had a boy but it was not to be.

From France, in summer of 1922, Bronio, Elsie, and infant Wanda made a visit to Poland, Elsie's first and only one but by no means Bronio's last. He had been invited to take up the new Chair of Ethnology at Cracow University. In 1922 the new Polish nation was in a state of economic and political turmoil, money available for the new department was scant, and Malinowski felt he could not spend the time needed for teaching and administration when he still had so much field material to write up; so they decided against it.

They still needed somewhere with a good climate, for Bronio was again apprehensive about his health, and somewhere where he could continue his *magnum opus* on the Trobriands; and their search for a place to live and work led them to a village on the edge of the Dolomites, in the South Tirol, a region reluctantly ceded by Austria to Italy at the end of the war. The village of Oberbozen (Soprabolzano), the surrounding mountains, the climate, all suited them, and in the summer of 1923 they bought the Alpine house that was to be their home for the next six years.

In 1924 my father took up the Readership offered him by the LSE and for the next five years he led a divided existence, commuting between London in term time and North Italy and his family in the vacations.

Also in 1924 the Masson grandparents, visiting Europe after Sir David's retirement in Melbourne, made a month-long and happy visit to Oberbozen. Elsie always tried to run her households on British lines: meals on time; early bed for the children, after a nursery supper with some reading and music, including lullabies from her or from Bronio; no Central European disarray. She acted as hostess to Malinowski's pupils, who soon began to visit the house in South Tirol for working holidays: Raymond Firth, E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Isaac Schapera, and Hortense Powdermaker were among the earliest.

In 1925 I was born in the South Tirol, in Bozen, and like my sisters given a Polish Christian name. It was during this pregnancy that Elsie showed the first symptoms of multiple sclerosis, from which she suffered for the ten years to her death. I can't go into the story of her illness; the ups and downs; the failures of diagnosis; the treatments and mistreatments; but of course it had a fundamental effect on the whole course of the family and on Bronio's life.

My mother went on, however, as center of the household wherever we were, supervising the maids and cooks and nannies but always in charge of her children's upbringing. Soon she had to give up her beloved piano and singing (she and Bronio loved to sing duets together), then she could no longer walk, then no longer write. But her mind was never affected.

While her life took its downhill path, Bronio's star rose. In 1926 he spent six gloriously successful months as guest of the Rockefeller Foundation in the United States. She, still well enough to travel, saw him off on the ship at Cherbourg and rightly foresaw their future as one of more and more separations.

In these months in America Malinowski visited and was feted by universities and other institutions in many states, and made his first visit to Mexico. When the sponsorship of the Rockefeller Foundation ended, he took up an invitation to give a summer course at the University of California at Berkeley. In America he found interest and acclaim and instant friendship such as he had not experienced before.

In 1927 Malinowski became Professor of Social Anthropology at London University, at the LSE, and the Director, Sir William Beveridge, urged him to end his divided existence, to live in London and ultimately to become a British subject.

Bronio and Elsie had a resistance to the idea of permanent life in London. (Among other things Elsie, brought up in Australia, hated English weather.) They finally had to give in, and in 1929 moved to a house in Primrose Hill, a house that in the following years became familiar to a host of friends, pupils, colleagues, and foreign visitors.

Elsie, now confined to couch and wheelchair, continued her writing, this time trying a new field in a play on the subject of black-white, European-African relations.

Bronio, having acquired British nationality, took sabbatical leave in 1931–32 and the Malinowski family, once more in search of good weather, moved to the south of France, near Toulon. Here he worked on his last big Trobriand monograph, *Coral Gardens and their Magic*, with, as always, the help of many secretaries and research assistants. He dedicated this book to his wife although, because of her progressing illness, this was the book she had the least to do with. She never saw it in print, as it appeared after her death.

In 1934, with the three daughters in boarding schools, it was decided that my mother's health would benefit if she spent some time away from the bustle and demands of the London house. She had by now a permanent companion, an Austrian, Rosa Decall, and they went to a little village, Natters, near Innsbruck. Though my parents still owned the house across the Austro-Italian border in the South Tirol, it was too isolated from the valley town, Bozen, and from medical help, whereas Innsbruck, in the North Tirol, had an excellent university medical school and excellent doctors.

I think this move was a mistake. Elsie's presence as center of a household, and Bronio's continued need for her as critic of his work, gave her her *raison d'être*. But that year in the Austrian village was not all melancholy. Elsie did see her beloved husband and children in the holidays, friends visited her, and she occupied herself writing another play, on an Austrian peasant theme, which she dictated to her companion Rosa.

She died, swiftly, in September 1935 with Bronio by her side and was buried in Innsbruck. Her death, like her long illness, caused him terrible suffering, compounded again by guilt. He had had several liaisons, and the letters he wrote to her in that last year, on the whole short and dutiful, show that she was no longer immediately important to him; but at her death all his original deep love for her reemerged.

After my mother's death, her companion stayed with the family to look after the daughters and to run the London house. Bronio reinforced her care for us with a safety net of women relatives and friends who met us at trains, took us shopping, fed and entertained us. It was probably the only way for a very busy man, so often away, to cope with motherless girls, and I am grateful to the memory of that procession of real and honorary aunts.

There is a sort of paradox in the way my father regarded his growing daughters. Before he was married, he had looked forward to fatherhood, but I think he was never quite comfortable with the actuality. Though he wrote so much about the importance of the family unit, he wasn't really a family man. He and my mother had been very concerned about our education, but after her death he seems to have been uncertain as to how much we were intellectual material and to have felt that even if we were to go to university we should aim for practical, nonacademic careers. For my eldest sister he envisaged social work as a hospital almoner for which I think she would have been quite unsuited: she's a successful journalist.

He was not a neglectful father in those years after Elsie's death: he kept up a steady correspondence when we were separated from him, and I have many happy memories of him then and later; but it was undoubtedly a great tragedy for the three of us that he died so early when we were 21, 20, and 17, respectively, and that we could never work out our relationships with him as adults on our side.

Now, I want to touch on quite another matter, Malinowski's women students. There are too many distinguished names who all deserve detailed discussion: to mention some, Edith Clarke, Hilda Beemer (Kuper), Lucy Mair, Hortense Powdermaker, Margaret Read, Camilla Wedgwood, Monica Wilson. I must mention too, though she was not a professional anthropologist, one of his later students, the American Essie Robeson. I remember that she and her husband Paul came to our London house for a dinner party, after which Robeson stood at the piano and sang (was it "Old Man River"?). I crept down from my bedroom and sat on the stairs listening as the house shook with the marvelous sound.

I will concentrate, among all Malinowski's women students, on Audrey Richards, who was almost as much an influence on his life as he was on hers. She came to study with him when she was 28, having been trained in biology. It was her friend Graham Wallas who suggested the move, and Audrey felt at once that anthropology gave her a marvelous new field of observation. She joined the still small but already well-known Malinowski seminars in 1927, and another friend, Gilbert Murray, wrote to her: "I hear you have chosen as your guide the most lurid of all the bale stars at the LSE."

Bronio's women students had great affection for him not just because he was attractive as a man, as his detractors have said, but because, in England at least, women were not really accepted in academic life, it was still cranky to go to university, and the middle-class woman was expected to be cultured but not really efficient at anything. As Audrey put it, there was a horror of the clever woman, but Bronio didn't have it at all, and women blossomed in this atmosphere of being taken completely seriously.

Audrey quickly became a friend of the whole Malinowski family. Her compassionate and

sensitive nature made her want to help the invalid wife and mother, and over the years she did so in countless day-to-day matters. She advised on our education, and two of us went to her old school, Downe House. We all three loved her and the refreshment of her sense of humor and sense of the ridiculous which she brought to us, and which never left her, even in old age.

A significant period in my father's life was his visit to Audrey on her second field trip with the Bemba in 1934. He worked with her, though briefly, in what was his first real fieldwork since leaving the Trobriand Islands. He came north to what is now Zambia from a conference in South Africa, and this was to be his only firsthand experience in Africa. It was of such importance to him because by then he was closely linked with the International African Institute and its research plans, and many of his pupils, of course, chose African societies for their field of study. In fact, he also visited the Wilsons and Hilda Beemer in the African field.

In London Malinowski had white and black students from several African countries. I suppose the most famous now is Jomo Kenyatta, to whose book *Facing Mount Kenya* my father wrote the introduction.

Some time in the years after Elsie's death, Audrey and Bronio came very close to marrying, but their temperaments were perhaps too much alike; Audrey could not, as my mother had been able to, stand back as it were from his volcanic nature. Audrey tried to intervene for us three children, to see that Bronio fulfilled his fatherly duties, but what he demanded from his friends, especially in the unhappy times right after Elsie's death, was total, uncritical support of all his actions. Anything else he labeled disloyalty. So their marriage plans came—alas—to nothing. His daughters have always wished that they had married.

In 1938 Audrey went back to Africa, this time to a teaching post at Witwatersrand University, and she and Bronio did not meet again. A year later, when war broke out, he was in the United States, his daughters were in England and their governess back in her native Austria under the Nazis. From her busy life in South Africa Audrey cabled my father in America offering my sisters and me a home with her there. I'm glad that that burden wasn't put on her shoulders (Bronio, though grateful, declined), but her action shows her continuing unselfish concern for the family's welfare—and, perhaps, that she was still somewhat in love with my father.

Malinowski had taken another sabbatical leave in 1938, mostly for his health's sake, going first to the Mayo Clinic for a medical review and then for a few months to Phoenix. While there he taught informally at the University of Arizona and visited Indian communities nearby and over the border in Mexico. Even before outbreak of war in 1939 he was contemplating staying in the United States; he was on his fifth visit there and, on the whole, liked the country and its people. I say on the whole because he went through so many changes in his attitudes to countries and places and peoples. England went up and down in the scales, so did Poland, France, and the United States. Yet Italy was always loved by him, as were the Italian people, despite his loathing of Mussolini's fascism; and I think he had the same bedrock of affection for the Spanish-speaking world.

In September 1939 the Director of the LSE, Sir A. M. Carr-Saunders, advised Malinowski to stay in the United States if he could find a post there, the wartime future of the LSE being most unclear; and he was offered a visiting professorship at Yale University. Late in 1939 he brought his daughters across the Atlantic and sent us off to schools and college. When we arrived, he was living as a bachelor in one of the Yale colleges, but six months later he married his second wife.

She was Valetta Swann, born Hayman-Joyce, an Englishwoman 20 years his junior. I know little about her background, but gather that she came from a well-off family, was born and brought up in Eastbourne and that her brothers were Army officers. I have been told that she stood out among the young women of her circle for her greater sense of style and elegance in clothing and her greater sense of adventure and independence. She had very English looks, fair hair, blue eyes, and a fine complexion.

She was not an intellectual but she was a woman of the world, who had been married and divorced, who had traveled alone as far as Russia, and who had begun a serious career as a painter.

She and Bronio met at a party in 1933 and saw each other fairly steadily from that time on. During their partings, for the nearly seven years before they married, they kept up a correspondence which is uncomfortable to read, with much jealousy and suspicion between them, and with Bronio, older and more intelligent, usually getting the better of it.

Valetta followed Bronio to the United States early in 1939, joining him in Arizona. Then, when he took up his temporary professorship at Yale in New Haven, Connecticut, she moved not far away to New York. Their relationship continued, in person and by letter, stormy and uncertain; and then seems to have been resolved in a blazing row or series of rows.

They married in June 1940, a civil marriage in New Haven, to which we three daughters were not invited. Malinowski made no formal announcement of this marriage in, for instance, letters to England or to Elsie's family in Melbourne, with whom he had continued to be in touch. English friends have speculated on why they married. Part of the reason was that in the conservative, almost Puritan atmosphere at Yale—through most of America in those days—it was impossible for a prominent man to have an open relationship with a woman not his wife. It was marriage or nothing. Then, he needed companionship; he once more feared blindness after an operation for detachment of the retina; he had known Valetta for so long and she was part of his European past, a link with it; and no doubt, in their complicated way, they cared for each other.

I think she was in awe of him, with his much greater age and his reputation. Yet, as I have said, she was very independent and I have wondered how their marriage would have developed if it had lasted longer than the bare two years it did. She would have had to make a real sacrifice, because I cannot see how she could have continued her career as a painter with all of Bronio's demands on her.

In fact he put her to work—his work—at once. After their marriage they went to Mexico, a country he already knew and loved, and during that summer he began fieldwork in the southern state of Oaxaca, with a young Mexican anthropologist, Julio de la Fuente, as collaborator. Valetta helped in practical matters, acted as chauffeur, and made plans and drawings for Bronio's research. The following summer of 1941 was the same, and it was in this period too, 1940–41, that Malinowski came weekly from Yale to New York to teach at the New School for Social Research. There would have been a third summer of fieldwork in Mexico if his sudden death in mid-May 1942 had not ended it all. He had just been appointed to a permanent professorship at Yale, to start the following autumn.

Bronio died of a heart attack at home in New Haven, after several strenuous days in New York. It was my 17th birthday weekend so I too was, unusually, in New Haven. Valetta was not a maternal woman and neither she nor, more curiously, my father considered making a home for his daughters after our arrival in the United States: we lived with and, I'm glad to say, were befriended by others, mostly in New York.

When my father felt ill that night he refused to allow Valetta to ring for a doctor, and when a doctor finally did come, it was too late. His grave is in New Haven, Connecticut, far from that of his first wife.

After Bronio's death Valetta spent some time in New York preparing for publication a nearly completed book of his, *Freedom and Civilisation*. Then she moved to Mexico, where she lived for the rest of her life, her friends among the circles of Mexican and foreign artists, not Mexican anthropologists. She became a well-regarded painter.

She was married again, to a German refugee, and then divorced and resumed the name of Malinowska. My father had died intestate, and after his death Valetta took charge of his literary heritage and much else. She was responsible, in one way or another, for the publication of his

posthumous books, including in 1967 the notorious one, *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*, actually two separate diaries he had kept in New Guinea, very personal, written in Polish and quite definitely not meant for other eyes.

A great deal has been written about the publication of this book. I myself don't think it was well edited and presented, but I have read other early diaries and diary fragments of my father's and can see what a difficult task it is to translate and edit such jottings. All the more, I feel the diaries should not have been published as they were but kept, together with his correspondence of that time, as raw material for a biographer, or perhaps published in a different form.

I know many anthropologists do not agree with my point of view. They have mined the diaries for insights (often distorted insights) into Malinowski's character and into what day-to-day life in the field can mean, and have found these insights most valuable.

Valetta did not consult her step-daughters on these posthumous publications. Our relations-by-letter, mine from England to which I returned, my sisters' from the United States where they married and now live, soon petered out. Shortly before her death, however, she made a new will naming the three of us her heirs in all things Malinowskian: I was as surprised as I was pleased.

Before his death, Bronio had planned to put another woman in his life to help in his work, namely me. He was to take me on his third Mexican field trip, the trip that never was, and I had started learning Spanish with that aim. I sometimes wonder what the future of at least one of his daughters would have been if I had been able to work with him then.

Last year, 1984, was Malinowski's centennial, and there were commemorations, conferences, symposia, exhibitions, in several countries. Attending as many of these events as I could, I thought of the women in my father's life and how many of them had made it possible, from his childhood to his premature death, for him to undertake and complete his significant and, I think, enduring work.

note

¹Helena Wayne was educated in England, on the Continent, and then in the United States. After graduation from Vassar in 1945 she returned to England and began her career in television and journalism. With her late husband, an American journalist, and their two children she lived in Athens, Rome, Paris, and Geneva before returning permanently to England. Her second husband is an American writer and they live near Cambridge.

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