

From: <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/351-screening-room-savage-memory>

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Study Guide

This film serves as a great teaching tool to explore and foster discussions on the history of anthropology, memory, kinship and the kind of labor done by anthropologists. In the way this documentary weaves various narratives it explores the history of the development of the discipline, what led Malinowski to carry out extended fieldwork, and the socio-historical context of the discipline at the time and disciplinary legacy.

Moreover, the film also creates a space for thinking about Malinowski not only as a historical figure studying kinship, but also embedded in his own kin relationships. It serves as a way of thinking about the different kinship relations that we come to be part of. Finally, the footage from the Trobriand Islands serves as a powerful statement and point of reflection on the consequences and ways in which the work of anthropologists becomes part of the reality of the groups they work with.

Discussion Questions

-Malinowski is often described as the father of fieldwork. What was anthropology like during Malinowski's time and how did he come to carry out extended fieldwork? What historical situations allowed him to engage in this form of research?

-How did the fieldwork done by Malinowski transform and help shape the discipline and work done by anthropologists?

-How is Malinowski remembered within his own family? In which ways has his memory been passed down through generations?

-In what ways is it different or similar to be the father of a family from the father of a discipline? Compare and contrast the ways he is remembered in each kin relationship.

-What traits from Malinowski did his family members see as being inherited? How do we understand inheritance within Western kinship relations?

-How is Malinowski's his work meaningful for the Trobriand Islanders and how might this be different from the ways anthropologists find his work meaningful?

-How do we conceive of ghosts, how does Malinowski explain ghosts in Trobriand culture, and how do contemporary Trobriand Islanders define ghosts?

-What is a legacy?

Readings

Kinship Curated Collection, Cultural Anthropology

Fisher, Daniel

2009. Mediating Kinship:Country, Family and Radio in Northern Australia. *Cultural Anthropology* 24(2):280-312

Grimshaw, Annaa

2001. The Innocent Eye: Flaherty, Malinowski and the Romantic Quest in The Ethnographer's Eye: Ways of Seeing in Anthropology

Malinowski, Bronislaw

1992. Baloma, Spirits of the Dead in Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays

Schneider, David A.

1980. American Kinship: A Cultural Account

Stasch, Rupert

2009. Society of Others: Kinship and Mourning in a West Papuan Place

Young, Michael A.

1998. Malinowski's Kiriwina: Fieldwork Photography 1915-1918

Other Related Multimedia

On Malinowski

Tales From the Jungle: Bronislaw Malinowski BBC Documentary

On Kinship The Family Album by Alan Berliner