

Review of Robert J. Gordon. *The Enigma of Max Gluckman: The Ethnographic Life of a 'Luckyman' in Africa*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 2018. Pp.475

Recent years have seen a growing body of detailed studies on the lives and works of key institutions and scholars that have shaped the history of social anthropology in Southern Africa. The most noteworthy of these include the Rhodes Livingstone Institute, Monica Wilson, and other women anthropologists. Written against the backdrop of calls for the decolonisation of anthropology, these studies carefully assess the broader political significance of anthropological lives and careers. Gordon makes a most valuable contribution to this growing body of literature by reconstructing the 'ethnographic life' of Max Gluckman (1911-1975). The project is a fascinating one. Gordon is a leading scholar on the history of the anthropology and has an exceptionally rich archive to work with. His biographic subject is a controversial figure, who constitutes a crucial link between the classical theories of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown and contemporary social anthropology. Though a passionate fieldworker and innovative thinker, Gluckman is a most controversial figure, who 'has excited the extremes of adulation and loathing' among students and scholars and has been stereotyped both as leftist and reactionary collaborator with colonial regimes.

The Enigma of Max Gluckman eschews easy generalisations, but offers deep insights into the complexities, both of Gluckman's anthropological career, and into the social relations embodied in the anthropology of Africa. Born in Johannesburg as the son of a lawyer, who regularly defended African clients, and of the first woman member of the South African Zionist Council, Max cut his teeth as a Jewish liberal, sternly opposed to racial discrimination and Afrikaner nationalism. He studied anthropology at the University of the Witwatersrand under Winnifred Hoernle and Isaac Schapera, as part of a privileged cohort of students, also including Hilda Kuper, Ellen Hellman and Eileen and Jack Krige. Max had broader interests, and apart from being a keen sportsman, led the Liberal Party in the South Africa's student parliament. From 1934 to 1937, Max studied at Oxford as Rhodes Scholar, where he completed a lengthy library-based thesis on the 'Concept of the Supernatural among the South Eastern Bantu'. His PhD was the first to be awarded in Social Anthropology by the famous university. Fortunately, Max attended Malinowski's seminar at the London School of Economics, where he befriended Evans-Pritchard and Fortes, and claimed to have learned more in a single day than in a week from Marett at Oxford. Gordon lays to rest the misconception that Max was a Communist, and that he had little interest in ritual, as Turner later claimed.

In Chapter Three, provocatively entitled, *How the Guinea Pig Burnt his Own Bridge*, Gordon offers a detailed account of Gluckman's fieldwork in the Nongoma district of Zululand between 1936 and 1938. From the vantage point of a hut in the compound of Matolana, a councillor of the

Zulu regent, Prince Mshiveni, he studied the changing social structure of the Reserve. His innovation was to treat the white missionary, administrator and labour recruiter as essential members of the tribe. From visits to the town of Nongoma, he found the white community to be stratified, suspicious, and obsessed with gossip. Zulu people too found him hard to classify, regularly demanded petty cash, and played him off against other whites and Zulus. Gordon shows Gluckman's inability to navigate the difficult social terrain, led to his expulsion from the field by Prince Mshiveni and Commissioner Lugg. Gluckman offended the regent by opposing the flogging of a drunk Zulu man. He also threatened established interests by asking politically sensitive questions and transgressing the norms of interracial etiquette. His misdeeds included inviting a white couple to a wedding dance, living in a hut, wearing a Zulu *beshu* in town, and writing a memorandum blaming low wages for the shortage of farm labour. Gluckman himself blamed. The chapter offers a superb demonstration of the ambiguous positionality of anthropologists in colonial times.

Gluckman returned to Oxford in 1938, to work in a department headed by Radcliffe-Brown. Here he was converted from an earlier idealist to a realist philosophy, focusing on the interdependence of events. He also embraced the comparative method, and along with Evans-Pritchard and Fortes made telling contributions to the edited volumes *African Political Systems* and *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*. Unfortunately, Gluckman failed to publish his envisaged monograph on conflict and cohesion in Zululand, partly because of the destruction of his field notes in a fire. Nonetheless, his most famous essay on the opening of a bridge in modern Zululand, developed Radcliffe-Brown's theory on social structure, bringing the innovation of the extended case study. Gordon argues that Gluckman used himself as a guinea-pig, using his own experiences as the starting point of his analysis. Because Gluckman had 'burnt his bridges' and had no prospect of return to Zululand he could include the colonial administration into his analysis. I find these formulations convincing, but might see the rejection of the essay for the RAI's Welcome medal in the light of Baunholtz's distaste of Radcliffe-Brown's take on anthropology.

The next five chapters examine Gluckman's work at the Rhodes Livingstone Institute in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), and complement previous work on the topic by Shumaker and others. Gluckman was employed as assistant anthropologist, working alongside Godfrey Wilson, shortly after his marriage to Mary Brignol. Gordon provides a vivid sketch of the town of Livingstone during the late 1930s and discusses how Max and Mary positioned themselves as embattled intellectuals in a deeply divided society. They experienced financial difficulties and Mary found it hard to socialize with local settlers (she was a Communist Party member from 1938 until the early 1950s). The Gluckmans were also accused of subverting the allied war effort and of engaging in anti-government talk. Yet the Gluckmans were better integrated than the Wilsons. Max built a compound in a Lozi village, Katonga, and stood up for ill-treated Africans, but at the same time fraternised Jewish businessmen and senior

government officials. Gordon includes a detailed description of Max's fieldwork, including a twelve day's journey to the field site following the infamous whore's road travelled by migrants from the gold mines, the accidental killing of a barge induna, equipment used, servants employed, and relations with field assistants and informants, and difficulties of researching topics such as sex. Fireside chats and gossip with servants and informants, Gordon shows, is a major source of information. Max's appeared to have amicable relations with commissioner Read, who offered him accommodation and access to government files. In turn he wrote memoranda on topics such as food production, labour and tribute.

Gordon also discusses *The Economy of the Central Barotse Plain* (1941), which shows a correspondence between mode of production and social organisation, as well as the effects of colonialism on food insecurity and the slide into poverty. Industrialisation contributed to the absence of able bodied men, now seeking money for taxes and commodities, and paramount chiefs who controlled the land were turned into capitalist employers. Also the comparisons Gluckman made between Zulu and Lozi kinship and marriage. In both instances adultery was high, but whereas marriage was stable among the Zulu, divorce was exceedingly frequent among the Lozi. The result is due to variations in social structure rather than bride-wealth. The Zulu were organised in extended unilineal groups, and the Lozi in more fragile mound based homesteads, comprising both agnates and affines. The essay, and unpublished monograph was inspired by Max's interest in psychoanalysis, which acknowledged an ambivalence in social relations, and co-existence of emotions of love and hatred.

Max is shown to be a remarkably effective director of the Rhodes Livingstone Institute. Thrust into the position after Godfrey Wilson's resignation, he took a middle path between applied anthropology and the production of sound anthropological knowledge. Max entertained affable relations with senior members of the government secretariat, collaborated with agriculturalists and economists, and gave advice on administrative issues. His proposals for reorganising Barotse Native Authorities and introducing Soviet-style farming, were not always accepted. At the same time, he emphasised the scientific basis of his work, resented government interference in running the Institute, and emphasised that research must be the researcher's prerogative. Through the publication of papers and monographs aimed to leave a legacy which Africans could read about when the country became independent.

Whilst Gordon provides ample evidence of Gluckman's interest in psychoanalysis, I feel that he does not acknowledge the limits of this

influence. He asserts, but does not carefully demonstrate the influence of Wurf Sacks *The Black Hamlet* on Max's own writings. Also the notion of catharsis in rituals of rebellion. Like Radcliffe-Brown, who was intensely interested in experimental psychology, Gluckman sought to separate the psychical from the social. This is evident in his debate with Kenny on psychological and sociological explanations of witchcraft. For example, Gordon maintains that it was Max's interest in psychoanalysis, rather than Roman Dutch law, which served as inspiration for the extended case study. Clearly, it is both.

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Baunholtz – restating simple things in a complex manner. No prospect of return was able to bring the administration into his analysis. Burning bridges can open new possibilities. Largely ignored. Relations RB, Ep. Fortes and Gluckman proposal to study modern political development, launched Association for Social Anthropology in 1940. Promote each other's interests, Only in 1949, alienated from EP, renounced position of anthropology as comparative science, badmouthed RLI, and accused Epstein of being a communist. Told former governor of N. Rhodesia MG ran a communist cell in Manchester. Mary loathed EP. Met Mary Brignoll, at Newnham and Communist Party member, skiing with Oxford students in Mont Blanc, long and happy marriage. Allied in politics social activism and sexuality.

detailed historical studies on the lives and works of key institutions and figures in the discipline, particularly during the interwar years. The most noteworthy of these have been on the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute (Shumaker 2001), and South Africa's women anthropologists, Monica Wilson (Bank and Bank 2013, Morrow 2016), Winnifred Hoernle, Audrey Richards, Hilda Kuper, Ellen Hellman and Eileen Krige (Bank 2016). Written against the backdrop of vocal demands for the decolonisation of the social sciences, and sometimes also for the end of anthropology, these studies carefully assess the broader political significance of their work. The result has been far deeper insight into the social contexts and relations of anthropological work.

In this monograph, Rob Gordon reconstructs the 'ethnographic life' of Max Gluckman. The result makes for stimulating reading. Gordon, a leading scholar on the history of anthropology, who is exceptionally widely read, and skilful at bringing to light unknown and forgotten aspects of the past to light, has exceptionally rich archive of personal correspondence to work with. The works of his biographical subject, Max Gluckman (1910-1973) form a crucial link between the classical theories of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown and contemporary anthropological works. Though a passionate fieldworker, innovative thinker and prolific writer, Gluckman appears as a divisive person, who regularly got into scraps, and frequently provoked controversy. He 'exited the extremes of adulation and loathing' among student and colleagues, and was sometimes remembered as overbearing, uncouth and unpleasant. Through a leftist, and critic of colonialism, Gluckman was, during the 1970s, branded as a collaborator with colonial regimes and a reactionary.

Fortunately, this empirically rich study eschews easy generalisations. In **Chapter One**, Gordon explores Gluckman's **coming of age in Johannesburg, South Africa**, and showing how he cut his teeth as a Jewish liberal, opposing racial segregation, anti-semitism and Afrikaner nationalism. His father Emanuel Gluckman, a left-wing atheist, fought on the British side during the South African war, and distinguished himself as a lawyer, who regularly represented African clients, and defended the famous trade unionist, Clements Kadalie. His mother, Katie Cohen, was the first women member of the South African Zionist council. Though Max studied philosophy and law at the University of the Witwatersrand, he took

Anthropology as a filler course, being fortunate to study under Winnifred Hoerne and Isaac Schapera, and to have Hilda Kuper, Jack and Eileen Krige and Ellen Hellman. He was schooled in the sociological approach of Durkheim and Radcliffe-Brown, and in liberal humanism. As student Max felt a need to take part in building up a greater South Africa. Apart from being a keen sportsman, he edited student magazines, chaired the Philosophical, Dramatic and Bantu Studies societies, and became secretary of the Student Representative Society, and leader of the Liberal Party in the NUSAS (National Union of South African Students) parliament. Universities should be unconscious of class, colour and creed of students, and educating black persons will generate economic security for all. Constant clashes with Afrikaner nationalists, who opposed the admission of black students, and inviting educated Africans to give talks. The rising tide of nationalism contained a spectre of anti-Semitism, culminating in the formation of fascist movements such as the Grey Shirts in the late 1930s. His brother Figgy, was beaten up near one such rally to such an extent that he required 6 stitches.

Chapter Two describes Gluckman's first visit to England. In 1934, he won a Rhodes Scholarship to study at Oxford, and enrolled to do a library-based PhD under RR Marett at Exeter College, one of the leading anthropologists of the day. His 700-page, library-based study examined the Concept of the Supernatural among the South Eastern Bantu. A single cultural area, comprising the Thonga, Zulu and Transkei, who were united in ritual practice. Saw ritual as an expression of social sentiments and drew on Van Gennep's comparison of sociological tendencies. Awarded in 1937 as the first PhD in Social Anthropology. He also regularly travelled to London to attend Malinowski's famous seminars, where he claimed he learned more in a single day than in a week from Marett. Presented a seminar on how the political structure facilitated chiefly supernatural power. Malinowski taught the essentials of fieldwork. Gluckman was stimulated more by Evans-Pritchard, an occasional lecturer at Oxford, who had completed his Azande fieldwork and by Meyer Fortes, whom he met in London. Fortes, a South African Jew of rural origins, who completed a PhD in psychology at the LSE.

In **Chapter Three**, provocatively entitled, **How the Guinea Pig Burnt His Own Bridge**, Gordon described the fieldwork Gluckman did between 1936 and 1938 near the Nongoma district of Zululand. He arrived with the preconceived opinion that whites had acquired their position by conquest, and with the intent to emphasise the interdependence of whites and Africans. In Johannesburg, broke his engagement with Doreen Grieg, and started undergoing psychoanalysis with Wulf Sacks. Description of Nongoma a town in Northern Zululand, Moved into a hut of Matolana, a councillor of the regent, and was assisted by Richard Ntombela, a Christian with three pagan brothers. Missionary, administrator and labour recruiter treated as essential members of the tribe. Found the European community stratified, suspicious, obsessed with gossip and interracial etiquette. Reprimanded for inviting a white couple to a wedding dance. Basis of social structure. His own guinea pig. Found it hard to classify him.

Played him off against other whites and Zulus, regularly asked for gifts and petty cash, people of the traditional council drifted into his hut, sat in on native trails. School notebooks. Explores various reasons for expulsion from Zululand. Invited by Prince Mshiveni to attend a large gathering of Zulu in Vryheid, where he addressed the Native Representative Council. When a drunk Zulu man shouted 'You know nothing' the regent ordered him to be flogged. The regent angered Matolana, and Gluckman intervened. Although Gluckman apologised, and asked Matolana to apologize. Told lived among the same conditions as natives, wears a beshu in town, and asked people how they were treated. Lugg did not want Gluckman to return. No technique for dealing adequately with day to day activities. Local dignitaries commanded his horse to attend local events. Set in on native trails, picture of Zululand social structure. Fieldnotes destroyed in a fire of 1940. School notebooks written by educated Zulu. Encouraged to keep dairies. Countcase a Zulu NRC clerk accused of giving a white girl a note. Focus on political legal and economic systems. found modern politics more important and interesting. Only a fragment of the fieldnotes survived. The regent and NAD supported the Inkatha - a Zulu cultural society and saw Gluckman as a rival. Known as Matlolana's white - great discussion of Zulu perceptions of Gluckman. The anthropologist like everyone is caught in inescapable conflicts between divergent political interests. Also the importance of gossip. Native farm labour committee. Investigate shortage of farm labour. 14 page memorandum. Discussions Zulu, vets, agriculturalists, mines and towns offered higher wages, access to land a right to which they are entitled not a payment for work. Malnutrition an impediment to production. Argued for a national policy to turn Africans into skilled specialists. Mshiyeni and Lugg to strengthen the tribal system. Collaborated in government policy. Lugg felt threatened by Gluckman's presence. Denied access to NAD records, asked undesirable questions. Hertzog's NAD a source of employment for poor whites, racist and anti-semitic social milieu. Disrupted colonialist's image of their own moral authority, genuine new insight.

Chapter Four - Return to Oxford. 1938, under sway of Radcliffe-Brown's comparative method and emphasis on systemic theory. Discussion of system and structure, contributed to African Political Systems, and African Systems of Kinship and Marriage. Lectures A Prolegomena to a Methodology of the Social Sciences. Drawn from idealist to realist, Not substance but events. philosophy. Interdependence between the passage of events. Structure an evolving process. Patterns of inter-relations of events within a set of regularities. 1940 RB's essay on social structure and Gluckman's essay on the bridge, study whole set of relations to understand social process. Conflict and Cohesion in Modern Zululand. Historical study of how whites and blacks became a single society. Tribes expand through fission, pressure on resources. Shaka's innovations led to the Zulu nation. How the Zulu reserve was interlocked in the South African social system. Situational selection of values. Live concurrent lives, selecting from a medley of contradictory values. RB seeing blacks and whites as part of the same social system. Himself as a

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Chapter 5 Landing and Living in Livingi.