

KO NAS ZAPUŠČAJO NAJBOLJŠI ...

Borut Brumen (10. 2. 1963–30. 7. 2005)

Rajko Muršič

305

Tudi če je opletanje z besedami moje rutinsko vsakdanje opravilo, mi leta vaje prav nič ne pomagajo pri pisanju teh vrstic, v katerega so me prisilile neizprosne sojenice, ki so mi vzele prijatelja in kolega v trenutku, ko bi se njegova pot šele začela približevati zenitu. Besede se zatikajo, misli ne stečejo. Fragmentarni spomini in nejevera, da ne morem več stopiti k Borutu in ga prositi za nasvet ali se pogovoriti – o čemerkoli že ...

Spoznala sva se med študijem, a mi je vseeno najbolj ostal v spominu zadnji izpit, ki ga je Borut opravljal na dodiplomskem študiju etnologije. Pa ne zaradi izpita (niti ne vem natančno, kateri izpit je to bil), temveč zaradi daljšega pogovora na poti skozi park za Filozofsko fakulteto. Pogosteje kot na predavanjih sva se srečevala na koncertih in na takšnih in drugačnih civilnodružbenih akcijah in prireditvah druge polovice osemdesetih let. Širina duha, toleranca in samosvojest so tri značilnosti, ki jih je Borut prinesel iz rodne Murske Sobotе.

Večkrat je pripovedoval, kako so se kot mulci podili naokoli, ne glede na to, s katerega konca Sobotе so bili – fantje iz Pušče so bili samoumevno zraven. In drugi »prišleki« z vseh koncev Slovenije in Jugoslavije. Borut je res znal pripovedovati zgodbe. Jaz jih ne znam niti obnoviti.

V Ljubljano je prišel leta 1982, ob zatonu znamenitega alternativnega kluba FV v Rožni dolini. V viharnih osemdesetih je v Ljubljani naletel na urbano vrenje novih časov. Ljubljana je bila takrat videti ne le kot eno središč takratne Jugoslavije, temveč kot ena novih svetovnih prestolnic, v kateri so se dogajale same prelomne stvari. Danes žal v Ljubljani tega občutka že nekaj časa nimamo več, takrat pa smo živeli v prepričanju, da smo se znašli v popku sveta. Leto za letom, mesec za mesecem, celo dan za dnem je bilo videti, da se odpirajo novi »prostorji drugačnosti« in da je nekaj, kar včeraj še ni bilo mogoče, danes postalo samoumevno. Pa ne gre le za pankovsko »divjanje«, temveč za boj za odpravo smrtnih kazni, boj za svobodo govora in boj za odpravo spolne in spolnouslymeritvene neenakopravnosti. Nova družbena gibanja so dosegla svoj vrh veliko pred letom 1988, ko so spremembe postale neizogibne. Borut je spremljal in podpiral družbena gibanja, obenem pa v etnologiji našel tisto vedo, v kateri si je obetal združevati prijeto s koristnim.

V nekem smislu je bil nedvomno nemirni pustolovski duh, ki so ga v enaki meri mikala domača dvorišča in tuja prostranstva. Med študijem so ga posebej zanimala vizualna antropologija, etnologija Evrope in muzeologija. V diplomski nalogi, ki jo je zagovarjal leta 1987, je pisal o razvoju etnološkega muzealstva na Slovenskem. Bil je med prvimi študenti etnologije – če ne prvi – ki je del seminarske naloge (o ljubljanskem boljšem trgu) oddal na filmskem traku. Bil je namreč izjemen poznavalec filma in filmske govornice. Čeprav se kasneje raziskovalno in strokovno ni posebej posvečal vizualni antropologiji (kljub temu je vse do konca veliko snemal), je z zanimanjem in odobravanjem spremljal nedavne dosežke naših študentov in študentk pri vizualni antropologiji.

306

Kot štipendist soboškega muzeja je kmalu po diplomi dobil pripravniško zaposlitev v Pokrajinskem muzeju Murska Sobota, še pred tem pa se je odpeljal s transibirsko železnico na nekajmesečno potepanje po Kitajski. Ob vrnitvi je sledila logična odločitev, da bo ob vpisu podiplomskega študija etnologije preučeval urbano podobo Murske Sobote. Leta 1991 je soorganiziral tudi poletno etnološko delavnico v Markovcih in leto kasneje uredil zbornik (*Etno delavnica Markovci 1991*, ZOTKS, Ljubljana 1992). Za opravljeno delo v Prekmurju je leta 1990 prejel priznanje beltinskega folklornega festivala.

Borutov nemirni duh pa ni dolgo vzdržal v njemu sicer dragem soboškem gradu, temveč ga je leta 1989 odpeljal na študijsko izpopolnjevanje v Berlin. Kot štipendist nemškega sklada DAAD je študiral na Inštitutu za etnologijo Svobodne univerze v Berlinu pri Georgu Elwertu, afrikanistu, ki je izšel iz nemške etnološke šole. Pokojni prof. Georg Elwert je ob koncu šestdesetih let temeljito obračunal s tistimi, ki so svojo znanost dali na posodo nacizmu (torej nacionalizmu) in se kasneje sprenevedali, da s tem ni bilo nič narobe. Bil je izjemen poznavalec konfliktov na afriškem rogu ter v severovzhodni Afriki, za nas pa je pomemben tudi zato, ker se je organizacijska zamisel Mednarodne sredozemske etnološke poletne šole razvila prav na podlagi pogovorov med njim, Borutom Brumnom in Zmagom Šmitkom.

Leta 1991 se je Borut zaposlil kot mladi raziskovalec na Oddelku za etnologijo in kulturno antropologijo in pod mentorstvom prof. Slavka Kremenška dokončal historično raziskavo urbanega življenja v Murski Soboti. Magistrsko nalogo je zagovarjal konec leta 1993, leto in pol kasneje pa je izšla tudi monografija z naslovom *Na robu zgodovine in spomina: urbana kultura Murske Sobote med letoma 1919 in 1941* (Pomurska založba, Murska Sobota 1995). V tej prelomni monografiji je Borut Brumen sicer sledil metodološkim usmeritvam do takrat prevladujoče historično naravnane slovenske »urbane etnologije«, a jih je tudi spretno nadgradil z weberjanskim konceptom »etosa« in formuliral inovativne interpretacije meščanskega življenja v skladu s sodobnejšimi kulturnoantropološkimi pristopi, še posebej v sklepnem poglavju, v katerem je razkrinkal meščansko družino z začetka dvajsetega stoletja kot patriarhalno avtoritarno strukturo. Pri uporabi sodobnih družboslovnih konceptov je Borut Brumen utiral novo »kritično« etnološko paradigmo, ki jo je razvijal v nadaljnjih delih.

Konec leta 1994 se je zaposlil kot raziskovalec na Fakulteti za podiplomski humanistični študij ISH v Ljubljani in opravljal raziskavo za doktorsko disertacijo v istrski vasi Sv. Peter, ki jo je pod mentorstvom Zmaga Šmitka zagovarjal leta 1999. Leta 1996 se je zaposlil kot stažist – asistent na Oddelku za etnologijo in kulturno antropologijo Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani. Takrat je bil izvoljen v naziv asistenta za področje etnologije Evrope, leta 2000 v naziv docenta za področje etnologije in urbane antropologije in leta 2005 v naziv izrednega profesorja za področje kulturne antropologije.

Leta 2000 se je iz etnologije Afrike izpopolnjeval na prestižni The London School of Economics, leta 2001 pa je en semester predaval na Inštitutu za evropsko etnologijo Univerze na Dunaju. Sodeloval je v več mednarodnih projektih in raziskavah, se izkazal kot organizator posameznih raziskovalnih taborov in odmevnih študijskih ekskurzij v Nemčijo (1992) in Maroko (1998, 2003).

307

Leta 1994 je bil med soustanovitelji in člani organizacijskega odbora odmevnega vsakoletnega simpozija oz. poletne etnološke šole v Piranu (*Mess: Mednarodna etnološka poletna šola oz. Mednarodni etnološki sredozemski simpozij*; angleško *Mediterranean Ethnological Summer Symposium*). Poleg Boruta Brumna in Zmaga Šmitka, ki je vtisnil Messu neizbrisni pečat tematske raznolikosti, ter pokojnega Iztoka Saksida, je Mess s svojimi sugestijami pomembno sooblikovala tudi pokojna Dunja Rihtman - Auguštin, ki je v devetdesetih letih z navdušenjem spremljala dogajanja v slovenski etnologiji (oz. etnoantropologiji, kot jo je imenovala sama) ter dajala Borutu (in drugim) stalno spodbudo. Borut Brumen je souredil prva dva zbornika s tega odmevnega srečanja (*Mess, Vol. 1*, SED, Ljubljana 1996; *Mess, Vol. 2*, IMR, Ljubljana 1998). Leta 1995 je koordiniral mednarodni raziskovalni projekt podiplomskih študentov in profesorjev s švicarskih univerz v Fribourgu, Loussanu in Neuchatelu na lokacijah v Miljah, Piranu in Novigradu. Leta 2002 je v družbi eminentnih evropskih gostov predaval v okviru podiplomskega seminarja na Inštitutu (oddelku) za etnologijo, kulturno in socialno antropologijo Univerze na Dunaju pod naslovom *Violence: Practices and Ideologies* (Nasilje: prakse in ideologije). Dve leti kasneje je na istem mestu predaval v okviru intenzivnega programa oz. poletne šole pod naslovom *Nationalism and Intercultural Connections* (Nacionalizem in medkulturne povezave).

Bil je član Sveta Radia Študent (1995–1997), uredništva Časopisa za kritiko znanosti (od leta 1996), član Sveta Slovenskega etnografskega muzeja (2003–2004), nekaj časa je bil član personalnega jedra za področje etnologije; bil je član Upravnega odbora Filozofske fakultete (od leta 2003), namestnik predstojnika OEKA (2002–2003) in zadnji dve leti njegov predstojnik. Bil je član Društva antropologov Slovenije, Evropske zveze socialnih antropologov (Easa) in Komisije za urbano antropologijo pri Mednarodni zvezi etnoloških in antropoloških znanosti (IUAES). Dobro desetletje je bil tudi član Slovenskega etnološkega društva.

V raziskovalnem delu in interesih, ki jim je sledil, je bil Borut, kot temu rečemo, nomad. To ne pomeni, da bi kjerkoli ostal na pol poti, temveč da je tematike svojega zanimanja vedno pripeljal do tiste točke, ko si je lahko odgovoril na ključna

vprašanja, ki so ga zanimala, potem pa se je usmeril še kam drugam. Borut Brumen je bil človek z izjemno širokimi obzorji znanja, zato ga je tudi zanimalo veliko različnih reči. Med raziskovalnimi področji je v svojem strokovnem življenjepisu omenjal etnologijo Evrope in Afrike, problematiko etničnosti, antropologijo meja, identitete, nacionalizma, ksenofobije in rasizma, antropologijo migracij, politično antropologijo, urbano antropologijo, preučevanje konfliktov in nasilja, časa in prostora, lokalnosti in globalizacije, kolonializma in postkolonializma, socializma in neuvrščenih, vendar s tem ni izčrpal vsega, s čimer se je ukvarjal. Kot sem že omenil, ga je ob vizualni in urbani antropologiji ter etnologiji Evrope sprva privlačila tudi muzeologija. Nikoli ni dvomil v to, da Slovenski etnografski muzej mora pridobiti svojo lastno stavbo, ni mu pa bilo vseeno, ne s kom se bodo etnologi spečali, da jo dobijo, ne kakšen bo tak muzej. S svojimi nasveti je kot član Sveta Slovenskega etnografskega muzeja gotovo prispeval k čim boljši podobi bodočega razvoja osrednje etnološke muzejske institucije pri nas. Kar zadeva geografska območja, ga je poleg Slovenije sprva privlačil sredozemski prostor, ki ga je prepotoval po dolgem in počez, drugi deli Evrope in Afrika, še posebej območje Sahare in Sahela, kjer je v zadnjih letih opravil največ intenzivnega terenskega dela.

Borut Brumen je neizbrisno zaznamoval razvoj slovenske etnologije, ki jo je v zadnjih letih razumel kot socialno/kulturno antropologijo. Bil je med pionirji vizualne antropologije na oddelku, bil je tudi med tistimi, ki so bistveno nadgradili paradigmo slovenske »urbane etnologije«. Njegove raziskave so temeljile na ekstenzivnem in intenzivnem terenskem delu. Ni se zadovoljil z vikendekspedicijskim delom, temveč je med redkimi slovenskimi etnologi in etnologinjami, ki je na slovenskem terenu izvedel dolgotrajno opazovanje z udeležbo. Že samo njegova monografija o socialnih spominih v vasi Sv. Peter (*Sv. Peter in njegovi časi: socialni spomini, časi in identitete v istrski vasi Sv. Peter*, *cf, Ljubljana 2000) bi bila za katerokoli nacionalno etnologijo na svetu prelomna – pri nas jo citirajo le redki. Še sreča, da je imel podporo mentorjev in ožjega kroga sodelavcev ter Dunje Rihtman - Auguštin, ki je v svoji recenziji zapisala, da je Borutovo monografijo in njegov slog mogoče primerjati s takšnimi klasiki, kot so Bronislaw Malinowski, Margaret Mead ali Edward E. Evans - Pritchard.

Tuji so se veliko pred našimi kolegi in kolegicami ovedli pomena Borutovega dela. Kolikor vem, je bil med prvimi, ki so mu sproti prevajali članke v španski, portugalski ali francoski jezik – celo brez njegove vednosti (glej bibliografijo na strani 435)!

Od zanimanja za sredozemske socialne spomine na niz držav, ki se pojavijo in propadejo v življenju ene ali nekaj generacij, je bil le korak do zanimanja za podobne »spomine« in dejavnosti v ne tako oddaljenem delu sveta, v Afriki. Borut je že sredi devetdesetih let organiziral dve študentski ekskurziji v Maroko – v okviru druge so se s študenti in študentkami za nekaj časa ustavili v Tantanoustu in izvedli terenske vaje. Od Berberov do Tuaregov, med katerimi je preživel skupaj skoraj leto dni, je bil le še korak.

Če se ozrem nazaj, moram ugotoviti, da je Borut Brumen v naš diskurz uvajal sodobne znanstvene in strokovne koncepte – tako v člankih kot v pedagoškem delu, s katerim je kot mladi raziskovalec na Oddelku za etnologijo in kulturno antropologijo začel že leta 1991. Če ne že prej, je moral ugotoviti neskladje med mednarodnim in domačim strokovnim besednjakom že na kongresu Mednarodne zveze etnoloških in antropoloških znanosti (Iuaes), ki so ga organizirali leta 1988 v Zagrebu in s katerega je poročal v tedniku Mladina. Borut je bil med prvimi, ki so se otresli spon sicer nekoč odlično zasnovane slovenske historične »urbane etnologije« in se usmeril k sodobni urbani antropologiji, prav tako pa je bil ključnega pomena tudi njegov epistemološki premik od primordialističnih pogledov na identitete, še posebej etnične in nacionalne (ki kot nerazumljivi prežitki še danes strašijo v slovenskem etnološkem pojmovniku) h kritičnim, instrumentalističnim in konstruktivističnim analizam. Čeprav se nikoli ni uvrščal k postmodernistom, je učinkovito dekonstruiral (ali k temu spodbujal kolegice in kolege) celo vrsto dotedanjih samoumevnosti. Med najopaznejšimi naj omenim kritično analizo pojava Šavrink in Šavrinije.

V različnih člankih nas je sproti seznanjal z metodološkimi novostmi in dogajanjem v evropskih etnologijah. Ob 60. obletnici študija etnologije na ljubljanski univerzi je z Zmagom Šmitkom organiziral odmevno mednarodno srečanje o antropološki in humanistični koncepciji časa, ki ga je pospremil zbornik (*Zemljevidi časa/Maps of Time*, FF, Ljubljana 2001). Tri leta pred tem sva v okviru devetih Etnoloških stičišč organizirala in izpeljala tudi mednarodni simpozij o posocializmu. Kot je Borut zapisal v uvodniku zbornika, je bil to morda prvi takšen dogodek v deželah bivšega socialističnega tabora (*Cultural Processes and Transformations in Transition of the Central and Eastern European Post-Communist Countries*, FF, Ljubljana 1999).

Najpomembnejši souredniški podvig Boruta Brumna je nedvomno izdaja tematske trojne številke Časopisa za kritiko znanosti z naslovom *Afrike*, v kateri je skupaj z Nikolajem Jeffsom zbral avtorska in prevedena besedila o afriškem kontinentu. To je kompendij, na katerega je bil upravičeno ponosen in ga je uporabljal tudi kot univerzitetni učbenik.

Borut Brumen je s svojim delom bistveno zaznamoval zadnje desetletje in pol razvoja slovenske etnologije, njeno transformacijo in odpiranje v svet, ki nas je – vsaj na oddelku – pripeljalo do živahne izmenjave izkušenj in zamisli. Prav z Borutovimi deli in deli nekaterih drugih etnologov in etnologinj srednje in mlajše generacije se je veda končno odlepila od samozaverovane zaprtosti v avtopoetične kroge samonanašanja in samonavajanja, ki so označevali dotlej najglasnejši del slovenske etnologije. Z uporabo sodobnih konceptov evropske etnologije, socialne in kulturne antropologije je bistveno pripomogel k temu, da je etnologija prerasla svoje izhodiščne omejitve iz osemdesetih let in se transformirala v vedo, ki danes obsega kulturno/socialno antropologijo v najširšem pomenu besede. Tej transformaciji lahko sledimo skozi niz znanstvenih besedil, objavljenih tako v znanstvenih zbornikih kot v uglednih domačih in tujih revijah.

Na dodiplomski ravni je predaval Etnologijo Afrike, Evropske študije in Etnologijo Evrope, pri kateri je vodil tudi seminar, na podiplomski ravni pa Težnje v sodobni evropski etnologiji. Bil je zelo cenjen mentor pri diplomskih, magistrskih in doktorskih nalogah. Njegovi študentki in študent so prejeli fakultetno Prešernovo nagrado. Kot gostujoči predavatelj je predaval na univerzah v Friebourgu (Švica), na Dunaju (Avstrija), v Berlinu in Bayreuthu ter na Max Planck inštitutu za socialno antropologijo v Halleju (Nemčija).

310 Svojega raziskovalnega dela Borut ni nikoli skrival v slonokoščeni stolp visoke učenosti. Nasprotno. Bogato primerjalno poznavanje problematike migracij, predvsem v Evropi in Afriki, je učinkovito uporabljal tako pri javni kritiki domače migracijske politike kot pri zasnovah in predlogih sprememb konkretnih ukrepov našega notranjega ministrstva. Boruta Brumna bomo zato rej ohranili v spominu tudi kot političnega aktivista in neustavljivega borca za pravice ponižanih in potlačenih. Najpomembnejša in najbolj dragocena pa je bila njegova konkretna pomoč posameznim iskalcem zatočišča. Nikoli ni pretakal krokodiljih solz, ampak je z enako mero sočutja spremljal trpljenje tisočev in milijonov na periferiji – ali onkraj – medijske pozornosti »velikih«. Clovekovih pravic in svoboščin ni nikoli obešal na velik zvon, ampak je za njihovo uveljavitev počel, kar je bilo mogoče. Javno najodmevnejše je bilo njegovo delovanje v Uradu za intervencije, ki je deloval kot slaba vest slovenske politike, manj znano pa je njegovo povezovanje z mirovniškimi in drugimi skupinami z območja bivše Jugoslavije med samo vojno, neutrudni dialog z oblastmi v korist iskalcev zatočišča in drugih migrantov. Bil je med redkimi anarhisti, ki so se znali pogovarjati z oblastmi in doseči marsikatero koristno rešitev za ljudi v stiski. Begunske problematike ni jemal kot del svojega raziskovalnega interesa, temveč je iskal praktične možnosti pomoči, predvsem pa je bil z ostrim peresom in neizprosni izjavami utelešena slaba vest slovenske države in različnih hujskačev. Njegov »Kolumen« – pisal ga je brez dlake na jeziku ali nagobčnika – v tedniku 7D se bere kot psihopatologija sodobnega slovenskega vsakdanjega življenja. Borut ni bil naiven pacifist, vendar je vedno znova svaril pred takšnim in drugačnim nasiljem, predvsem tistim, ki ga sprožajo močni. Zato je bil velik kritik vstopa Slovenije v pakt Nato.

Svoje poglede in vizije je Borut Brumen dobesedno živel. Zanj na primer ženska enakopravnost ni bila le političnokorektniška puhlica, ampak si je za enakopravnost živo prizadeval v vseh pogledih in vedno znova opozarjal na premajhno prisotnost žensk tako v akademskem kot političnem življenju. Strpnost zanj ni bilo leporečje, temveč strpen dialog, v katerem je znal komurkoli povedati tudi tisto, kar je bilo za njegova ali njena ušesa manj prijetno. Kako tudi ne, ko pa je prihajal iz Prekmurja, ki ga je v nekem intervjuju opisal kot gibanico s protestantskim dvomom, ekspresivnimi pisatelji in likovniki, skrivnostno Muro, pomanjkanjem žensk v javnem življenju, Štefanom Smejem ali Vladom Kreslinom, specifičnimi socialnimi spomini in odnosom do Slovenije ter Slovencev – in z Romi.

Kot neizprosni kritik vsake oblike izkoriščanja, neenakosti in sovraštva se je spopadal tudi z vsemi oblikami nacionalizma. Še posebej odločen je bil takrat, ko

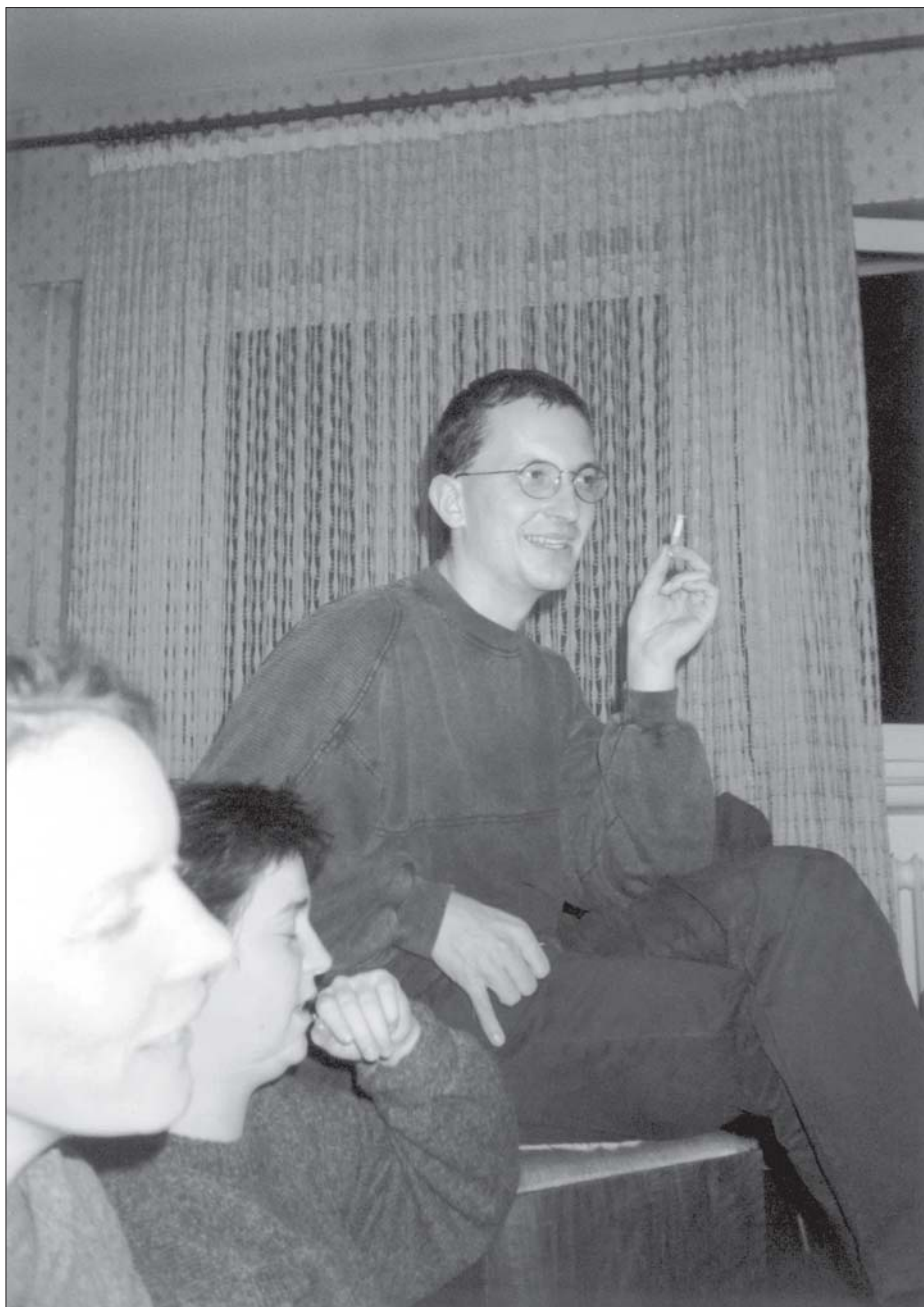
so se dali nacionalizmu na posodo etnologiji ali etnologinje. Leta 1998 je skupaj s takratnima urednikoma Glasnika SED podal zahtevo za sklic izrednega občnega zbora Slovenskega etnološkega društva, s katerim smo reagirali na nacionalistične težnje takratnega vodstva. Po trpki izkušnji nojevske razprave Borut v zadnjih letih ni več plačeval društvene članarine in v svoji biografiji ni več navajal članstva v društvu.

Naj na koncu opišem še Boruta kot kolega in sodelavca. Banalno bi bilo reči, da je bil sodelavec, kot si ga želiš – če to ne bi bilo res. S svojim občutkom za pravičnost je vedno poskušal ustreči vsem, vendar ne tako, da bi iskal brezplodne kompromise, temveč tako, da se je, kjer je bilo le mogoče, postavil na stran tistega, ki je bil v izhodišču v podrejenem položaju ali kakorkoli ogrožen. Tudi zato je znal prisluhniti željam in potrebam študentk in študentov. Ob izvajanju izrednega študija, ki ga ni odobral, a je bil vanj, skupaj z vsemi drugimi, zaradi nezadostnega financiranja študija dobesedno prisiljen, se je študentom opravičeval za (ne)red, ki so ga vsilili drugi. Vedno jih je usmerjal v raziskovanje tistih tematik, ki jim bodo omogočile zaposlovanje.

311

Mlajše kolege in kolegice je znal spodbuditi z zamislimi in argumenti, obenem pa se je znal uživati v njihov položaj, znal je povezovati na videz nepremostljivo različne zamisli in vizije kolegov in kolegic na oddelku, poleg tega pa se je dobro zavedal tudi pomena neformalnih pogovorov in občasnega sproščenega druženja. Prav kot povezovalca in animatorja ter kot prijatelja ga bomo najbolj pogrešali! Preprosto rečeno: bil je izjemen človek.

V *Dnevniku* Sobotne priloge Dela je januarja zapisal: »Prijatelji in prijateljice, tisti s službami in oni brez, se ubadajo s podobnimi težavami. Zmanjkuje jim časa zase in za druge. Časa za samorefleksijo, posedanja, pogovore in ustvarjanje, ki nas bogati z novimi izkušnjami in spoznanji. Nekaj najhujšega, kar se lahko zgodi živemu človeku.«



Borut Brumen na študijski ekskurziji v Nemčiji leta 1992, iz zasebne zbirke Nene Židov

WHEN THE BEST AMONG US DEPART ... Borut Brumen (10. 2. 1963–30. 7. 2005)

Rajko Muršič

313

Juggling with words may be an everyday routine job to me, but all these years of exercise are of little use in writing this obituary, forced by the inexorable Fates, who have bereaved me of a friend and colleague at a time when his professional career was just about to reach its zenith. The words just don't flow and my thoughts keep faltering. What is left are fragmentary memories and the disbelief that I can no longer go and see Borut for a word of advice or just to talk about anything.

We met as students, but the moment that left the strongest impression on my mind was the last examination Borut passed as a graduate student of ethnology. Not because of the examination itself (I don't even remember which subject it was), but because of the long conversation we had walking through the park behind the Faculty of Arts. We rarely met at lectures, more often at concerts and a variety of civil society actions and events in the latter half of the 1980s. Breadth of mind, tolerance and originality were three features Borut had brought from his native Murska Sobota.

He often told me how as boys, he and his friends used to roam around and nobody cared from which part of the town any of them was – and how perfectly normal it was for boys from Pušča (the Roma settlement) to join them. The same was true of the “newcomers” from anywhere in Slovenia or Yugoslavia. Borut really knew how to tell a story. I cannot even begin to retell them.

Borut first came to Ljubljana in 1982 when the legendary Klub FV, an alternative disco in Rožna dolina, was already in decline. During the turbulent 80s in Ljubljana he faced the urban turmoil of a new age. Ljubljana then seemed to be not just one of Yugoslavia's centres, but one of the world's new capitals in which momentous events were taking place. This feeling has been lost in Ljubljana for quite a while now, but in those times we really thought we were in the centre of the world. Year after year, month after month, even day after day it seemed as if “new spaces of difference” were opening up, and that something that was just not possible one day, was self-evident the next day. This was not just about “raging” punk, but about the struggle for the abolition of the death penalty, for freedom of speech and the elimination of inequalities based on sex or sexual orientation. The

new social movements reached their climax long before change became inevitable in 1988. Borut followed and supported these movements and he discovered ethnology as a discipline in which he could combine the pleasant with the useful.

In some sense, he was undoubtedly a restless, adventurous mind who was equally attracted by the domestic environs and the vast expanses of the world. During his studies, he was particularly interested in visual anthropology, the ethnology of Europe, and museology. His graduation thesis in 1987 was dedicated to the development of ethnological museology in Slovenia. He was one of the first students of ethnology – if not the very first – to include a film in his seminary assignment (about the flea market in Ljubljana). He was indeed an outstanding expert on film and film language. Though in his later research and professional work he did not specifically dedicate himself to visual anthropology (but he continued to film until the end), he showed an eager interest and appreciation of the recent achievements of our students in visual anthropology.

As a scholarship holder of the museum, he was employed as a trainee at the Murska Sobota Regional Museum soon after graduation. But before taking up his job, he travelled to China on the Transsiberian railway hiked through the country for several months. His return was followed by the logical decision to enrol in postgraduate studies in ethnology and to simultaneously research the urban image of Murska Sobota. In 1991, he co-organised a summer ethnological workshop in Markovci and later edited its proceedings (*Etno delavnica Markovci 1991*, ZOTKS, Ljubljana 1992). He received the Award of the Beltinci Folklore Festival for his professional work in Prekmurje.

Borut's restless mind however made him soon leave his dear Sobota Castle and he went to Berlin for additional training in 1989. A scholarship from the German DAAD foundation allowed him to study at the Institute of Ethnology, Free University of Berlin, under Georg Elwert, an Africanist of the German ethnological school. In the late 1960s, professor Elwert (d. 2005) called to account the people who had allowed their discipline to be abused by the Nazis (that is by nationalism) and later pretended they had done nothing wrong. He was a great expert on the conflict in the African Horn and Northeast Africa, and he was also important to Slovenia because the idea to organise a Mediterranean Ethnological Summer School was born and developed in discussions between Elwert, Brumen and Zmago Šmitek.

Borut joined the staff of the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology as a junior researcher in 1991; here he finished his historical research of urban life in Murska Sobota under the mentorship of professor Slavko Kremenšek. He took his master's degree in late 1993 and published his dissertation entitled *Na robu zgodovine in spomina: urbana kultura Murske Sobote med letoma 1919 in 1941* (Pomurska založba, Murska Sobota 1995) a year and half later. In this ground-breaking monograph, Brumen followed the methodological directions of the then prevailing historically oriented Slovene "urban ethnology", but skilfully enriched it with the Weberian concept of "ethos", formulating innovative

interpretations of bourgeois life in accordance with more recent cultural anthropology approaches, in particular in the final chapter, in which he unmasked the bourgeois family of the early twentieth century as a patriarchal, authoritarian structure. In his use of modern sociological concepts, Brumen paved the way for a new “critical” ethnological paradigm, which he further developed in his later works.

In late 1994, Brumen was appointed researcher at the ISH Graduate School of Humanities in Ljubljana and carried out research for his doctoral dissertation (mentor Zmago Šmitek) which he successfully defended in 1999. He was appointed trainee assistant at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana in 1996, assistant (professor) for the ethnology of Europe, lecturer in ethnology and urban anthropology in 2000, and associate professor in cultural anthropology in 2005. 315

In 2000, he received additional training in the ethnology of Africa at the prestigious London School of Economics, and in 2001 lectured one semester at the Institute of European Ethnology of the University of Vienna. Brumen collaborated in several international projects and researches, and excelled as an organiser of research camps and acclaimed study excursions to Germany (1992) and Morocco (1998, 2003).

In 1994, he was a co-founder and member of the organising committee of the well-received annual symposium or summer ethnological school in Piran (*MESS: Mediterranean Ethnological Summer Symposium*). Beside Borut Brumen and Zmago Šmitek, who gave MESS an indelible mark of thematic variety, and the late Iztok Saksida, MESS was greatly influenced by the suggestions of the late Dunja Rihtman - Auguštin, who followed the developments in Slovene ethnology (or ethno-anthropology, as she called it) with enthusiasm in the 90s and never stopped to encourage Borut (and the others). Borut Brumen was a coordinator of the first two proceedings of these highly-praised symposiums (*Mess, Vol. 1*, SED, Ljubljana 1996; *Mess, Vol. 2*, IMR, Ljubljana 1998). In 1995, he coordinated an international research project involving postgraduate students and professors from the Swiss universities of Fribourg, Lausanne and Neuchâtel at locations in Milje, Piran and Novigrad. In 2002, he was one of a group of eminent European guests who lectured at the Institute (Department) of ethnology, cultural and social anthropology of the University of Vienna as part of a postgraduate seminar entitled *Violence: Practices and Ideologies*. Two years later he again lectured there as part of an intensive programme or summer school on *Nationalism and Intercultural Connections*.

Brumen was a member of the Board of Radio Študent (1995–1997), the editorial board of *Časopis za kritiko znanosti* (from 1996), the Board of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum (2003–2004), for some time also a member of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport's staffing committee for ethnology; member of the Board of Governors of the Faculty of Arts (from 2003), vice head of the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology (2002–2003) and its head

for the last two years. He was a member of the Slovene Anthropological Society, the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA), and the Commission for Urban Anthropology of the International Union of Ethnological and Anthropological Sciences (IUAES). He was also a member of the Slovene Ethnological Society for about a decade.

316 In his research work and the interests he pursued Borut was, as we like to say, a nomad. That does not mean that he would go only half-way in his efforts, but that he always pursued the themes of his interest to the point where he could answer the key questions to himself, and then moved on. Borut Brumen was an intellectual with exceptionally wide horizons of knowledge and was therefore interested in a great variety of things. In his professional CV, he mentioned the following research fields: the ethnologies of Europe and Africa, issues of ethnicity, the anthropology of borders, identities, nationalism, xenophobia and racism, the anthropology of migrations, urban anthropology, the study of conflicts and violence, space and time, localness and globalisation, colonialism, socialism, and the non-aligned countries. And he still failed to mention quite everything he occupied himself with. As mentioned above, he was first attracted by museology, in addition to visual and urban anthropology. He was never in any doubt that the Slovene Ethnographic Museum should acquire museum premises of its own, but he was hardly indifferent to the issue with whom the museum would get involved to achieve this objective or to what the museum would be like. His recommendations as a member of the Advisory Board of the Slovene Ethnographical Museum certainly contributed to a better insight into the future development of this central ethnological museum institution in Slovenia. In geographical terms Brumen was at first attracted, beside by Slovenia, by the Mediterranean which he travelled in all directions, and in other areas of Europe and Africa, in particular the Sahara and Sahel, where he carried out the most intensive fieldwork in the last years of his life.

Borut Brumen has left an indelible mark on the development of Slovene ethnology which in his last years he understood as social and cultural anthropology. He was one of the pioneers of visual anthropology at the department, and one of those who essentially expanded the paradigm of Slovene “urban ethnology”. His research work was based on extensive and intensive fieldwork. He did not satisfy himself with weekend expedition trips, but was one of the rare Slovene ethnologists who carried out long-term participatory observation in Slovenia. His monograph on social memories in the village of Sv. Peter (*Sv. Peter in njegovi časi: socialni spomini, časi in identitete v istrski vasi Sv. Peter*, *cf, Ljubljana 2000) would be a ground-breaking study in any national ethnology in the world, but is rarely cited in Slovenia. He was indeed fortunate to enjoy, at least, the support of his mentors and a close circle of collaborators, as well as Dunja Rihtman - Auguštin, who in her review of the study wrote that Brumen’s monograph and his style stood the comparison with classical authors the likes of Bronislaw Malinowski, Margaret Mead or Edward E. Evans - Pritchard.

Foreign experts were aware of the significance of Brumen's work long before it was recognised by his colleagues in Slovenia. To my knowledge, he was one of the first whose articles were regularly translated into Spanish, Portuguese or French – at times even without his knowledge (see his bibliography on the page 435).

His interest in the Mediterranean social memories of a range of countries, which emerged and disappeared within the lifetime of one or a few generations, was only one step away from his interest in similar “memories” and activities in another, not so distant part of the world - Africa. He organised two student excursions to Morocco in the 90s, and during the second one he and his students spent some time in the village Tantatoust to carry out field exercises. From the Berbers to the Touaregs, among which he spent almost a year, was just another step.

317

Looking back, I can say that Borut Brumen introduced modern scholarly and professional concepts to our discourse; he did so in his articles as well as in his educational work, which he started as a junior researcher at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology in 1991. If not earlier, he must have become aware of the inconsistencies between the international and national terminologies at the congress of IUAES, organised in Zagreb in 1988, from which he reported for the *Mladina* magazine. Borut was one of the first to shake of the shackles of the Slovene historical “urban ethnology”, though excellently conceived in the past, and move to modern urban ethnology; equally important was his epistemological shift move from primordialist views of identity, in particular ethnical and national ones (which continue to live on without being understood in Slovene ethnological terminology), to critical, instrumentalist and constructivist analyses. Though he never saw himself as a postmodernist, he efficiently deconstructed (or encouraged his colleagues to deconstruct) a whole range of ideas that were taken for granted in the past. As one of the most conspicuous ones I would like to mention his critical analysis of the phenomenon of Šavrinija and the Šavrinija women.

Brumen introduced us to methodological novelties and developments in European ethnologies in a variety of articles. On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the study of ethnology at the University of Ljubljana, he organised, together with Zmago Šmitek, an acclaimed international symposium on anthropological and humanist conceptions of time, published in the proceedings (*Zemljevidi časa/ Maps of Time*, FF, Ljubljana 2001). Three years earlier I collaborated with him in the organisation and execution of an international symposium on post-socialism as part of the Ninth Ethnological Contacts. As Borut wrote in his introduction to the proceedings, this may have been the first such event in any country of the former Communist Block (*Cultural Processes and Transformations in Transition of the Central and Eastern European Post-Communist Countries*, FF, Ljubljana 1999).

Brumen's most significant achievement as a co-editor was undoubtedly the publication of a triple issue of *Časopis za kritiko znanosti* entitled *Afrika*, in which he and Nikolai Jeffs gathered authored and translated texts about the African

continent. He was rightfully proud of this compendium and used it as a university textbook.

318 Borut Brumen's work distinctly marked the last decade and a half of the development of Slovene ethnology, its transformation and opening up to the world, and this development led to lively exchanges of experiences and ideas, at least at the department. Borut's works and those of some other ethnologists of the middle and younger generations were instrumental to ethnology's break-away from the self-satisfied isolation and autopoetic circles of self-references and self-citations that until then were typical of the most vocal members of Slovene ethnology. By using modern concepts of European ethnology, social and cultural anthropology, he considerably contributed to ethnology's overcoming its initial limits from the 80s and transforming itself into a discipline which today encompasses cultural and social anthropology in the widest sense of the word. The transformation can be traced through a range of series of scientific texts, published in professional anthologies and in renowned domestic and foreign journals.

At the undergraduate level, Brumen lectured the Ethnology of Africa, European Studies, and the Ethnology of Europe, where he also led a seminar; at the postgraduate level, he lectured Tendencies in Contemporary European Ethnology. He was a highly regarded mentor of graduation, master and doctoral dissertations. Several of his students received the faculty's Prešeren Award. As a visiting lecturer, he lectured at the universities of Fribourg (Switzerland), Berlin and Bayreuth, and at the Max Planck Institute of Social Anthropology in Halle (Germany).

Brumen never tried to hide his research work in an ivory tower of highbrow science. On the contrary: he efficiently used his rich comparative knowledge of migration issues, especially in Europe and Africa, in his public criticism of the domestic migration policy as well as in concepts and proposals to change concrete measures addressed at the Ministry of the Interior. Borut Brumen will also be remembered as a political activist and an unyielding fighter for the rights of the abused and oppressed. Most important and most precious, however, was his concrete assistance to asylum seekers. Brumen never was one to shed crocodile tears, but followed the suffering of thousands and millions of people on the margin or beyond the attention of the media of the powerful with an equal measure of empathy. He never spoke of human rights and freedoms in high terms, but did what he could to implement them. His most noticeable public action was his collaboration with the Office for Intervention which functioned as the bad conscience of the official policy; less well-known are his connections with peace and other movements from the territory of the former Yugoslavia during the war, his persistent dialogue with the authorities in favour of asylum seekers and other migrants. He was a rare anarchist who knew how to talk to the authorities and achieve useful solutions for people in need. He did not consider the refugee issue as part of his research interest, but sought practical ways to help, and with his sharp pen and uncompromising statements he personified the bad conscience of the state and

various agitators. The columns he wrote for the weekly 7D – without beating about the bush or any self-censorship – read like a psychopathology of contemporary everyday life in Slovenia. Borut was no naïve pacifist, but always warned against all forms of violence, especially of the kind that is perpetrated by the powerful. He was therefore highly critical of Slovenia's accession to NATO.

Brumen literally lived his views and visions. Women's equality, for instance, was not just a politically correct catchword to him, he really made efforts for equality in all aspects and never stopped drawing attention to the under-representation of women in academic and political life. Tolerance was not just smooth talk to him, but a tolerant dialogue in which he often managed to communicate to people things they would rather not hear. As a native of Prekmurje, which he once described in an interview as a *gibanica* (a cake of layered pastry) made up of protestant doubt, expressive writers and artists, the mysterious Mura river, the absence of women in public life, Štefan Smej or Vlado Kreslin, the specific social memories and attitudes of its inhabitant to (the rest of) Slovenia and the Slovenes, and the Roma.

319

As an adamant critic of all forms of exploitation, inequality and hatred he was against nationalism in any form. He was particularly strong-minded when ethnologists lent their services to nationalism. In 1998, Borut and the then editors of the journal *Glasnik SED* (including this author) demanded an extraordinary general meeting of the Slovene Ethnological Society, at which we reacted to the nationalist tendencies of the then leadership. Following the bitter experience of a head-in-the-sand discussion, Borut stopped paying his membership fee and deleted his membership of the society from his CV.

I would like to conclude by remembering Borut as a colleague and collaborator. It would be trivial to say that he was the kind of collaborator one can only wish for – but that is the plain truth. Because of his keen feeling of fairness, he always tried to please everybody, though not by seeking a fruitless compromise, but by taking the side, whenever possible, of the weaker or in any way threatened person. That too is one of the reasons why he was sympathetic to the wishes and needs of his students. Though he was against part-time study, he was forced, as was the rest of the staff, to introduce and carry out the programme because the regular programme was underfinanced. He apologized to the part-time students for the (dis)order others had forced upon him. He always directed them to the research of themes that would enable them to find employment.

Brumen was very good at stimulating his younger colleagues with ideas and arguments, and he also knew how to put him in their position, knew how to link apparently unbridgeable ideas and visions of his colleagues at the department, and was keenly aware of the importance of informal conversations and occasional relaxed socialising. We will indeed miss him most as an animator and friend! Simply put: Borut was an exceptional human being.

In January, he wrote in his *Diary*, published in the Saturday Supplement of the newspaper *Delo*: “All my friends of both sexes, whether employed or not, face

similar problems. They are always short of time for themselves and for others. Short of time for the self-reflection, sitting around, talking and creative efforts that enrich us with new experiences and findings. That is probably one of the worst things that can happen to a living person.”

BESEDA O AVTORJU

Rajko Muršič, dr., izredni profesor in predstojnik Oddelka za etnologijo in kulturno antropologijo Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani. Predava metodološke predmete in popularno kulturo na dodiplomskem študiju ter izbrana poglavja iz sodobne etnološke metodologije na podiplomskem študiju.

320

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rajko Muršič, Ph.D., associate professor and the head of the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. He lectures on methodological subjects and popular culture at the graduate level, and on selected chapters from contemporary ethnological methodology at the post-graduate level.
