Univerfsity of Ljubljana
Faculty of Arts
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Places of Encounters / Prostori soočanja

International Symposium
in the Memory of Borut Brumen

Abstracts

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Cathie Carmichael:

'Ethnic Boundaries and Real Communities in Bosnia'

An article by D. Marjanovic et al 'The Peopling of Modern Bosnia-Herzegovina: Y-chromosome Haplogroups in the Three Main Ethnic Groups', which appeared in the Annals of Human Genetics (69)(6) 2005 purported to demonstrate that "the three main groups of Bosnia-Herzegovina... share a large fraction of the same ancient gene pool distinctive for the Balkan area". Scientists working on other parts of Europe have also concluded that genetic boundaries do not correspond at all neatly with political, religious or linguistic boundaries. This paper will consider the implications of this body of research and suggest that geneticists should be prepared to work with social scientists in order to avoid "essentialism" in their methodological approaches and simplification in their conclusions.

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Jasna Čapo Žmegač:

Encounters in the transnational social space

In this presentation I would like to question the usual representation of transnational social space as a space in which borders are overcome and cultural forms and identities are being reshaped. While it cannot be denied such a characterization, transnational social space is an arena in which might arise complex - simultaneously harmonius and strained - relations between its participants. Tensions between migrants and non-migrants in the transnational social space arise in the cleft between the wish of the migrants to maintain contact with the locality (and country) of origin and the efforts to which they are exposed in the country of migration. The latter might result in the impossibility that the migrants participate in transnational social space. The presentation will explore those tensions using the case study of Croatian transmigrants in Germany.

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Ildiko Erdei:

"It Takes Two to Tango": Encounters of "East" and "West" in Everyday Economies in Post-socialist Serbia

Everyday experiences and economic life in post-socialist Serbia is strongly marked with the encounter and interface of what is colloquially perceived as "Eastern" and "Western" social, political, economical and cultural ways of being, thinking and behavior. In the introductory part of the paper, the encounters between Slovenia and Serbia in economic domain will be presented, as they have figured in the public discourse. In the symbolic geography of the former Yugoslavia, Slovenia was perceived as its internal "West", compared with its "Eastern" (and, consequently, more "oriental") parts consisting of Bosnia, Serbia and Macedonia. That fact of social imagination was easily discursively translated into Slovenia being a representation of Westernness, Europeaness, in the context of the post-socialist transition in Serbia. Indeed, the representations of Slovenia were sometimes also played down, in the nationalistically tuned "defense" of the "domestic" economy. Therefore, I will briefly document the debates held in Serbia, on the encounters between Slovenia and Serbia in economic domain, focusing on two periods: the end of the eighties and the famous "embargo" on Slovenian commodities in

Serbia, and from 2000 on, including the most recent debates on the nature of capital in the privatization processes of "C-market" in Serbia and "Merkator" in Slovenia, showing that both the alleged "East" and "West" need their counterparts in order to define their new collective identities. In the second part of the paper, results of a case study of the encounter of "Eastern" and "Western" business cultures will be presented, on the example of the privatization of the local brewery in Vojvodina.

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Thomas Fillitz:

You May Say, I'm a Dreamer – But I'm Not the Only One … (© John Lennon)

1) Starting with Africa/African societies faced and face multiple ways of "encounters" – war zones, touristic landscapes, markets, etc.

2) What Augé conceived as *non-lieux* is becoming in the concepts of avant-garde global architects more and more a space of fast encounter which needs structures of its own as the architect The architect Rem Koolhaas and his team OMA are outlining. On the other hand, Adam Kuper launched another highly antagonistic controversy about the "Return of the Native"?

3) Places of Encounter/Multiculturalism seems to becoming an old fashioned notion for social relations which are no more of political relevance. Instead intercultural practices and the concept of cultural diversity are taking the lead – what does this shift imply?

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Andre Gingrich:
Temporalities: A comparative Perspective from Anthropology

One of Borut Brumen's lasting contributions to anthropology certainly are his ideas and findings about experiencing time and temporality. Many of these conceptual findings on time were based on his fieldwork in Istria, and they combined ethnographic richness with an innovative sense of reconsidering anthropology's established views on this topic. In showing how individuals' and local groups' experiences of community, of seasons, rituals, and of wider influences linked up with their temporal life experiences, Borut Brumen demonstrated how smaller and larger systemic analyses can be integrated with an understanding for personal time rythms, and for lived temporal experiences. In fact, these innovative approaches by Brumen represented a major breakthrough in a field in which many earlier anthropologists, as Johannes Fabian once pointed out, either completely had ignored topics of time by falsely giving undue attention to space, or by historicising the "other" in a way that marginalised the "other's" roots in the present. The present contribution honors these achievements by Borut Brumen as one of Europe's most briliant anthhropologists of his generations, and at the same time attempts to further elaborate and adapt his thoughts for current debates on multiple and alternative modernities, as well as about the paradoxes of

globalisation. To this purpose, and following a 'Current Anthropology' issue on time and temporality that I co-edited a few years ago, this paper will try to combine Borut Brumen's ideas with a comparative perspective from anthropology on other temporal rythms and movements in today's world. These explorations into an improved anthropological understanding of temporalities in a contradictory, globalising world thus will pursue and carry on insights and visions that certainly continue to live on, despite the painful loss of a colleague and dear friend.

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Christian Giordano:

Dealing with the Past: The Social Construction of Antagonistic Histories

Historical anthropology as *science du présent* highlights that the past not only belongs to the past but also acts heavily upon the present, since specific social actors can actualize it. In other words, the past can be more or less intentionally *mobilized*, or, better yet, *activated* in the present. Such a mobilization or activation can occur for specific reasons. For example, it could take place to accent a certain identity or a given feeling of belonging; to convey a metaphoric or symbolic message of hostility or friendship to other actors; to steady positions of power or relations of social inequality; to rebel against reputedly unacceptable political and/or socio-economic conditions, etc. There are many cases, however, in which two or more divergent, if not opposite, historical truths appear simultaneously and become the target of heated ideological discussions among intellectuals and of political contentions among the ruling classes of a country or of two or more States. In most cases, intellectual and political elites manage the past and produce both the histories and the memories of a society, and consequently also the antagonistic historical truths. The latter are a specific social construction of reality that results from an accurate re-elaboration, reinterpretation, manipulation, or even reinvention of the past in the present. The "invention of tradition" is the term which the historians Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger have coined to describe such constructions. Such an invention

is never utterly arbitrary or spontaneous and should be interpreted as a clever modulation of the facts. Two antagonistic facts might even be based on the same events of the past.

Antagonistic historical truths concerning the past are used especially in territorial contentions in which boundaries are ill defined or have a *variable geometry* because they have almost constantly been shifted in the course of history. Therefore, antagonistic histories and the principle of territoriality are frequently linked. We should always remember that an appeal to an historical right, the so-called *right of the first-comer*, generally legitimates a territorial claim. However, this implies dealing with the past to give credence to one's requests in the present. Antagonistic histories often bolster the community spirit or the ethnic or cultural identity of a group facing an actual or presumed threat from outside. At the same time, the ensuing contention tends to strengthen the ruling class' hegemonic status and therefore confers legitimacy to the elites. Usually the latter are interested in kindling the antagonism of the truths and thus in amplifying tensions and conflicts through a shrewd emphasis, or a crafty re-evaluation, or again by deliberately omitting certain facts of the past. In such cases, there is frequently a conflicting policy of symbols ending in a symbolic battle over the *lieux de mémoire*.

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Božidar Jezernik:

The construction of the Other through state terror: Museums in German concentration camps 1933–1945

It is the ideological incompatibility of the concentration camp and the museum which makes us think of them as unlikely bedfellows. In our mind, the concentration camp, as the very emblem for the system of barbarous terror, symbolises precisely those attributes to which the museum was conceived as an antidote. Yet, in major concentration camps established under SS control, museums were set up with the aim of collecting exhibits and displaying them within a *Rassenkunde* (race science) framework.? As the discourse of racial anthropology was built on the rhetoric of the difference between the 'pure' races and people with "inferior hereditary quality" (see e.g. Günther 1933), SS museums put on display 'pieces of evidence' with a view to rendering present and visible that which was absent and invisible: the hierarchical order of different races. Thus, collections displayed in SS museums in concentration camps were instrumental in the process of defining the Aryan *Übermensch* (superhuman) as the personification of all desirable physical, cultural and intellectual attributes, born to conquer and rule the world as a member of the *Herrenvolk* (master race), and the non-Aryan, above all the Jewish *Untermensch* (subhuman) as his opposite, a radically other and barely human, suitable only for menial chores.

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Grażyna Ewa Karpińska:

Let's meet in the mall: Places of encounters in contemporary culture

My paper attempts to depict places like fast-food and other restaurants, coffe-shops situated in large shopping malls. My objective is also to think over the meanings these places generate for a man. I describe them by means of the French anthropoligist's concept (Marc Augé) about the anthropological places and non-places.

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Georg Klute:

Guerilla Warfare in Africa

Guerrilla warfare is mobile warfare par excellence. Many modern guerrillas are highly motorized wars, often led in spacious movements and in great speed. The paper shows how ordinary four-wheel-drive cars are combined with light weapons in the technology of the modern chariot. This combination is called technology of the modern chariot, because it resembles the technology of the historical chariot in its forms and application: The connection of speed and mobility with relatively high firepower, large operation range and long independence from outside supply make the modern chariot a weapon, which is particularly suited for the highly mobile warfare of guerrilla wars.

It is argued, that the unification of two existing techniques, resulting in a new technology, is by no means a simple addition of two existing technical artefacts, but an independent creative act, for which the term of combining invention is suggested.

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Nancy Lindisfarne

Saving Women and Children First?

Jason Hart has written a powerful article, 'Saving children. What role for anthropology?' (AT, 22/1, February 2006) on child-soldiers and the practices of child-focused humanitarianism. The project he calls 'saving children' also applies to 'saving women'. Both sets of practices are part of the same international system, as parallels in the imperial wars in Afghanistan and Iraq make particularly clear. And both sets of practices merit a comparable anthropological critique. This paper is a preliminary exploration of the 'saving women' project in Afghanistan. In autumn 2001, Cherie Blair and Laura Bush sought to legitimize American bombing by claiming it would liberate Afghan women. In 2003, George Bush told the UN that invading Iraq was for the sake of Iraqi women. The orientalist rhetorical strategy was the same for both countries and relied on a homogenized, racist construction of 'Muslim women' and excessively feminized Afghan and Iraqi women as the passive victims of Muslim men. This construction erased international politics from the equation, while implying that the entire populations of first Afghanistan and then Iraq were, because of local sexual politics, in need of enlightened intervention through pre-emptive war. In both countries an externally imposed and funded NGO gender/women industry has burgeoned with occupation. I suggest that this women-industry, and the 'saving women' discourse, is deeply misleading in a number of quite distinct ways. For instance, by focusing on 'gender issues' – rape,

prostitution, honour killings, child and forced marriage, infant and maternal mortality, women's education and public participation – the industry focuses attention on the local culture. It simultaneously ignores the impact of war and occupation on both women and men through new, engineered sectarianism, greatly increased poverty and infrastructural collapse. Further, I argue that the women-industry represents the priorities of the occupiers, not those of local people. It systematically damages genuine local women's NGOs in favour of those fronted by women associated with the puppet regimes. In these and other ways, we see that the industry serves to evoke western sympathy and shore up the moral legitimacy of the occupiers in their own eyes.

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Elke Mader:

Encounters with Otavalo: Trade, Tourism and Ritual in Ecuador and Beyond.

This contribution will approach places of encounter in the context of notions of place, placemaking and culture in a globalized framework. Focusing on people from Otavalo in the Northern Ecuadorian Andes, I will argue that such places of encounters represent complex cultural situations and processes. The paper will discuss this topic in regard to two particular arenas of action: Production of and trade with textiles (closely connected with tourism, travel and migration), and the celebration of rituals, particularly the Fiesta San Juan (also known as Inti Raymi). Both arenas are, on the one hand, linked to a place, Otavalo, and to a specific group of its inhabitants, indigenous Otavalo runa. On the other hand, both arenas comprise extensive translocal and global dimensions; they are deeply rooted in local and regional cultural and socio-economic configurations, but have changed significantly in a globalized context. The talk will look at the role of these two arenas in regard to placemaking of Otavalos in Ecuador and beyond, and at discuss their representation in the internet.

Monica Martinez:
Ethnic Identity, NGOs and Cultural Mediation in
Kzna Yala, (Panamá)

Using an anthropological approach, I will elucidate the transformations in ethnic identity in connection to change in political discourse of Kuna organizations, specially among kuna NGO. These organizations now place environment at the center of their political struggles. A new ethnic identity is emerging and being put in context in social situations and encounters.

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Rastko Močnik:

Ideological Domination and Contestation

The author will discuss his recent work on ideology and
power in post-ideological soceities and discuss
sociological aspects of Borut Brumen's work in Istria.

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Rajko Muršič:

Borut Brumen: a Scholar and a Friend

The author will say a few words about a great man,
scholar and friend. Borut Brumen was a person with quite
clear world-view. We may call it anarchist or libertarian,
but it was more than that, perhaps the only possible
ethical stance in the late 20th century: critical humanistic.
Borut Brumen's decision to study ethnology and
sociology of culture was most likely derived from his
life-stance. He was a child of the sixties with all the
possible connotations of the era. Student revolts in the
late sixties were the last revolutionary struggles in
Europe. But revolutionary ideas of younger rebels were
only a part of overal cultural revolution of that time:
building of many different alternative ways of life and
new communities had tremendous effects to everyone
who came to the age in the seventies. Rapid technological
development was just one part of the story, together with
increasingly vivid movement of people.
Relatinship between an individual and the state was one
of the topics Borut Brumen studied. In scholarship he was
rather a nomad: starting with visual anthropology, he was
interested in museum studies, urban anthropology, social
memory, identities, anthropology of time, borders and
boundaries, history and methodology, migrations, etc.

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Christian Promitzer:

When Serbs meet Serbs: Petrovden in Bela krajina

The paper is on the small authochthonous Serb community in Bela krajina. On the day of St. Peter, 12 July 1998, the new painting upon the entrance to the Serbian orthodox church of the village of Miliči was consecrated. The painter was from Karlovac, he and a number of Serbs from Karlovac were present at the ceremony and the party thereafter. The paper reflects the meeting of members of the Serb minority of Croatia with the hidden Serb minority of Bela krajina and the role I played in this meeting as a scholar from Austria.

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Thomas Schippers:

We were here before ! Some Reflexions on Time, Place and Identity Building today.

This paper will present some anthropological refexions on present day uses and significations of words like 'autochthonous' or 'authentic' both in scholarly and vernacular discourses. After shortly recalling the epistemological influence of geological models like the one of stratigraphy on the emerging XIXth century social sciences, the paper will stress the influence of Antique political conceptions on European elites involved in the building of modern Nation-States in the same period. The idea of autochthony occurs here in a context of 'quest for a national history' in terms of national 'markers', which are paradoxally mostly considered as timeless. With the help of European, but also North-American and African examples some of the political and social implications of ideologies based on a principle of auctoritas vetustatis will be examined. The author will make a distinction between situations where those who use the autochthony argument form a (dominated) minority and situations where this argument is advocated by a majority. In the second case the idea of autochthony generally aims the exclusion, the discriminations, the expulsion or even the physical eradication of minorities perceived as socio-economic treats for the majority. It will be argued that in most cases where the autochthony concept is put forward, it is considered as a quasi irreducible form of otherness

asking for acknowledgement and 'respect' rather than a (simple) socio-cultural difference accessible to (scholarly) knowledge. This may explain the 'mixed feelings' scholars generally have when faced with vernacular claims of autochthony or authenticity. But on the other hand the author admits in conclusion that these 'imagined historical constructs' can have genuine mobilising effects when adopted by large groups searching for forms of collective belonging. For the better, but also for the worst.

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Peter Skalnik:

Dilemmas of European Africanist Anthropology in the 21st Century

European Africanist anthropologists face a number of dilemmas today. They cannot any more do their research without close cooperation with their African colleagues. At the same time they cannot continue with topics of research which are not relevant to current African realities. Can they still be loyal to the pursuit of scientific knowledge or the definition of knowledge will have to transform by the very fact of mutuality between European and African researchers? How legitimate is the critical study of African contemporary sociopolitical situation? What are the advantages of comparison between post-colonial and post-communist societies? Who should set research priorities? How do we avoid the racism of politics of research when those who finance the research are also dominant in deciding who is researching what and how? Can Africanist anthropological research be shared by African and European scholars and thus put on equal footing? What can we learn from African anthropologists if they begin to do regular fieldwork in European societies? Such and other questions will be raised and discussed in the paper. Even if answers might be only tentative at this stage, the paper will attempt to challenge received wisdoms of European Africanist anthropology and offer new vistas for a more fruitful anthropology of Africa.

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Zmago Šmitek:

The Symbolic Concepts of Place and Time in Asian Cultures

The author will present some facets of Borut Brumen's work on concepts of time and place in Istria and Murska Sobota, and compare his contribution to the concepts of time and place in India.