

as filtered through the characters' and narrators' memory. Questions of identity and the representations of complex relations between time, space, and old age throughout the Soviet era, with its specific chronotopes throughout the communist period, are explored in nuanced ways in the article about "Rasputin's and Trifonov's Old Characters" (Remonato).

Noteworthy of mention is the seamless combination of extensive research and refined theoretical framing with fluid and elegant prose that characterizes all the articles gathered in it. Dagmar Gramshammer-Hohl's edited collection of essays *Aging in Slavic Literatures* is an extremely valuable study that engages in lucid critical inquiry of the theme of aging across a rich section of traditions, historical and cultural universes and valorizes complex, positive and non-stereotypical representations of old age in works of Slavic literature. The study is a valuable resource for students and scholars alike and for all those interested in the topic of aging in general.

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Hunger and Fury: The Crisis of Democracy in the Balkans. By Jasmin Mujanović.

New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. xii, 229 pp. Notes. Index. \$27.95, paper. doi: 10.1017/slr.2019.139

Democracy has never had an easy ride in southeastern Europe. Still, it is fair to say that it is going through a particularly tough time. That is attested by international watchdogs such as Freedom House, who register a steady decline across critical indicators such as the rule of law, freedom of expression, and civil society. The bulk of the countries in former Yugoslavia are still classified as "partly free." Even Serbia, slotted in the "free" category, is hardly a paragon of democratic rule. Strongmen are back in fashion, peddling nationalist rhetoric much like two decades ago. With media tamed, civil society marginalized, and courts under political control accountability is in short supply. Crony capitalism thrives and societies are demoralized. Worse still, western organizations' membership conditionality, hailed in the 1990s and 2000s as the driving force of political change in post-communist Europe, does not seem to work its magic. In the age of Viktor Orbán and the far right populists surging in the west, the European Union (EU) has lost much of its former radiance.

Jasmin Mujanović provides an uncompromising snapshot of the snapshot of the state we are in. He has no doubt who bears the responsibility for the democratic failures in the region (meaning former Yugoslavia rather than the wider Balkans). "[T]he authoritarian germ has persisted through the adept incubation of nationalist tensions and resentments as engineered by local elites" (14). Mujanović spares no criticism of the west either. To him, the EU and US are complicit in accommodating rapacious Balkan politicians, in the false hope that they are essential to maintaining stability. Externally-driven democracy building has proven to be a dead-end street.

There is a silver lining, however. Mujanović believes that civic activism, long suppressed by Balkan authoritarians, is coming of age. He gives examples from across former Yugoslavia where citizens have taken up socio-political issues, as opposed to the usual ethnic grievances, to hold their leaders to account. The cover of the book shows a protester in front of a government building in Tuzla, a fire burning behind him. Taken during the 2014 demonstrations, the image hints to the inspiration behind the book's title. "We are hungry in three languages," a protest sign famously said.

Yet, can civic mobilization compensate for institutional pathologies and provide a durable alternative to ethnopolitics? Mujanović is upbeat. In his closing chapter he looks at the example of Macedonia, where two years of protests in the capital, Skopje, paved the way for the downfall of Nikola Gruevski, the country's populist nationalist prime minister for more than a decade, in 2016–17. But that is only part of the story. Gruevski's center-right VMRO-DPMNE lost power because of a combination of factors: pressure by the EU and US leading to early elections overseen by a new prime minister and a reshuffled cabinet, the Socialists doing very well at the polls, and, crucially, Albanian parties choosing to align with the opposition rather than with Gruevski. At the end of the day, the only success story the western Balkans have produced, was contingent on (1) the push by the west and (2) intra-party dynamics. The jury is out on whether the new pro-western government is capable of reversing state capture. In other words, it is too early to hail the victory of a popular uprising. But it is all shades of grey. Macedonia, on the verge of joining NATO and possibly starting accession talks with the EU, is not likely to be a flop such as Georgia or Ukraine following the color revolutions in the mid-2000s.

Another shortcoming in the book concerns its foray into history to explain contemporary authoritarianism. The first chapter, titled "Clients and Brigands," highlights the continuity with the self-serving state-builders in the nineteenth century, harnessing nationalism. That historical leap is problematic on many counts, starting from the radically different nature of post-communist societies and elites compared to their counterparts in the Ottoman Empire and Austria-Hungary and ending with southeastern Europe's rich, if flawed, experience with elections and multiparty politics between the 1870s and 1930s.

Even so, *Hunger and Fury* is a book everyone interested in the Balkans should read. It is a frank and uncompromising snapshot of the region at a testing time. Mujanović puts forward all the right questions, with much passion and eloquence.

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Staging Citizenship: Roma, Performance, and Belonging in EU Romania. By Ioana Szeman. Dance and Performance Studies Vol. 11. New York: Berghahn Books, 2018. 195 pp. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. \$120.00, hard bound.
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The author of this volume is teaching in a department of Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies but this book is not about the art of performance. Its topic is the real life of a group of poor Romanian citizens of Roma ethnicity. However, this makes the book not any less dramatic. It presents the everyday hardships and struggles of members of this Roma community, in terms of socio-economic conditions, violations of their basic human rights, and the general lack of their cultural recognition. These people make a precarious living from recycling materials from the garbage dump at the margins of a Transylvanian town. They also live in a "citizenship gap," Ioana Szeman argues, which separates their legal entitlements and rights from their everyday experience. Since the fall of the Romanian socialist regime, Roma were recognized as a national minority, however, their everyday life is not only burdened with economic hardships, but they are also deprived of their "cultural citizenship." Their possibility to gain recognition, experience group belonging, an express openly their cultural differences is extremely restricted. The public sphere in Romani is dominated