***Serbian Dreambook: National Imaginary in the Time of Milošević.*** By Marko Živković. New Anthropologies of Europe. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011. xi, 318 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Filmography. $80.00, hard bound. $27.95, paper.

Marko Živković ethnography *Serbian Dreambook: National Imaginary in the Time of Milošević* deals with aspects of Balkan history that many *Slavic Review* readers will find familiar. Yet Živković renders this history in complex and analytically nuanced detail, making this book essential for anyone interested in Serbian and Yugoslav history and Balkan studies more generally. Rather than treating ethnonational mythology in Serbia in the 1990s as a given discursive and ideological phenomenon, Živković demonstrates the hybrid forms and circulations through which these mythologies became convincing in mass-mediated contexts. He does this by weaving together analyses of films, literature, poetry, political discourse, and instances of everyday talk into a Serbian "dreamscape." This discursive space was ultimately constituted through nested, intertextual, and at times contradictory narratives and stories that people "told themselves—and others—about themselves" (4) during the Milošević era.

One of the book's main innovations is to map the rhetorical mechanics through which various actors dialogically produced a sense of Serbia as a space betwixt and between. Many scholars have written about the Balkans as an indeterminate space, often reifying or naturalizing this framework in the process. Živković gives new analytic purchase to this phenomenon. He examines the various subject positions and tropes that when mobilized in a broader social field produce the experience of ambiguity. In other words, he shows how ambiguity is a socially and rhetorically created effect that emerges from people's attempts to come to terms with and reposition their marginal status or "spoiled identities" in relation to powerful (European) centers.

For example, Živković demonstrates how a series of oppositions such as north/south, east/west, margin/periphery, mud/asphalt, highlander/lowlander structure narrative representations of the Balkans. Živković is careful to establish the ideological and discursive mechanics of these dichotomies by showing how they can be variously mobilized as forms of social performance and self-representation. Because these oppositions can be layered in ever finer recursive patterns, they are flexible and powerful discursive resources. Yet their mobilization can also lock people into relations of margin and center in seemingly determinate ways. As he shows in chapters 6 and 7—chapters covering the crucial topics of historical mythologies and discourses surrounding Serbian history, Kosovo, and World War II—such narrative frameworks are most effective when they stitch together different historical and millennial senses of time and space.

Živković also demonstrates how the production of certain narrative tropes was central to the creation of moral authority and the performance of competing authenticities. In his chapter on Serbian Jeremiads, Živković introduces the lament as a rhetorical form through which people in Serbia produced a "kind of anguished meditation on national character flaws" (116). Živković examines how the problem of Serbian "mentality" was figured, debated, and contested through frameworks such as the "Turkish taint" and the communist moral compromise. Such tropes formed the basis of pitched battles over the status of Serbian character and culture in the 1990s, providing authorizing frames through which politicians tried to assert their moral and cultural qualifications and to denigrate those of others. Thus "'culture' became an extremely potent multipurpose weapon in all kinds of social struggles" (129), culminating in a full co-optation of culture-based, opposition critiques by the Milošević regime itself.

Živković is at his best when he demonstrates the mind-numbing complexity of a range of social and discursive positions, while still doing justice to the lived experience of uncertainty that their mobilization produces. In chapter 9 on conspiracy theories he gives a detailed sense of the struggles entailed in "cognitively mapping" everyday existence and social-political relations in Slobodan Milošević Serbia. He shows how people experienced disorientation, social paranoia, and confusion, in large part due to a regime that set out to produce a sense of "social opacity" and crisis. In an attempt to undo the epistemological

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presumptions of those who would claim to pull back the curtain to reveal what was really going on in Serbia during this time, Živković takes conspiracy theories as both object of study and analytic frame. He challenges the reader to consider whether conspiracy theories, "notwithstanding their cognitive 'garbledness,' and perhaps precisely in virtue of this 'garbledness,' aspire to a certain 'poetic truth'" (232).

This strategy fits well with Živković notion of the dream as a productive analytic framework for Serbia under Milošević. He argues that "Dreams are . . . epistemological machines for modeling all sorts of different worlds, self-sealing paradigms, epistemes, or frames, as well as traffic between them" (8). In inviting the reader to constantly "jump frames" and "see the material . . . as a repository of dialogically entwined stories, as intertextually linked genres of speech, and, finally as a sort of national dreamwork" (8), the author positions the reader within the field of knowledge production itself. The result is a prism-like effect in which familiar details are refracted into complex, interweaving, and even contradictory social and discursive patterns. The complexity of this dreamscape makes it difficult to see where ideology ends and critique begins. In other words, the dream-as-analytic performs the very problem at the heart of Milošević-era politics in Serbia.

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***Debating the Past: Modern Bulgarian History from Stambolov to Zhivkov.*** By Roumen Daskalov. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2011. vi, 370 pp. Notes. Bibliography. $55.00, hard bound.

In this work Roumen Daskalov examines the historical debates concerning four important issues of Bulgarian history: whether the authoritarian rule of Stefan Stambolov was Russophobe, the class nature of the peasant revolution and government of Aleksandar Stamboliiski, the nature of "fascism" in 1930s Bulgaria, and Bulgarian society from 1944 to 1989 during the rule of the Bulgarian Communist Party (BKP), particularly under Todor Zhivkov. Daskalov naturally concentrates on Bulgarian historians and authors, but he also occasionally refers to foreign scholars. He does not examine the important question of Macedonia (Are the Macedonians Bulgarians or a separate nationality?) except for brief comments, "because there was hardly debate between the national[ist] Bulgarian historians on the issue" (1). Daskalov also includes a supplementary chapter on his personal views of the various schools and theories of history and how they apply to Bulgarian historians in the precommunist, communist, and postcommunist eras. Although he examines various sides of the debates, he clearly has an anticommunist and pro-monarchist point of view.

The debates over Stambolov, Stamboliiski, and Zhivkov extend back to the eras of their rule. The arguments about the three leaders share certain similarities. Were they dictatorial, authoritarian, or nationalistic and to what extent? For Stambolov, whose policies were designated Russophobe by his enemies, the "Russophile" party, Bulgarian revisionist historians writing both during and after the communist period attempted to resurrect his reputation by portraying him as a Bulgarian nationalist. Of Stamboliiski, Daskalov explores whether his Bulgarian Agrarian National Union (BANU) government was truly democratic and truly revolutionary. During the communist period, the government officially emphasized the Agrarian leader's cooperation with the BKP. In the postcommunist period, historians wrote of the conflicts between the BANU and the BKP. For Zhivkov the question was how did this politically wily but unimpressive leader maintain power for so long in the face of changes coming from Moscow and in the Balkans.

Aside from his examination of the views of older historians in the debate over Stambolov and Stamboliiski, Daskalov focuses primarily on historians of the communist era. He emphasizes how their views evolved, both during the era as well as after the fall of communism in 1989, paying particular attention to the move from an overtly pro-Soviet, indeed

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