Tomić briefly compares some memoirs written by women and men. For example, Natalija Obrenović stressed her role in caring for the wounded in the Serbian-Bulgarian war, and wrote about intimate issues such as motherhood and marriage. Totally different are memoirs of politicians and ministers Vladan Đorđević, a physician who does not mention the queen's efforts at all, or Jovan Žujović, whose wife was Natalija's favorite lady-in-waiting, yet Žujović writes about himself, other men, politics, never mentioning his own wife.

A very useful part of the book is devoted to translations: during the years 1868–1900, altogether 813 translations were published in Serbia, by 511 men and twenty-four women, mostly from German and French, with Russian ranking only third. An obvious explanation would be that the Serbs in Austria-Hungary (especially in southern Hungary, or Vojvodina) played an important role in the culture of Serbia. The elite of the so called *Srbi Prečani* ("Serbs from the other side") knew German, and probably translated many non-German authors using German editions. The structure of the book is fragmented, since it is a series of already published texts or presented papers, with repetitions especially concerning goals or criticism towards the state of art. Tomić is sometimes too keen on interpreting women writers as feminists, even in the earlier period. The South Slavic context shows that as a rule this approach can be traced to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Tomić is also a bit too critical, since recently gender issues have been researched in Serbia and Tomić herself is participating in two projects funded by the Serbian Ministry. The South Slav context should be more present, especially since some of the women mentioned, like Jelica Belović-Bernadzikowska, were active in Serbia, Bosnia, and Croatia. There are some imprecisions: *Srpkinja* is not the first lexicon on women among South Slavs (14); one cannot say that women teachers "practically carried out the cultural development of Serbian society" (2), thus leaving men out completely, or that in 1923 the publishing of children's books was in its beginning in the State of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (216), since there were older traditions of writing and publishing of children's books there.

To sum up, Tomić's book brings useful data and entices rethinking and reevaluation—a process useful regardless of its result.

Iskra Iveljić
Filozofski fakultet, Zagreb

***Haunted Serbia: Representations of History and War in the Literary Imagination*.** By David A. Norris. Cambridge, Eng.: Legenda, Modern Humanities Research Association; Abingdon, Oxon, Eng.: Routledge, 2016. ix, 190 pp. Notes. Bibliography, Index. $120.00, hard bound.

doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.156

In this well-informed, logically structured study, David A. Norris offers a lucid and original interpretation of important and influential Serbian narrative fiction between the demise of Tito in 1980 and the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999. Chapter 1 summarizes how the communist mandate over the form, style, and thematics of literature was ideologically monopolized through writers' responsibility to patriotically celebrate the Partisan collective cultural ethic, dominant 1944–52. Norris explains the political myth of the post-WWII liberalization of Party control over the production and circulation of literary meanings, 1952–84. Seeing Thomas Eekman's claim that the new cultural policy beginning in the 1950s brought "enormous relief" as overgenerous (*Thirty Years of Yugoslav Literature, 1945–1975*, 1978, 12), Norris convincingly documents how mechanisms of constraint continued to be exercised over literature.

https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2018.156 Published online by Cambridge University Press

In Chapter 2, Norris discusses the politics of literature according to two "kinds" of Serbian literary identity—in the socialist context, 1943–80, and in the nationalist context, 1991–the present. He considers the 1980s a transitional period of experimental national fiction and critiques scholars who assign primacy to the sociological influence of fictional texts on the broader history of political events and who offer a version of the Serbian national narrative that is most interested in themes of WWII, victim psychology, and suffering. More concerned with the semantics of thematic diversity, Norris references Lubomir Doležel's theory of fictional worlds and Predrag Palavestra's concept of "critical literature."

Norris divides Serbian fiction into the post-Tito period of Socialist Yugoslavia and a second period that includes Wars of Yugoslav Succession, 1991–95, and the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999. The fiction from both periods is interpreted in two chapters each. History is treated first symbolically in Chapter 3, then semantically in Chapter 4. War is interpreted first symbolically in Chapter 5, then semantically in Chapter 6. Finally, Chapter 7 explores both the symbolic facts of the bombing of Serbia and the semantic fictions of the eerie twilight zone in which writers found themselves as both objects and subjects of the history and war brought home at the end of the decade.

Chapter 3 sees the 1980s as a time of exhuming the signs and stories of the past, as in the summoning of unburied specters from the karst pits of Croatian Krajina in Jovan Radulović's story collection *Dove Hole*. Norris describes in detail how local memories are stirred and haunted by discovered ghostly bones of Serbian villagers' unsettled souls leaving the atrocious site of their execution during WWII in order to be interred half a century late. Analyzing Slobodan Selenić's novel *Heads or Tails*, he interprets how literature after Tito began to deal with the past's unfinished business and put the lie to "Brotherhood and Unity." Norris completes this period with Svetlana Velmar-Janković's stories in *Dorćol: The Names of the Streets*, which reach into the pre-socialist era to interpret the lives of prominent figures in the nation's political and cultural past as ephemeral presences powerless to relieve the present burden of national history.

Chapter 4 examines ways in which historical memory is articulated through a range of uncanny motifs, referring to Sigmund Freud's psychological and Tzvetan Todorov's structuralist considerations of how a sense of unexpected unease is used in fiction to suggest normally impossible worlds. Norris elaborates these in considering the oneiric histories of Danilo Kiš's *Encyclopedia of the Dead*, in the unremembered history of Antonise Isaković's controversial novel about the island prison camp Goli Otok, *Instant 2*, and in the shattering unsettlements of uncanny borders relayed in Radoslav Bratić's *Picture without Father.*

Norris turns to consider the nationalist period of Serbian fiction created in the 1990s in the post-communist state in Chapter 5, when events and experiences are played out symbolically against the conventions of war fiction, as seen in the chapter's metaphorical title: In the Shadow of War. Norris is particularly convincing in thinking about the place of WWII in war fiction from the 1990s. He explains that Serbian WWII narratives could not, unlike in the west, function as an underlayer of a hallowed past precisely because the new Serbian war fiction of the 1990s was concerned with discrediting the myths of Partisan heroism. Velmar-Janković's *The Abyss* and Selenić's novel *Premeditated Murder* exemplify this topic.

In Chapter 6, Norris turns to consider the multiplicity of literary meanings presented as subliminal conceptual worlds. He surveys scholarly literature about Freud's term *unheimlich* to explain a particular form of the uncanny—unhomeliness—a binary reality in which war haunts on a level of supernatural threat beyond the battlefield. Here he analyzes in detail Vladimir Pištalo's short story "The Grenade" and Vladimir

https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2018.156 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Arsenijević's bestselling novel *In the Hold*—which he relates to the sociological theory of urbicide. He evaluates the work's structural organization of the hostilities in terms of the melodramatic triviality of a family "soap opera," the novel's subtitle.

Chapter 7 ties together Norris's conceptualization of Serbia haunted in fictional representations of history and war, playing on the ghostly metaphorics and semantics of the country's very different historical experience of war in 1999. Đorđe Pisarev's novel *In the Shadow of the Kite* represents different experiences of unresolved social violence through a postmodern technique that parodies how war can be fictionally narrated on different intergenerational and socio-psychic levels. Norris understands Pisarev's challenge to the mimetic conventions of anti-war literature, specifically in fiction that expresses the symbolic ghostly reality of NATO's *phantom* and *stealth* aircraft. Overshadowed by dragon kite apparitions from the sky, the novel's conscript protagonist is not a stouthearted analogue-epic defender of the homeland but a fragile, mortally exposed juvenile player in a raptorial digital game. Following on Linda Hutcheon's description of parody, Norris defines this as a shift of representations that reveals and transfers a semiotic code into a new context. He concludes with references to narrative fiction theory (Viktor Shklovsky's formalist concept of defamiliarization, Mikhail Bakhtin's thinking about carnival humor, Wolfgang Kayser's description of the grotesque) to assert that both the frightening relief of laughter and the cynical feeling of pent up apocalyptic dread manifest the sense of uncanniness that informs Serbian narrative prose at the end of the millennium.

Ralph Bogert
University of Toronto

The House of a Thousand Floors. By Jan Weiss. Trans. Alexandra Büchler. Budapest: Central University Press, 2016. 266 pages. $17.95, paper.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.157

Jan Weiss's classic modernist novel *The House of a Thousand Floors* (*Dům o tisíci patrech*), first published in 1929, has now been released in a splendid new translation by Alexandra Büchler in the series Central European Classics, which also includes Jan Neruda's *Prague Tales* (*Povídky malostranské*) translated by Michael Henry Heim. The back matter and afterword of the volume inform us that Weiss was "one of the co-founders of Czech science fiction, alongside Karel Čapek, the author of *R.U.R.* (*Rossum's Universal Robots*)—the play that gave to the world the word "robot."

But Weiss was far more than a shadowy contemporary of the most famous exponent of Czech science fiction. Born in Jílemnice in Bohemia in 1892, Weiss began to study law at the University of Vienna in 1913, but after only two semesters he was conscripted into the Austro-Hungarian army at the outbreak of World War I. In 1916 he was captured at Tarnopol and spent the rest of WWI in Russian captivity in Siberia, where he contracted typhoid fever. After his release he joined the famous Czech Legions and returned to Prague in 1920, where he spent the rest of his life, dying in 1972.

Weiss's creative output was forged in the context of the Czech interwar modernist movement that first took the form of Poetism and later developed into Surrealism. The publication of his greatest work, *The House of a Thousand Floors*, in 1929 coincided with this movement. Like many of his Czech contemporaries, Weiss's harrowing experience in WWI inclined him to left-wing politics, and his novel can be read as an allegorical critique of the capitalist system. It is the story of a man who has lost his memory and who wakes up on the deserted staircase of a gigantic building consisting of a thousand floors. He eventually learns that his name is Petr (Peter) Brok,

https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2018.156 Published online by Cambridge University Press