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of the literary works mentioned are always pointed out in footnotes and often other information on the publication given. Sometimes these vignettes take much longer form and become small essays about Njegoš, Dositej or Ivo Andrić. Marija Mitrović dedicates much space and attention to four most well-known Serbian literary authors of the late twentieth century (D. Kiš, B. Pečić, M. Kovač, F. David) as well as authors recently translated and popular among Italian readers (M. Pavić, D. Albahari, D. Velikić) which is necessary given that this is the first book to encompass and critically assess their work. Marija Mitrović also analyses contemporary literary production even though she is largely critical of it. In this regard, also praiseworthy is the inclusion of Serbian-born authors who live and write abroad or even those fully integrated in American culture such as Charles Simic or in Austrian such as Milo Dor given their inspiration and links with the old country in the age of mass migration and cultural transfer and entanglement.

Eventually, the volume's richness in focus and diverse length of its subject matters act in a useful way by maintaining reader's interest and keep the story dynamic. Similarly, while the narrative is divided in sections representing established movements

and periods they are often interspersed with discussion on previously largely ignored women authors or for contemporary audience in Italy very relevant literary works with Holocaust as subject.

This reviewer would appreciate more balance in favour of popular instead of high culture which is difficult given that the book's main focus is literature, a mainstay of high culture. Also some minor factual errors creep in as in the portraits of Mehmed Paša Sokolović and Arsenije Jovanović Šakabenta. More troublesome is what is left out when selection had to be made. Anyone ever working on a textbook, anthology and/or chronology knows how cumbersome if not impossible that task is. But if the Austrian military border is mentioned then an explanation is necessary let alone a reflection on its place in Serbian history and culture. Similarly, there is no mention of bishop Nikolaj Velimirović, Justin Popović or any other modern religious figure or author, which is an evident gap.

The volume boasts very useful appendices including maps, index, basic historical chronology, and the bibliography of key secondary works on several languages as well as of all translations of literary works from Serbian into Italian.

ANIKÓ IMRE, *TV SOCIALISM*. DURHAM AND LONDON: DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2016, 315 p.

*Reviewed by Annemarie Sorescu Marinković\**

Over the past thirty years, media studies have encompassed various disciplines and employed most diverse methodologies, spanning across all continents. However, most work in television studies, a paramount area of media studies, has remained restricted to American and West-European academic centres and traditions, developing mostly in reference to *capitalist television* – television

systems fuelled by and entrenched in capitalist economies. The study of European televisions has recently rediscovered *socialist television*, and we have witnessed a rapid rise in scholarly interest in a new area of research:

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socialist television studies. Sabina Mihelj, one of its pioneers, points to the topicality of socialist television studies in a recent article: “Until well into the second half of the twentieth century, the vast majority of producers and audiences around the world have experienced the medium of television in the context of non-democratic or, at best, semi-democratic political regimes. Socialist television studies are particularly well equipped to address the specificities of television cultures in non-democratic political contexts.”<sup>1</sup>

The last five years have seen the publication of several articles, edited volumes and research monographs, which now form the basis of this emerging domain of study. International research networks on socialist TV studies have been founded, scientific conferences organized and research projects funded. In this very short period, the bipolar model commercial (Western) television/public service (Eastern, socialist) television, which at first dominated this field and was deeply entrenched in the persistent Cold War way of thinking with its sharp East/West divide, has been overcome. *TV Socialism* appeared at a point in time when socialist TV studies have been in full swing. Even though the field is a very new one, work on socialist TV is no longer in short supply and this book did not have to start from scratch, but was able to build on the already existing staples, outlining a methodological and theoretical framework which the field still misses. However, *TV Socialism* aims at – and manages to achieve – much more than that.

Anikó Imre, the author of the book, is Professor of Cinema and Media Studies at the School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California. Her earlier books, *East European Cinemas* (editor, 2005), *Identity Games: Globalization and the Transformation of Media Cultures in the New*

*Europe* (2009) and *Popular Television in Eastern and Southern Europe* (co-authored with Timothy Havens and Kati Lustyik, 2011), recommend her as an authority in the field of global television, national and transnational media and European media. However, it was not until *TV Socialism* (2016) that nostalgia so profoundly permeated her scholarly work. As Imre mentions in the introduction, “*TV Socialism* bears the mark of having been written by someone who carries the bittersweet burden of the memory of really existing socialism in her very cells.” Having decided not to cover up the visceral experience of watching the Hungarian television in the 1970s and 1980s, part and parcel of her upbringing, Imre capitalizes on nostalgia attached to socialist television and manages to write a lively and authentic testimony, in the form of a timely scholarly contribution.

The book is organized according to a broadly conceived *generic* logic, *genre* being understood here as “a trans-cultural form of expression rather than a set of specific television genres, since socialist genres do not exactly overlap with those derived from Anglo-American television”. Divided into four parts – “Genres of Realism and Reality”, “Genres of History”, “Genres of Fiction” and “Genres of Humor” – the volume combines the logic of TV genres with the guiding force of several key concepts, such as: *competition, consumption, education, emotion, entertainment, gender, history, humour, memory and nostalgia*, as the author explains in the introduction. Each of the four parts explains how a certain generic dimension functioned within socialist television and in the end discusses how these dimensions have shifted since the end of the Cold War. This hybrid approach, based on a crisscross of genres and defining concepts, reveals that the topography of socialist television differs to a great extent from the image of uniform propaganda programming that one has tended to think socialist media looked like. Thus, under the widely encompassing umbrella of ideological commitment to Soviet principles, the author

<sup>1</sup> Sabina Mihelj, “Understanding Socialist Television: Concepts, Objects, Methods”, *VIEW: Journal of European Television, History and Culture* 3/5 (2014), 7.

reveals a great variety of aesthetic and economic practices: frequent contacts and exchanges within the region and with Western media institutions, a permanent transborder broadcasting flow, a steady production and broadcasting of entertainment genres and transcultural, multilingual reception practices along the state borders.

The author argues that, unlike socialism, socialist television is a necessary construction, which proves to be a better platform for a historical revision of life under socialism than art films and literature. Television, Imre thinks, was a more reliable barometer of political, economic, social and cultural life under socialism: "In the most obvious sense, it was an institution that lived in the intersection of the public and domestic spheres, between top-down attempts at influencing viewers and bottom-up demands for entertainment. Where much of art and literature informs us of the relationship between the party leadership and the intellectual elite, TV gives us a sense of the real complexity of the relationship between the party leadership and the public." The book also stresses temporal continuity between socialism and post-socialism, as well as their shared historical roots in the pre-socialist era, showing, for instance, how contemporary reality programs dialogue with the documentary and educational programming that dominated socialist TV schedules, or how socialist superwomen characters who "did it all" as the anchors of 1970s–80s "socialist soaps" both paved the ground for and issued an early critique of post-feminist politics.

*TV Socialism* intends neither to draw up a chronological history of socialist TV, nor to provide a full geographical coverage, given the cultural and linguistic heterogeneity of the region and the span of the historical period in question, but rather to show how socialism and television function(ed) as a window onto each other. However, detractors might point to the preference given to the

Hungarian TV, the only analysis supported by the author's interviews with Hungarian TV consumers, or to the preponderance of data about some socialist televisions at the expense of others, such as the Albanian one, for example. Nevertheless, one must acknowledge that the wide geographical area encompassed by the research and the unavailability of sources make it extremely difficult to allocate the same amount of space to the television of each country of the Eastern bloc. Rather, the author focuses on patterns that stretch across national borders, while national TV histories are in the making or yet to be written.

The book provides an innovative view on socialism, through the lenses of the television programs it produced, which shakes some fundamental assumptions of television studies as well as our ingrained notion of socialism. It is a fascinating and inspiring read as a whole, but it can also be read chapter-wise, for its wonderfully written miniatures, such as the one on socialist commercials ("Commercials as Time-Space Machines"), which discusses how the most liberalized socialist televisions of Yugoslavia and Hungary inherited advertising structures from the pre-war era and sustained their own marketing activities throughout the socialist period, and how these "time-space machines" represent testimonies to the surprising complexities of socialist television.

Apart from contributing to the still ongoing process of laying the foundation of the socialist television studies, *TV Socialism* is also a profoundly personal and exceptionally scholarly work, which challenges established views and places this emerging field on stable ground, providing it with a solid theoretical fabric and revealing different connections in time and space. Last but not least, its great merit is that it manages to escape the Eurocentric perspective, which inevitably colours the work of so many scholars from European academic hubs.