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Maria Todorova, ed. BALKAN IDENTITIES: NATION AND MEMORY.
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Maria Todorova's new edited volume on nation and memory in Balkan identities is an important book. Much of the most significant and "distinctive scholarship of recent years on the role of collective memory ~ in the formation of national identity has involved the Balkans in one way or another, with the region being either the site of its production or the "object of study. Todorova herself was a trail-blazer in this regard. Her first and, perhaps, best-known book, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford University Press, 1997), magnificently charted the mechanisms through which the Balkans-Europe's internal 'other' -served as a negative foil for the creation and consolidation of a collective identity of European power, coherence and civilization. The Balkans, in contrast, emerged as at once unified and jumbled a whole that was marked by confusion, fragmentation and a lack of coordination.

Todorova's latest volume -with its pointedly plural title- further fleshes out these earlier themes and takes them in new directions. Individual chapters discuss Kosovo, Greece, Turkey, Turkish Cyprus, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia and Serbia. Thematically, they are organized around three basic section headings: "Creating Historical Memory: Individual, Local and National Identities"; "The Masonry of National Memory: Monuments, Heroes, Anti-Heroes"; and "National Identity: Problems of Transmission and Mobilisation." This tripartite division usefully replicates recent trends in the study of nationalist memory and collective memory formation in different global settings, thus making the book useful to those interested in its thematics, but geographically removed from its subject matter. In the context of Middle Eastern studies, in particular, the role of textbooks in national identity- formation has been a hot topic: the third section of *Balkan Identities* is largely concerned with the same issue in the context of the Balkans. The subject of national monuments has been fairly extensively explored in terms of Latin America and Central Europe among other places: Todorova's volume expands both the theoretical and geographical boundaries of this field of study. And, of course, the study of the inter-play of individual, local, regional and national memories has been a booming business across fields and geographies for some time now.

Todorova is right to set her work within these trends-and, in some cases, against them-noting from the outset: "Memory is fashionable" (1).

As she did so well in *Imagining the Balkans*, Todorova again takes that which seems well-known, familiar-perhaps even overdone-and shows why it is that the Balkan context can infuse longstanding debates with fresh perspectives and establish new bearings. Specifically, Todorova is interested in shifting the terms of debate away from, on the one hand, the question of borders (and the modes of analysis that come with it- liminality, marginality, transgression, alterity) and, on the other, "space" (a category which, as Todorova puts it, "has produced valuable works. ..but also has its caveats, the most important of which, creeping through the back door, is essentialism").-As an encompassing alternative, she provides "the notion of historical legacy," which aims not

to "displace the notion of space," but rather to "retai[n] the valuable features of the analysis of spatiality while, simultaneously, refining the vector of time, and making it more historically specific" (11). Todorova, above all things a historian, finds in 'historical legacy' a frame that allows her to deploy interdisciplinarity to its best ends, while deftly avoiding its worst pitfalls.

This is clearly evidenced in the book's list of contributors which, like the topic and section headings, is very well conceived. It includes scholars well-known in the United States (Milica Bakic-Hayden, Maria Bucur, Anastasia Karakasidou, Robert Shannan Peckham, Todorova) and others well-known at home, but relatively undiscovered elsewhere (Ivan Colovic, Dunja Rihtman-Augustin, Costa Carras, Diana Mishkova, Alexander Kiossev); and an equally impressive group of up-and-coming scholars (Keith Brown, Nergis Canefe, Mirela-Luminita Murgescu, Leyla Neyzi, Stephaine Schwandner-Sievers, Dubravka Stojanovic). Todorova, who is active in academies on both sides of the Atlantic, has put her intimate knowledge of the field to good use in putting together this particular group of contributors. Most of them are historians: those who are not are historically-informed practitioners of sociology, anthropology and cultural studies. Together, they showcase the vibrant state of (for desperate want of a better term) 'Balkan Studies' here and, particularly, abroad.

If the preceding is a view of the volume from the 'top down' -from the point of view of Todorova's intelligent editorial shaping, her theoretical vision and her careful selection of contributors-the book is no less impressive from the 'bottom up.' Every contribution to *Balkan Identities* more than holds its own as a stand-alone piece. In the field most familiar to me personally-that of modern Greek studies-a few of the articles are outstanding. Shannan Peckham's "Internal Colonialism: Nation and Region in Nineteenth-Century Greece" is a very important contribution to an emerging literature (pioneered by Artemis Leontis, Stathis Gourgouris, Vangelis Calotychos, Elli Skopetea, Christina Koulouri and Dimitris Tziouvas, among others) that has been scratching away at the smooth nationalist narrative of nineteenth-century Greece for some time now. The article by Carras, "Greek Identity: A Long View," gives a refreshingly historicized and de-polemized account of one of the most vexing and contested claims of national collective memories in today's Balkans, viz., of "a sense of identity dependent on a long view going back to Antiquity" (294).

Other studies in the volume make important contributions to comparative theoretical discussions. Brown's "Villains and Symbolic Pollution in the Narratives' Nations: The Case of 'Boris Sarafov'" contains one of the most satisfying revivals of the notion of 'pollution' since Mary Douglas' 1966 *Purity and Danger*, while Bakic-Hayden's "National Memory as Narrative Memory, the Case of Kosovo" should be required reading in classes concerned with showing how literary text is woven into national cultural and popular imaginations on the ground. Mishkova ("The Uses of Tradition and National Identity in the Balkans") revivifies debates about the proper place of Romania in formulations of the Balkans and provides, in the process, a model for comparative Balkan study.

Additional articles (not otherwise mentioned here) include "Times Past: References for the Construction of Local Order in Present-Day Albania" (Schwandner-Sievers); "Conversion to Islam as a Trope in Bulgarian Historiography" (Todorova); "Edifices of the Past: War Memorials and Heroes in Twentieth-Century Romania" (Bucur); "The Monument in the Main City Square: Constructing and Erasing Memory in Contemporary Croatia" (Rihtman-Augustin); "Affections of a Greek Hero: Pavlos Melas and Heroic Representations in Greece" (Karakasidou); "A Criminal-National Hero? But Who Else?"

(Colovic); "Construction of Historical Consciousness: The Case of Serbian History Textbooks" (Stojanovic); "Memory in Romanian History: Textbooks in the 1990s" (Murgescu); and "Bulgarian Textbooks of literary History and the Construction of National Identity" (Kiossev).

Leyla Neyzi's "Exploring Memory through Oral History in Turkey" helps readers to understand the complicated status of oral history-yet, it also strikes the volume's only dissonant note. While I agree fully that Turkey ought to be included in various constructions of 'the Balkans', its inclusion is taken as a: given in this volume, but not really explained from an historical or theoretical standpoint: it probably ought to be. While Canefe's article ("Communal Memory and Turkish Cypriot National History, Missing Links") is interwoven with a number of the historical themes common to the region-the dissolution of empires, the peculiarities of being in some way 'between' Orient and Occident, the post-colonial predicament-Neyzi's (nevertheless very interesting) contribution does not.

But here, perhaps, I am merely finding what, in the interests of impartial reviewing, I looked so hard for, but could scarcely find: a flaw, however small, in this very important, well-written and well-conceived collection.