

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 metaphors 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.

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***The House of a Thousand Floors.*** By Jan Weiss. Trans. Alexandra Büchler. Budapest: Central University Press, 2016. 266 pages. \$17.95, paper.  
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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 Jilemnice 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,

a detective sent to rescue Princess Tamara, kidnapped by the despotic ruler of the kingdom of Mullerdom—the house of a thousand floors.

The novel ends on an autobiographical note when we discover that the narrative was nothing more than a hallucination created by the effects of typhoid fever. The tyrannical ruler of Mullerdom—Ohisver Muller—also suggests Weiss's own father Josef who was dubbed "The Monarch" by the local townspeople of Jilemnice. Muller's ability to spy on his enslaved subjects in the remotest corners of his empire equally invests the novel with profound political relevance. The sinister figure of Muller looks back to Fredersen, the Master of Metropolis in Fritz Lang's cinematic masterpiece *Metropolis* (1926), as well as forward to Big Brother in George Orwell's novel *1984*. The novel's hallucinatory, oneiric quality even anticipates Terry Gilliam's cult fantasy film *Brazil* (1985), which also involves a protagonist who dreams of saving a beautiful damsel and who is involved in a web of mistaken identities and mindless bureaucracies. The novel's evocation of a malevolent controlling father-figure inevitably conjures up the specter of Franz Kafka, Weiss's more famous Czech compatriot who wrote exclusively in German and whose work was beginning to be known and appreciated in Czechoslovakia by the late 1920s.

Like his artistic contemporaries Karel Teige, Vítězslav Nezval, and the young Jaroslav Seifert, Weiss aspired to reconcile a political commitment to communism with artistic subjectivism. Although this rapprochement of politics and personality was eventually crushed in Soviet Russia by the early 1930s, the democratic state of Czechoslovakia provided a tolerant framework for the creation and flourishing of a socialist Avant-Garde that produced some of the most audacious and ambitious works of art in interwar Europe. The publication of Weiss's masterpiece coincided with this efflorescence of the arts in Czechoslovakia. Even the novel's typographical experimentalism (handsomely reproduced in the translation) recalls the 1922 *Devětsil* anthology of poems and essays and Nezval's early collection of Poetist verse *Pantomima* (1924). Moreover, the narrative's hallucinatory tension between reality and dream has much in common with Nezval's similarly-named surrealist poem, "The History of the Six Empty Houses" (*Historie šesti prázdných domů*), published in 1931.

This excellent and readable translation of Weiss's overlooked masterpiece will surely be welcomed by scholars of central European modernism and, more generally, Anglophone readers interested in deepening their knowledge of a rich culture that was swept away by world war and totalitarianism.

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***Worker-Mothers on the Margins of Europe: Gender and Migration between Moldova and Istanbul.*** By Leyla J. Keough. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015. xx, 238 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. Maps. \$24.00, paper. doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.158

The trafficking of women from the former Soviet Union and eastern Europe for sexual exploitation has received a great deal of attention in the past two decades. The story of the victimization of young women who fall prey to traffickers has often been sensationalized by the media, policy makers, and agencies created to assist them. The focus on sexual exploitation renders invisible those women who voluntarily migrate from the region, find other types of paid employment, and deem their work abroad worthwhile for themselves and their families. Leyla Keough investigates the experiences of just such a group of women in her book, *Worker-Mothers on the Margins of*