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Post-Yugoslav Literature in others' languages: Memory and identity among second-generation writers

There have been many discussions about the common cultural space embracing the former Yugoslavia countries. Under the term of “post-Yugoslav literature,” scholars have argued the importance of works produced by exile writers, such as Dubravka Ugrešić and David Albahari, and their potentiality to transcend the national boundaries. Is the post-Yugoslav literature a transitional phenomenon, as some critics contend, or will it be a lasting legacy? To consider this question, this presentation will examine and compare two works written by the younger generation of novelists, Sofija Stefanovic and Pajtim Statovci, who wrote in their adopted country's language. Stefanovic's novel *Miss Ex-Yugoslavia* (2018) chronicles the story of a young woman who left Serbia in her childhood and grew up in 1990s Australia. Statovci's first novel, *My Cat Yugoslavia* (Finnish: *Kissani Jugoslavia*) (originally published in 2014, translated into English in 2017, and translated into Serbian in 2020) explores two intertwined stories: The first story follows a young man who moved to Finland from Kosovo as a child, and the second story begins with the youth of his mother, set in the 1980s Kosovo. The novels of Stefanovic and Statovci differ greatly in their style and structure. In addition, the protagonists' attitudes towards the Yugoslavia era are diagonally opposite: one is inclined to nostalgia, and the other is prone to resentment. Nevertheless, there are interesting affinities. One such example is the personification of Yugoslavia, which is traditionally represented as female but represented as male in both stories. With this clue to go on, this presentation will explore the question of memory, gender, and identity in an ever-changing post-socialist culture.