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# AGEING EAST AND WEST: POLITICS AND POETICS

DANIELA KOLEVA (SOFIA)



## Ageing's Coming of Age: From a Blessing to a Problem

The paper starts with some representations of the 'ages of man' to focus on the construction of old age by the modern state (20th-century Bulgaria taken as an example). While the ideal life course, embracing seven or more decades, was an exception until mid-20th century, the rising life expectancy during the past 100 years turned old age into a concern for the welfare state, both west and east of the Iron Curtain. Did the shared problems result in similar policies?

**Daniela Koleva** is Professor at Sofia University and Senior Researcher at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

DAGMAR GRAMSHAMMER-HOHL (GRAZ)



## Literatures (Un-)Showing Ageing: A Poetics of Erasure

A conspicuous feature of contemporary South-East European literatures is the fact that the literary images of ageing they create tend to erase what they seem to represent. Narratives of old age, memory loss, or illness frequently acquire allegorical meaning; they speak about whole societies rather than an older individual's experience, about the body politic rather than individual bodies. Showing, thus, becomes an act of 'unshowing'. In this talk, I will exemplify and contextualize this 'poetics of erasure'.

**Dagmar Gramshammer-Hohl** is Senior Lecturer at the University of Graz. She holds a *venia docendi* in Slavic Literary and Cultural Studies.