LETTERS

From the *Slavic Review* Editorial Board:

Slavic Review publishes signed letters to the editor by individuals with educational or research merit. Where the letter concerns a publication in *Slavic Review,* the author of the publication will be offered an opportunity to respond. Space limitations dictate that comment regarding a book review should be restricted to one paragraph of no more than 250 words; comment on an article or forum should not exceed 750 to 1,000 words. When we receive many letters on a topic, some letters will be published on the *Slavic Review* web site with opportunities for further discussion. Letters may be submitted by e-mail, but a signed copy on official letterhead or with a complete return address must follow. The editor reserves the right to refuse to print, or to publish with cuts, letters that contain personal abuse or otherwise fail to meet the standards of debate expected in a scholarly journal.

To the Editor:

The Spring 2008 issue of *Slavic Review* (vol. 67, no. 1) carried a review written by Aleksandar Pavković of *Conflict in South-Eastern Europe at the End of the Twentieth Century: A "Scholars' Initiative" Assesses Some of the Controversies,* edited by Thomas Emmert and Charles Ingrao, to which I contributed two chapters. Pavković claims that my classification of approaches concerning the Yugoslav meltdown is "arbitrary" (221) but does not tell the reader what my classification scheme is. In fact, I divide the approaches into several broad categories: those that emphasize external factors (such as the end of the Cold War), those that look to national character, those that bring into the picture (albeit not exclusively) nineteenth-century problems, the ancient hatreds school, and variously those emphasizing economic problems, problems associated with the political system, and/or human agency. What scheme does Pavković prefer? Second, Pavković claims that I believe that everyone writing about Yugoslavia is "dealing with the same set of questions" (221). Yet, on page 5, I mention five questions that come up in discussions of the Yugoslav meltdown and then show that some writers look at some questions, others at other questions. On page 25 I wrote that the theories presented up to then had not addressed question 3. Third, he claims that I do not acknowledge that some people advocate a "multifactor approach" (221) and yet, on page 18, I explicitly acknowledge that some scholars gave "non-exclusive stress to systemic factors" (which is to say that they adopt multifactor approaches), and on pages 27–30 I advocate precisely such an approach, under the subtitle "Toward a Synthesis of Approaches."

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Professor Pavković responds:

In classifying various approaches to the "roots" of Yugoslav disintegration (which Sabrina P. Ramet proceeds to "assess"), Ramet combines some historical criteria (*ancient* hatreds, the era of the *Cold War,* the nineteenth *century*) with structural and agency-based criteria without explaining how the first differs from the last two. Some ancient-hatred narratives, for example, purport to explain disintegration or conflict in terms of human agency and, at that level, do not seem to differ from the approaches classified as human-agency approaches. Hence her classification appears to be based on a selection of arbitrarily selected criteria. Further, Ramet appears to believe that the diplomats, journalists, politicians, and social scientists whose works she is discussing are all attempting to explain social phenomena *and* to assign personal or collective responsibility for them. This might have led Ramet to assign several multiple factor explanations, advanced by social scientists,