

Transatlantic Central Europe is a thought-provoking volume that employs theoretical and methodological innovations to a seemingly passé idea, and thereby not only improves on the intellectual historical record, but also demonstrates its enduring relevance for cultural politics in the present. The book is clearly written, and is thus accessible even to those with no prior exposure to the literary figures discussed.

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Playing It Dangerously: Tambura Bands, Race, and Affective Block in Croatia and Its Intimates. By Ian MacMillen. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2019. xviii, 278 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. Musical Examples. \$85.00, hard bound; \$34.95, paper.

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Playing It Dangerously examines the interplay of affect, intimacy, space, and belonging in tambura music-making in post-war Croatian communities. Tambura string bands emerged as a popular practice in northeastern Croatia (and neighboring regions) during the nineteenth century, quickly figuring into Croatian nation-building efforts centered on resistance to Austro-Hungarian domination. Ian MacMillen's work, based on ethnographic research conducted between 2007 and 2015, shows how associations between tambura music, Croatian national spirit, and territorial sovereignty continue to inform its popular significance. Yet while much scholarship to date focuses on the discursive politics of nation and belonging in post-Yugoslav cultural politics, MacMillen privileges attention to the ways that musically-mediated affect shapes processes of intimacy and exclusion.

The book comprises five chapters bookended with an extensive introduction and short epilogue. Aside from race, MacMillen's analysis also addresses questions of territorialization and space, intimacy, gender, and metaphysics. The introduction situates the study in terms of key theoretical issues, particularly with respect to affect and MacMillen's particular interventions. Most significantly, he lays out a theory of affective "block." In contrast to most scholarship's focus on affect's ubiquity in musical contexts, MacMillen explores how actors regulate (or cut off) affective intensities. His core premise holds that affect is a resource—neither fully subordinate to, nor completely independent of, discourse and signification—that actors may deploy in strategic ways, even as the residues of affective intensity often extend beyond intended effects in practice.

The bulk of the book explores how affect and music shape processes of belonging and exclusion in Croatian communities since the Yugoslav wars. Chapter 1 examines how "aggressive" playing styles, song lyrics, and popular media dissemination associated tambura musicking with resistance to Serbian military aggression in eastern Croatia and post-conflict efforts to reclaim those spaces. Chapter 2 considers how US Rust Belt Croatians negotiate an ambivalent position as not-quite-white east European ("hunky") immigrants, yet white-oriented in contrast to African-Americans in formerly immigrant urban neighborhoods, through affective "blocking" in musical performances and joking. In Chapter 3, MacMillen cogently unpacks how affect and aesthetics shape racialization in Croatia (and across nearby territories), where people claim that a "clean" tambura playing style is inherently Croatian while the "dirty" sound of Romani performers—though exciting—also triggers visceral feelings about Romani otherness. Chapters 4 and 5 then move away from an overt focus on

racialization to consider dynamics of gender and metaphysics within “Croatian-oriented” communities, respectively. MacMillen examines how performative interactions with tambura musicians consolidate masculine intimacies, conscripting men into gendered habitus through accumulations of intense feeling. The final chapter explores how tambura sound constitutes space through metaphysical considerations, including how affective dimensions of tambura music support (or subtly qualify) official narratives of church and nation during Catholic masses. MacMillen uses the epilogue to argue that musically-mediated affect is “dangerous” precisely because of its dynamic potential effects—both reinforcing normative constructs and troubling the status quo.

MacMillen’s original theoretical interventions, particularly with respect to affect and “affective block,” constitute major strengths of the book. Theoretical discussions are woven into all chapters of the book, interspersed with ethnographic vignettes in ways that maintain constant dialogue between these threads. Chapters 1, 3, and 4 are especially strong pieces in the work, where MacMillen lays out rich ethnographic cases that provide compelling support for his theoretical arguments.

Several issues, however, detract somewhat from the book’s strengths. The author’s focus on theory at times displaces attention to ethnography. Several chapters would have benefited from a closer, more extensive reading of ethnographic examples—or a greater degree of ethnographic contextualization to support more abstract theoretical discussion. Theoretical jargon and neologisms (such as “limitative becoming,” “affect is blocked, but also blocked”) at times cloud the clarity of MacMillen’s arguments, in places making it difficult to follow how the author links his theoretical claims to ethnographic support. The broad array of themes traced throughout the work can also be confusing, diluting the work’s primary focus on questions of race (the final chapter’s turn toward metaphysics). Moreover, MacMillen does little to contextualize his use of race (as opposed to ethnicity or nationality) to analyze the phenomena he addresses; the work would have benefited from greater attention to the extensive scholarly literature on race to date, as well as to recent important work on race in eastern European and ex-Yugoslav spaces more specifically.

Despite these concerns, *Playing It Dangerously* is of significant interest for MacMillen’s important contributions to scholarship on affect, identity, and music-making, particularly in the context of post-Yugoslav cultural politics.

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Yellow Star, Red Star: Holocaust Remembrance after Communism. By Jelena Subotić. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019. xxii, 241 pp. Notes. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Maps. \$29.95, hardbound.
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Lev Tolstoi begins *Anna Karenina* as follows: “All happy families resemble one another; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.” In a footnote to this sentence, Gary Saul Morson notes that Tolstoi makes a related point in *War and Peace* and elsewhere when he says: “Happy people have no history,” (Lev Tolstoi, *Anna Karenina*, Yale UP, 2014, 743). What might Tolstoi be saying here? It seems to me that he might be suggesting a connection between suffering, history, and particularity: every particular group suffers in its own way and, thus, each group tells its own history. If that were not so, then there would be no history because suffering drives history and