The "Secret Knowledge" of Carousing:

From Orientalizing Other to (Not) Becoming-Other

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Introduction: Affect and Emotion

Generally, there are two types of writing on affect and emotions. One concerns the view that equates emotions and affect, while the other perceives affect as "prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act" (Massumi 2005, xvi).[1] According to the latter, neither affect nor affection denotes a personal feeling. Deleuze and Guattari (2005) use the concept of *sentiment* derived from Spinoza's concept of *affectio* (*l'affection*) as a state signifying "an encounter between the affected body and a second, affecting, body (with body taken in its broadest possible sense to include 'mental' or ideal bodies)" (Massumi 2005, xvi).

Based on Deleuze and Guattari's thought, Felicity J. Colman states: "affect is the change, or variation, that occurs when bodies collide, or come into contact" (2010, 11). Encounters between bodies thus conceived force one to think in a way that is opposed to recognition but can only be sensed (Deleuze 2001, 139).[2] Massumi develops Deleuze and Guattari's ideas of affect, claiming that affect, or "intensity," is "asocial, but not presocial" (1995, 91), which also means that it is presubjective without being presocial (Massumi 1995, 91; Massumi 2002). It is bodily and sensory, but it surpasses and "escapes the individual body" (Laszczkowski and Reeves 2018, 5). Since affect escapes language,

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2   In recognition, the sensible is "that which bears directly upon the senses," but may itself be attained by other faculties as well (Deleuze 2011, 139).

just as it escapes "cultural patterns," it can only be experienced and evoked (Jansen 2016, 59). That means that affect cannot be aligned "with any conventional conception of culture, since the whole point of affect […] is that, unlike emotion, it is not always already semiotically mediated" (Mazzarella 2009, 291–292).[3] Thus, it is usually said that affect cannot be reduced to any study (anthropological or otherwise) that "would seek to explain affect by situating it comparatively within integrated cultural orders" (Mazzarella 2009, 293). How can we then discuss any anthropological work, ethnographic or otherwise, in terms of affect?

First, it should be noted that anthropology does not define its subject matter solely in semantic terms. The study of affect, as Mazzarella explains, moves us "into the neighborhood of a social aesthetics, if we understand by aesthetics the ancient Greek sense of *aesthesis* or sense experience" (2009, 293). In other words, the crucial question seems to be what affect does. Furthermore, phenomenological approaches in anthropology have taught us that the body affected is not a clean slate devoid of any preconceived ideas, as society is inscribed on our nervous system and in our flesh before it appears in our consciousness. This means we may see the body as a generative base of culture rather than the plate into which culture, society, and ideology inscribe their mark (Csordas 1990). The affective body "preserves the traces of past actions and encounters and brings them into the present as potentials" (Mazzarella 2009, 292). Only in that sense affect is asocial, but it is clearly not presocial—"the *trace* of past actions *including a trace of their contexts* [are] conserved in the brain and in the flesh" (Massumi in Mazzarella 2009, 292, original emphasis). Affect is thus, at the same time, embodied and impersonal (Mazzarella 2009, 292).

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3   This may pose the question about the "location" of affect and its connection with the subconscious. According to Massumi (1995, 85) affect/intensity is beside the loop of "a nonconscious, never-to-conscious autonomic remainder." However, this is not completely clear. Following Bergson and Spinoza, Massumi argues "that it is only when the idea of the affection is doubled by an idea of the idea of the affection that it attains the level of conscious reflection" (1995, 92). In other words, conscious reflection is self-recursion of the idea of affection that becomes consciously experienced when it is approached from the metalevel and on the body level.

Emotion has a role of subjectification tied to the body. For Deleuze and Guattari, as well as for Massumi, the body is not only a "local embodiment *of* ideology" (Massumi 2002, 3, emphasis in the text)—as common anthropological wisdom has it—but is related to the nexus of emotion and affect.[4] Emotion is affect/intensity that is qualified and inserted into the semantic field of culture with its function and meaning. It is a "subjective content, the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point onward defined as personal" (Massumi 1995, 88). In that way, emotion is owned and recognized (Massumi 2002, 28) only when affect becomes qualified, that is inserted into semantic and semiotic fields (or discourse) and becomes available for narratization (Massumi 1995).[5] If unqualified, affect is not subject to critique. Only when affect becomes emotion can it be subjected to academic or other kinds of critique.

Affect is inscribed with potential. It is productive and mobile. It escapes (very much like a "line of flight" in Deleuze and Guattari) the individual body keeping its vitality, or potential of interaction, alive (Massumi 2002, 35). Perception and cognition are captures of the affect of which emotion is the most intense (Massumi 2002, 35). However, as Massumi writes, something always escapes this capture, remaining inassimilable, albeit inseparable from the particular perspective, e.g., the particular emotion. This residue makes emotion

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4   Mazzarella, as the first among anthropologists who actively engages with affect theory (but see also Stewart 2007), writes that subjective life, including emotion, is a secondary effect of cultural mediation (2009). It seems to me that Mazzarella here argues that culture forms subjectivity, which appears to be an odd idea, as most affective theory rejects the sociology of the social, instead focusing on the non-human and the relationship between a human and a non-human actant in flat sociology (Latour 2005) and flat ontology (DeLanda 2002). The critique of the idea of the body and embodiment that stems from Amerindian anthropologists of the ontological turn (cf., for example, Vilaça 2012) is similar to those posed by the affective turn and focuses on a non-representational and non-anthropocentric understanding of culture. In the affective, as well as in the ontological turn, the subject is not seen as a bounded entity. Traditional concepts of society and culture are likewise called into question.

5   There is a difference between semantics and semiotics. Massumi sometimes uses them interchangeably or stresses both, while Mazzarella refers to semiotics. Semantics is usually understood as being constitutive of semiotics.

detached and alienated, almost disorienting (as being outside oneself), but also makes affect crucial for "actually existing" and opposed to "pure entropy, death" (Massumi 2002, 35).[6]

This "vitalist philosophy," as Mazzarella (2009) calls it, may have its flaws, especially regarding its insistence on immediacy or immediation—that is, the radical binarization of "conceptual mediation" and "affective immediacy" (2009, 294). It seems that it presupposes two registers: a register of affective, embodied intensity on the one hand and a register of symbolic mediation and discursive elaboration on the other.[7] Although Massumi claims that the relation between these registers is "not one of conformity or correspondence but rather of resonation or interference, amplification or dampening" (in Mazzarella 2009, 293), it still resembles an uncanny dichotomy of affect and social, emotion and ratio that most of the affect theorists are doing their best to avoid. However, if these ideas are tracked back to the initial idea of affection as being affected, we may ask what affect or emotion does (Massumi 2002; Ahmed 2004) in a concrete social setting, such as carousing (*šenlučenje*) with Gypsies in Novi Sad, a town in Vojvodina. If "secret knowledge" is understood as affect (rather than simply feeling), carousing with Gypsies and "wild behavior" associated with it can be understood as affective state of relation (Seigworth and Gregg 2010) that brings together various others ("white Vojvodinians," Western others, Vojvodina Roma) in single becoming (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 2005). In exploring this, I draw from Mattijs van de Port's book,

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6   For Massumi, affect does not only keep one alive, but also does that for the universe being responsible for general vitality.

7   For many anthropologists, historians, and sociologists there is no experience that is not semantically mediated. Instead, they use the term affect to "emphasize the physical nature of the emotion without implying that it is by necessity pre-cultural" (Belting et al. 2014, 248). In this reading, affect becomes more like Bourdieu's concept of habitus (Belting et al. 2014) or embodiment in which bodies are seen as shaped by the habits made in common surroundings and articulated as movements in the broadest possible sense. But, even in Bourdieu's ideas of habitus, we see that it is understood not as personal, but as collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor (2013, 80) that we may understand as society. Habitus-formation predisposes subject and its emotional responses. In that sense, it is similar to affect understood as presubjective without being presocial (Massumi 1995).

Gypsies, Wars and Other Instances of the Wild: Civilization and Its Discontents in a Serbian Town, which gives a thick ethnography of Serbs in Novi Sad based on polarities between what he describes as "European-ness" versus "Balkan-ness" further equated with "culture" (*kultura*) versus "wildness" (1998). He argues that the bourgeoisie of Novi Sad, to whom he usually refers as "nice people" (*fini ljudi*), have actually ceased to behave like the "real bourgeoisie." This shift has supposedly resulted from the fact that they genuinely belonged in the Balkans, seen as an "unruly and wild place," primarily due to the specific war-like history of the Balkans that engendered certain human experiences alien to Western researchers. Reading this book in relation to my prolonged research of music in Novi Sad, I argue that those affective becomings of various others make a "symbiotic emergent unit" (Deleuze and Guattari 2005, 238) in which a constant transformation produces "becoming-other" as the permanent condition of the self.

Orientalism/Balkanism and Discontent in Novi Sad

My fieldwork friends were not particularly interested in *kafana*.[8] They were urban middle-class cool people whose cultural capital and social standing depended on the knowledge of Western music and loathing of any contemporary (or other) "folklore."[9] Still, I managed to persuade a few of them to visit a wine festival in Irig called *Pudarski dani* (Pudar's Days), a small place 24 km from Novi Sad. The wine degustation ended at the local *kafana* with live music and carousing. It took us a while to find the *kafana* suggested by a local friend. After

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8   About *kafana*, a tavern in the eastern Balkans, see the Introduction.

9   For many of my informants all "non-Western" music was consider to be some sort of "folklore." However, it is important to stress that Gypsy music and *kafana* music may be of different kinds and genres, but generally carousing with Gypsies is usually more acceptable than contemporary turbo-folk or other similar music that may be played at more rural festivities (*vašari*) usually under big tents or in the less respectable *kafana* in central Serbia. Peasants, especially those "semi-urban," are not the same Others as Gypsies.

a half-hour drive and a short detour over a dusty village road, we arrived at a "proper Gypsy bar" (one in which Romani musicians are playing).[10] It quickly became full of locals and festival goers, filled with smoke and hectic tones of local musicians who played with the full band probably assembled for the festival (accordion player, violin player, and *prim tambura*, *basprim*, *čelo* and *bas*[11] players). As the night progressed, musicians played faster and louder, collecting money from the guests for the songs they wished to be played. The musicians presented their vast repertoire of songs from more the traditional, those originating from Serbia's "down south" to the more modern ones. The night became more and more intense. It ended with dancing on the table, laughing, crying, and a not-too-serious fight between friends. The participants in the fight, for example, certainly came from Novi Sad bourgeoisie. Two of them had recently gotten married. Theirs was one of the most "cultural" weddings I have attended,[12] and they certainly did not belong to those who easily surrendered to this kind of music. It seems that Gypsy music not only stirs emotion but generates specific intensity that was not easily translatable into a usual and known vocabulary. In a *kafana*, the usually nice people of Novi Sad completely lose control and behave in an uncivilized manner. It can best be described as a cathartic experience of the ecstatic *Bacchanalia* that turns our souls inside out.

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10   The use of the terms Gypsy or Roma/Romani can be a tricky one (for the discussion see Gay y Blasco 2008). I decided to use term Gypsy when I follow my informants who talk about Gypsy music, carousing with Gypsies, Gypsy bands and *kafana*, etc. I also use this term when I follow the authors who use them in a specific context (e.g. van de Port, Deleuze and Guattari). When I analyze certain discourses (academic and otherwise) I use Roma or Romani, when I want to stress various discourses at once I use Roma/Gypsy (cf. the approach by Pasqualino 2008).

11   *Prim tambura* is the smallest of *tambura*, usual used as a lead instrument. *Basprim tambura* is slightly bigger and lower type of tambura used as secondary melody tambura while *čelo* is four strings *tambura* also used as a secondary melody *tambura*. *Bas* is also known as berda, "which resembles a double bass in appearance and function" (MacMillen 2014, 76).

12   Generally, weddings were understood as occasions at which someone could clearly make his/her cultural capital manifest. In this case, it is usually called "cultural level" (*kulturni nivo*). Thus, I heard several times that certain weddings were "cultural," while others were more "peasantry." Thus, a member of a world-music band with whom I collaborated in my research told me that they were asked to play at a "cultural wedding," but they refused, as they considered their music to be artistic and inappropriate for carousing.

The idea of "something extra" that cannot be easily described in the known vocabulary figures prominently in the studies of post-socialism and the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s. The "integrated cultural order," together with the usual and known power structure, collapsed. At the same time, for most people, the upcoming social and political order was not order at all but simply "chaos" (cf. Simić 2014). The fall of socialism in Europe entailed a fall of socialism in Yugoslavia, too. Accompanying the country's disintegration were wars in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo, armed conflicts in Slovenia and Macedonia, and the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) in 1999. The successive wars in the former Yugoslavia did not take place on Serbian territory, apart from that in Kosovo. Serbia received many refugees from Croatia and Bosnia, who primarily settled in Vojvodina.[13] That, together with the cumulative 116 trillion % inflation during the final three months of 1993 (Lazić and Sekelj 1997), made life increasingly difficult. After the fall of Slobodan Milošević in 2000, the international isolation and the UN sanctions were lifted, and the period from 2000 onwards is usually understood as a "period of recovery" and the prolonged, never-ending "road to normality."

The initial state of turmoil was so great that the society was opaque and obsolete for both outsiders and insiders, researchers and natives (as well as for all those in-between). Marko Živković, in his study of the Serbian capital Belgrade in the mid-1990s, wrote that social reality became "opaque" not only to him but to other natives "who lived there continuously" (2000, 168). He goes on: "My own society became almost as unfamiliar to me as it might have been for an outsider. Milošević's Serbia was a place undergoing a traumatic change and experiencing what is, by any standard, a high level of general turmoil. One aspect of such an extreme situation is that a great deal of what has previously been taken for granted by the majority of people is thrown out of kilter"

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13   An estimated 650,000 refugees had come to Serbia from other former Yugoslav republics by 1995 (Blagojević 1995), while Vojvodina received by far the biggest percentage of those coming to Serbia (Tasić et al. 1997; Lukić and Nikitović 2004).

(Živković 2000, 168). Thus, it is not surprising that both chaos and normality, as its opposite, emerged as central issues in the anthropological studies of the former Yugoslavia (Simić 2014; Jansen 2015). Normality can be applied equally to people, institutions, societies, and states to refer to something ordinary in a good way: stable and predictable. Still, what counts as "normal" may vary across the post-socialist world. Sometimes, the idea of normality is conceptualized through consumption (Crowley 2000; Fehérváry 2002; Rasuing 2002), but it is not the only means through which people construct and understand it (see Yurchak 2006). This normality refers to the totality of the social fabric. Recently, "normality," understood as certain living standards, has been somewhat restored, but the yearning for normal life seems to be here to stay (Simić 2016).

Chaos and abnormality stand in opposition to the previously known—to the state, society, and order in general, which seems to be reflected in carousing in *kafana*, especially when accompanied by Romani musicians. In his study *Gypsies, Wars and Other Instances of the Wild: Civilization and Its Discontents in a Serbian Town,* most of van de Port's (1998) informants describe the practices of carousing in *kafana* in Novi Sad and its surroundings in the 1990s as "crossing boundaries of culture." Where culture is understood "as [the] positive pole of the balkanist discourse" (Jansen 2005, 159) and equated with good manners, civility, and civilization, in contrast, crossing those boundaries means "slipping back" into "pre-civilized" time of the Balkans.

In the former Yugoslavia, the main criterion for the differentiation between "Europe," understood as the ultimate model of "high civilization" embodied in Western European countries, and the less clearly localized and more scattered idea of "barbarity," lies in the historical demarcation between the Habsburg Empire (Western Europe) and the Ottoman Empire (the Orient). Vojvodina is usually seen as more "civilized" than the rest of

Serbia, primarily due to its Habsburg legacy.[14] Most importantly, although it has the highest agricultural production in all of Serbia, Vojvodina is seen as more urban than the rest of the country, and urbanity is understood as a clear mark of civilization (Jansen 2005; Spasić 2006). Thus, even Vojvodina's villages are seen as somehow urban since they usually consist of houses on both sides of paved roads with gardens behind them, while in the rest of Serbia, due to the hilly landscape, houses are scattered about the hills without any proper connections between them. These factors constitute the perception of Vojvodina in the eyes of many Serbs and others from former Yugoslavia as the most "European" part of Serbia, hence different from the Balkans "down south."

In popular imaginations, *Vojvođani* (Vojvodinians) are perceived as polite, moderate, mild-tempered, and gravitating toward their own homes. By contrast, a "typical" Serb is impatient and rude, spending more time in *kafana* than at home. However, Vojvodinians also appear to be slow and dispassionate. This set of stereotypes is often used to point out very different things, including the citizens of Novi Sad poised reactions to the performers at gigs and their passivity/reluctance regarding solving the town's problems. Nevertheless, these characteristics are not necessarily negative and have frequently been utilized in drawing distinctions between Serbia "down south" and Vojvodina. Thus, I was told by an informant, a musician in a local rock band:

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14   This mark of civilization, however, can be further used to divide Vojvodina into "more civilized" or "less civilized" parts. Vojvodina is usually divided into three regions called: Srem, Banat, and Bačka (Novi Sad is located in the part of Bačka where it borders Srem). Thus, a curator in the Novi Sad City Museum told me that when Serbs emigrated from southern Serbia and Kosovo (in the Ottoman Empire at that time) at the end of the 17th century to the territory of the current Vojvodina (part of the Habsburg Empire at that time), a leader of the Great Serb Migration, Patriarch Arsenije III Čarnojević, ordered "all roarers and noisemakers to stay in front of/on Fruška Gora," i.e., in Srem. In Novi Sad, I also learned that Srem is more Serbian, not like the "real Vojvodina." In an endless game of classification, I also heard that Srem itself could be divided into the "wine part" and the "swine part;" it was not hard to guess which one is considered to be more civilized. Many of my informants were very keen to explain these differences to me in various situations.

Novi Sad is always a different story, um, literally, um, for example, a Rambo[15] concert in Novi Sad and in Belgrade are two completely different concerts, with no similarities. In Belgrade, you feel the energy, while here, someone will reluctantly clap and shout "bravo Rambo!" you know, like "bravo Rambo!" [he said this in a high, tiny voice] That's a strange thing about Vojvodina, and Novi Sad is especially like that. (no name, 2005, October)

Similarly, a man from the Exit Festival organization told me that when they organized the anti-Milošević protest that later became the Exit Festival,[16] they did not think of inviting trumpet players, as he explained: *People said, it's not for us. We don't know how to carouse, like people from Belgrade.* In other words, "we are polite and moderate people," and this kind of qualification can easily lead to a further explanation of Vojvodina's "cultural superiority" that got spoiled in the 1990s and received its expression in *kafana* gatherings.

Many studies of former Yugoslavia from the early 1990s onwards concentrate on the opposition between "the West" and "the Balkans," employing a different version of Edward Said's orientalism (1979).[17] For Mattijs van de Port, Serbian refusal to allow for the possibility for foreigners to understand their behavior is based on their idea of having a "secret knowledge" that enables only natives to understand their own reality (1999). Although the people with whom van de Port was talking to reference their own "wild behavior" as

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15 Antonije Pušić Rambo is a famous rock musician.

16 Exit is a music festival that emerged out of anti-Milošević protests in 2000.

17 Goldsworthy (1998) situates the ideas of imperialism and colonialism, as analytical categories, within the analysis of Western European and North American exploitations of the "Balkan" concept in their fictional films and literature (cf., Jezernik 2004). Fleming (2000) argues for a more historically grounded implementation of Said's model, questioning the very possibility of applying "any model of Orientalism" to the Balkans. Similarly, in her influential study of the Western imaginations of "the Balkans," Todorova (1997) gives a historically grounded, explicit critique of Said's version of Orientalism, arguing that it is not appropriate for a study of the Balkans and showing how the West has stereotyped the Balkans from the early Renaissance to the present age. Bakić-Hayden (1995) and Bakić-Hayden and Hayden (1992) show how discourses about the "West" and "East" have been internalized in both locations.

something that reflects a real "Serbian mentality" or a "true Serbian behavior"—which they claim an outsider could not understand—it is questionable whether such assertions should be used for analytical, as opposed to descriptive, proposes.

"East" and "West" do not form simple binary oppositions based on a simplified and mechanistic version of Said's Orientalism but must be placed in the cultural and historical settings in which their meanings are generated. Following a similar line of argument, Sarah Green (2005) states that the idea of Orientalism is not useful for analyzing the Balkans, suggesting that the idea leads to a serious misunderstanding of the Balkan region. Green suggested that Orientalism makes the distinction between "East" and "West" too stark, arguing that the Balkans have not been perceived as problematic because they were too "Eastern" and thus too different from the "West," but rather because they have been both "Western" and "Eastern" simultaneously. To say that people argue that the next-door neighbors are "orientals" but that "we" are not reinforces the suggestion that there is, in fact, no clear distinction: the difference keeps regressing into ever smaller differences, and there is no agreement upon which side is the more or less oriental than the other side, leaving the situation unresolved (Green 2005). Furthermore, in former Yugoslavia, we may rather speak of "recursive Eurocentrism" (Jansen 2009) based on the ideas of the special Yugoslav position during the Cold War (among other things).[18] This recursive Eurocentrism became entangled with the Orientalist/Balkanist theme to produce a specific sense of exclusion that intensified in Bosnia and Serbia in the early 2000s.

In that sense, it may be useful to go beyond the binarism of the oppositions implied in (nesting)-orientalism. Instead, investigating how ideas stemming from that logic are deployed in everyday social interactions and as a frame of the analysis of carousing and othering in *kafana* where Romani musicians play could provide a more reliable basis for understanding the situation. Those ideas

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18   The "special position" includes Yugoslavia's membership in Non-Aligned Movement, Yugoslav citizens' relative freedom to travel abroad and availability of Western goods.

contextualize academic analysis and define the local "secret knowledge" of carousing (van de Port 1998). However, it becomes clear upon closer investigation that this knowledge is not secret. In fact, a well-known Orientalism/Balkanism framework shapes it while preventing us from understanding the intensity that escapes it. I argue that it is better to understand "secret knowledge" and "common sense statements" about the "Serbian predicament" as "a complex semantic and affective realm that organizes our relations to the world [...]" (Grossberg and Zixu 2017, 10).

The Public Life of Becoming-Other

It is frequently argued that carousing makes people lose a sense of themselves and the world around them (everything solid melts into the air). My informants found our *kafana* gatherings not only important in terms of friendship or entertainment but also as occasions in which the everyday life of rules and conduct give way to deep feelings and a sudden burst of unknown truths, even if the participants find their cultural or artistic values questionable. Life is full of "idle stories" (van de Port 1998)—empty discourses that disguise reality which could be reached only through carousing with Gypsies who can bring the underlying madness of reality to life. They are more like the unwanted version of ourselves. Romani musicians can bring this secret knowledge to life by making people transcend their everyday life into the world of freedom and wilderness that seems more real and in tune with society's invisible reality and general discontent.

It should not be surprising that Roma are seen as the keepers of this kind of knowledge and becoming. For a long time, they have acted as the quintessential European others. In the European imaginary, Roma are pictured, narrated, and known as "the wandering, free, musical, thieving, lustful." They are "uncivilized, animal-like and predatory," and "generous and noble yet child-like" at the same time (Gay y Blasco 2008, 298). In Serbia, they are isolated from the rest of the population and perceived as poor and forced into constant movement by sheer necessity. However, the fantasies of their life also made "the Gypsy world"

an "irresistible dreamland" for the Novi Sad Serbian bourgeoisie (van de Port 1998, 7).[19]

Carol Silverman (2011), probably one of the best-known researchers of Romani music in the Balkans, used Said's concept to claim that Roma are "orientalized." This orientalization also makes them prone to balkanization, which is related to understanding music as a form of art that can help release hidden emotions. Indeed, as Silverman argues, "Roma have carved a traditional musical performance niche from their historical association with emotion" (2011, 276). Following van de Port, she further argues that "patrons need them for ritual," through which Roma bring out patrons' inner feelings (Silverman 2011, 276). Furthermore, Silverman—similarly to van de Port—argues that "some Romani performers strategically employ aspects of emotional self-stereotypification to monopolize various musical niches" (2011, 279) or simply to satisfy clients, as that is what they are doing for a living.[20] However, this is not Romani-Serbian specific, but it applies to many situations in which the exploited/discriminated accept the characteristics attached to them by the domain/ruler. Nevertheless, it is also a matter of comfort in the situation in which they are accepted and, in a way, respected for who they are and not ostracized. In this case, Gypsies are playing to give "the customer the feeling that he's understood," as a violin player explained to van de Port (1998, 182). Thus, the main task of the Romani musician is to supply a music product that can be recognized as "Gypsy" and "that enables the audience to identify with the 'Gypsy spirit'" (van de Port 1998, 182). To that end, "labels such as exotic, passionate, genetically talented, and soulful, for example, are not only found in marketers' advertisements but also sometimes defended by Romani performers" (Silverman 2011, 279). Such labeling applies both to the global political economy of performance and performances in *kafana* in the Balkans.

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19   Minority groups exist only through "becoming" never through "having" (Deleuze and Guattari 2005, 291). If Gypsies are indeed a minority usually understood as "wandering nomads," that makes them especially capable of resisting the "state territorial machine," as Deleuze and Guattari (2005) call it.

20   See also the chapter by Hofman and Kovačič in this book.

Carousing in *kafana* is not dissimilar to the effervescence produced by the crowd that can be controlled through rituals.[21] The affect of the *kafana* is described as having specific effervescence that helps the "re-creation of the world people experience" (van de Port 1998, 5) but cannot be discursively formulated. In typical academic narratives of public life, reason, and affect, "mass affect" (affective experience in the large group) and reason are radically incommensurable. Crowds or other forms of mass affect are usually seen as extremely suggestive and thus alien to reason and good sense. As Mazzarella explains, "in the discourse of modernity, affect appears as a social *pharmakon*,[22] at once constitutive and corrosive of life in common" (2009, 296). Similarly, although rituals may look like solidifying social practices, they are practices that allow the indeterminacy of affective life and make life livable (Massumi 2002).

Deleuze and Guattari's (2005) concept of assemblage can be devised to illuminate the perplexity of the situation. According to them, our world is made of assemblages. There are "mechanic assemblages" (physical things) and "assemblages of enunciation" (ideas). Assemblage (*agencement*) is a technical term that they developed to describe the process of arranging, connecting, fitting, and embedding that points not to the presupposed organic unity of its elements but rather to the heterogeneous characters of the phenomena (Deleuze and Guattari 2005). In that sense, it is a process—not an entity—that "emerges when a function emerges; ideally it is innovative and productive" (Livesey 2010, 19). The result of an assemblage may be a new expression, institution, realization (Livesey 2010, 19) or reterritorialization. Thus, assemblage is intended to

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21 Romani musicians' performances in *kafana* are sometimes described as rituals, since carousing, as part of many ritual practices is typical of the "liminal phase" of ritual transgressing and possession. Rituals are specific forms of cultural performance (cf. Brown 2003) that van de Port (1998, 5), following Victor Turner, understands as "free zones where the imagination is unfettered." Cultural performances of carousing in *kafana* are, of course, different from the rituals of state and organized religions that "enshrine[s] state or official deities." However, in both cases, rituals have a role of social mediation and should not be seen as opposite to institutional practices that are also a form of a performative ritual (Mazzarella 2009, 298).

22 *Pharmakon* is the term introduced to critical theory by Derrida (1983) and it can mean poison and remedy.

make new connections where you would not expect them and produce a new reality (Livesey 2010, 19). That said, if we understand feelings aroused by Gypsy music in *kafana* as affect and not simply as emotions that help "implicit social knowledge" surface, we may also be able to understand the "secret knowledge of carousing" as an attempt to disfigure the assemblage of the Serbian real that consists of both dominant discourses and things that people can only sense, but not describe.

Affect is produced through assemblage, which "generate specific forms of affect" (Hickey-Moody 2019, 45) in various forms (such as gender, ethnicity, or race). Affect is the result of interactions between bodies (of all kinds – raced, gendered, ethnic bodies), the passage from one state to another, which occurs in relation to affecting bodies (Massumi 2005, xvi). We can also understand affect as an "effectuation of a power of the pack that throws the self into upheaval and makes it reel" (Deleuze and Guattari 2005, 240). If we replace the word "pack," which has a special meaning in Deleuze and Guattari and their philosophy of becoming (animal, other), with "group" or "groupness,"[23] we can say that the process of subjectification (identification) enfolds as "introjection," "whereas affect acts upon the self like an arrow (or 'projectile'), forcing us to relate to the forces of chaotic materiality that surround us, rather than suppressing their heterogeneity through identification" (Cull 2021, 192). Or, in Deleuze and Guattari's words, "affect is the active discharge of emotion, the counterattack, whereas feeling is an always displaced, retarded, resisting emotion. Affects are projectiles just like weapons; feelings are interoceptive like tools" (2005, 400).

In *kafana*, both are at work: the processes of effectuation/affectuation[24] and the production of emotions. Affect forces one to respond to the chaotic

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23   This may be a bit of a simplification of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy in which the idea of the pack is firmly connected with other ideas, such as assemblage, rhizome, multiplicity, molar, and molecular. Molar is linked to the State, and molecular to micro-entities "that transpire in areas where they are rarely perceived," such as "the perception of affectivity, where beings share ineffable sensations" (Conley 2010, 176).

24   I coined the term affectuation from the word affect in analogy with effectuation.

surrounding, while feelings entail identification based on mimicry. Van de Port argues that encounters between Serbs and Gypsies in *kafana* are based on a complex game of mimicry and imitation on both sides. In the context of self-stereotypification, we may ask if the Roma's acceptance of the others' othering them, i.e., acceptance of the public image of themselves created by others and based on the others' perception of them is identification based on mimicry or the Roma's way of doing affect counteracting by mimicry. They do not become Westerners; they do it to remain who they are. Taussig calls this mimesis a situation "in which it is far from easy to say who is the imitator and who is the imitated, which is copy and which is original" (1993, 78). According to him, mimesis primarily seems to make the mimic similar to the mimed, nevertheless reproducing the difference between the two, while Serbs apparently wanted to erase this difference (1993). In *kafana*, they almost seem to be possessed by music so that the feelings and behaviors that they had attributed to others—Gypsies and Balkans in general (smashing glasses, for example)[25]—became real and became their own.

Still, it seems that mimesis leads nowhere. Serbs do not become Gypsies, nor vice versa. Discourse or signification always seems to pull them back into the whirlpool of the Orientalist/Balkanist dyad (van de Port 1998; Silverman 2011). Becoming-other is not a process of imitation and mimesis since these always inevitably fail. It is also not a return or a cycle (of a ritual)—the constant repetition is not becoming, but rather a radical act of new formation.[26] Even if the subject of becoming is imaginary (as discourse-based knowledge of *Gypsy kafana* teaches us), becoming is real, and the alterity which it results in hides in

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25 Smashing glasses is constitutive of the archetypical *kafana* behavior expressing deep passion called *dert* (for the notions of *sevdah* and *merak*, see also chapters by Bartulović and Jelača in this book), in the act of self-harming and self-sacrifice. The infamous sign on the wall in Serbian *kafana* saying, "every glass that gets broken has to be paid for" is not really a prohibition, but permission—"go ahead and do it, but you have to pay for it, the same way you pay for your drink," "just to let you know that it is part of the service."

26 Affective transformation, as such, is a process, not a result. In that sense, I avoid using the term metamorphosis as it may be more suggestive of a result, not a process.

the very meaning of the verb to become that "designates neither a predicative operation nor a transitive action" (Viveiros de Castro 2014, 160).[27]

In order to disentangle the complexity of the "*kafana* situation" and diverse instantiations of various degrees of hybridity, it should be noted that the concept of becoming describes a relationship that operates in a different register from that requires, however loosely fixed points of relaters, what Eduardo Viveiros de Castro defines as "morphological relationality of structuralism" (2014, 160). This relationality can be noticed in the simplified or uncritical use of Orientalist/Balkanist interpretation of carousing with Gypsies. Following Deleuze and Guattari's ideas of becoming, it can be argued that becoming Gypsy is not the same as "becoming-Gypsy." The former is what the Other is (not) doing, while the latter could refer to both the Gypsy and the Other. The latter implies that becoming is the present participle of the non-transitive verb used as a modifier of the word other, and the very becoming is itself other—the Other (Gypsy) is an immanent aspect of the event and not its transcendent object.[28]

The moment a Serb (or anyone else) "becomes a Gypsy," the Serb and the Gypsy are no longer there. Thus, the formula Serb/Gypsy/Balkan/European designates a specific multiplicity of becoming that is incomprehensible in structuralist logic of affect as Balkanism.[29] Instead, we should be looking for the "disjunctive synthesis of becoming" that is not based on metaphor (for example, carousing as a metaphor for war, wildness or disorder) or mimesis (Serbs imitating Gypsies) but on a movement that deterritorializes "the two terms of the relation it creates by extracting them from the relations defining them in order to link them via a new 'partial connection'" (Viveiros de Castro 2014, 160).

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27 Indeed, linguistically, becoming is rather an adjective (the present participle derived from the verb becoming). It is not about action but characteristics/description

28 The transitive verb *becoming* is probably not possible. But it does not necessarily make the non-transitive verb *becoming* less worrying or, in some instances, less beautiful.

29 Multiplicity and becoming are one and the same thing (Deleuze and Guattari 2005, 249). Multiplicity is defined by the number of dimensions it has. It is not divisible, it cannot lose or gain a dimension without changing its nature. But affects are also becoming (Deleuze and Guattari 2005, 256).

These "partial connections" (Strathern 2005) are never simply dichotomous points of two things that relate but an array of relations that make a bundle (or assemblage) that cancel the initial dichotomy. Thus, if the experience of *kafana* is to be taken seriously, one should search for an affective transformation that embodies social and power relations but may also be prone to failure and impossibility of transformation due to that very embodiment.

If affect is the name that Deleuze and Guattari give to a particular kind of encounter between bodies (Cull 2021, 192), then the central question is what a body (as affect) can do (to other bodies). As we have seen, Deleuze and Guattari do not understand bodies in a conventional sense of human or animal body (although bodies are also human and animal), but rather "as any whole composed of parts, where these parts stand in some definite relation to one another" (Baugh 2010, 35). Understood in this way, the body can be a human or an animal body, but also "a body of work, a social body or collectivity, a linguistic corpus, a political party, or even an idea" (Baugh 2010, 36). In carousing, the human bodies of musicians and the audience interact, as well as the bodies of ideas and everything else that participants bring in: the ideas and imaginaries of Europeanness, Balkanness, civilized, wildness, etc.

In order to understand affective encounters in *kafana*, it is helpful to reiterate Deleuze and Guattari's idea of becoming in the context of art performances. Laura Cull, for example, suggests that there "would be a difference for Deleuze, between the audience's recognition of an actor's representation of 'a familiar, easily recognizable emotion' and the 'unfamiliar affect' of a performance that unsettles but also fascinates us in its power to resist identification" (2021, 192). Following those ideas, we can say that carousing with Gypsies, things may be at the same time familiar and unfamiliar. Familiar in the sense that participants recognize the ritual in which they might or might not have participated in the past (repetition always fails), but it is never certain in which direction the carousing will go—how (if at all) they are going to be affected by it.

I will give an example from my ethnographic experience: I had friends visiting from Belgrade at Christmas who wished to go to a *kafana*. I decided to take them to a "cultural one," but after dinner, they wanted some live music, and

we went to a *kafana* where Gypsies played. The *kafana* was relatively spacious, which was not common, but the band consisted of only guitar, bass, and accordion. As the evening progressed, and the music became more frenetic, and we became drunker; a female friend became a very enthusiastic dancer, while her male partner, an amateur musician, borrowed the accordion from the player to perform a song. He wanted to join the band for more music, but the friendly and firm band leader refused. The songs were to be paid and ordered as they should be, and no amount of personal charm, male comradeship (or flirting) could do otherwise. My friends were rather disappointed, as it is well known that "the real soul of Gypsy music is only released when the musicians play for themselves and not as professional musicians" (van de Port 1998, 181), which made them want to leave and find a place where Gypsies "play for the soul." However, the rest of us were already tired and could offer them only a dramatic drive through the thick snow toward Belgrade.[30]

In other words, in the setting of *kafana*, it was mostly impossible "to become-other." The Romani musicians were the gatekeepers of the transformation. As van de Port explains, "the task of the Gypsy musician is to bring the internalized Gypsy of the Serbs to life" (1998, 182). It means that imitation is not enough. You cannot imitate Gypsy if you want to become one—you need to lose both your Serbianness and Europeanness if you want to bring your "inner Gypsy" to life. As Deleuze and Guattari explain, "imitation self-destructs, since the imitator unknowingly enters into a becoming that conjugates with

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30   In van de Port's (1998) account, this impossibility of becoming the Other applies particularly to women, and he himself was much more critical of women who attempted such a transformation than of men. This may sound odd, as female Romani singers are seen as a typical embodiment of Gypsy *kafana* music in discursive and bodily senses. However, a *kafana* used to be seen as a place of male entertainment with female singers who performed for male clientele (as far as social status is concerned, these women were not regarded as being much different than prostitutes). Thus, it was almost impossible for women clientele to engage in the state of becoming-other by merging with their Gypsy-other within. They were tied to a double transformation that they had already made—from Serbian women to Serbian male clientele of *kafana*, from which becoming-Gypsy seemed impossible. Serbian women could not be transformed into Serbian males, as discourse keeps them with their female roles, while the Serbian men could not be transformed into the subordinated but desired Gypsies.

the unknowing becoming of that which he or she imitates" (2005, 304–305). However, as it was clear in the discussion of Balkan and Europe in the Orientalism/Balkanism debate, it should also be said that Gypsy is not fundamentally an ethnicity or race with certain characteristics that old ethnographers can identify and describe. Instead, a characteristic of "Gypsiness" is that Gypsies have the power to guard and use it as a force of transformation (cf. Deleuze and Guattari 2005, 239 and further). Thus, one also needs to lose the other's Gypsiness in Other to become the Other. In carousing in a *kafana*, affect reveals that the real qua continual becoming is immanent to what appears as an imitation. However, the constant nesting character of otherness simultaneously permits and blocks the transformation: European, Serbian, Gypsy that swings from the reality of the flesh to the "idle stories" of discourse.

Conclusion

Although the Orientalist/Balkanist discourse is based on the nesting principle of recursive Eurocentrism that may make the Balkans simultaneously Western and Eastern (Green 2005), it still reproduces a dichotomy that does not disappear into fractal-like indifference. Thus, as soon as orientalist discourse creeps in, the transformation becomes impossible (the question remains if it is possible at all/generally). It captures and fixes any intensity in a dialectical game of discourse and emotion/affect. Affect's work in a *kafana,* as described by van de Port and my interlocutors, exists only as the result of mediation by Western discourse. Describing it as Balkan, wild, and true, as an unmediated affect of "true self" may be possible only because it emerges as the result of the constant process of Othering. I am not simply saying that the Orientalist/Balkanist discourses produce the polarization that enables carousing to be read as wild and "more real" than the supposedly "civilized behavior" of European non-*kafana* goers. Also, contrary to the perception of some aspects of society as instances exclusively of the rational, civilized, and logical, I contend that affect is pivotal to institutions of modernity rather than being a residual (the institutions'

other) that becomes manifest in specific circumstances such as wild, wild Balkans. I argue that both intensity—non-semantically mediated affect—and a semantic qualification are needed to make any social practice possible. In that respect, and contrary "to the ideological discourse of rationalized modernity," the easily altered "terrain of affect is not, in fact, external to bureaucratic process" (Mazzarella 2009, 298). Affect is not the radical other of public order (or bureaucratic efficiency) but a necessary part of any institutional practice with an aspiration to public efficacy. In other words, any public policy that seeks to be effective must also be affective (Mazzarella 2009, 299).

This may look like an awkward concluding dialectical move to the theorists of affect who, following Deleuze and Guattari, mostly reject dialectics. However, some authors recognize a gap between affect and symbolization as a "productive gap" that needs to be addressed (Mazzarella 2009; Duclos 2018). In that sense, for Mazzarella, the condition of our becoming is a "negatively dialectical one" in which "we are always moving between immanence and qualification" (2009, 304). Immediation, imagined by some kind of pre-mediated existence, is constituted as "at once the outcome of mediation and the means of its occlusion" (Mazzarella 2009, 303). In other words, "immediation is nothing more than an illusion produced by an always already constitutive mediation" (Duclos 2018, 41). The categories that seem opposite to the vitality of affect (like social order or citizenship) become their necessary part and always make our identities inadequate.

The reference to Theodor Adorno's negative dialectics is not accidental. Some authors try rereading affect theory through the lenses of Adorno's negative dialectics (Mazzarella 2009; Rhodes 2019). For Adorno, dialectics is not based on reconciliation that leads to a positive outcome or sublimation into something greater. Similarly, mediation exposes "disjunctions and contradictions," conceived "as the process of interconnection itself, as a process of mutual implication of the subject and the object" (Duclos 2018, 41). Following a similar idea, I argue that the discursive dichotomy of Europe (civilization) and its Balkan discontent must be paired with the affect of *kafana* to make us interpellate into people of a certain kind. Nevertheless, in contrast to the arguments made

by Mazzarella (2009) and Duclos (2018), I argue that in the case in question, the only real potential for the escape lies in the rejection of the dialectical logic altogether. We are neither European (with a threat of the Balkan essences lurking from inside/within) nor Balkan. Neither are we both at the same time. Those (n)either/(n)or identities based on the opposition between articulation and affect always fail, as they are based on "two levels of impersonal generality" (Mazzarella 2009, 299). It is not only that they are too general for our personal experiences, but also that they are based on dark dialectics of civility on the one hand and, on the other, the intensity of carousing. There may be two implications for the ethnographic cases presented here. First, it may entail that the situation as mediated by Western discourses is not characterized by dichotomies, i.e., that Serbs and Gypsies cannot engage in the becoming-Other since there is no other in that game. The second implication concerns the mediation by a Western discourse that causes perceiving the situation in a certain way. Specifically, it implies the exoticization of the very participants (Serbs and Roma), thereby rendering them the Other. Then, one of the parties is further othered and remains distinct. In both cases, to become-Other as a "permanent condition of the Self," it is necessary to recognize the power of mediation that produces the dichotomy of the two and overcome it in a paradoxical affect of dialectic.

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