

WHAT DOES CAPITALISM SOUND LIKE

Nina Dragičević's composition "*Ma'am, there is no such thing in reality*" opens up with a question. A question, or questioning, a doubt, this constitutive moment, this constitutive act of the enlightened subject, was in modern age marked with a generation of new insights, with the search of new knowledge, with widening of intellectual cognition, with thinking. But the intonation of the introductory question – "No, I mean, do you understand me?" – uttered by one of the speakers from Nina's composition, does not presuppose new knowledge, new cognition. Her question does not presuppose doubt; on the contrary, it presents the incantation of dogma, it presents non-thinking, it confirms the axiom, it strives to confirm the axiom, personal belief, in short, the ideologeme. The question does no longer express a questioning. It is no longer a search for new, but a persistent perpetuation and confirmation of stasis.

Of course Dragičević immediately puts us in suspense. What we should understand, what this axiom is, this ideologeme, confirmed by the speaker through the whole composition, is not known until the end. But it is this ceaselessly declaring that is also important: as if the speaker would like to imprint this dogma on her own perception, as well as on the perception of others. To suture all that is existent.

In this urban operetta, as Nina Dragičević marks her composition, many voices speak and "sing". Here they are, here we are, contemporaries, sunk in mortgages, hungry, in constant deprivation, and here is theirs, ours, sonority. Dragičević strings sound situations, declarations and voices of people who are solving their specific personal miseries in the context of contemporary capitalism, but – and this is the basic warning of the presented piece – the ways of speaking about misery are at the same time the expressions of strategies of dealing with it. Nina emphasizes: Deprivation is being resolved precisely with tools that have led to deprivation.

The composition "*Ma'am, there is no such thing in reality*" is a sound representation of this specific madness of people facing misery. Listen carefully: one is grinning, the other is giggling, the voice of the third is loaded with apathy, the fourth victimizes herself, the fifth is all actional, "you must", she repeats. It is not only important how they speak about misery, but above all how they solve it. And, of course, Nina also inserts herself: "where can I pay", we hear somewhere. These vignettes are strategies of facing reality. And the circle is closed: the reality of misery and deprivation is at the same time the reality of the tactics of solving the same misery and deprivation. And the sonority that Nina mediates is the sound expression of this reality. And she mediates the sonority of this miserable reality excellently. Her exceptional sensitivity of listening and then mediation is shown precisely in such instances. That is how capitalism sounds like.

The intervention of the violin is the intervention of the commentator: it is a sound commentary on the state of mind, a sounded parallel of the composition's protagonists' talking. That is why after the first minutes, the violin sound begins to break: Nina only slides on the violin, with her fingers she presses the strings, and while we hear different voices, different people, different sayings, the violin comments them, saws them, the sound is getting stuck, tiredly repeating itself, grinding, getting stuck again, slipping into the sequences of Paganini's "Venetian carnival", just to emphasize this grotesque human masquerade. But then even the carnival is being torn apart.

Until all this drive exhausts itself. Until all this drive burns out. Until all this human hibernation is expressed by mere tiny sound twitches, by steps in the apartment, inbreaths and clock ticking in silence ... and by mortgages ... and mortgages ... and mortgages ... and mortgages. Until all sound finally disappears. And until this entire human feast of today's *les misérables* turns on again with all vibrancy.