

Jana Gajic:

“Hood Elitism: Stylistic Transgression of Dominant Cultural Meanings in the Music of the Serbian Artist Mimi Mercedez”

Opponent’s review of bachelor thesis

Jana Gajic in her thesis does discuss very specific environment of Serbian youth culture, *trepfolk* phenomena and its artist Mimi Mercedez and connotation with history, gender, musical resistance and precarity. In three chapters student gives a very good ethnographic work on what the neo – Diesel culture is, what are the main markers of its identity and it very personal and intimate insight into the Serbian youth culture.

In the whole thesis Jana Gajic works excellently with literature and her approach vastly exceeds the terms of bachelor thesis. Also the bibliography of this thesis is impressive – its almost 60 publications and even more journalistic sources. Maybe also because of this, the thesis is almost double in length then it is required and also due to the length of the thesis there are some information which repeats themselves. Reader also can be sometimes little bit lost with too much theories student is using. Nevertheless, Gajic uses those theories very well to defend the whole point of her paper.

What I appreciate the most in the thesis is the positioning part. Gajic is not afraid to go very deep and doesn’t hide anything personal, even the romantic relationships with informants, and also writes about her doubts that emerged during her research. All this information, and also feelings, provides great plasticity of the position in which the author was, where she comes from and what are her values, thus the values of the Serbian youth. Also, the fact author met Mimi Mercedez in January 2022 makes this research absolutely up the date and shows how the situation is in the very present day.

The historical chapter provides a good historical context and connects the whole Diesel / neo – Diesel movement with problems of today and very well describes the dichotomy between classes and between rural and urban areas. However, the historical chapter went little bit too deep and gave too many information in sort of chaotic way and as not an insider (and also not Serbian), I had sometimes trouble to be oriented in the whole situation.

Despite the quality of the whole thesis and lot of ethnographic work I would expect of this thesis to have more ethnographic data. This as well as performance analysis or even some “snapshots” from the events and also interviews environment author did with agents of this thesis. It could add to the thickness of the analysis in many parts and enrich the whole thesis and provide more plastic image. I’m also missing where and when the interviews were done and the methodological aspect of the interview whatsoever.

It surely was not an easy task to map the soundscape of Serbian youth movement of promiscuity, drug abuse and Diesel heritage, but Jana Gajic did more than a standard bachelor thesis, went very deep in her research and did an excellent job. I recommend this thesis to defence and consider it as excellent.

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