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VLADIMIR NAZOR'S *PARTISAN POEMS*: A READING FROM THE CAPITALIST PRESENT²

Poetry makes nothing happen, as we all know, except when it does.
Jasper Bernes, *Poetry and Revolution*

Abstract: *This paper presents a comparative analysis of the poetry collection Partisan poems (Pjesme partizanke) by the Croatian poet Vladimir Nazor, written during the People's Liberation Struggle and published in 1944, and the Occupy Wall Street Poetry Anthology (Boyer and Marinovich, 2011), written in the context of protests related to the last global economic crisis of 2008, also known as the Great Recession. In the comparative reading of these two poetry collections, the analysis is focused on the structural and political relationship between poetry and revolutionary imagery in the context of form, images, and effects. Following recent theoretical research in literature on the topic of poetry, revolution and Partisan art (e.g., Bernes, 2022; Komelj, 2009, Kirn, 2020), the analysis traces specific strategies in the poetic production of political imaginary of a revolutionary quality in the immediate poetic responses to the Second World War and the global economic crisis, with a special emphasis on the formation of the idea of "poetic justice" (Nussbaum, 1997) and the "impossible" (Komelj, 2009) when it comes to imagining the future of overcoming both of the crisis events in which these collections were created.*

Key Words: *Vladimir Nazor, Partisan poetry, Occupy Wall Street Poetry Anthology, Revolution.*

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Introduction: Partisan Art Today

To reflect on Yugoslav Partisan art today, one must be aware of the contemporary capitalist “now” in which the reflection is taking place. At the global level, the moment is marked by growing economic and class inequalities, an ecological threat to the planet, and the dominance of financial elites in creating the future of social, economic, and cultural policies. In the regional context of the former Yugoslavia, it is a time of ongoing transition to capitalism, largely marked by historical revisionism. During the last few decades, as claimed by philosopher Gal Kirn:

‘(t)he academic and political task of historical revisionism consists in erasing all the revolutionary projects spanning from the Jacobin moment to the October revolution [...] including the Yugoslav revolution during World War II and the anti-colonial struggle after WWII. Furthermore, historical revisionism rests on the equation of communism with fascism, which produces an epistemological obstacle to any attempt to think emancipatory political and cultural practices [...]. (Kirn, 2016:p.192)

Although there are various differences in the treatment of anti-fascist cultural heritage in the republics of the former Yugoslavia, the relativisation of anti-fascism by neglecting and destroying anti-fascist heritage is not just an excess of an anonymous acts of vandalism, but a systematic political practice being carried out by the leading political and cultural elites in the region.³ Recent approaches on Partisan culture and art address the status of Partisan art today and argue that it is particularly relevant.⁴ The annulment or, in better cases, the taming of the culture and art of the People's Liberation Struggle (*Narodnooslobodilačka borba*, henceforth NOB) is part of the local perceived problem with anti-fascism,⁵ which is why we should by no means treat Partisan art as a passive object but rather always look for new perspectives when observing it. Therefore, I'm here primarily interested in establishing a dialogue between the moment of the NOB when this art was created and the moment of our capitalist “now”. Or, as stressed by philosopher Rastko Močnik: ‘The Partisan art was produced in a radical and liminal situation and is hence itself radical and liminal. So, if we want to think about it at its own level, we must think radically and assume a liminal perspective’ (Močnik, 2016:p.19).

³ On this topic, see, e.g., Hrženjak, 2002; Lešaja, 2012; Šimunković and Delač, 2013; Kirn, 2019 and 2020.

⁴ Such as those by Miklavž Komelj (2009 and 2016a; 2016b), Miranda Jakiša and Nikica Gilić (2015), Kirn (2016, 2019, 2020), Rastko Močnik (2016), and others.

⁵ For new approaches on this topic, see Duraković and Matošević, 2023.

In this attempt to create a meaningful and purposeful dialogue with Partisan art in our capitalist “now”, I will offer a double reading in which I will parallelly read Partisan poetry—more precisely the collection *Partisan Poems* [Pjesme partizanke] by Vladimir Nator, created and initially published in 1944 during the NOB in which Nator was a participant—and the collection *Occupy Wall Street Poetry Anthology* (henceforth *OWSPA*) from 2011, edited by Stephen Boyer and Filip Marinovich and created under the conditions and within the consequences of the last global economic crisis, also known as the Great Recession. Although the parallel reading of these two literary documents, separated by 67 years of history, may seem a somewhat eccentric analytical gesture considering that there are no direct contacts between them, as well as the fact that in the first case it is a collection by an individual author and in the second case we are dealing with an anthology of several hundred poems by various poets, there are numerous similarities and encounters in terms of the poetic and political imagination that provide arguments for their comparison.⁶ A parallel reading of these two texts and an attempt to establish a dialogue between them follows Kirn’s reflection or, more broadly understood, analytical call ‘[...] for the [Partisan] archive’s de-nationalisation and decolonisation’ and thereby the ‘[...] setting in motion of the emancipatory past as a venue that can open up gaps in the dominant discourse by dispersing the fragments of emancipation in our present’ (Kirn, 2016:p.104).⁷

⁶I’m here taking Nator’s book of poetry as representative (but not privileged) in terms of articulating Partisan imagery, artistic politics, and ethics, while remaining aware of the massive engagement of many poets, both known and anonymous, in the cultural production of the NOB. As claimed by Kirn, ‘The Partisan cultural production existed in all resistance movements across Europe that developed their own cultural apparatus and propaganda sections. However, I would argue that the sheer numbers of artworks and variations of artistic practices in the Yugoslav case are immense. As concerns poetry alone, around 40,000 poetic works were written during the four years of war [...], with Slovenia counting some 12,000 poems and songs! A large majority of these poems and songs were not written by established poets, but by unknown and anonymous Partisans. Anonymous poetry had to do with both the emancipatory character of the new artistic practice and also ran contrary to the preconception of a poet as an individual genius/lighthouse of the nation on the one hand, and as a form of protection to not let oneself be exposed by name (which could endanger one’s own life and the lives of relatives and friends). This cultural phenomenon of the immense production of anonymous poems and songs—singing was a vital bind of Partisan community—can be seen as a part of the movement of the masses entering an artistic-cultural stage of production (socialisation against exceptional individualisation)’ (Kirn, 2020:p.52–53).

⁷In another place, Kirn describes his analytical attempt as one that tries to ‘[...] excavate moments and (art)works from the past that form emancipatory fragments and that can potentially transfer them into the present’ (Kirn, 2020: p.18), inducting the concept of “Partisan counter-archive” as ‘[...] a “construction site,” where semi-forgotten artworks and political acts enter into a more palpable—and, I hope, lasting relationship in and beyond post Yugoslav context’ (ibid.).

Immediate Poetic Responses to Crisis

How, then, to read these two collections in their mutual mirroring? To begin with, it is important to emphasise that both collections, each in their own time, were created as an immediate and direct affective, aesthetic, and political response to their respective crisis, understood here in broad terms.⁸ Neither poetry collection is a subsequent literary reflection of the event, but both were created in parallel with the events they poetically reflect upon and articulate. Years after Nazor's book, a huge amount of Partisan literature, film, and comics was created on the cultural scene about the NOB, a process that lasted as long as the country existed, which is similar to how the last global economic crisis will be reflected in Hollywood films and numerous books published in years to come. In contrast, these two literary documents were created in the very epicentres of the resistance to the crises at the time when they were happening and while the outcomes were still uncertain.

Nazor's collection was created during his participation in the Partisan struggle, which he joined as a poet at the age of 67. I emphasise exactly this "as a poet" because Nazor participated in the NOB not as a soldier, but as a poet, writing poetically inspired motivational speeches for the Partisans, as well as his diary and poems, making literature his tool of resistance. The immediacy of the creation of the poems in Nazor's book is documented by paratextual notes of the date and often the place where each poem was written. These notes point to the immediate reality of the Second World War and the strategic or symbolic importance of certain localities, for example 'In a burning Serbian village near Vrginmost, I. 1943', 'In retreat from Montenegro, spring 1943', 'In the Muslim village Govza, 1943', etc. Most of the poems were written between the years 1942–1944 and the amended fourth edition also includes poems written after the liberation in 1945. The largest number of poems were written in 1943 and most of them have their documentary counterpart in Nazor's diary *With the Partisans (1943–1944)* (S Partizanima 1943–1944), created in the same period. On the other hand, the *OWSPA* was created during the movement's protest activities in Zuccotti Park in New York's financial district from 17 September to 15 November 2011. Both collections also express a special debt to "the people" in their dedications. Nazor's poems are dedicated to the 'Croatian Partisan youth',⁹ and the *OWSPA*, along with highlighting the editorship of Stephen

⁸ The Second World War and the economic crisis of our recent times are, of course, not events at the same social and political level. However, I'm treating them here as "crises" with some structural and political similarities regarding an actantial structure of power, violence, and resistance, especially regarding the literary response to both events.

⁹ The full text of the dedication goes: 'TO THE CROATIAN PARTISAN YOUTH / COURAGEOUS DILIGENT AND WILLING TO MAKE SACRIFICE / WITH THE HAMMER, THE OAR

Boyer and Filip Marinovich and the people of OWS, gives a special thanks to 'the people of Occupy Wall Street and the poets' gathering' (Boyer and Marinovich, 2011:p.1). But even more importantly, both collections were not only an artistic addition to the resistance in crisis events but were co-created parallelly with the events. Namely, the texts of both collections were read publicly during these two historically separate resistances. Likewise, reading poetry as part of the Occupy Wall Street protest activities was a performance of the values that the movement stood for. This performative context of the Occupy Wall Street movement was described by Travis Holoway: 'What occurred looked less like a poetry reading and more like a democratic Athenian assembly. As an art form, the poetry assembly did not simply demand for democracy. It performed it' (Holoway 2011). Or, as the writer Aaron Gell (2011) points out, 'If you really want to understand Occupy Wall Street, you have to talk to the poets.' By analogy we could say that if you really want to understand the NOB, you must read Partisan poetry.

And it is the poetry in both cases that instructively points to the historical connection with revolution. Namely, as author Jasper Bernes claims, 'Poetry is the literary mode most practically suited to revolution, the literary practice that coincides most clearly with the concerted activity of revolutionaries in the throes of crisis. Resistance, insurgency, and revolution produce their novels after the fact but their poetry, often, right away' (Bernes, 2022:p.240).

As Bernes further explains, poetry's verbal compression

'[...] not only allows for concentrated activity fit to the militant's busy calendar of bombings and interminable meetings, but generates a literary object easily circulated and reproduced within revolutionary milieus. Temporal compression is the innate condition of revolution and moments of social mobilisation broadly. The revolution is, classically, a moment of accelerated, compressed historical change.' (ibid.)

Discussion: Poetic Imagery of the Political

Apart from the described context in which both collections were created as a direct affective and aesthetic response to crisis, both collections contain a common network of poetic motifs in their treatment of the political. To begin with, both of these poetry collections include the search for and imagine of poetic justice as

THE SWORD, THE PEN / BENDING FOR JUSTICE AND FREEDOM / THESE FLOWERS
AND THORNS / GROWN FROM THE BLOOD, SWEAT, AND TEARS / ON THE LAND
OF THE TORTURED HOMELAND / DEDICATED / V.N.' (Nazor, 1945:p.5).

a central and prominent motif. This is created through the affectual shaping of anger, frustration, and revenge through imagining an alternative reality and future, together with the affectual shaping of love, empathy, compassion, solidarity, and togetherness against the cruelty of fascist and capitalist violence. I use the concept of “poetic justice” here leaning on the concept developed by Martha Nussbaum in which she, relying on Walt Whitman, describes the concept as the ‘poet’s democratizing mission.’ It is a

‘[...] mission of imagination, inclusion, sympathy, and voice. The poet is the instrument through which the “long dumb voices” of the excluded come forth from their veils and into the light. To attend to the way things are with the excluded and the despised as well as the powerful, to insist on participating oneself, through sympathy, in the degradation of the degraded, to accept only what others can have on the same terms, to give voice to the pain of the excluded, the intimidation of the harassed [...]’ (Nussbaum, 1997:p.119)

In view of “poetic justice” thus defined, we can reflect on Nazor’s poem “Orthodox Mother” (*Majko pravoslavna*). This poem, placed and dated ‘In a burning Serbian village near Vrginmost, I. 1943’, builds solidarity and, most of all, compassion with the suffering of the unnamed Orthodox mother who has lost everything: her home, her children, and her friends:

‘Have you wept over the fate of your comrade, / O beloved comrade! / They caught him by betrayal, beat him like a dog, / Tortured him, bound him, threw him into prison. / And he, whose heart was drawn to perform difficult and glorious deeds, / Has returned crippled, to die in your arms, / Orthodox woman. // O have you wept over that terrible pit, / O cursed pit! / Where with their throats cut, your children now lie / Beside their grandmother, and where they call their mother, crying with her; / You are silent. The seal of silence, misery, has struck your mouth, / Orthodox mother.’ (ibid.:p.12)¹⁰

The apostrophised mother from the poem is voiceless in her pain over the atrocities she witnesses but the lyrical subject is encouraging her to not stay silent, and it is doing so by articulating the voice of her pain and thus accomplishing the already mentioned “democratic mission” of the imagination, inclusion, sympathy, and voice, as stressed by Nussbaum. The Orthodox mother’s speechless voice of pain thus gains its presence through the lyrical subject, affectively activated by compassion and solidarity:

¹⁰ All translations from Nazor’s poetry are mine.

‘You are fading, thinning and holding back, but do not stifle your pain, / Your too deep pain! / Let your sorrow echo throughout the land / And may it last for centuries. Let them hear what now / Your longing, your old, ancient sorrow, has turned into. / – You are silent. You are fading. And the halo of martyrdom already crowns you, / Orthodox Mother.’ (Nazor, 1945:p.12)

In terms of articulating poetic justice with the voice of resistance, the poems of both collections have a clear target: in Nazor’s book it is the fascists, Nazis, domestic traitors, and the bourgeois, while in the *OWSPA* it is the banks, bankers, rich people, and the economic-political establishment. The motives behind the inhuman behaviour of the fascists as well as the motivating greed of the banks are drawn through the specific moral and affective perspective of both collections, which use different poetic, political, and philosophical references through which the struggle for justice acquires broader humanistic connotations: from biblical motifs (‘Easter Bells’ [*Uskrsna zvona*]), the classical period of Greek literature to the tradition of peasant revolts (‘Gubec’s Axe’ [*Gupčeva sjekira*]), political rebellions in the context of modern history (‘Radić’s Message’ [*Radićeva poruka*]), poets of the local tradition who sang about freedom and other. In *OWSPA* those are proletarian rebellions in America, beat culture and civil right movements, Walt Whitman’s poetry to name just a few of the many intertextual references. In this sense, the attitude towards tradition in both collections is extremely inclusive, and revolutionary events are seen as part of the general human struggle for justice and freedom which creates a kind of “revolutionary pantheism”, to use the formulation of literary historian Stanley G. Eskin (1968).¹¹

Thus, in both collections, justice is sung as something that is awaited, that is demanded and also ultimately created and performed by the poem itself. Thus, for example, in Nazor’s poem ‘Dragon in the Bunker’ (*Zmaj u bunkeru*), written ‘In Gračanica on Rama, III. 1943’, the lyrical subject directly addresses the enemy, who is called a ‘dragon’ and a ‘pagan reptile’. This enemy performs violence against the population, is cruel to the most vulnerable, which, in the testimony of the unnamed lyrical subject, who is not distant from the events it sings about, produces strong effects of defiance, revenge, and defence in an ardent desire for justice and freedom:

¹¹ Or as claimed by poet and art historian Miklavž Komelj regarding Slovene Partisan poetry and its relation to the tradition: ‘The novelty of partisan poetry did not occur independently of the literary tradition, but in establishing a new relationship to it. The break was often most clearly formulated precisely through the appropriation and transformation of texts canonized by the (national) tradition. The break with the past was at the same time its “new use”’ (Komelj, 2009:p.287).

'I will chase you from the hole, you pagan reptile! In vain you dug a pit, and fenced it with stones, and fenced it with wire—of iron ties—and defended it through the shaft with a machine gun. // [...] Dragons with mouths full of iron and fire, what are you going to do? Where did it come from, to burn our villages, to slaughter our children? // My scissors tremble, my bombs blink with the desire to punish. If I didn't have them, I would tear the wire with my teeth, and I would tear down the fence barefoot and break your skull with my bare hands.' (Nazor, 1945:p.19)

Defending against the enemy as well as seeking retaliation, which are expressed in the conditional in the verses of the first two stanzas, is abruptly interrupted in the third stanza by a direct battle cry that positions the poem in the present moment that literally explodes onomatopoeically: 'Quiet!...Forward! // Now! // Flash...Burst!... // You spit fire at me; but I am a knight of two proud goddesses: Justice and Freedom' (ibid.).

The conflict between the strong physical force of the enemy on the one hand and the lyrical subject's physical weakness coupled with a dedication to the ideals of justice and freedom takes place in the poetic "now". In this battle, expressed in the present tense, the victory is ultimately won by the lyrical subject, whose dedication to the ideals of justice and freedom—paradoxically—makes it invulnerable. To quote the poem:

'You thrust a rock into me, sharp as a spear; you drive a tooth into me, sharp as a sword, but I am a supporter of a holy Idea: I am invulnerable, bulletproof, like the paladin Rolando Peleus's son once was.' (ibid.:p.20)

After this short reflection on invulnerability, additionally supported by the themes of ancient mythology, the poem anchors us again in the present of the struggle itself and the final victory:

'My bomb is flying. / It hit... / It burst... / The air breaks. The net of wires is broken. The fence is crumbling. Everything jumped into the air: it disappeared. // The only thing, in front of my feet, barely moving, twitching – the nasty dragon's tail. (ibid.)

The poetic vision of victory and justice is realised with "impossible" tools: dedication to the ideals and imagery of the final victory despite the "objective" weakness. Early mentioned poet and art historian Komelj detected that imagining the "impossible" was an important component of Partisan art. As claimed by Komelj, [...] the link between the revolutionary movement and artistic creation was in this context not limited to the cultural field; it consisted in the very process

of creating new revolutionary subjectivity by confronting with the impossible' (Komelj, 2016b:p.90). He observed the "impossible" in various aspects of Partisan art and examined 'the political nature of the very emergence of art in what could be seen as an impossible situation' (ibid.:91), for example the Partisan staging of Molière with Baroque costumes made of parachute silk (ibid.). Here, I am primarily interested in the "impossible" in the political imagination of the text itself and the revolutionary potential of poetry with political effects.¹²

In the *OWSPA*, published 67 years later, the poem "The World Wave" by James Smith articulates a search for justice within the global financial crisis in similar poetic fashion, directly addressing the rich in the form of a threat:

'Listen, rich man / Your pockets got half of everything / If you billionaires won't share the wealth, / and the things we need / Someone's gonna bleed. // Rich man, you got your armies / goin' around the world / terrorizin' folk. That's gonna end. / Hey, we got our army, too. / 25 million jobless comin' unglued.' (*OWSPA*, 2011:p.167)¹³

The lyrical subject is positioned within these 25 million unemployed on whose behalf the song was being recited. The ultimate goal is justice, more important than debt repayment regarding the credit crisis in which poem is written: 'Lots of us want justice even more than livin'. (ibid.)

The motif of the "impossible", which is dominant in both collections, is most frequent in imagining the future. For Nator, it is the future of freedom and the final victory over fascism despite all obstacles. Thus, for example, in the poem "Conversation with the Dead" (*Razgovor s mrtvima*) (dated I. 1943, Ostrožac, Castle at Uni. Room of Old Portraits), the lyrical subject connects the historical oppression of feudalism with the breakthrough events happening in the poetic present. The poem is conceived as a "conversation with the dead", i.e. with the lords the lyrical subject is looking at in the pictures in the castle, through which a stench spreads. The stench is later in the poem described as the smell of wood, resin, bark, moss, mud, sweat, horse dung, and blood (Nator, 1945:p.13–15) and it is carried by the oppressed who will conquer the castle. In such a context, the lyrical subject imagines a future that brings revolutionary change and liberation from all "historical" oppressions:

¹² See also Komelj, 2009:p.288.

¹³ In my text (Kolanović, 2025), I offer a more focused and detailed analysis of the *Occupy Wall Street Poetry Anthology* within the topic of "semicapitalism" in the context of the (mis)use of language in contemporary financial capitalism.

'Let it! / In front of everyone I will wield an axe / and strike. I will break the alcoves / in which you lazed; baroque stoves, by which you warmed / the cold blood that crawled in your veins; / and those antique tables / in which you sat and ruled, / and the peasant knelt before them. / I will open all the windows / so that the Dawn and the Sun can enter that tomb, / I will shatter the frames / of those pictures of yours... / Disappear / in the light of day that dawns behind the mountain, / you shadows from the past! / - In his land, with the blisters of his hands, / on the ruins of the count's court, / Barbarian will build a new home.' (ibid.: p.15–16)

Dated 1943, this poem observes the course of history from the perspective of the historical "now" and intervenes in that course with a revolutionary poetic gesture of radical rupture,¹⁴ whereby the gesture of resistance and the building of a new course is added to the legacy of the barbarians, i.e. those who are oppressed and have been traditionally viewed as barbarians.

In the *OWSPA*, there are also frequent themes of imagining the future, one that is not tailored according to the standards of the economic establishment, which, as such, implies economic growth. It is also not a hopeless future in the shackles of credit. The imagined future is more just and free but requires a revolution and also the arrival of new barbarians as seen in, for example, the poem "Invitation to Walt (for Occupy Wall Street)"¹⁵ by Danny Shot:

'Yet, we've come so far in so many ways / call it evolutionary progress if you will / though there's so much work left undone / We need a revolutionary spirit to unfold // It's time for us to dream big again / of democratic vistas and barbaric yawps / of space travel and scientific discovery / where we protect our glorious habitat // and build structures worthy of our dreams. / Imagine an America based on empathy and equality / in which we lend a hand to those in need / unembarrassed to embrace our ideals.' (*OWSPA*, 2011:p.26)

In the imagination of such a utopian and prosperous future of the United States of America, a welfare state appears with the pillars of healthcare, education, fair working conditions, and greater civil rights:

'We need to recognize healthcare / and education as basic human rights / we need to restore the dignity of work, / as well as the dignity of leisure from work. // [...] We need to take back our democracy, from banks too big to fail, / masters

¹⁴ On Partisan ruptures, see Kim, 2019.

¹⁵ Walt in this poem is, of course, Walt Whitman and the poet is here making intertextual dialogue with his poem "Song of Myself".

of Wall Street, insurance deniers, education profiteers, / from closet racists, and self-appointed homophobes, / the unholy trinity of greed, corruption and cruelty.' (ibid.:p.25)

Both poetry collections thus indicate the specific temporality of the revolutionary moment that Kirn describes in the context of the NOB, in reference to Slavoj Žižek, as a future that '[...] already existed, and thus performs the transformation before it takes place in reality' (Kirn, 2016:p.111).¹⁶ Or, as Močnik points out with regard to Partisan culture and art, '[...] the cultural action was but a forerunner of the armed struggle, and it already anticipated its results' (Močnik, 2016:p.25). This specific temporal quality of Partisan poetry can be registered in Nazor's poem "Joy" (*Radost*). In the paratextual note, its creation is dated 1918, but Nazor was reciting it 'at the ceremony in Otočec, September 3, 1943.' It is a poem about joy and victory that Nazor publicly recited in the midst of the Second World War. In the poem all the victims, sufferings, and sacrifices are articulated as being in the past, which opens the way for a glorious future, euphorically proclaimed by the lyrical subject:

'O children of our land! – You, warmed by the sun; / You, whom darkness already seizes; you, whom the grave already hides, / Hear me, hear! – Dark, / Open your house and rise from the grave. / - I burn like a pyre on the threshold of a new age / And I bring you glorious news. // 1. Hear me, hear, children of our land! – You are / Still full of darkness; and now you have not carried / the dead man from the house of yours. / But fear not! He is a hundred times dead, - he will not / Like a ghost walk under our roof / And follow us; // For now we will pass to the other side of the water, / And destroy all the bridges and ships behind us, / Burn all the ships; / From the dark dock we will climb to the heights / And we will pitch a white tent under the sun, / Which cannot set. // While at the bottom of the souls of men the ancient frost and ice dry, / My spirit will rise like a wave today, / And my throat will swell; / And I will sing, while the days fade grey, / The pean of our happiness. – All dead and living, / Oh hear, hear, now I am! (Nazor, 1945:p.48–49)

Such a glorious future was created in the poetic "now" of the poem itself. In this "now", it is important to point out, the themes of solidarity, togetherness, equality,

¹⁶ As further explained by Kirn: 'Žižek takes this temporality from Lacan and Badiou, who connect it to *futur antérieur*. It is not enough for a revolutionary event like the Partisan struggle to simply take place: in order for it to take hold it needs to be named and retroactively acted upon' (ibid.). Komelj also reflects on this issue, stressing that '[p]artisan art, with its realizations, which were constantly reflected in the partisan movement in relation to the not-yet-realized, opened up space for the not-yet-existing' (Komelj, 2009:p.7).

and reconciliation stand out in particular as a pledge for that better future. Within Nazor's *Partisan Poems*, these are affective themes for creating Yugoslav unity, as, for example, in the poem "Raft on the Drina" (*Splav na Drini*, dated IV., 1943 in Bosnia), in which Dalmatians are building a raft near the Drina and resist 'ancient brotherly hatred' (ibid.:p.31). The song within this poem itself plays a particularly important role in creating that community. In the poem, the image of the Dalmatians building a raft in the conditions of a difficult battle 'under the rain of bullets, / in the thunder of guns' (ibid.) are permeated with the lines of an old Croatian song in dialect: 'Marijan, Marijan, why don't you fly your flag, our flag Croatian?' (*Marjane, Marjane, / ča barjak ne viješ, / naš barjak brvacki?*) (ibid.:p.32), which, at the end, merges with the song of the dead fighters, drowned near Foča, and its verses are transformed into: 'O Fočo! O Fočo! / why don't you fly your flag, / a Partisan flag?' (*O Fočo! O Fočo / što barjak ne viješ, / barjak partizanski?*) (ibid.). What we are witnessing in the poem is the reworking of tradition in the poem itself in which a Croatian song gains a new meaning during the Partisan struggle, becoming a part of the larger community that is surpassing not just national borders but the borders between the living and the dead. Another example for a similar strategy can be found in the poem "On Vučevo" (*Na Vučevu*, dated 'during the days of the withdrawal from Montenegro, VI., 1943'), in which the lyrical subject emphasizes song as an element of cohesion amidst the different ethnicities involved in the common struggle:

'[...] But a Slavonian song, and the one from Split, / And from Banija, and from Bosnia, and who knows / Whose and from where, but ours, it screams / With a mountain full of threats and dangers; / From the soul of the whole nation rises / A cry of defiance and faith. / Forward! Onward! / All roads are now open, / There are no dead people. - / And life reigns.' (ibid.:38)

Togetherness thus overcomes individualism and particular interests and represents strength in resistance. The most famous slogan of the Occupy Wall Street movement, "We are the 99%", best sums up the importance of togetherness and the solidarity of the economically oppressed. As claimed by Eskin:

'The revolutionary motifs in twentieth-century poetry in part are variations on nineteenth-century antecedents, and in part reflect new feelings and situations. The poetry of left-wing political commitment is less ethereal than it had been, more narrowly urgent, set against a bleaker background of capitalist oppression and Fascist brutality, calling not so much for a soaring of the individual spirit as for solidarity with a cause.' (Eskin, 1968:p.203)

Those qualities are all traced in the examples of these two poetry collections.

Towards a Conclusion: Marginal Status Featuring Political Potential

In this text, I have tried to point to the poetic strategies for articulating revolutionary imagery in Partisan poetry in its analytical dialogue with the protest poetry in the context of global capitalism. The analysis of the two poetry collections encompasses the strategies of poetic production within a political imaginary of a revolutionary quality in the immediate poetic response to the Second World War and the global economic crisis in which the aforementioned collections were created.

Finally, it is important to point out that both texts also have a marginal status in their national cultures in contemporary times. Although Nator occupies an important place in Croatian culture,¹⁷ his Partisan literary works are on the margins of academic study. Moreover, Nator's involvement in the Partisans is often disputed, such as the well-known spin that he was forced to join the Partisans, even though it is a rumour that began to circulate during the Second World War in the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), a fascist puppet state, and one that Nator himself unequivocally denied in his diary from those years (Nator, 1982:p.37).¹⁸ On the other side, the *OWSPA*, although reflected in the media during the protests, has remained unexplored in scholarly reflections in US academia.¹⁹

With this text, I outlined the main coordinates of the context as well as the networks of common motifs of these two collections, which provide arguments for the denationalisation, decolonisation, and internationalisation of Partisan art in a purposeful and even necessary dialogue within our capitalist "now". Both collections can be read as important texts of anti-fascist and anti-capitalist literary pedagogy in their universality of ideals of freedom, justice, solidarity, compassion, brotherhood, and equality, as well as unequivocal resistance to injustice and oppression. Because of these qualities, Partisan poetry might be closer to us today than we think. Ultimately, its political imagination was certified in the victory over fascism in the Second World War. Imagining a fairer world within the unjust conditions of financial capitalism, as done by the poets gathered together in the

¹⁷ For example, the main Croatian state award for the best achievements in the field of culture and art bears his name.

¹⁸ Furthermore, there was a discussion as to whether Nator wrote a poem dedicated to the notorious leader of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), Ante Pavelić, which has been disapproved through textual analysis done by researchers from Dubravko Jelčić to Zoran Kravar (cf. Kravar, 2008). More on these controversies in reception of Nator in Croatian culture see Protrka-Štimec, 2019:p.80-90.

¹⁹ Admittedly, there are many articles about the Occupy Wall Street movement itself, but surprisingly little about this poetry collection in US academia.

OWSPA, is not a reflection of reality, or at least not yet. As Bernes claims: 'Poetry makes nothing happen, as we all know, except when it does' (Bernes, 2022:p.251).

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PJESME PARTIZANKE VLADIMIRA NAZORA: ČITANJE IZ KAPITALISTIČKE SADAŠNJOSTI

Rezime

Rad donosi uporednu analizu pjesničke zbirke *Pjesme partizanke* hrvatskog pjesnika Vladimira Nazora, nastale i objavljene tokom Narodnooslobodi-

lačke borbe 1944, te američke pjesničke antologije pokreta *Occupy Wall Street Poetry Anthology* (Boyer i Marinovich, ur. 2011), nastale u kontekstu protesta vezanih za zadnju veliku ekonomsku krizu iz 2008. poznatu i kao *velika recesija*. U uporednom čitanju ove dvije pjesničke zbirke problemski fokus stavljen je na promišljanje strukturnog i političkog odnosa poezije i revolucionarnog imaginarija na tragu novijih književnoteorijskih istraživanja (Bernes, 2022; Komelj, 2009, Kirn, 2020 i dr.), s posebnim naglaskom na status partizanske umjetnosti u vremenu postsocijalizma, te njene aktuelizacije u kontekstu globalnog kapitalizma. Sama analiza ove dvije pjesničke zbirke obuhvata strategije pjesničke proizvodnje političkog imaginarija revolucionarne kvalitete u neposrednom pjesničkom odgovoru na Drugi svjetski rat i ekonomsku krizu s posebnim naglaskom na oblikovanje ideja *pjesničke pravde* (Nussbaum, 1997) i *nemogućeg* (Komelj, 2009), kada je u pitanju zamišljanje budućnosti u nadilaženju oba krizna društvena događaja u kojima nastaju spomenute zbirke.

► **Ključne riječi:** Vladimir Nazon, partizanska poezija, pjesnička antologija *Occupy Wall Street*, revolucija.

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