


This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.
Ovaj rad dostupan je za upotrebu pod međunarodnom licencom Creative Commons Attribution 4.0.



<https://doi.org/10.31820/f.36.1.12>

Ivana Odža

ROSARY AROUND THE NECK – REFLECTION OF THE CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW IN CONTEMPORARY CROATIAN CHILDREN’S WAR PROSE¹

dr. sc. Ivana Odža, Sveučilište u Splitu, Filozofski fakultet
iodza@ffst.hr  orcid.org/0000-0002-5699-0563

pregledni rad

UDK 821.163.42.09-93

rukopis primljen: 12. prosinca 2023; prihvaćen za tisak: 20. lipnja 2024.

This paper aims to observe how the Christian worldview is manifested in contemporary Croatian war prose for children and youth [It refers to children’s prose focused on the Homeland War (1991–1995)]. The analysis of selected texts shows that the Christian worldview is reflected through many traditional Christian motifs, particularly the rosary motif, in the Christian tradition and the Christian message. The analysed corpus aims to confirm Christian literary continuity in Croatian children’s literature, despite the long-term marginalisation of Christian literary themes.

Keywords: *children literature; children’s war prose; Christian worldview; Homeland War in Croatia; youth literature*

¹ The paper was translated into English by Ana Mršić Zdilar.

1. Introduction

Homeland War, as an important national topic, is reflected in Croatian children's prose. The consequences of the traumatic events² which particularly affected vulnerable groups (children) revitalised the need for Christian literary expression. The long-term marginalisation of Christian motifs in the literary and cultural space, and their "exclusion from the social public arena",³ especially the one intended for children,⁴ pointed to their resilience and immanence in Croatian culture (cf. Hranjec 2003). Stjepan Hranjec (2009: 400) indicated the marginalisation of children's Christian-themed literature in the example of one of the analysed novels – Krilić's *Krik* (Eng. *Scream*).

For the purpose of this paper, the concept of contemporary Croatian war prose for children and youth refers to the period from the independence of the Republic of Croatia in 1991. The establishment of an independent state focused the interest of certain authors on the long-disputed subject of identity significance, such as the motif of Christianity, which is particularly noticeable in children's war prose. The paper is divided into two parts. The first part refers to theoretical concepts about Croatian children's war literature and to the cultural and historical context of the attitude towards Christian themes in children's literature, which aims to point out the marginalisation, as well as the persistence of children's literature with a Christian message. The second part, which is based on the content analysis method, observes how Christianity is manifested in the examples of Croatian children's literary prose and, to a lesser extent, war-themed prose for young people.

2. Children's war prose – Christian continuity of Croatian children's literature

Dubravka Zima (2001) analysed the poetic peculiarities of children's war literature, including books on World War II and the Homeland War. She concluded that Croatian children's literature is dominated by two

² Many texts have been written about the consequences of war trauma on the lives of children, as well as their reflection in children's literature, for instance: Hranjec (1998), Pilaš (1998).

³ Lončarević (2017) provides a series of arguments to support his thesis on the 50-year-long exclusion of Christian literature.

⁴ For more information see Majhut (2022).

narrative approaches to war themes: the first observes the war as a mediator in the main character's – child's – coming of age; war is depicted from the child's point of view, so the focus is on the child's inner world. The second approach is directed towards the external manifestation of war, which partially coincides with the way adults present war to children or how children themselves, as active participants, perceive it. Within such a model, children become active participants in war events – the focus is on activities, not on characters' internal experiences. Zima referred to these two conflicting models as: "war as a rite of passage" and "war as an adventure". These two approaches are often intertwined; the absolute autonomy of either approach within a particular literary work is rare. According to the structure of the work and the attitude of the protagonist towards the war, Dubravka Težak distinguishes three types of works: documentary works such as, for example, diary prose focussed on the personal experience of the literary subject who is passive in the war process, adventure works which have an active literary subject and fantasy or fairy-tale works (cf. Težak 1997).

Zima (2001: 83) believes that the reason for the frequent evasion of war themes in children's literature and the lack of respective research interest is the general lack of interest in children's literature and its long-term marginalisation, the sensitivity of the topic itself (children's war tragedy), but also ideological reasons which are almost indispensable in any war-themed text. Within Croatian children's literature, there are several approaches to Christian themes as summarised below:

- (1) traditional approach – moralising-didactic literature in the first children's magazines;
- (2) Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić and Jagoda Truhelka as an original authorial contribution to Christian topics;
- (3) evasion/denial of Christian topics during socialism;
- (4) pluralism of contemporary approaches (cf. Vidović Schreiber, Odža 2023: 183).

Such classification indicates Christian literary continuity in Croatian children's literature, despite the long-term marginalisation of Christian literary themes. The analysed corpus is part of the 4th approach listed above, which will be analysed in the following section.

3. Reflection of the Christian worldview in Croatian children's war prose

The analysis encompassed works of different genres which are related by the determinant of narrative prose – predominantly lengthy tales or children's novels and novels for young people. The works, dating from the contemporary period, address the Homeland War, which means they were created after 1995 or during the war. Eight contemporary Homeland War-themed prose works for children were analysed to show that the Christian worldview is a perpetual element thereof.

The book *Marijina tajna* (Eng. *Mary's Secret*) by Nada Iveljić was written immediately after the war (1995) as a vivid testimony of the war, without a detached perspective. The protagonist is a little girl Marija who spends her days as a refugee in a tourist resort. Dislocated from her homeland, Marija is accepted by her peers, despite occasional minor disagreements. This fortunate circumstance, however, does not change the tragedy of war trauma which is permanently imprinted on the girl. For this reason, Marija seeks the company of those who can share her grief. One of them is grandmother Ana, a refugee from the Sinj hinterland accompanied by her goats and a dog⁵, who tries to revive the space of her former everyday life in the same space as Marija. In addition to their former lives, their current life runs its usual course – Marija is faced with the jealousy of the little girl Doris who cannot fully understand her refugee position but is, essentially, a good person who wants to overcome her jealousy and strengthen her friendship with Marija. The internal change within Doris recalls the internal conversion beseeched by Christ during his homilies:

“She has changed. She has changed for the better. The proof of this is not only in the sparkle in her eyes but the fact that this new Doris thinks more of the joy she will *give* than the joy she will *receive*.” (Iveljić 1995a: 63).

⁵ Animals are frequent companions of children's characters. This connection stems from an immanent human connection with nature. Animals in war-themed novels can be understood as a symbolic substitute for the lack of human empathy, which is particularly evident in wartime. In this context, the animal has a better understanding of children's (human) tragedy than humans. With the help of the animal, tragedy turns into an adventure.

The Christian worldview in this novel is expressed:

(1) through the Christian message that grandmother Ana sparks in Marija when she says that it is necessary to “open our eyes to good” (Iveljić 1995a: 37). The significance of faith and trust in the future (cf. Iveljić 1995a: 66) is mentioned in several places throughout the book:

“Tell them that grandmother is a good teacher”, she told the principal. “She teaches the subject of Wisdom. You know what she says and what I like to hear from her? *Evil will be depleted, evil cannot last*; (Iveljić 1995a: 39) ... my hope of returning does not depend on something outside of me, as much as this subject is dear to me, but the hope lies within me...” (Iveljić 1995a: 77–78).

(2) Through the motif of Christian tradition, specifically the motif of St. George – the iconography of the saint who defeated the dragon (“You have finally come to love the sea but you are turning your back on the mountain. You don’t even want to look at me, St. George, as I bring you joy. Turn around, little girl, and look where I’m pointing with my sword” (Iveljić 1995a: 89)). In the next chapters, St. George is mentioned several times, and at the very end he points the way with his sword (Iveljić 1995a: 91). St. George thus becomes a connective tissue between the geographical area where the refugees are settled (Makarska Littoral) and the Croatian tradition.

“She remembered that she had dreamed of St. George before the dawn. From her very first days there, she had been afraid of the towering Biokovo and one of its peaks called St. George. During thunders, she imagined that St. George⁶ was knocking down rocks while riding across the mountain. Her mother told her that St. Elijah caused thunder by riding a heavenly chariot. But St. Elijah remained in Slavonija to ride his chariot across the sky. Here St. George does not ride a chariot but a horse, as all images and statues portray him as a horseman who defeated the dragon. – It’s strange – Marija thought to herself – in tonight’s dream I wasn’t afraid of St. George. It seemed to me that I was sitting right in this place as he was saying,

⁶ According to Marko Dragić (2013: 269), St. George is one of the most venerated saints in Christianity. His cult is extremely widespread in Croatian cultural heritage.

standing behind me from afar: The sea is beautiful, and God gave it to you to enjoy it. You may look at it, my child, but don't forget to look back at the mountain as well" (Iveljić 1995a: 52).

In Croatian tradition, *Angelus* announced the beginning/end of daily activities and invited people to a prayer: "And when *Angelus* rang from the bell tower, she abruptly got up. She set out for the pine grove to find grandmother Ana" (Iveljić 1995a: 68).

(3) Through the motif of a rosary as a fundamental tool in prayer and an inseparable part of the tradition of older generations with the potential of passing it onto the younger generations:

"The old woman did not pray the Rosary, at least not in front of her, but in the evening when the bell rang, she would make the sign of the cross with such humble devotion that she felt a deep presence of the One glorified by the bell chimes. And when she mentioned to her that she was afraid of the big mountain and that she was imagining a horseman on the top of Biokovo who was pouring lightning from above, grandmother would say: 'Don't be afraid. It's good to have the mountain and St. George close by. They are a good defence against those who are attacking us from the other side'" (Iveljić 1995a: 54).

There is frequently a direct allusion to Christianity by invoking God or mentioning the motif of a rosary. Elderly members of the community always keep and pass on faith, but not publicly, or intrusively; their teaching is perceived as a natural process. Therefore, grandmother Ana invokes God as she embraces the grieving girl: "Lord", she prays to herself, "This child is at the end of her ropes. Please help her and let her mother bring good news. Give her back her father, because it would bring her back to life" (Iveljić 1995a: 67).

In the lengthy fantasy tale by the same author, *Čuvarice novih krovova* (Eng. *The Guardians of New Rooftops*, 1995), the protagonists are attic fairies. They live in the attics, without interfering with human lives too much. The war forces them to intervene in human life with good deeds, as instructed by the head fairy named Mudra (Eng. *Wise*). Although they do not live as humans and their basic physical characteristics include fluidity, youth, and beauty, their names echo various types of human traits.

One is Sviračica (Eng. *Musician*), the other is Tuga (Eng. *Sorrow*), followed by Grofica (Eng. *Countess*) who is preoccupied with her lavish past life in the castle, then Dašak (Eng. *Breath*), Kao Dijete (Eng. *Childlike*), Svilena (Eng. *Silk*), Biserka (Eng. *Pearl*), etc. Fairies have human characteristics, but they do not have the immortal human soul. They are a common motif of Slavic/Croatian traditions, so Nada Iveljić based her fantasy novel on the elements of folk tradition. The fairies are deprived of their peaceful life as they are forced to leave the attic, so they move into a demolished church, reassemble a beautiful, dismembered statue of St. Joseph using mistletoe⁷ and follow the guidelines of Mudra: “We must do good and prevent evil with good deeds”. Their mission is to do small good deeds despite the dominance of evil, which reflects the Christian worldview through the Christian message of the necessity to counteract evil with goodness. In addition to good deeds, optimism is also generated by prayer empowered by the pastor who, expressing gratitude for his life, rebuilds the destroyed church devoted to the patron saint St. Joseph. Church wedding ceremonies in which Sviračica happily participates testify to the return of life to the restored city (an allusion to the baroque castle, probably Eltz in Vukovar, but generally to Vukovar as a *baroque city*). The fairies became guardians of new rooftops, rejoicing in human joys such as the birth of a child who, after the end of the war, appears as a “symbol of peace, love and family happiness”. The basic message is the message of hope and optimism, because war, even though it is perceived as the epitome of the worst evil, can have a positive side:

“The war changed everything. Both her stepsisters and she are no longer what they used to be. Neither are people. The war made them even more resilient and appreciative of peace and love as fundamental determinants of survival” (Iveljić 1995b: 114).

Nada Iveljić applied a similar approach in her short story *Božićna priča* (Eng. *Christmas Tale*) where the destroyed church is rebuilt with help from the animals. There is an underlying message of hope here as well – evil is transient, good has greater power and is a certified winner.

⁷ The parish of St. Joseph the Worker is a parish in Borovo Naselje, one of the topoi of the Vukovar tragedy.

The basic narrative plot of the novel *Bijeg u košari* (Eng. *Escape in the Basket*) by Maja Gluščević is based on the poetic matrix of “war as an adventure”. Forced to fight for her bare life, a grandmother places her grandson, a six-year-old boy Jerko, in a basket on her donkey’s back, and he embarks on an unknown war adventure which he miraculously survives. A miracle is a way of Christ’s public manifestation – believing in a miracle is a true test of faith. Considering Jerko’s story, given his age and passivity, it could only have been a miracle, as highlighted by Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić in her story *Bratac Jaglenac i sestrice Rutvica* (Eng. *Brother Jaglenac and Sister Rutvica*). The literary motif of a helpless child becomes a true indicator of untarnished, unburdened and genuine faith resulting in a miracle. The Christian worldview in this novel is manifested in several recognisable aspects of Christian provenance:

(1) The Christian message about the importance of forgiveness (and one of Christ’s fundamental commandments of love, which implies the love for one’s enemy): a grandmother, a representative of the older generation who passes on experience, prays for “villains” to regain their peace (Gluščević 2009: 26);

(2) Prayer as a recurring natural part of everyday life and trust in God (grandmother perseveres in prayer, it is an integral part of her life (Gluščević 2009: 28–29). It is precisely because of this trust that she places Jerko in a basket believing/hoping/trusting God that the journey will have a happy outcome;

(3) The motif of a rosary; grandmother prays the Rosary, and the boy is saved by the man wearing a rosary around his neck:

“He immediately recognised a friendly-looking soldier in this kind giant from the rosary with the glistening cross hanging from his neck, the same brown rosary his grandmother would pick between her fingers when she sat by his bedside in the evening” (Gluščević 2009: 79).

Christianity is, therefore, a tradition passed down from generation to generation, adopted naturally, as part of life.

(4) The Christian message about the importance of hope and faith is present in the paremiological corpus, which is traditionally passed on by the older generations (“an elderly man with a moustache”) to the younger generations: “But remember this: every force eventually comes to an end!” (Gluščević 2009: 82);

(5) The motif of the nativity scene (Gluščević 2009: 94) in exile and Christmas is presented as a holiday of hope.

(6) The enemy is compared to the biblical symbol of evil, a fire-breathing dragon that is increasingly losing its strength, which symbolises the end of the war (Gluščević 2009: 98).

(7) The ending of the novel has Christian undertones:

“Later, Dad glued the plaster donkey together, and Jerko carefully laid it in a box and covered it with straw. – It can stay there until Christmas – he said. – And then it will again stand under the tree in the illuminated nativity scene in our new house with a large balcony” (Gluščević 2009: 110).

The boy Jerko lives with his grandmother because his parents work abroad to earn enough money to build a new house. House is a physical symbol of home, family communion, self-deprivation, and sacrifice for the common good.

Miro Gavran’s novel *Kako smo lomili noge* (Eng. *How We Broke Our Legs*), follows a double plot divided into three parts; the coming of age of the main character Filip in the 1960s and the coming of age of the second generation, his son Luka in the 1990s. Both parts function as novels within a novel – the novels are written by the main characters in 1971 and 1991 – two very important years in Croatian history – the year of the political movement the Croatian Spring and the year of the beginning of the Homeland War. The third part is entitled *War in My Homeland Croatia*, and it is also formed as a literary essay on the children of war written by Luka. The novel is, therefore, written from the child’s perspective, which makes it part of the children’s literature. The novel includes several cultural details of the Slavonian region where the plot takes place, as well as distinctive ideological topoi of the time (for example, a policeman’s reaction to a person who bought jeans in Italy, which is considered a *capitalist* product) (cf. Gavran 2003: 28), which approximates it to the genre of the novel for young people. The boy comes from a family that did not support the ruling regime (as evident from the critique of Tito during a spontaneous family conversation (cf. Gavran 2003: 62)), placing all hope in the Croatian Spring movement. This is a family novel which follows the history of life of its members who represent the community and the discourse of the time. On the other hand, the author’s ironic attitude towards the discursive elements of the time separates it from the corpus of

the children's literature and approximates it to crossover⁸ literature, which can be read by both adolescents and adults. Christian reminiscences are almost non-existent, which can be understood as part of the author's ironic detachment. Christianity as an element rooted in culture is evident indirectly from individual casual statements of the characters. For example, God is mentioned as the creator of human destiny, incomprehensible to humans, when Stjepan, Luka's great-grandfather, leaves the hospital on his initiative in the terminal stage of illness:

"I'm not going back to the hospital, I'm going to live my life like a normal person, and when death comes for me, I won't object, I've lived a plentiful life, and I can't complain about anything. God has been better to me than to most people I have met in my life" (Gavran 2003: 105).

Christian tradition is also evident from Luka's review of the Stone Gate:

"The Stone Gate shouldn't be called the gate, it should be called the Stone Passage, because it is such a strange place, a strange dark old passage where people light candles and pray to God when they face adversities" (Gavran 2003: 133).

Furthermore, there are several general places which indicate the presence and significance of Christianity in the broad cultural perception of the space:

(1) the lighting of candles for the fallen defenders (cf. Gavran 2003: 13);

(2) the celebration of Christmas; Christmas is often an important holiday of communion, a feast of hope; the father returns from the battlefield on Christmas Day;

(3) the importance of family: "True, we spent that night in the basement. But, when one family decides to celebrate life, then even the enemy cannons cannot stop it" (Gavran 2003: 182).

Hrvoje Hitrec complemented his popular novel *Smogovci* with the novel *Smogovci u ratu* (Eng. *Smogovci in the War*, 1994). The novel retains a well-known array of characters and a humorous tone, which is particularly

⁸ Crossover literature is literature for all ages, although it may seem to be intended for children at first glance.

interesting as it deals with a tragic and traumatic subject. The basic tone is common to the tone of all analysed literary works for children; the author highlighted the importance of optimism and kindness. There are not many explicit Christian motifs, one of the most significant is the gesture of the Vragec family matriarch who puts a rosary around her sons' necks as they depart for the battlefield.

A similar motif is found in Dunja Kalilić's novel *Crobinhoodovi* (Eng. *The Crobinhoods*, 1997). The protagonists are animals left to their own devices in a war-ravaged city. Animals live in unison with other people, waiting for the return of other family members to whom they belonged in their past life, following the basic Christian principles – hope, optimism, kindness and love, ethics of the heart.

The novel *Čuvari amfora* (Eng. *The Guardians of Amphorae*, 1994) by Nikola Pulić takes place at the onset of war in a mixed Croatian-Serbian setting. Although based on a real historical background and Serbian rebellion, ethnic groups are depicted in a somewhat flat, black-and-white technique, so all Serbs are represented as the embodiment of evil, gluttonous villains who get drunk and accumulate weapons to invade others. They do not perceive the sea as their own, although they live in the area. The amphorae symbolise Croatian cultural identity, an ancient heritage that a group of Serbs want to extract from the sea; amphorae are not just a personal pathological desire to become wealthy, their misappropriation is a symbol of stealing and destruction of cultural, native and national heritage. They are a “valuable Croatian heritage infused with the strength and soul of the Croatian sea” (Pulić 1994: 91). Another symbol of heritage is the church of St. Stephen on the island named after the building (Crkvica, Eng. *small church*), which was intentionally destroyed by a Serb outside of war circumstances.

“The destroyer of the old church ruined the beauty of the area that could only be seen from the church arch” (Pulić 1994: 79). God, however, is a just judge, and this concept is especially present in the Croatian oral literary tradition: “God's hand will eventually capture anyone who destroys holy things and holy places”. God is part of the everyday life of each believer, both child and adult, so it is no wonder that instead of, for example, the expression, “let us hope, let us believe”, people place trust in God with the invocation “God will provide”. Conversation with God, a kind of reliance on God, is present in Pulić's characters in all segments of life, even in

trials and tribulations, when they have trouble finding a rational foothold and when everything seems pointless. God is perceived as the only meaning in life, although inconceivable and irrational, but an inevitable support nonetheless. Prayer is an integral part of the lives of both children and adults, so it is not uncommon to see children in prayer, with a small crucifix around their necks:

“Kaja took the gold chain off her neck, with the cross and the crucified Christ, and put it around amphora’s neck. Kaja and Luca kneeled in front of the amphorae which have protected them with their magical powers against all evils” (Pulić 1994: 131).

The chain is repeatedly mentioned in the novel, not only as a symbol of faith but as a real amulet with true protective powers. The Christian worldview in this novel is manifested mostly as a part of (traditional) heritage.

The novel *Krik* (Eng. *Scream*, 2001) by Zlatko Krilić is a multi-layered literary work which exceeds the framework of children’s perception of the world, revealing itself to young adolescents with its metaphorical expression and thus enabling them to construe the image of the Homeland War. It also helps them perceive the war as a global human tragedy and see the potential of the spiritual world of every human, built on a set of traditional foundations, to overcome evil. The novel begins with an excerpt from *The Book of Job*, whose underlying motif is light, i.e., the contrast of light and darkness, which is further developed by the end of the novel. The plot revolves around a child who was abandoned due to war circumstances. A boy named Anton struggles to survive in burned-down and abandoned villages, burdened with uncertainty, which is unfitting for a boy his age. Unlike other novels with this subject, the underlying motif of a child left to his own devices in the turmoil of war resembles the novel *Bijeg u košari*, but it is much more poignant, filled with explicit motifs of war atrocities. The Homeland War becomes a universal symbol of war as evil, but it derives from the plot that the Croatian side is endangered – as evidenced by the elements of traditional culture such as the tablecloth embroidered with Croatian tricolour in rural areas. Zima classified the novel as a special category of fantasy literature, especially due to the motif of a magic lamp with which the boy Anton converses in a moment of strong existential fear which gradually turns into a prospect for revenge and hatred. This novel has brought the Christian message of goodness and hope, as integral elements

of all analysed works of children's literature, to another level. The triumph of good is not a natural human condition, it results from a prominent internal struggle of good and evil in moments of permanent exposure to evil. By witnessing the atrocities committed by inhumane people, the boy Anton also resorts to inhumane psychology – he becomes eager for revenge, imagining equally disgusting ways to eradicate his enemies. His thoughts are intercepted by childhood memories of fairy tales where good triumphs over evil when the Light in human form appears to warn him that death is not the worst outcome – a much worse outcome is to become inhuman: “To be killed by them is less gruesome than turning into them” (Krilić 2012: 83). Apart from the fact that such a message is one of the most intriguing postulates of the Christian worldview (If someone throws a stone at you, throw them a piece of bread instead)⁹, Christianity is reflected in many distinctive motifs: crosses at village intersections, making the sign of the cross and praying before each meal, Christmas iconography (the tradition of decorating the Christmas tree, the star of Bethlehem), motif of light, crucifix with a heart and the inscription INRI carved into wood, the Bible as a book present in every household (whose excerpts are interpolated into the text itself – *The Book of Genesis* and *The Book of Job*). One of the chapters is entitled *Čudo* (Eng. *Miracle* – on several occasions, the author rejects the possibility of a miraculous, divine intervention; a miracle is a part of everyday phenomena that God sends over to make Himself closer and more comprehensible to human logic and rational understanding. Such materialised miracles truly represent divine intervention. The Light tells the boy: “I am not God, but I am dear to God – I am the fruit of His first words. In the same way that He loves me, He loves everyone who carries me within” (Krilić 2012: 117). The Light tries to explain to Anton the miracle of everyday phenomena:

“Isn't it a special kind of miracle when grass grows from a dead seed? The greatest miracle of all is when an inanimate thing turns into a living thing. That could never happen without light” (Krilić 2012: 118).

⁹ Biblical reference whereby people are advised to always show mercy, even to one's enemies. This thought is especially evident in the conversation between the boy and the Light (2012: 120). Trying to subdue the boy's revenge impulses, the Light explains to him that evil will not disappear if he kills his enemy, but that evil will prevail because he will now become a murderer himself.

Zlatko Krilić's *Krik* deals with the fundamental gift of God – the freedom to choose between good and evil. Based on the complexity of the final message “you should fight the darkness within you with light (...) It is only when you overcome the darkness within, that you will be able to fight against the creatures of darkness” and the unusual approach to the subject, this novel can be classified under Christian literature but also as borderline children's literature.

4. Conclusion

The survival of the Christian worldview in Croatian children's literature, despite continuous efforts to suppress it, points to Christianity as a persistent element in the overall cultural and spiritual life of the Croatian people.

After 50 years of marginalisation, the Christian worldview has become an integral part of Croatian children's prose and is particularly revived in children's war prose (Homeland War prose), which indicates its persistence within Croatian spiritual life and, consequently, its important role in times of crisis. By analysing contemporary Croatian children's prose about the Homeland War, it can be concluded that the Christian worldview is deeply rooted in Croatian culture and (children's) literature. In the analysed corpus, the Christian worldview is manifested by the use of Christian motifs (cross, Bible, rosary, church, nativity scene) with rosary as the dominant motif (it is present in half of the analysed corpus), by conspicuous presence of Christianity in the Croatian cultural tradition (customs, celebration of holidays, patron saints, prayer as a part of everyday life) and the Christian message (the message of hope, forgiveness, optimism, love, personal freedom of choice in overcoming evil).

Bibliography

- Brić-Mažuranić, Ivana (2007) *Priče iz davnine* [Croatian Tales of Long Ago], Školska knjiga, Zagreb.
- Dragić, Marko (2013) “Sveti Juraj u tradicijskoj baštini Hrvata” [Saint George in the Traditional Croatian Heritage], *Croatica Et Slavica Iadertina*, 9, 1, pp. 269–313.
- Gavran, Miro (2003) *Kako smo lomili noge* [How We Broke Our Legs], Mozaik knjiga, Zagreb.

- Gluščević, Maja (2009) *Bijeg u košari* [Escape in the Basket], Školska knjiga, Zagreb.
- Hitrec, Hrvoje (2008) *Smogovci u ratu* [Smogovci in the War], Školska knjiga, Zagreb.
- Hranjec, Stjepan (1998) “Djetinjstvo zasuto granatama” [Childhood Covered by Grenades], *Odrastanje u zrcalu suvremene književnosti za djecu i mladež* [Growing Up in the Mirror of Contemporary Literature for Children and Youth], ed. Ranka Javor, Zagreb, pp. 18–24.
- Hranjec, Stjepan (2003) “Christian continuity in Croatian children’s literature”, Stjepan Hranjec, *Kršćanska izvorišta dječje književnosti* [Christian Sources of Children’s Literature], Alfa, Zagreb.
- Hranjec, Stjepan (2009) “Krilićev Krik” [Krilić’s Scream], in: Stjepan HRA-NJEC, *Ogledi o dječjoj književnosti* [Essays on Children’s Literature], Stjepan Hranjec, Zagreb.
- Iveljić, Nada (1995a) *Marijina tajna* [Mary’s Secret], Mosta, Zagreb.
- Iveljić, Nada *Čuvarice novih krovova* [The Guardians of New Rooftops], Divič, Zagreb.
- Iveljić, Nada (1995c) *Božićna priča* [A Tale of Christmas], Tbpex, Zagreb.
- Kalilić, Dunja (1997) *Crobinhoodovi* (The Crobinhoods). Marjan tisak, Split.
- Krilić, Zlatko (2012) *Krik* [Scream], Alfa, Zagreb.
- Lončarević, Vladimir (2017) “Hrvatska katolička književnost 1945.–1990.” [Croatian Catholic Literature 1945–1990], *Kroatologija*, 8, 1–2, pp. 1–28.
- Majhut, Berislav (2022) *Na Titonicu. Hrvatska dječja književnost u razdoblju socijalističke Jugoslavije* [On Titonic. Croatian Children’s Literature in Socialist Yugoslavia], Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, Zagreb.
- Pilaš, Branko (1998) “Domovinski rat u hrvatskoj prozi za djecu” [Homeland War in Croatian Prose for Children], *Odrastanje u zrcalu suvremene književnosti za djecu i mladeži* [Growing Up in the Mirror of Contemporary Literature for Children and Youth], ed. Ranka Javor, Zagreb, pp. 32–39.
- Pulić, Nikola (1994) *Čuvari amfora* [The Guardians of Amphorae], Alfa, Zagreb.
- Težak, Dubravka (1997) “Prozna djela dječje književnosti s tematikom Domovinskog rata” [Children’s Literature Prose Works on the Subject

of Homeland War], ed. Ranka Javor, *Dječja knjiga u Hrvatskoj danas* [Children's Book in Present-day Croatia], Zagreb, pp. 42–50.

Vidović Schreiber, Tea-Tereza, Odža, Ivana (2023) “The transformation of the contemporary Christian children's story– Stjepan Lice and Sonja Tomić”, *Folia linguistica et litteraria*, 44, pp. 179–195.

Zima, Dubravka (2001) “Hrvatska dječja književnost o ratu” [Croatian Children's Literature on War], *Polemos: časopis za interdisciplinarna istraživanja rata i mira*, 4, 8, pp. 81–122.

SAŽETAK

Ivana Odža

KRUNICA OKO VRATA – OČITOVANJE KRŠĆANSKOGA SVJETONAZORA U SUVREMENOJ HRVATSKOJ RATNOJ PROZI ZA DJECU I MLADE

Cilj je ovoga rada razmotriti kako se kršćanski svjetonazor očituje u suvremenoj hrvatskoj ratnoj prozi za djecu i mlade [misli se na dječju prozu koja tematizira Domovinski rat (1991.–1995.)]. Analiza odabranih sadržaja pokazuje da je kršćanski svjetonazor vidljiv u nizu tradicionalnih kršćanskih motiva od kojih je osobito prepoznatljiv motiv krunice sadržan u naslovnoj sintagmi, u kršćanskoj tradiciji te u kršćanskoj poruci djela. Analiziranim korpusom želi se potvrditi kršćanski književni kontinuitet u hrvatskoj dječjoj književnosti, usprkos dugotrajnome marginaliziranju kršćanskih književnih tema.

Ključne riječi: *dječja književnost; Domovinski rat; književnost za mlade; hrvatska ratna proza za djecu i mlade; kršćanski svjetonazor*