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From Popularity and Influence to Cultural Oblivion. The Case of Jagoda Truhelka in Croatian Literary and Cultural History¹

Abstract: The aim of the paper is to shed light on the place of the Croatian author Jagoda Truhelka within Croatian literary history. The starting point is the fact that from the position of a very popular writer in the first decades of the twentieth century, recognized as a classic author of children's literature, in our century she has become almost unknown. We will attempt to find reasons for such a trajectory by relying on several intraliterary but also extraliterary research strongholds, including archival material such as correspondence, re-examining in that context the canon as an aesthetically but also a socially determined system of literary "peaks" and its influence on the formation of collective and personal memory (Assmann, Halbwachs). Through a contrastive analysis of several editions of Truhelka's *The Golden Days*, we will attempt to detect the impact of censorship on this short prose collection, considered by many to be her best literary work, and, hopefully point out the possible reasons for today's problems with the reevaluation of a once popular children's classic. Extraliterary reasons such as purposefully keeping silent about the author's works and the censorship of new editions have resulted in her disappearance from individual and, thus, also collective memory. Today's efforts aimed at regaining awareness of the (canonical?) value of her literary work – apart from at the literary-theoretical level – have not achieved much success.

Keywords: collective memory, Croatia, Jagoda Truhelka

INTRODUCTION

In an attempt to shed light on the place of the Croatian author and pedagogical worker Jagoda Truhelka (1864–1957) within Croatian literary history, we will start from the fact that from the great popularity which accompanied her in

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the first half of the 20th century and her recognized status as a children's literary classic author, in our century Truhelka has fallen almost into oblivion. She spent her active working life in the teaching profession: as a teacher she worked in her hometown Osijek, then in Gospić. Subsequently, she gained a teaching position at the boarding school for girls in Zagreb and later in a teacher-training school in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and then finally as the headmistress of a two-year girls' college in Banja Luka. She remained in close contact with several of her students, developing through the years particularly close and friendly relationships with two of them: Elza Kučera and Zdenka Marković, both of whom became distinguished figures in Croatian culture. Elza Kučera was the first woman from Croatia to obtain a PhD in psychology and also the first Croatian female librarian,² and Zdenka Marković³ made a huge impact building intercultural bridges between Croatian and Polish culture.

In her forty-year teaching career, Truhelka frequently encountered many obstacles and difficulties, mostly in the negative and unsupportive attitudes towards girls' education, but also those of a more practical nature, such as the renovation of a school building, the organization of classes or improving the school library system.⁴ Truhelka, nevertheless, was not only a teacher in practice, but expressed her pedagogical ideas⁵ in a series of professional

² Elza Kučera (1883–1972) worked in the University Library in Zagreb from 1909 to 1944 and is considered a pioneer in the field of experimental psychology. Correspondence sent from Truhelka to Kučera, covering an almost fifty-year period (1901–1950), is kept at the National and University Library in Zagreb (call number R 4771 b).

³ Zdenka Marković (1884–1974) was a Croatian author and literary translator. She studied Slavic studies, art history and philosophy in Zagreb and Fribourg. Letters sent from Truhelka to Zdenka Marković were written from 1901 to 1953. They are deposited in the literary bequest of Zdenka Marković, kept in the archives of the Division for the History of Croatian Literature at the Institute for the History of Croatian Literature, Theatre and Music, Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zagreb. The majority of the correspondence was published in 2004 (ed. Batinić, 2004), apart from several letters and postcards, from July 1941 to July 1953, which were only recently discovered in a part of Zdenka Marković's bequest still waiting for detailed archival analysis and subsequent scientific interpretation. The letters cover a range of different topics, from the personal lives of both women, to professional matters, for example, Truhelka's advice regarding her student's translation of Polish literary works into Croatian (Truhelka's letter to Zdenka Marković, Sarajevo, 27 December 1916).

⁴ In a letter sent from Banja Luka to Elza Kučera, dated 19 January 1910, Truhelka asked her to make inquiries with Marija Jambrišak, Truhelka's former co-worker and teaching colleague from the boarding school for girls in Zagreb, about the organizational system of the boarding school's library, because she wanted to improve the functioning of the library at the Banja Luka school, where she was working at the time.

⁵ Truhelka never stopped educating herself, showing a serious and responsible attitude to her profession and recognizing the need for lifelong learning. In a letter to Elza Kučera from Banja Luka (12 January 1910) she shares her impressions after reading Foerster's *Jugendlehre: ein Buch für Eltern, Lehrer und Geistliche*, published in Berlin in 1906. Friedrich Wilhelm Foerster (1869–1966) was a German academic, pacifist, education-

articles,⁶ as well as in her prolific literary work. She was also socially active in various newly established women's associations of the time. One of the most influential was a charitable society initiated by Marija Kumičić.⁷ The society, called "Hrvatska žena" ["Croatian Woman"], was founded in Zagreb in 1921, with its main aim being the promotion of Croatian patriotism and culture, as well as social, humanitarian and charity work, such as helping orphans and the poor. Truhelka was the first president of the Sarajevo branch of the Croatian Woman, established on 19 November 1922 (Benyovsky, 1996: 22). Her play *Aničina lutka* [*Anica's Doll*] was published in Osijek in 1928 as a Croatian Woman's edition. It is interesting that on the occasion of celebrating the 15th anniversary of the foundation of the Croatian Woman in Sarajevo on 15 May 1939, Josipa Glembay⁸ proposed that the society should publish all of Truhelka's works (*Jutarnji list*, 18 May 1939, according to Benyovsky, 1996: 22, 60–61).

Another society which Truhelka was actively engaged in was the "Društvo za unapređivanje dječje književnosti" ["Society for the Promotion of Children's Literature"] established in Zagreb in 1922. It published several original literary works written by Croatian writers – among them Truhelka's short prose work for children *Pipo i Pipa* (1923) and *Božja ovčica* (1926) edited by Julijana Bošković – and translations of foreign (children's) literary classics into Croatian (Lovrić Kralj and Milković, 2018: 51–52). Finally, as an active participant in the literary life of her time, Truhelka also became a member of the "Društvo hrvatskih književnica" ["Croatian Women Writers' Association"], the first – and so far the last – association of women authors in Croatia. The Association was founded in November 1936 in Zagreb, in the apartment of the Croatian writer Zdenka Jušić-Seunik, who became the Association's president. It included some twenty female authors from different generations, not only the most prominent, such as the famous Croatian children's authors Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić and Truhelka, but also those less known, who were at the time still at the beginning of their literary careers. According to the Association's *Rules*, its main aim was

ist and philosopher, professor of pedagogy in Zürich, Vienna and Munich. Truhelka particularly emphasized and liked his amiable tone and style of writing: "That is something we so indispensably need. Here everything is so superficial, arranged according to outer appearance and 'usefulness', so the world doesn't even dream that there is more to it than this that yells and competes, something deeper, better and more beautiful". In a letter (21 July 1910) from Reichenhall, a spa town in Upper Bavaria in Germany, Truhelka informed Elza Kučera that she had managed to obtain all of Foerster's pedagogical works, concluding with the following sentence: "I wish I had such books 20 years ago."

⁶ For example, "Što da čitaju naše mlade djevojke" [What Our Young Girls Should Read], *Napredak*, 1893.

⁷ Marija Kumičić (1863–1945), a Croatian author and translator from French into Croatian, a journalist, founder of the Croatian Woman Society. She advocated girls' education and women's active public life.

⁸ Josipa Glembay (1861–1941), teacher and pedagogue (Lončar, 2011: 207–258).

to promote literature in the Croatian direction by publishing works of quality written by Croatian female authors, to unite women writers in order to protect their interests, to upgrade their literary status through joint work, and, when necessary, to provide mutual material support. For this purpose, one of the first steps in the Association's work was to establish its own publishing trade, to serve exclusively for the publication of works by Croatian women writers. (Mihaljević, 2010: 434)

Another of Truhelka's many contributions to Croatian cultural life was the foundation in 1901 of "a magazine for the family" called *Na domaćem ognjištu* [*At the Home Fireside*], which she edited with Marija Jambrišak. The monthly was published for fourteen years, its editors always being women (besides Truhelka and Jambrišak, the editors were Milka Pogačić, Zdenka Marković and Zora Vernić), who followed its patriotic, humanistic and pedagogic line (Čorkalo, 1998: 93–107). *Na domaćem ognjištu* was the first Croatian women's magazine (Šilović-Karić, 2004: 181–190) intended for mothers and their daughters, consisting of literary contributions (poems and short prose, partly for children and young people) and didactic articles on child-raising, children's healthcare, children's play, women's behaviour and etiquette, the lives of women in different parts of the country and abroad, needlework, fashion, housekeeping, gardening, etc.

IN THE EYE OF THE CRITICS

This section will highlight some critical voices regarding Truhelka's position in Croatian literature. Considering the previous sceptical attitude, to say the least, towards both female authors and children's literature, the fact that many reviews of Truhelka's works were written precisely by women does not come as a surprise.⁹ Reviewers and literary historians are more or less unanimous concerning the main features of Truhelka's narration, usually identifying and emphasising the following features: the lyrical, emotional experiencing of reality, poetically detailed descriptions, intimacy, emotional ecstasy, suggestiveness, stylistic simplicity, realism with nuances of naturalism, autobiographical elements, features of oral literature, an inclination towards fairy tales, the Christian world view serving as the foundation of ethical and moral messages,¹⁰

⁹ Marija Jurić Zagorka (1900, 1939), Adela Milčinović (1904), Camilla Lucerna (1910, 1930, 1931, 1932), Zdenka Smrekar (1918, 1924, 1934), A. K. C. [Antonija Kassowitz-Cvijić] (1925), and, especially, Zdenka Marković, the already mentioned student and later friend of Truhelka, who followed Truhelka's literary work with great interest, which is indicated by her regularly published papers in periodicals in which she wrote about virtually every newly published work by Truhelka (1910, 1919, 1927, 1930, 1932, 1934, 1939).

¹⁰ Hranjec, 2005: 136–143.

pronounced Croatian patriotism¹¹ and sometimes even discrete pedagogical lessons. Some of the often-mentioned characteristics are also cheerfulness, serenity, brightness and plasticity in Truhelka's narration and its well-foundedness in real life, that is, lived experience (Grgec, 1933: 86–88). The aporias that appear in the reviews are mostly in connection with the positioning of Truhelka's opus in the context of Croatian literary history. According to a survey conducted in 1934, in the period between the World Wars, Truhelka was, along with Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić, the most popular author (Anon., 1934: 8), especially among girls: "They read like this: boys undoubtedly Robinson, and girls Jagoda Truhelka and Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić" (Petris, 1935: 107). Contemporary critics perceive her as part of a "trio", together with Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić and Vladimir Nazor (Crnković and Težak, 2002), an author who stands alongside the classics of Croatian children's literature (Hranjec, 2004) and, besides Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić, the most reputable Croatian children's author (Detoni-Dujmić, 2000). Literary historians tend to link her on a regular basis with the name of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić, considering Truhelka as her predecessor,¹² an author of strong expression who rightfully captures a permanent place¹³ in the Croatian literary system. Certain critics such as Josip Andrić¹⁴ and Zdenka Marković¹⁵ also put her side by side with Brlić-Mažuranić's literary work regardless of the differences in poetics, considering Truhelka's literary protagonists as the "classic little characters" of Croatian literature (Andrić, 1944: 31). Zalar (1983: 24), on the other hand, used this difference in the poetics of the two authors to show Truhelka's literary work

¹¹ Her zealous patriotism is interesting since she was raised in a family of immigrants: her father was a Czech who moved to Croatia, taking a teaching position, and her mother was a German from Hungary.

¹² "A predecessor of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić and, together with her, the founder of Croatian realistic children's literature" (Frangješ, 1987: 532; 283).

¹³ "A subtle depiction of psychological experiences in a modest, simple style, which was the main feature of these works, which secured for her a permanent place in Croatian literature" (N. S., 1924: 3).

¹⁴ "From this viewpoint precisely [the viewpoint of realism of a Catholic orientation which, according to Andrić, is characteristic of Truhelka's literary expression, author's comment]. Truhelka stands somewhat apart from her literary contemporaries Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić, Adela Milčinović and Zdenka Marković, among whom chronologically she comes first, and by her literary importance she shares first place with Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić" (Andrić, 1944: 31).

¹⁵ Reviewing *The Golden Days*, Zdenka Marković pointed out: "The first one [*Priče iz davnine* [Croatian Tales of Long Ago] by I. Brlić-Mažuranić, author's comment] is purely a book of stories, a book of imagination, created by the soul of a mother-poetess, the second one [Truhelka's *Zlatni danci* [*The Golden Days*] author's comment] is a book of reality, experiences, a book of life, written by the hand of a realistic narrator. But in no way is it inferior to the first, because Jagoda Truhelka's realism is a beautiful kind of realism, authentic yet not grounding, but spiced by the scent of a child's soul and its poetry" (Marković, 1919: 135).

as a sort of “intermezzo between Brlić’s fairytale-novel and Lovrak’s contemporary, socio-realistic and collectivistic works.” Dubravka Težak also considers her to be an important link in the development of Croatian children’s literature,¹⁶ and great tribute was paid to Truhelka by Hranjec (2006), with the first period of Croatian children’s literature being named “The period of Jagoda Truhelka and Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić.”

Zdenka Marković divided Truhelka’s literary work into two phases: the first pre-war phase was sophisticated and anonymous (Truhelka published her first works under the pseudonyms A. M. S. or A. M. Sandučić¹⁷) and the second phase was stronger and more constructive. In dividing Truhelka’s work in this way, Marković noticed:

That pre-war realism of hers is elegiac, the fog of melancholy covers the corners of people’s houses and souls, while the realism of her *Zlatnih danaka* [*The Golden Days*], *Bogorođičinih trešanja* [*Mother of God’s Sweet Cherries*], *Duhova domaćeg ognjišta* [*Ghosts of the Home Fireside*], *Palčićeve kraljevskog leta* [*The Wren’s Royal Flight*], etc., is healthy, brisk, pure realism, so attractive and fascinating to young people. (Marković, 1939: 74)

Her early moral tales draw on the 19th century poetics. Dubravka Težak (1994) pointed out that their inner atmosphere derives from the tales written by Antonija Kassowitz-Cvijić and Jelica Belović-Bernadzikowski, while her early novels *Tugomila* (1894) and *Naša djeca* [*Our Children*] (1896) display features of novels about orphans (Majhut, 2005). In her subsequent novels (*Plein air*, 1897, *Vojača*, 1899, *Zlatko*, 1934) Truhelka successfully presents feminist and (pseudo)historical subjects, but, as the Croatian literary historian Slobodan Prosperov Novak emphasises, her most popular works are those she wrote with a child audience in mind:

Truhelka’s *The Golden Days* is one of the most beautiful intimate descriptions of Central-European everyday life, a book about the multicultural environment in Osijek. When she writes for children, Truhelka does not even bother to invent an unrealistic and fairytale world. Her narration is slow and realistic, rhythmic and very astute. (Prosperov-Novak, 2003: 250)

Stjepan Hranjec has the same line of thought, holding that *The Golden Days* is the best gift of Truhelka to Croatian children’s literature. Published at the very end of the Croatian modernist period, with its lyrical prose merged in autobiographical discourse, it could not be further from modernist decadence,

¹⁶ “The works of Jagoda Truhelka are today slowly falling into oblivion, but they should by all means be reclaimed from obscurity because these are the works which marked the beginning of Croatian realistic children’s literature and made a solid ground for further development [...]” (Težak, 1994: 154).

¹⁷ Since Truhelka’s father Antun was of Czech origin, she Croatized her surname, i.e. translated it to Croatian. That is where Truhelka’s pseudonym Sandučić [“a small box”] came from (T-ć., 1903: 201).

which is an example of the independence of children's literature from the stylistic trends of adult literature.¹⁸ Hranjec goes on to explain:

Everything shows that *The Golden Days* remains a permanent value in Croatian children's prose. Thanks to the poetic descriptions of her hometown of Osijek, her skill in expressing the children's world of the heart and spirit, and her true patriotism, "a simple beauty of large and small human joys", Truhelka's work is not just any kind of landmark, but affirms the literary beauty of the simplicity and poetry of everyday life, built into the corpus of Croatian children's literature as its fundamental beginning. And while Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić's work is associated with a fairytale setting, Jagoda Truhelka opened a second, parallel branch in Croatian children's literature – realistic, lyrical, idyllic prose, appropriate for a young reader, warm and kind, far from Croatian modernist decadence. (Hranjec, 2006: 56)

THE GOLDEN DAYS AND CENSORSHIP

As elaborated in the second part of this paper, according to the majority of literary historians and critics, *The Golden Days* is the most significant and probably the best known of Truhelka's literary works.¹⁹ "It lived to see the largest number of editions, all of them illustrated" (Javor, 1998: 111). Therefore, it would be logical to expect *The Golden Days*, for its quality and its appeal to a young(er) audience, to ensure the author's survival not only in our cultural and literary history and memory, but also in the present, consequently becoming inscribed in the consciousness of future generations as a Croatian children's classic – as part of the canon. In practice, however, the situation is quite different.

First of all, it should be taken into account that the (unfortunate) fate of Truhelka's present status in Croatian cultural and literary history cannot be properly understood without bearing in mind the historical and political context in which she lived, taking on her many roles as teacher, pedagogue, editor, etc. Before the beginning of the First World War, Croatia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. In October 1918, it became part of the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, and from December of the same year, of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, proclaimed in Belgrade – the capital of Serbia – under the rule of the Karađorđević dynasty. In 1929 the state changed its name to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia which fell apart in 1941, following the foundation of the Independent State of Croatia – a fascist puppet state of Germany and Italy. Another change of regime followed in 1945: transition into Socialist Yugoslavia. After the ideological and regime change in 1945,

¹⁸ M. Subotić (1991) has also analysed the misfit of Truhelka's works in the literature of the modernist period, although the author recognizes the modernist period as a poetics in Croatian children's literature, to be more precise in the works of Vladimir Nazor.

¹⁹ "Truhelka conveyed her Osijek childhood with great aesthetic sensitivity to the golden pages of her literary opus" (Pintarić, 2004: 150).

Truhelka experienced years of being passed over in silence.²⁰ In the Croatian Writers' Association's archival materials, kept at the Division for the History of Croatian Literature of the Institute for the History of Croatian Literature, Theatre and Music of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, documents with the decisions of the Association's Court of Honour from 1945 are preserved. Handwritten and typed lists include the name of Truhelka, but not among fascists, such as, for example, Croatian writers Zdenka Smrekar or Mara Švel, but among the collaborators of the Ustasha government.

In the aforementioned archival material, however, there is also a ruling by the Court of Honour of the Association of Writers of Croatia (as the Association was called at the time), dated 5 July 1945 and signed by Zdenko Štambuk, according to which Truhelka's work was allowed to be published by Croatian publishing houses and in Croatian newspapers and periodicals. Although her literary work was not permanently suspended, after the breakdown of the Independent State of Croatia and the establishment of socialist state authority, there was a long twenty-five-year period – from 1944 until 1969 – during which none of Truhelka's works were published. The publishing gap was followed by a gap in the critical reception of her opus. In her paper on Truhelka in the proceedings *Život i djelo Jagode Truhelke* [*Jagoda Truhelka's Life and Opus*] (Osijek, 1998), Ranka Javor indicates that the editions of Truhelka's work failed to appear for extraliterary, political reasons – the author was accused of patriotism and holding a Christian world view. The first publishing and literary revitalization of Truhelka was attempted in 1969 by Mladost, a publishing house from Zagreb, and the first post-war theoretician to review and shed light on her work was Milan Crnković (1970), who assessed *The Golden Days* as a valuable part of Croatian literary heritage. The book was published in a series called "Biblioteka Vjeverica", as one of the longest pieces, covering approximately 300 pages, and illustrated by Branko Vujanović. It remains unknown whether this edition had any impact on further events, but in 1970, a short selection of Truhelka's works²¹ was included in a series "Pet stoljeća hrvatske književnosti" ["Five Centuries of Croatian Literature"] (Zora, Matica hrvatska), together with some works by Verka Škurla-Iljić,

²⁰ Unfortunately, Truhelka is not the only such example. Another woman of a similar destiny in terms of our cultural memory is Marija Kumičić (1863–1945), a Croatian literary author, journalist, translator, cultural worker and humanitarian. Although a very important person in Croatian public life during the first decades of the previous century – the time when women in Croatia (until 1918 still part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy) started to enter the public sphere, simultaneously fighting to gain political, economic and social rights – she was almost completely forgotten in the period after the Second World War, and today she is mostly known as the wife of Eugen Kumičić (1850–1904), a prominent Croatian right-wing politician and writer of social and historical novels. Others who shared similar fates were Štefa Jurkić (1895–1971) (Vrgoč, 1995: 123–146), Zdenka Smrekar (1884–1946) (Majhut, 2012: 102) and Sida Košutić (1902–1965) (Hranjec, 2013) whose work was also forgotten and/or neglected after 1945.

²¹ The selection includes some short prose from *The Golden Days* and Truhelka's biography *Iz prošlih dana* [*From the Past Days*].

Dora Pfanova, Mila Miholjević and Mara Švel-Gamiršek (editorship and authorship of the preface signed by Ljerka Matutinović). There were then no new editions²² for almost a quarter of a century, until 1994 when a publishing house from Vinkovci, Privlačica, published *Gospine trešnje* [*Our Lady's Sweet Cherries*] in a book series named Slavonica.

In the middle of the 1990s, new editions of the historical novels *Vojača* and *Naša djeca* appeared. In 1997, selected works by Truhelka, together with a selection of works by Adela Milčinović, were published in Matica hrvatska's edition "Stoljeća hrvatske književnosti" ["Centuries of Croatian Literature"]. It should be mentioned that in that crucial 1970, apart from Crnković, Ljerka Matutinović (1970: 77–80) and Zvonimir Balog also wrote about Truhelka. Balog's article was published in *Telegram* under the title "Klasično djelo hrvatske dječje književnosti" ["A Classic Work of Croatian Children's Literature"], and if there was not a discrete subtitle informing readers that its subject was Truhelka's *The Golden Days*, most Croatians would probably automatically think that Balog was dealing with Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić's children's classics.

The question is why we perceive these literary works in such a way. Balog's article opens with the following sentence: "These days, a work of extraordinary importance for Croatian children's literature has appeared in bookshop windows." This work, as Balog says, was the fourth edition of "one of the most valuable works of Croatian children's literature that once already had its audience – which in our situation is not insignificant". The first two editions appeared before the war (in 1918 and in 1921) and the third during the war (in 1942), so, as Balog points out, this fourth edition was "actually more than insignificant", concluding that *The Golden Days* also had its "unhappy, rainy days, or years". Balog poses the question about where we should seek the cause of such a destiny of this literary work. In publishers' indifference? In the personal attitudes of editors or the generally difficult situation in which culture found itself? He continues by adding that it is really completely irrelevant what the answer is, openly and precisely dissecting the circumstances:

Fear of differences in opinion and ideological antagonisms tell us about our rigidity and about our unscientific approach to culture. In this sense, unambiguous proof that we are still not complex-free is deviation in comparison to the original and the omission of chapters 4, 14, 20 and 22 in this newest, first afterwar edition. Was the text's length the real reason for this to be done? How come that in the earlier three editions the length of the text was not brought into question? At the time of freedom of thought, even the freedom of wrong thought, at the time of the legal publication of the Bible, the Catechism, books of dream interpretation, horoscopes, pornography, literary trash and all sorts of written, spoken and visual 'weaklings', far from scientific, dialectical and material discerning, we are afraid of an alleged religious colouration of an acknowledged literary work which already belongs to history and whose intention is

²² There were, however, reprints of the edition from 1969 (Mladost, 1977 and 1981).

not colloquiality in the sense of the creation of religious morals, but evoking a time with all its good and bad sides, beliefs, joys, sorrows and misconceptions. If, however, the cutting of the work was a condition for it to be published, then all objections fall away. But this edition of *The Golden Days*, even such as it is, still represents a true holiday, because its maker, alongside Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić, is most certainly the greatest name in Croatian children's literature. (Balog, 1970: 4)

The first edition of *The Golden Days* was published in 1918, but the words of the title – “zlatni danci” [“golden days”] – appeared as early as 13 November 1906, in Truhelka's letter from Banja Luka to Elza Kučera, who at that time was a university student in Zürich. It remains unknown whether it is the very first time it is mentioned in the context of Truhelka's (auto)biography, but from the content of the letter it is clear that the two words were used in the function of a title of Truhelka's new literary work, in which she wanted to incorporate some of Elza Kučera's children's poems. In a letter from Banja Luka dated 1 October 1906, Truhelka encouraged Kučera to send her all the children's poetry she had written, which Kučera obviously did, because in the following letter – that of 13 November – Truhelka thanked her for the received poems, continuing:

And, regarding what you mentioned, that there are several intertwined ideas running through your head, please do disentangle them, they may come to me at a good moment. I wish you were here, so that I could perhaps make a suggestion. You know that we need such things more than anything. I'm just arranging the tales, putting them in order, actually they are only scenes from a child's life, memories = ‘Wahrheit and Dichtung’, your little poems will come between them. The title of the book would be ‘Zlatni danci’ [‘The Golden Days’]. It may not turn out to be what I think the book might be, but it will fill a small gap. If I had some kind of opening poem for it, and if it was yours.

From subsequent letters it appears that Truhelka submitted the manuscript of her and Elza Kučera's book to Milka Pogačić,²³ but it seems that even after a few years of waiting, it was never actually published in this form. In a letter dated 11 January 1908 (Banja Luka) Truhelka expresses hope that it would appear by Easter: “Our book (do you know about it?) will be published sometime around Easter. I thought I might be able to send it to you for Christmas, but it could not be; Mrs [Pog.]²⁴ promises that it will be very beautifully illustrated.” On 23 February (Banja Luka) of the same year, Truhelka again mentions to Elza Kučera the product of their co-authorship, but Kučera was probably too preoccupied with her studies to worry too much about her literary work: “You are not even curious concerning ‘our book’, and I am angry about such a delay. It should have been published at Christmas time. I guess one day we will live

²³ Milka Pogačić (1860–1936) was a Croatian teacher and author, a versatile cultural worker.

²⁴ Probably Milka Pogačić.

to see it published after all.” Finally, the letter of 23 March 1909 (Banja Luka) is the last one in which Truhelka mentions the book: “What is happening with my book and your poems in it, God and Milka P. only know. She has had the manuscript for three years now, and not a word about it. I have given it to the Association²⁵ as a gift, and she mysteriously hesitates with the publication.”

Although the idea of Truhelka’s and Kučera’s co-authorship was not achieved, the quoted correspondence provides evidence that Truhelka was pondering over this children’s book and probably working on the manuscript, not necessarily continuously, for quite a long time before it was eventually published in its finalized form in 1918 by Mirko Breyer’s²⁶ publishing house in Zagreb. The full title of the edition was *Zlatni danci. Istina i priča. Slike iz dječjeg svijeta* [*The Golden Days. The Truth and the Story. Scenes from the Children’s World*]. Later, after the second edition in 1921, where the illustrations were done by Lina Crnčić-Virant, the book was expanded into a trilogy, with *Bogorodičine trešnje* [*Mother of God’s Sweet Cherries*] (1929) and *Dusi domaćeg ognjišta* [*Ghosts of the Home Fireside*] (1930) as the second and the third part. All three parts of the trilogy appeared in new editions during the Second World War, with the following title changes: the second part became *Gospine trešnje* [*Our Lady’s Sweet Cherries*] (1943), and the third part *Crni i bijeli dani* [*Black and White Days*] (1944).

The first part of the trilogy, *The Golden Days*, has so far lived to see a total of ten Croatian editions published in four historically and politically different periods. For this reason, the current paper also includes a contrastive textual analysis of the editions of 1918, 1921, 1942, 1969 and 1995, in order to gain an insight into the changes in the text and potential interventions from the censor.²⁷ Today, the editions of 1918 and 1921 are a rarity – and were obviously also scarce at the time of the publication of the fourth edition in 1969 (Balog, 1970) – and the one from 1942 was not widely available and was not saved in libraries (Crnković, 1970: 29). In the socialist period, from 1945 to 1948, all books published before the war in fascist states, those published during the war in the Independent State of Croatia, as well as those containing criticism of the situation in the Soviet Union, were banned and removed from library col-

²⁵ Most likely the Udruga učiteljica Kraljevine Hrvatske i Slavonije [the Association of Women Teachers of the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia], in which Milka Pogačić collaborated and which had already published Truhelka’s work *Bijeda* [*Misery*] in the publication *Darovi našim djevojkama* [*Gifts to Our Girls*] edited by Milka Pogačić, Udruga učiteljica Kraljevine Hrvatske i Slavonije, Zagreb, 1905.

²⁶ Mirko Breyer (1863–1946) was a Croatian writer, bibliographer and antiquarian.

²⁷ Information on the censorship of *The Golden Days* in the socialist period of the Croatian past is often mentioned in reference works on Truhelka. For example, Budimčić (1998: 276) pointed out: “Her [Truhelka’s] literary work was neglected, passed over in silence to be more precise, during the years of the former regime (and silence is the hardest criticism). At that time, parts of her autobiography and *The Golden Days* were published with significant omissions and were ‘maimed’”.

lections (Vujić, 2000). The rules on the publication and distribution of young adult and children's literature and the press in the People's Republic of Croatia forbade the selling and distribution of "all editions of young adult and children's literature published during the occupation by the occupying forces or their accomplices" (Hebrang Grgić, 2000). The first edition of *The Golden Days* of 1918 is a short prose collection containing twenty-eight chapters covering 312 pages. It was published at a turning point, when the world that the prose text narrates was falling apart.²⁸ Considering the stylistic features of the period, the reception of the realistic sketches of growing-up at the end of the 19th century (in which many critics see autobiographical elements) was surprisingly good, at the very time when most authors were starting to rely on fantasy.

Very soon, in 1921, the collection was printed in a new, improved and expanded edition. It had twenty nine chapters and a total of 337 pages. For this edition, Truhelka wrote two completely new stories: "Tatino carstvo" ["Dad's Empire"] and "Praznici" ["Vacations"], while the story "Anica kuha" ["Anica Cooks"] was left out. The order of the stories was changed in several cases, some were expanded with new motifs (for example, the motif of Anica's fear in the stories "Bolesna lutka" ["A Sick Doll"] (p. 41) and "Zimnje večeri" ["Winter Evenings"] (p. 118)), and some were modified with alterations in the setting, such as Milica's narration in the story "Zlatica" (p. 261) (the original title is "Priča o Zlatici Zlatoperki" ["A Story About Goldy Goldenfeathers"]), or changes in the side characters' personal names to improve the coherence of the narration.

In the third edition, published in 1942,²⁹ compared to the previous one in 1921, the stories "Zlatni danci. Istina i priča" ["The Golden days. The Truth and the Story"] (a short introduction which serves as a frame story to all other episodes), "Nova haljina" ["New Dress"] and "Zlatica" ["Goldy"] are missing, and the author wrote another new one: "Ljetni danci na Dravi" ["Summer Days on the Drava River"]. The very content of the stories underwent changes, such as the shortening of certain descriptive sequences, the orthographic and lexical norm was aligned with the established rules of orthography and grammar of the time, although the etymological spelling which was officially introduced at the time of the Independent State of Croatia was not implemented, and references to the former Yugoslav period were replaced with original Croatian elements.³⁰

²⁸ This refers to the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy as a state, but also to the disintegration of one world view and its substitution with another.

²⁹ In the context of the above-mentioned awareness of only a few copies left of this edition printed during the time of the Independent State of Croatia, we should mention that in the copy kept at the National and University Library in Zagreb there are two chapters missing (pages have been torn out): "Bratac Milan" ["Brother Milan"] and "Zornice" ["Morning Services"], which are actually two of the four chapters omitted from the 1969 edition.

³⁰ For example, in the story "Djeca se igraju" ["Children Are Playing"], in the first two editions they are playing a game called "Kraljević Marko i dvanaest Arapa" ["Prince

This edition contains 28 stories taking up 330 pages. Slighter curtailments of the text were made to improve the flow of the narration, but, generally, these alterations to the text were made to affirm more strongly this literary work of Truhelka in the Croatian tradition, given that this was the political tendency of the time. But the largest impact on the text and its reading/understanding has been made with omitting the frame story. By doing this the grownup Anica vanished as a narrator and the strong autobiographical connection with the author as well.

The fourth edition of *The Golden Days* collection appeared in 1969, in a political system that had values completely opposite to those built in Truhelka's work. The editor of the edition, Milan Crnković, one of the most prominent and meritorious Croatian researchers of children's literature, seized the moment of a relative weakening of state control³¹ and after 27 years of silence published this work with certain modifications. Bearing in mind the existing research of censorship during the Socialist period in Yugoslavia (Svetina, 2011, Pokorn, 2012, Mazi-Leskovar, 2015, Majhut and Lovrić Kralj, 2016), at its starting point, this research also expected significant censorial interventions in parts of the text containing motifs of patriotism and religion. First of all, the collection was abridged to 24 chapters, with a total of 299 pages. There is an annotation concerning the collection's abridgement at the end of the book, explaining that chapters 4, 14, 20 and 22 were left out because of the text's length. To be specific, the stories that were omitted are: "Bratac Milan" ["Brother Milan"], "Kuma priča" ["Godmother Talks"], "Žabari" ["Frog-catchers"] and "Zornice" ["Morning Services"]. Since this edition is based on the template of the third, already shortened edition, the fourth edition also lacks the previously omitted stories "Nova haljina" ["New Dress"], "Zlatica" ["Goldy"] and "Anica kuha" ["Anica Cooks"], but includes the story first published in 1942, "Ljetni danci na Dravi" ["Summer Days on the Drava"]. With regard to the expected censorial removal of all religious

Marko and Twelve Arabs"], and in the edition of 1942 the hero from Yugoslav folk tales and legends Prince Marko was replaced with characters representing Croatian heroes: Mijat Tomić and Ivo Senjanin.

³¹ It was the time of the development of the democratic national movement which started in 1967 with the *Deklaracija o nazivu i položaju hrvatskoga književnog jezika* [Declaration on the Name and Status of the Croatian Literary Language], the time after the removal from duty of Aleksandar Ranković, the Yugoslav vice-president and the leading person of the intelligence services responsible for state repression to which essentially Croatian people were subjected. "In the state and beyond, books and magazines supporting the ideas of the movement started to be published. The state has again found itself facing a torrent of printed words, which by all means needed to be suppressed" (Hebrang Grgić, 2000: 125). The movement, the so-called "Croatian Spring", was stifled by force in 1971, and on 19 April 1973, a new *Law on the Prevention of the Misuse of the Freedom of Print and Other Forms of Informing* was implemented (Hebrang Grgić, 2000). In that very short period, there emerged an apparent sense of freedom of the written word, which, for example, can be seen in the cited article by Zvonimir Balog from 1970, reviewing the fourth edition of *The Golden Days*.

and national motifs, this edition, surprisingly, kept stories such as “Božić” [“Christmas”], “Zavjetni put” [“A Votive Path”], “Uskrsna zvona” [“Easter Bells”], “Još jedan Božić” [“One More Christmas”], and “Svibanjska slava” [“May Glory”], that is, most of the stories that talk about religious holidays and customs. However, in the texts of these stories, very attentive, surgically precise and consistent censorship of all elements pertaining to religious teaching and the characters’ religious attitudes can be detected. Nevertheless, content regarding religion at the level of customs and activities, such as the celebration of Christmas, Easter, taking a vow, prayers, parish fêtes, going to church, even the description of a church or the words of a poem “We Praise You, God!” (182), has remained. In contrast, when the actions are explained by religious dogma or followed by the religious rapture of a female hero, these sentences were regularly deleted. In the following example, the omitted sections are italicized:

You could already hear the bells jingling in front of the doors. Suddenly the sound of an organ cascaded through the church, beautiful music, the singers’ voices poured out, so the church filled with so much festivity, greatness *and divine delectation* that it was almost too much for the eight-year-old child’s heart. Up there, her own Dad is playing, so wonderfully, so gloriously, cheerfully and sorrowfully, her very own Dad who she likes to listen to so very much when he plays the organ, and yet today, on that festive day, when everything is so different from other days, his playing is also different, so that all of her body shivers *with holy terror*.

Sweet tears streamed down Anica’s cheeks – and at that moment, all evil was forgotten and only the good was remembered, the good and the kind. And what can be kinder and better for a child in this world than his or her father and mother? *And when she sets her eyes high upon the pious crowd and the white statue of the resurrected Christ, raising his hand to give his blessing to the people, and when she thought she heard his comforting words:*

– For you I have suffered, for you I have been resurrected, peace be with all of you who are sad and unhappy. Come to me, to comfort you, – the child went down on her knees before the holy Christ, bringing her little head down low and whispering:

– Dear Jesus, I pray to you, pleas, do not let me sin ever again. Forgive me and let my Mum, Dad and brothers and all good people live.

The priests gathered at the altar, frankincense filled the air, wrapping the light of the candles in a mysterious veil, the organ was resonating, and the people were singing festively, joyfully, and touched:

We Praise You God! (Truhelka, 1969: 182)

Expressions such as “thank God”, “may it please God”, “my Lord / my God” scattered throughout the collection were also censored, and if they in some manner managed to remain, then the word God / Lord was written with a lower-case initial letter. As far as the omitted chapters are concerned, it is not entirely clear what the editor’s rationale was when making a decision about which

chapter to leave out. In terms of subject matter, the stories are heterogeneous and there is no consistency in the changes in narration which would imply deliberate ideological reasons for censorship. The subject of chapter 4, "Bratac Milan" ["Brother Milan"], is the death of a small brother, sadness, and Dragoš's lack of understanding, but also a religious explanation about life and meeting again in another world. Chapter 14, "Kuma priča" ["Godmother Talks"], for the most part consists of a folk tale about a green sparrow told by the godmother. Chapter 20, "Žabari" ["Frog-catchers"], narrates an episode on searching for frogs, whose legs would be revived by electrodes, and Dragoš's attempt to follow the older children in frog hunting, which eventually ends with him falling into the water and being afraid because he has wet and dirty trousers, but concluding with his mother's forgiveness. Chapter 22, "Zornice" ["Morning Services"], describes Dragoš's persistence in attending morning services with his father and his enjoyment in that special atmosphere. There is no doubt that in every story, apart perhaps from "Žabari" ["Frog-catchers"], there is a reason for potential ideological censorship: from the prevailing religious parts, such as those in the story "Zornice" ["Morning Services"], to the folk tale elements³² in the story "Kuma priča" ["Godmother Talks"]. On the other hand, the main focus in all the stories is on Dragoš and his experiencing of reality, so in a certain way, by eliminating these stories, the narrative interest is mostly directed at Anica, ensuring a greater compact quality of the narration. The research results show that much less was censored than expected, which can probably be attributed to the period of weaker state control (see footnote 32) and to the editor Milan Crnković, who, with his authority as a researcher of children's literature, provided an opportunity for *The Golden Days* collection to be published in its most complete form possible. This edition was reprinted twice more in an identical form, in 1977 and 1981.

The first edition of *The Golden Days* in the Republic of Croatia, and all together, including reprints, the seventh one, appeared in 1995. The template for this edition was the fourth edition of 1969, because, as it became evident by contrastive analysis, the four stories that are missing are precisely those left out by the editor Milan Crnković. A comparison of the contents of the editions of 1969 and 1995 shows that there were no significant changes. There are some slighter alterations at orthographical and lexical levels (for example, "točak" – the Serbian word for "wheel" – was substituted by "kotač" which is the word for the same object in Croatian, "bure" – the Serbian expression for "barrel" – by the Croatian "bačva", etc.), but regarding the structure and subject matter, this edition is equivalent to its template. This also pertains to all the censored parts, so the parts related to religious dogma and the ecstatic experiences of the protagonist were left out of this edition too, which is somewhat surprising because the new social setting of 1995 was more than favourable for religious

³² Folk tales, but also all types of fantastic and science-fiction stories, were undesirable literary forms at an early period of socialism.

and national subject matter. It can only be assumed that the editor of both editions, Milan Crnković, was not aware of the censored fragments, since the literary text before its publication in 1969 was most probably subjected to one more editorial reading. At that time, the editor of the “Biblioteka Vjeverica” series was Ana Kulušić, and it is known that the editions published in that series indicate they underwent censorship, which largely remains uncorrected even today (parts of the novels *Bambi*, *Heidi*, Perrault’s fairytales).

TRUHELKA’S WORK TODAY: CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

After gaining insight into the level of censorship applied in the 1969 edition of *The Golden Days* and the contents of the omitted chapters 4, 14, 20 and 22, we may conclude that the shortening of the 4th edition (1969) was probably not of an ideological nature. However, it is unquestionable that Truhelka as an author was entirely passed over in silence until 1969. This is probably most vividly seen from the destiny of her best literary work, *The Golden Days*, with its first post-war edition being censored when it eventually appeared. After the establishment of a new political and social system in Yugoslavia in 1945, the link with tradition was radically broken. There was thus a need to reassess the canon up to then of children’s literature. Works dealing with subject matter that was not suitable for the ideology of the new system, authors who clearly expressed opposite views or collaborated with the Ustasha government, or an entire literature dealing with religious topics, were not allowed to pass into the canon of children’s literature after 1945.³³ Despite the fact that in 1945 the eighty-one-year-old Truhelka was allowed to be published, the real situation can be seen from a period of more than twenty years of silence on the author and her literary opus. Besides, her works have not kept their canonical status. Among the well-known “trio” from the 1930s, Brlić-Mažuranić–Nazor–Truhelka, only Vladimir Nazor was suitable for the new government³⁴ and was highly positioned in the canon from the very beginning. Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić’s fate was uncertain in the post-war period due to her preferences for the Karađorđević dynasty and her anti-Communist attitudes (for more about this topic, see in Majhut, 2018). However, because of her importance for Croatian children’s literature and her remarkable international reception, she managed to persist, while Truhelka stayed in the shadows, slowly falling into oblivion. Unlike Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić, Truhelka neither had strong institutional support (Ivana

³³ On rewriting history and its falsification using the example of the 1930s in Croatian children’s literature, see Lovrić Kralj, 2014.

³⁴ In 1942, Vladimir Nazor (1876–1949) joined the partisans, and, after the war, he stayed politically active, becoming the first president of the Croatian Parliament and the president of the Executive Board of ZAVNOH [State Anti-fascist Council for the National Liberation of Croatia], the highest government body in Croatia during the national liberation struggle.

Brlić-Mažuranić was the first woman to become a corresponding member of the then Yugoslav, today Croatian, Academy of Sciences and Arts), nor a family like Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić's to encourage new editions and translations of her works (even after 1945, Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić's family continued their efforts with regard to the translation of her works into foreign languages). Those who encouraged Truhelka to write and who contributed to her positioning in the canon by writing reviews of her works, her former students and colleagues, experienced different fates, and their organizations and associations did not survive the revolutionary period. Milan Crnković, obviously led by his own memories and nostalgia, initiated the publication of *The Golden Days*. After that, the work appeared in two more reprints, but never again achieved a canonical status.

It is not rare that revolutionary upheavals in society result in interventions in the literary canon, that is, in the collective memory of a nation. All those works and literary phenomena that are not passed on to younger generations over the years simply slip from collective memory. In spite of the fact that older generations may perhaps still remember her, carrying her in their individual memory, as did Milan Crnković who, in 1969, attempted to rehabilitate Truhelka, new generations are not encouraged to read her works. Thus, an instrumentalized collective memory also becomes a frame for private memory. This is precisely what Halbwachs writes about when questioning the freedom and independence of individual (private) memory and setting it into the context of social memory, which is determined by current ideology and by the needs of a social community:

Halbwachs doubted the very existence of private recollection and believed that the individual assimilates the group's memory and can remember only within the context of his or her social group. Every crossroad of recollection adjusts itself to a certain social group, be it a family, religion, political faction, status, or nationality. Group memory responds to contemporary needs, which dictate policies of forgetting, remembering, and transgenerational transmission. Consequently, memory changes as the needs of the group change. (Shavit, 2005: 56)

In the case of Truhelka, the reason for oblivion was, first of all, an intentional passing over in silence, so we can talk of censorship as one way of an active process of forgetting (Assman, 2008: 99). The position of power in which "the revolutionaries" found themselves as the creators of a new canon is particularly visible in the domain of children's literature, since it is directed at the most sensitive reading audience – the one which most easily welcomes new ideas and accepts the offered knowledge and options without much questioning. One day, that same reading audience will grow up and continue to pass on to the next generations the canon they are familiar with, and the consciousness of what was before dies with the last member of the community who experienced the pre-war time, having in mind a different canon. A similar role of

children's literature was also observed by Yael Darr (2017), analysing the creation of new nations by using the canon:

As opposed to adults, children have no "cultural memory" or cultural "habits". They are therefore due to precede adults in the adoption of new national practices and cultural assets. These fresh carriers of the new culture can subsequently function as effective cultural agents in the present, both in the public and in the private sphere. They are further expected to continue to do so in the future, as adult members of society. It therefore comes as no surprise that in numerous cases of nation building, intensive canonization of children's literature serves to construct the national child culture and its past. (Darr, 2017: 24)

As Darr notices, as opposed to the canon of adult literature, the canon of children's literature is part of a sentimental experience of grown-ups who act as its promoters and, as such, it represents a kind of generational constant in society. The introduction of a new canon becomes an organized, conscious activity, most easily implemented starting from children. Since children do not have a cultural memory and cultural habits, the new canon will become the pledge and foundation of their future cultural memory and cultural habits. Darr emphasises this peculiarity while exploring the creation of nations, but the same principle might be applied to all social revolutions which fundamentally abolish the existing tradition and introduce a new canon. In the Yugoslav post-war period, the state had the highest authority, because, through systematic repression of free speech and tyranny on dissenters, it reduced the influence of family and church to the lowest possible level.³⁵ Children were imbued with new conceptions which might have been different from the perceptions of their parents, who simply had to keep silent. The new canon became the only one possible, presenting the past in a way that was suitable for the present. According to Czernow and Michułka (2017), Polish children's literature also experienced similar traumas for socio-political reasons – and it happened three times, in 1918, 1945 and 1989. The experience after the Second World War was very close to the Yugoslav one, especially with regard to censorship ("religious and popular literature, historical works on the Borderlands, the Home Army, scouting and Polish forces in the West were censored"), and all three times the children's audience served for the creation of a new canon ("Its goal was to create a canon matching the new reality and the new state", of course, again at children's expense, that is, "cherished architects of the socialist tomorrow" as they were considered after the Second World War (Czernow and Michułka, 2017: 87)). And regardless of the fact that since 1969 Truhelka's *The Golden Days* was available on the bookshelves, it never returned to the canon of children's literature, since the institutional support that was needed for that to happen was lacking. *The Golden Days* had a new opportunity for its way back into

³⁵ For more on the post-war period, children's literature and children's free time, see in Majhut and Lovrić Kralj, 2022.

the canon in 1991, when the state and political setting changed. The first edition in the Republic of Croatia appeared in 1995, and, in its *Preface*, Milan Crnković expressed the belief that the moment was right for *The Golden Days* to be given its rightful place in Croatian children's literature, and to regain its canonical position that it had had until 1945.

Today, when Jagoda Truhelka as a classic of Croatian children's literature is regaining her deserved glory, we know that it is not *in spite of* but precisely *because* she impressively and extensively depicted exactly such a kind of childhood, which is old but not dead, and which possesses all the beauty and value of Croatian traditionality in the noble sense of the word. (Crnković, 2003: 275)

Although Pavao Pavličić (1994) anticipated Truhelka's great comeback among contemporary readers, it did not happen in the end. In an open letter to the author, Pavličić wrote that the current time shows an inclination towards a return to the poetics that Truhelka used in *The Golden Days*, but not even that kind of support helped Truhelka become alive in the cultural memory of present-day children and young people. Despite the fact that already in 1991 *The Golden Days* was restored to the required school reading lists on which, according to Narančić-Kovač and Milković (2018), it stayed until as recently as 2006, and that that decision was also accompanied by certain publishing activity (four editions and reprints after 1991), Truhelka has remained a part of passive memory outdated and distant from today's young generations. The reasons for this are not easy to see. One line of thought can be found in Vladimir Mužić's paper in which the author discusses whether the peaceful, serene atmosphere in Truhelka's tales is still attractive to children today – in other words, are the values represented in *The Golden Days*, as well as the way in which they are represented, able to awaken and hold the interest of the present young generations who are living and growing up in a world quite different from the world of Truhelka's young literary characters? (Mužić, 2004: 129–132). From today's perspective, there is a recognized need to make certain adaptations for *The Golden Days* to become closer to contemporary children. In the last twenty years, this work – in the context of required school reading – has been “mostly ‘treated’ in a negative way, that is, as archaic, uninteresting, long, boring, unsuitable for the children's age and demanding to read, although its value, especially cultural value, is strongly expressed and significant”. This is why a “new reinterpretation of this novel is not only needed for the linguistic issues, but an adjustment of this work to the age of the young reading public is also required” (Tvorčić Kučko, 2014: 131–148). One example from Zadar shows that Truhelka is not so outdated after all. Željka Diklan, a teacher, read parts of *The Golden Days* to her pupils whose reaction was extremely positive (Diklan, 2018). Neither the initiatives of contemporary researchers in children's literature (D. Težak, R. Javor, L. Fosić), nor a series of scientific conferences held under the name “The Golden Days” – among which those of 1997 and 2014 dedi-

cated precisely to Truhelka – or a roundtable talk held in 2014 at the Croatian Writers' Association, have resulted in any noticeable success in efforts to bring back Truhelka's former place in the perception of the wider public. Some of her works, however, have been read from new perspectives and reinterpreted relying on methodological approaches and viewpoints of new posthumanistic disciplines, such as literary animal studies (Batinić, 2012), imagology (Ivon, 2015) and feminist theories or spatiality (Vodopija, 2000). Truhelka also became the subject of several degree theses, and "female" internet portals find her interesting because of the feminist aspects of her work, so she is willingly thematized from that standpoint.³⁶ But, it seems, echoing Zvonimir Balog's words from his *Telegram* article of 1970, it is indeed very difficult for an author to re-enter the canon once the author has been not only marginalized, but completely covered in a merciless veil of silence.

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³⁶ For example, Anon. *Jagoda Truhelka – književnica za velike i male*. Feb. 2015, <https://hr-hr.facebook.com/PortalLibela/photos/jagoda-truhelka-knji%C5%BEevnica-za-velike-i-male-pedagoginja-i-spisateljica-jagoda-t/1027279587302357/> (visited on 3 July 2019); Pleić Tomić, Barbara. „Modeliranje dobre djevojčice.“ *MUF*, Dec. 2015, <http://muf.com.hr/2015/12/19/dobre-djevojčice/>. Accessed June 2019; ***. "U carstvu duše Jagode Truhelke." *Ladylike*, Feb. 2018, <http://www.ladylike.hr/vise/fama/moc-zena/u-carstvu-duse-jagode-truhelke-3624>. Accessed 30 June 2019.

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