

SCANDINAVIAN CRIME FICTION AND POPULAR CULTURE: JO NESBØ'S HARRY HOLE NOVELS

Jo Nesbø is one of the most important and popular crime fiction writers of today, as well as a typical representative of the contemporary literary genre known as Scandinavian crime fiction. Within the entire literary opus of this writer, the central position is reserved for the series of novels in which detective Harry Hole is the main character. Various segments and aspects of these novels demonstrate a strong connection and relation with popular culture, and they are identified and discussed in this article. However, before the mentioned identification and discussion, some facts are stated regarding the phenomena of Scandinavian crime fiction, as a regionally determined literary genre which emerged to the world literature scene in full power at the end of the 20th and the first decades of the 21st century, and its relation to popular culture.

Key words: Scandinavian crime fiction, Jo Nesbø, Harry Hole, novel, popular culture

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INTRODUCTION

In today's world, crime fiction (implying its Scandinavian "branch") and popular culture are inevitably associated. Namely, it is simply not possible to prevent or separate the (popular) reality from its (fictional) presentation, so that crimes and their investigations have become consisting parts of the both mentioned phenomena. In this article, the connection of popular culture with Scandinavian crime fiction will be presented, through the series of Jo Nesbø's novels with the detective Harry Hole as the main protagonist. The steps which had been performed prior to the actual writing of the article included the reading of all the novels from the series (not in a chronological order!) and the subsequent chronological recapitulation of the main story lines and events with the emphasis on identifying and presenting the key aspects of the novels in which the presence of popular culture elements or a connection to them is visible. At the same time, the available literature on both Scandinavian fiction and various aspects of popular culture was consulted in order to provide the appropriate theoretical background for the research in terms of description and definition of the relevant phenomena.

The aspects of Harry Hole novels identified as the ones directly associated with popular culture can be broadly classified into five categories: (1) characterization, (2) setting of criminal activities and investigation procedures, (3) narration, (4) social criticism and (5) general, global popular culture references. In the text that follows, each of these categories will be elaborated and discussed. However, before that, relevant information on the phenomenon of Scandinavian crime fiction and its aspects which can be observed within the scope of popular culture will be given, as well as on popular culture itself. Such an overview is necessary in order to discuss and understand the phenomenon of Jo Nesbø's Harry Hole novels, place it in a wider context and, especially, to name the aspects of its connection with popular culture. The two sections lead to the third one, containing the conclusions and recapitulation of the relation of Harry Hole novels with popular culture.

SCANDINAVIAN CRIME FICTION AND POPULAR CULTURE

"Crime fiction" is the name which includes or implies any story that has a crime and its solution as a central feature of its plot (Danyte, 2011, p. 5). Through the history of its existence, it has been appearing in the form of different sub-genres, such as detective fiction, golden age crime fiction, hard-boiled (noir) crime fiction, mystery fiction, police procedurals and,

finally, suspense thrillers, especially popular in present time and popular culture as a sort of hybrid of all the named sub-genres.

Within the present-time crime fiction, an important place is reserved for Scandinavian crime fiction, also known as Scandinavian noir or Nordic noir. That is the crime fiction originally created in Scandinavian countries and written from the police perspective, i.e. as police procedurals, but with strong elements of suspense thrillers. According to Hansen and Waade,

Scandinavian police procedurals have been attracting worldwide attention for quite some time. Since Mai Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö introduced the socially sensitive sleuth in the 1960s, this genre from especially Sweden, and literary crime fiction in particular, have built up a wide readership and developed a broad appeal outside of the region of its origin. Swedish novels by Henning Mankell, Leif G.W. Persson and Stieg Larsson have reached a very large audience and have paved the way for the immense international success of Nordic crime fiction in film and television that we have seen since the mid-1990s. (2017, p. 1).

It can be indirectly seen from the excerpt that the world popularity and success of Scandinavian crime fiction or Nordic Noir occurred when it started to be translated into English, thus becoming available to a wider, global audience and market. Its popularization actually happened together with the overall globalization processes, providing an insight into a (Scandinavian or Nordic) literary world of crimes, and, simultaneously, demonstrating to which degree that literature has been oriented towards itself or open towards different, global and popular crime fiction influences and trends. Forshaw (2012, p. 1) states that “crime fiction from the Scandinavian countries affords subtle pleasures often more rich and atmospheric than those provided by the standard British or American variety with which we are so familiar”. Those “subtle pleasures” are probably based on the remarkable ambience of the Scandinavian countries, in which most of the novels take place, and very diverse, unexpected and sometimes even shocking characters, plots, developments and solutions. Another important issue is the fact that the writers of Scandinavian crime fiction seem more prepared to play with “notions of improvisation and destabilization of the generic form, producing writing which may sketch in the rough parameters of the crime novel but also attempts to expand the possibilities of the medium – those possibilities which so often remained unexplored” (Forshaw, 2012, p. 3). Forshaw also notices the following fact:

Even the least ambitious Nordic fiction, however, is often prepared to take some audacious steps into the unknown, producing fiction which can function as both popular product and personal statement from the author. This is not to say that the elements of

innovation (or improvisation) are incorporated into the majority of Nordic crime novels – the field has more than its fair share of workaday writers. But the very best novelists are well aware that it is almost always necessary to resist lazy, warmed-over conclusions delivered by rote about both society and human psychology within the context of a crime novel. Such writers – the most ambitious practitioners of the form – are temperamentally unable to merely recycle and reheat clichés and various second-hand aspects of the genre. These writers are obliged to dig more assiduously beneath the engaging surface of popular fiction and discover the hidden striations of meaning and significance that are often under-exploited in the crime fiction genre. With a newly forged technical and psychological armoury in place, the writer with this approach has a capacity to elevate the genre above its most basic entertainment status. Again, this level of ambition appears to be more readily employed in the Nordic countries. (2012, p. 3-4)

Due to that, in different Scandinavian crime novels, the traces or elements of various other genres of fiction may be found, such as horror or mystery fiction, psychological novel, travel narrative or even love or romantic fiction, and their presence contributes to the novel as a whole, in terms of making its story and development more effective and lifelike.

The entire fame which follow the appearance of Scandinavian crime fiction probably has something to do with the contrast arising from the overall stereotypical image of the Scandinavian or Nordic countries as somewhat peaceful, idyllic, well organized and even monotonous countries and the use of these countries as the locations of creative, violent and brutal crimes solved by various police investigators and/or their squads. That makes an obvious contrast between the present time “status” of most Scandinavian countries as the ones with “some of the lowest crime rates in Europe” (Forshaw, 2012, p. 11) and the literary creation of some of the meanest and most powerful villains in the entire history of crime fiction, as well as of the complex worlds of corruption, social inequality and crime at all levels. Relating to that, another important issue that characterizes Scandinavian crime fiction is social criticism:

Scandinavian crime fiction has long extrapolated elements of social critique into literary form and as an index to the society it reflects is most cogent, from Sjöwahl and Wahlöö’s influential hard-left ideology in the Martin Beck series through Henning Mankell’s concerns for the third world to Stieg Larsson’s ruthless demolition of the image of the Swedish social democratic ideal (creating for outsiders a new, astringent vision of modern Sweden). At the same time, it provides an illustration of Nordic cultural

differences from Iceland to Norway, as seen through such novelists as Karin Fossum and Jo Nesbø. (Forshaw, 2012, p. 14)

The social criticism, together with general social insights and the expression of doubts and suspicions regarding the Scandinavian democratic ideals, are the key points in which the elements of popular culture can be found within Scandinavian crime fiction, as a common, shared phenomena for the entire modern world. Some other reflections of popular culture deal with characterization, i.e. imply the creation and characterization of intelligent, skillful and independent detectives or police officers which do not follow the rules strictly but still achieve the results by means of their intuition, persistence, training and education. They achieve this either in cooperation with their colleagues or teams or on their own, and that is a typical, global or popular, image of a present-time super-detectives or police officers depicted in innumerable crime novels and stories, TV shows, movies and comics all over the world. Relating to that, it can be stated that the crime itself, especially if it is a murder or a set of murders, has, rather paradoxically, become a popular culture issue implying, on the one hand, the existence of a complex personality of a villain, driven by various motives and murder systems, who is also often very creative, innovative and brutal in methodology, organization and performance of murders. On the other hand, the villain's counterpoint, embodied in the character of a detective mentioned and described in previous sentences, as well as in the entire team which helps him/her in the investigation, including the non-police staff such as computer or information technology experts, psychologists, medical examiners, forensics, etc. It seems that the murders, their investigation and solving have been considered as something unavoidable or even necessary both in the present time reality and the fiction which describes it. At the same time, it occurs that, within the entire complexity of the present world, a literary depiction of simple, easy-to-solve murder cases, without a deep psychological, social, historical or some background is simply not popular and sustainable genre anymore. The constant need for extravagance and bizarreness has thus become deeply embedded in the very essence of the basis contemporary crime fiction (i.e. a crime and its solution), and, in terms of that, Scandinavian crime fiction provides truly remarkable pieces of literature.

The Norwegian writer Jo Nesbø stands as one of the most prominent and best-known writers of Scandinavian crime fiction. Within his literary opus, probably the most significant position is occupied by the police procedural thrillers whose main character is an Oslo Police Squad detective named Harry Hole. So far, twelve novels have been published in the series: *The Bat* (1997), *Cockroaches* (1998), *The Redbreast* (2000), *Nemesis* (2002), *The Devil's Star* (2003), *The Redeemer* (2005), *The Snowman* (2007), *The*

Leopard (2009), *Phantom* (2011), *Police* (2013), *The Thirst* (2017) and *Knife* (2019).

When writing about Jo Nesbø and his work, Forshaw states that “apart from the sheer narrative nous, his work also provides a coolly objective guide to fluctuations in Norwegian society. There is also a universal feeling that his work is more strikingly individual than that of most of his Scandinavian colleagues” (2012, p. 105). That individuality probably occurs due to the author’s inventiveness, exceptional storytelling skills, creativity and the overall ability to deal successfully with the courses of actions on different levels, both in terms of time and location and at the level of individual novels and the entire opus, covering the time span of more than twenty years. Each crime setting in all Nesbø’s Harry Hole novels is unique, carefully planned and implemented, together with the picturesque characters of villains but, at the same time, there is a story about Harry Hole and the people around him which has been running continuously from novel to novel, often involving some genre characteristics which slightly or completely deviate from the general police procedural thriller genre, but still contribute to the quality and authenticity of each novel in the series.

Besides the novels’ numerous features which made them famous and bestselling all over the world, still preserving the already mentioned extraordinary qualities in terms of narration, organization and characterization, the novels also demonstrate the author’s relation to the modern world and its popular culture. That relation could be observed primarily through the specific aspects of the novels which, generally, fit into the elements of popular culture that have already been identified in the introduction, and, partially, in this section, as a feature of Scandinavian crime fiction:

- Characterization, implying, on the one hand, the creation and characterization of an intelligent, intuitive and independent contemporary detective or police officer with various subsidiary features and traits which make him unique and individual, and, on the other, extreme and detailed characterization of villains. Another important feature is also the appearance and use of different, modern psychology and medicine related psychical and physical conditions and states in the design of characters.
- Setting of criminal activities and investigation procedures, especially in terms of the depiction of committed crimes and the emphasizing of role, significance and importance of all the participants in a contemporary police investigation, including the staff which does not strictly belong to the police, such as the computer experts, forensics experts, psychologists and pathologists.

- Narration, i.e. the narrative techniques which often make the novels very close to film as one of the most significant popular culture phenomena.
- Social criticism, especially related to the organization of the police and governmental structures.
- General, global popular culture references in terms of phenomena such as music, film and history.

In the text that follows, all these aspects will be presented and discussed in more detail. However, before that, it is necessary to define precisely the notion and meanings of the term “popular culture”.

The first detailed intellectual connecting of “popular” and “culture” occurred in the 19th century as a result of the interest in the folk culture (Storey, 2003, p. 1). For the persons interested in folklore, the popular culture is the one which originates from “the people”. In the 20th century, this produced the definitions such as the following one: “popular culture [...] which is to be sharply distinguished from [...] commercialized “pop culture” [...] is the style of life of the majority of the members of a community” (Shiach, 1989, p. 22). As such, it only presents an authentic culture of the people and, at the same time, “it evades any significant discussion of the commercial nature of much of the resources from which popular culture may be made” (Bennett, Grossberg & Morris, 2005, p. 263). If the term “popular” is used to indicate something that is widespread or generally accepted, then the popular culture can be defined as culture which is widely favored or well-liked by many people.

On the other hand, Williams (2005, p. 180) sees popular culture as something “not identified by the people but by others”. He also notices that it “carries two older senses: inferior kinds of work (popular literature, popular press as distinguished from quality press); and work deliberately setting out to win favour (popular journalism as distinguished from democratic journalism, or popular entertainment)”.

In the globalized world of today, all the mentioned definitions and explanations of popular culture can be treated as relevant in describing the phenomenon.

One of the significant aspects of popular culture is the emergence of various literary and non-literary forms trying to depict the world in which they exist in a vivid and precise manner. If that is connected with various, almost uncountable crimes and murders that happen all over the world on a daily basis, “popularized” through the information and details available all over the world via the mass media and the Internet, it can be said that contemporary crime fiction, within its discourse, topics, stories and depictions, presents a significant segment and reflection of the criminal

aspect of the modern era popular culture, and that explains its worldwide popularity and constant expansion. Scandinavian crime fiction stands as one of its most significant branches and Jo Nesbø as one of its most important authors and representatives, with Harry Hole novels as the central axis of his literary opus. In the following section, the aspects of popular culture in those novels will be presented and explained, both individually and in their mutual connections.

HARRY HOLE NOVELS AND POPULAR CULTURE

Detective Harry Hole, the key character in Jo Nesbø's series of twelve novels, presents a complex and intriguing personality, with a whole range of distinctive personal traits. These traits, as well as his character, have been gradually developed in the course of the novels.

Harry Hole initially seems as a combination of a noir crime fiction and police procedural fiction detective. He is a loner with extraordinary investigation capacities and intuition, well trained and educated. From novel to novel, as the (narrative) time passes by, he also has a severe problem with alcoholism that is, generally, somehow kept under control. Hole has a very strict feeling for justice, and he will do anything to make things right, even if that implies the avoidance of the regulated procedures. On the other hand, his relationships with other people are problematic, despite his absolute loyalty and support for the colleague policemen and detectives in all critical situations, implying the readiness to put his life in danger without hesitation. Hole has a sister with the Down syndrome whom he adores and very few friends, while his love life is turbulent although women find him attractive and intriguing. Also, it can be said that he is a sort of a contemporary super-detective, where his physical and intellectual capacity, as well as the ability of reasoning and decision making in difficult and almost impossible conditions sometimes go far beyond ordinary human capacities and skills, especially if different physical injuries and situations which Hole faces in different novels are taken into account.

If it is observed below the surface, it can be noticed that numerous, sometimes even contradictory characteristics may be found in Nesbø's depiction of Harry Hole throughout the novels, referring to various popular culture phenomena. Both in terms of his visual appearance and the music which he listens to and follows, Hole is a typical representative of the popular blues, jazz, rock and heavy metal music culture. In different novels, he refers to the bands and musicians from the jazz pianist Duke Ellington to the rock music legend Neil Young and from the punk classics Sex Pistols to the modern pop, rock and heavy metal music and visual sensations such as A-ha, Slipknot and Foo Fighters. His view on music is critical and uncompromising and implies both a clearly developed taste and a large

listening experience. It can be said that, in the world of popular culture phenomena such as music and film (Hole is also a great fan of Francis Ford Coppola's movie *The Conversation*, and absolutely disrespects Mel Gibson's *Braveheart*) he is a sort of a traditionalist, more oriented towards the older, classical trends and values, while he accepts the new things only partially and with a distance. It is the same with his use of modern communication and information technologies. He is fully aware of their existence and benefits, but at the same time he rejects to know them better and to use them. Thus, his mobile phone has only few numbers saved as contacts. Hole can be seen as a person who has chosen to stay out of the currents of popular mainstream culture and digital technologies and remain in the classic and analogue world, thus opposing the globalization and instant cultural phenomena with limited duration, as well as the availability of everything and everyone to everything and everyone, which characterizes the popular information and communication tendencies in the world of today. Of course, to solve a crime, or simply to find a clue, Harry Hole will use all possible means, but in his private time, he will avoid new technology and products as much as possible.

In all Harry Hole novels, written between 1997 and 2019 and covering roughly the same period in the life of Hole and other reoccurring subsidiary characters, the action, essentially based on a crime (murder) or crimes (murders), involves a great deal of main and side events, unexpected turns, past flashbacks or, more generally said, of different narratives which are interwoven both at the level of a particular novel and the entire corpus. Within them, Jo Nesbø manages to explore, describe and comment different present-time situations and events, and, at the same time, to refer to various popular culture phenomena.

The first of these phenomena is the contemporary organization of the police as an institution for criminal case investigation and solving. Besides the "ordinary" policemen and detectives and their work described in various police procedural novels, the contemporary police also includes, on the one side, the entire hierarchy of chiefs, commanders, officials and politicians at a higher level of power, and, on the other, there are positions and occupations involving the persons with education and training different or wider than that of a police officer. Such persons act as psychologists, medical examiners, forensic and computer/information technology experts, and, in all the novels, they have an important role in solving a crime puzzle and finding a killer by giving different types of contributions and/or by finding important information.

Although the commanding structure of the police has been described from the very beginning of crime novels, the structures described by Jo Nesbø in his Harry Hole novels, especially in the newer ones, such as *Phantom*, *Police* and *The Thirst*, are a typical example of a modern time multi-

level organizational structure, interested only in the final result and the public image regardless of everything that needs to be done, performed or sacrificed on the way to achieve such a result. In depicting the complex police apparatus of both the Oslo Crime Squad and the entire organizational structure which surrounds it, Nesbø breaks to pieces the popular image of Norway as a perfectly organized Nordic country with an excellent and rightful system of government, social care and welfare for all its citizens, still and peaceful, almost without crimes, without political and media sensations and modern world problems such as drug abuse, unemployment, homelessness and corruption at various state and local levels. Fully aware of the value and importance of the authorities' addressing to general population through different media and public appearances, press conferences, etc., in sort of a discourse of power, Nesbø describes in detail the mechanism of live TV shows and duels, official and unofficial meetings, parties and ceremonies and especially of press conferences and public speaking in relation to the solving of a criminal case. He is fully aware that the discursive power of public addressing is not in the hands of those actively involved in a specific case, but in the hands of the ones who are at higher political and organizational positions, so that the facts they pronounce as the truth have validity and influence among the people, regardless of quality and objectiveness. For them, it is important only to find a closure which can be presented to media as a proof their value and capacities, and thus provide the support of public and the higher authorities. These mechanisms of media and position (ab)use, largely outside the scope of the police business, as well as the mechanisms of corruption, organized crime and cooperation with criminals are a significant part of background stories in Nesbø's novels. This can be seen vividly through the character of Harry Hole's "arch enemy" within the police, Mikael Bellman (*The Leopard, Phantom, Police, The Thirst*) and his "shadow", police officer and loyal childhood friend Truls Bernsten who does a great deal of dirty work for him in various situations. Bellman is an ambitious, corrupted and power-hungry character who, in the chronological order of the novels, holds different positions from the head of Kripos (The National Criminal Investigation Service, a special agency of the Norwegian Police) to the Chief of the Police. Another important figure in this sense is Bellman's secret mistress, Isabelle Skoyen, the Councillor for Social Affairs at Oslo City Hall. In older novels, (*The Readbreast, Nemesis, The Devil's Star*), there is also the police officer Tom Waaler as an illegal weapons smuggler and a police officer deeply involved in criminal activities and benefits arising from them. Besides the mentioned, there are numerous subsidiary characters with similar traits, actions and activities presented within the narrative of particular novels, which depict a present-time image of governing, industrial, economic and administrative apparatuses through

different manipulations, corruption and fight for power, which have become a sort of popular culture issue in today's society, and Nesbø's presentation of the situation in Oslo and Norway can surely be applied on a more global level.

On the other hand, different professionals closely related to the police, criminal case investigation and solving, such as psychologists, medical examiners, forensics and computer experts play important roles in the action of Harry Hole novels. These occupations, as an inseparable part of all police investigations and crime solving operations in present time and popular culture, are associated with all aspects of criminal processing procedures and techniques. In this sense, the core of Harry Hole's team for investigations, observed at the level of the entire corpus of novels, consists of several very remarkable characters, mostly trained policemen with some special, additional skills and capacities, which also comply with popular discoveries, findings and states defined by contemporary psychology, medicine and forensic science, and popularized through written publications, mass media and the Internet. One of such characters is Beate Lonn (introduced in the novel *Nemesis* and killed in *Police*), who will become an important partner to Harry and also establish significant relations with some of other characters. Beate is a daughter of a police officer killed in a bank robbery and a brave and dedicated detective with the unique ability, i.e. a rare genetic condition to remember every face she has ever seen, which is very important in many situations during the investigations in which she participates. This gift represents a typical peculiarity which characterizes the popular culture of identifying and using the "super" people with some extraordinary capacities, above the level of what is considered "normal" or standardized. Another person is Katrine Bratt, a character who appeared for the first time as a newcomer in the novel *The Snowman*. She is a good detective and an excellent computer search expert, with the amazing association skills (which is particularly visible and emphasized in *The Leopard*). At the same time, she is mentally unstable and unpredictable, suffering from a sort of uncontrollable paranoia, which is a mental state closely associated with the present time psychology and culture of living. Finally, there is Stig Aune, a psychologist, psychotherapist and police advisor who treated Harry for alcoholism and became his friend in time. Aune's (psychological) judgements, opinions and profiles are often crucial for investigations and their solutions, thus emphasizing the role of psychological approach to criminals, villains and murderers. This is also a common trait of popular culture relating to the presentation of crime and murder issues and their treatment, originating to the times of Sherlock Holmes novels, but gaining its true potential in the everyday real life and contemporary crime fiction.

Other significant consisting parts of Jo Nesbø's Harry Hole novels are the villains and their crimes (murders). From *The Bat* to *Knife*, Nesbø creates the villains in a multidimensional manner, using a lot of references from popular culture, medicine, psychology and history. The contemporary notion of villains in popular culture and literature, with many accompanying details and pieces of information, has found its place in Nesbø's novels, in the creation of remarkable and frightening characters of villains and descriptions of the committed murders, victims and crime scenes. In the novels, such villains range from a former Norwegian Nazi (*The Redbreast*), over a PTSD hitman from Croatia (*The Redeemer*) to a renowned surgeon with scleroderma (*The Snowman*); or from Harry Hole's colleague from the Police School in which he works in the novel *Police*, Arnold Folkestad, to a horrifying maniacal rapist and serial killer Valentin Gjertsen (*The Thirst*) and his father Svein Finne (*The Thirst, Knife*). All the villains are carefully and gradually built in the narrative of novels, with their identities kept secret to the very ends. In some novels, Jo Nesbø provides them with specific murder weapons or methods, which make them even more authentic and horrifying, such as the manufactured iron teeth (*The Thirst*), rare Marlin sniper rifle (*The Redbreast*), copycat killing at the scenes of unsolved murders (*Police*) or, even, the weapon invented by Nesbø himself, called "armored heart" (*The Leopard*). Such care for every detail is a typical characteristic of popular contemporary crime novels and thrillers, but also of reporting and presenting of criminal or murder events in real life. It is simply not enough just to have a killer and victim(s) and to (try to) catch them: popular culture requires constant tension, unexpected turns and depiction with special care and many details of everything relevant to the crimes and murderers, and that is exactly what Jo Nesbø does in his Harry Hole novels.

Through the action of his novels and especially through the villains or main characters, Jo Nesbø refers to or investigates some events, situations and phenomena from history, such as the war in former Yugoslavia, Norwegian collaboration with the Nazis in the Second World War, Israeli-Palestinian peace conference which started in Norway, the Neo-Nazi movement in present time Norway etc. The use of such historical references can also be identified as an element of popular culture in Harry Hole novels, due to the popular tendencies in contemporary literature to base the stories on real historical events or facts. In that way, the author achieves universality and wideness of his novels by exploring different global and local contexts, both past and present, and embedding them in the courses of actions.

The narrative techniques used by Jo Nesbø also contribute to that. Namely, the narration in the novels mostly takes place in the third person singular, from the position of an omniscient narrator, with some episodes

in the first person, mostly representing the direct thoughts of villains, victims or some other characters. However, it often changes focalizations, perspectives, times and places, so that the final effect is close to the verbal camera-eye presentation of events, similar to the technique of audiovisual narration which characterizes film, as one of the most important arts and constituents of popular culture. Also, in his narratives, especially at the beginning of the novels, Nesbø often uses the film-like lack of provided information and makes interesting, sometimes ambiguous narratives (e.g. at the beginnings of *The Police* and *Knife*) or perspective shifts in terms of place, time and characters linked by the similar or same actions, making a reader uncertain about what is happening to whom, where and when (e.g. at the beginning of *The Redeemer*). Such ambiguity and uncertainty, as well as the tension and interest they arouse, also present one of the common traits of crime and other narratives imposed by popular culture, aiming to make a novel more dynamic, interesting and unpredictable.

Finally, the locations of Harry Hole novels are also in accordance with the popular cultural tendency of travelling and experiencing different places, societies and cultures. That is the case both with Hole's hometown Oslo and the countries he visited (Croatia, in *The Redeemer*) or lived in for a period of time (Hong Kong, in *The Leopard* and *Phantom*). Simultaneously, Nesbø introduces different contemporary problems which characterize the places, such as illegal drug markets and abuse, smuggling of weapons, corruption and the class of rich people with large political and social influence, almost untouchable for the law. In that way, as a sort of a background to the crimes and murders which are the primary topics of his novels, Nesbø makes an effort to demonstrate various complexities of the present world and consequently of the, rather unpredictable and often chaotic and endangered, popular culture of human activity and existence.

CONCLUSIONS

Jo Nesbø and his Harry Hole novels hold a significant position within Scandinavian crime fiction, as well as within the contemporary crime fiction on a global level. That is primarily due to their inventive and extraordinary stories, characters, plots and twists, implemented through innovative and consistent narrative techniques. However, another strength and attraction of these novels also lies in the way in which their writer depicts the modern world and the popular culture. As it has been shown, the segments in which that is visible include, primarily, the creation and characterization of a contemporary super-detective and different villains, with the use of various modern psychology and medicine related conditions. There are also various depictions of crimes, crime settings and investigations, with a special emphasis on the role of computer experts, forensics experts, psychologists

and pathologists, and settings of the action all over the world. Harry Hole novels series are also characterized by specific filmlike narrative techniques and by expressing different forms of social criticism. Finally, there are the popular culture references in terms of music, film and history.

Everything mentioned is mostly performed and visible through the words, thoughts and actions of Harry Hole and other characters, presenting situations, actions and administrative mechanisms. Although this mostly refers to Norway and its internal issues, it is applicable to almost any country in the present world. Nesbø's novels also demonstrate the concerning fact that the phenomena such as murders, crime, serial killers, torture, rape or corruption have become the issues so closely related to popular culture and everyday life that modern people are willing to read about and discuss them in the same manner as they do with ordinary daily news and stories, as warranted by the global increase of violence, criminal acts and homicides in the real world, and the extraordinary fast distribution of information on them all over the world via mass media and the Internet. Finally, Nesbø's novels present the different occurrences of the darkest sides of the human mind, often rooted in psychical disorders being the consequences of living in the contemporary world, its challenges, speed and popular culture. They also demonstrate the existence and functioning of the discourse of power at different levels high above the ordinary citizens, and its impact on everyday life. All that makes them a unique fictional image of the reality of contemporary living and the popular culture and its flows.

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SKANDINAVSKA KRIMINALISTIČKA PROZA I POPULARNA KULTURA: ROMANI JUA NESBEA O HARIJU HULEU

Rezime

U današnjem vremenu i svijetu u kome živimo, postoji neizbježna i neosporna povezanost između kriminalističke proze i popularne kulture, koja se prvenstveno ogleda u tome što su zločini i njihove istrage praktično sastavni dio oba navedena fenomena. Takođe, u okviru savremene kriminalističke proze, veoma važno i istaknuto mjesto zauzima „skandinavski kriminalistički proza“, kao regionalno određeni književni žanr, koji se u punoj snazi pojavio na svjetskoj književnoj sceni krajem 20. i u prvim decenijama 21. vijeka, i kao takav je višestruko povezan sa popularnom kulturom. Među piscima koji pripadaju žanru „skandinavske kriminalističke proze“, značajno mjesto svakako ima Ju Nesbe, kao tipični predstavnik ovog žanra, ali i kao jedan od najznačajnijih i najpopularnijih pisaca današnjice u domenu kriminalističkih romana i trilera. U književnom opusu ovog pisca, centralno mjesto zauzimaju romani u kojima se, kao glavni lik, pojavljuje detektiv Hari Hule. Do sada je, u periodu od 1997. do 2019. godine, objavljeno dvanaest romana u kojima se Hari Hule pojavljuje kao glavni lik. Navedeni romani približno, u vremenskom smislu, obuhvataju isti period u Huleovom životu, kao i u životima ostalih likova koji se pojavljuju u romanima. U raznim segmentima i aspektima ovih romana ispoljavaju se snažna povezanost i odnos sa popularnom kulturom, i oni se identifikuju i razmatraju u ovom radu. Segmenti i aspekti romana o Hariju Huleu koji su identifikovani kao direktno povezani sa popularnom kulturom mogu se, u širem smislu, klasifikovati u pet kategorija: karakterizacija, postavke kriminalnih aktivnosti i istražnih postupaka, pripovijedanje, društvena kritika i opšte reference u vezi sa popularnom kulturom. U radu se detaljno razmatra svaka od navedenih kategorija. Međutim, prije nego što se obavi pomenuto identifikovanje i razmatranje, neophodno je navesti i određene činjenice u vezi sa fenomenom „skandinavske kriminalističke proze“ i svjetske popularnosti ovog žanra. Takođe, razmatra se i sam fenomen popularne kulture i različite definicije ovog pojma koje se mogu naći u literaturi. Pri tome se poseban naglasak stavlja na činjenicu da u okviru popularne kulture dolazi do pojavljivanja različitih književnih i neknjiževnih oblika i žanrova putem kojih se „realni“ svijet u kome ovi oblici i žanrovi egzistiraju nastoji prikazati na

живописан и прецизан начин, а у оквиру тога различити видови криминалистичке прозе имају изузетно значајно мјесто.

Кључне ријечи: скандинавски криминалистички роман, Ју Несбе, Хари Хуле, роман, популарна култура