

## **Serial and thrill killing in literature and film: a conflict of knowledge**

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Murders are in themselves thrilling crimes, because they blur the boundaries "between ones living self and the corpse one will become, forcing recognition of the end into the heart of our here, our now, our aliveness:" (Kristeva, 1982: 3-4). Literature and films in recent decades in particular have been marked by two dreadful forms of murders - serial and thrill killing. Such murders have been dealt by the novels *Psycho* by Robert Bloch, *American Psycho* by Bret Easton Ellis, novels about Hannibal Lecter by Thomas Harris and novels about Thomas Ripley by Patricia Highsmith, which have also been adapted for the screen. All of them reflect the basic knowledge governing criminology and the operation of the criminal justice system at a given historical time. The literary works and films analysed in this paper reflect the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of 21st century of Western society, value and criminal policy trends in Western societies and changing forms of knowledge, which are perceived as "principal" or "relevant" in dealing with crime.

The article addresses the following questions: (1) which forms of knowledge correspond to the notion of serial murder, how and by whom are these perpetrators supposed to be detected and what recommendations for dealing with them can be found in particular forms of knowledge; (2) thrill killing, as a second terrifying method of killing is analysed in this article in relation to the pleasure of murderer and his subjectivization. The message of novels and films about thrill killing, decontextualized and sexual murders in a hyper-consumption and metaphysically exhausted Western society is compared to the findings of critical criminological theory. Presentation of thrill killing is set within the context of a mass culture in which the most serious forms of killing become a commodity; a form of consumer entertainment, as well as in the context of urbanisation and the related concept of a town as an urban jungle, a whirling, fluid and formless space, causing fear of the unknown and presenting a threat to identity.

**Key words:** murders, literature, films, criminology, serial killer, thrill killing

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