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Antonela MARIĆ

Filozofski fakultet

Sveučilišta u Splitu

Poljička cesta 35

HR – 21 000 Split

antonela@ffst.hr

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SPACE AND PLACE IN THE CONTEMPORARY ITALIAN CRIME FICTION: THE CASE OF IMMA TATARANNI AND LOLITA LOBOSCO

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to examine the role of space in contemporary Italian crime fiction, focusing in particular on works by Gabriella Genisi and Mariolina Venezia, and their two protagonists, deputy prosecutor Imma Tataranni and deputy chief Lolita Lobosco. The paper argues that space and its features are pivotal to the narrative. Space goes beyond serving as a mere backdrop; it actively mirrors and shapes social and cultural dynamics within crime fiction (Gabellieri). Drawing on theorists such as Gaston Bachelard, this study highlights how spaces infused with human values can evoke “topophilia,” a profound sense of belonging, which in turn supports cultural identity and connection to a place. The selected novels show a strong belonging to place and show how serious social issues, such as corruption, land speculations, the ecomafia, profit, and the like, can influence engagement with space. The cities of Bari and Matera, each with their distinct characters, illustrate this impact: Matera is regarded for its historical and cultural richness, while Bari reveals a complex modernity. Yet, both cities are marred by crime and social challenges. This duality is explored as both picturesque and unsettling, influencing the identity of the region. This paper demonstrates how these spaces engage readers emotionally, becoming central to plot and character development. By integrating geographical

and cultural elements, we underscore how spatial settings are as vital as characters in shaping the depth and resonance of Italian crime fiction.

Keywords: space, crime fiction, cultural identity, topophilia, social context

1. Introduction

Barbara Pezzotti (2014) suggests that literature is a powerful instrument to detect and visualize space, in particular national and regional characteristics, by mixing the geographical objectivity and cultural subjectivity, whereas “crime fiction can deliver a sense of a place” (Pezzotti 2), which borrows from Massimo Carloni and suggests that there is a general acknowledgement of the importance of place in the *giallo* (crime fiction) genre. Following this argument, we wanted to explore the importance of space (on a wider scale) and place (on a more intimate level) in the several selected crime novels by Gabriella Genisi and Mariolina Venezia and argue their function; suggesting that they serve as crucial protagonists in the several examined novels and crime series.

Places and spaces that surround people and objects are well determined by values that people give them. The touch that the human brings to the space, has given birth to various definitions. Spaces can be regarded as highly relevant in anthropological research, whereas interactions between localized cultures and spaces could lead to a better understanding of relations between places and politics of spatial order (Aucoin-McKenzie 395).¹ According to Pauline Aucoin-McKenzie, spaces can be ethnographic or geo-symbolic, as well. There is no single definition of spaces, but instead, spaces can be researched at various levels.² Sometimes, as Gaston Bachelard defines it in *The Poetics of Space* (1964),

¹ Aucoin-McKenzie (397) indicates the importance of memories with regard to spaces, and suggests creating cultural activities aiming at determining the politics of spatial order, and also at making place-making practices that give meaning to spaces whether these spaces are built, worked over, lived in, or a part of the space imaginary: “As sites take on cultural meaning, they come to be distinguished from generalized space as places.” Following the argument of Aucoin-McKenzie, and accepting the basic definition that places are framed spaces meaningful to persons or groups over time (Thornton 10), we are going to focus on localized places in this text, better to say Southern Italian regions and their capitals.

² Marina Grishakova’s (2012) for example, is concerned primarily with the textual space. Grishakova proposes the revisited definition of Gabriel Zoran’s classification of space levels (topographical, chronotopic and textual). With this regard, topographical level would correspond best to what we define physical space. Zoran’s classification defines space with its objects and locations in its static function as topographic. The chronotopical level would include pragmatic spatial function, and the textual level would be projective (viewer-relative) level. Grishakova revisits this classification by

spaces may be called “eulogized” or “felicitous” spaces, depending on the characteristics and features an artist, or, equally so, people that populate such spaces, decide to give them. Bachelard’s argument seems relevant, because he describes small familiar, well known, owned, spaces. The same feeling of a familiar, well known, happy space is identified in the crime fiction we are referring to. What we would like to argue in the present text is how spaces influence the context (especially crime fiction context) and how topophilia,³ perceived in the most positive of its connotations (since it represents a strong sense of belonging and devotion to a place), could serve as a tool for promoting cultural identity and love towards a space.⁴ When studying the landscape in relation to literary work, one should recall the relevance of literary geography, in particular “the role of spatial descriptions in detective novels” (Gabbellieri 3896), because art in general, and literature in particular best captures peoples’ emotional reactions to their environment (Lando 3). Geographical space can be used in crime fiction⁵

adding the metatextual dimension (space) in order to separate the represented space from the space of text production (47). Also, spaces can be characterized by its original, natural topographic or geomorphological values, but also, in a poetic text, by its imagined, fictitious or diversely attributed values. Places and spaces could be seen as internal or external, intimate and open, static or dynamic, multivocal, imaginary or fabricated, associated with more or less positive emotions, owing mainly to the creative and literary abilities of the artist.

³ Bachelard is not the only one (see James W. Gibson) to highlight the relevance of topophilia. However, we find important the fact that Bachelard points out to the strong interlink between the sense of space and emotions. According to him, the notion includes the strong sense of attachment to the space, but also the presence of a historical context that contributes to creating the landscape, suggesting that topophilia and related researches “seek to determine the human value of the sorts of space that may be grasped, that may be defended against adverse forces, the space we love” (xxxv).

⁴ Barbara Pezzotti, in *The Importance of Place in Contemporary Italian Crime Fiction* (2014), associates landscape and crime fiction to the Italian identity, arguing that “regional” and “local” particularly apply to this Mediterranean country. In another text on crime fiction, *The Flâneur Detective as Time Traveller: Social Criticism in the Urban Environment* (2019), Pezzotti highlights spatiality as one of the most important crime fiction features.

⁵ The same could apply to the field of media studies, with regard to film and TV series. Namely, a parallel could be drawn between the literary spaces and the filming spaces. Coviello and Re (2021), in “Translocal Landscapes: *La porta rossa* and the Use of Peripheral Locations in Contemporary Italian TV Crime Drama,” argue that the so-called ‘peripheral locations’ (in this case it is the peripheral Italian regions) apply not only to places and production centers “away from Rome,” referring to various localities away from the capital that have gained on popularity thanks to series like *Montalbano*, *Imma Tataranni*, *Rocco Schiavone*, and the like, but they may apply also to places that are rather unconventional and do not correspond to the conventional “stereotypical representation of the Italian landscape and cultural heritage” (63). The authors suggest a great benefit from “a localized dimension that stresses the *topoi* of suburbs and gated communities” which in their opinion would include “great emotional resonance.” In our opinion, and that is also something that we stress elsewhere, it is precisely the emotional response combined with the familiar spatial context that contribute to the desired effect in the contemporary crime fiction.

to identify the context and to mirror “social and cultural dynamics” (Gabellieri 3896).

2. Places as Protagonists

Mariolina Venezia, in her novel *Maltempo* (2014), which is set in the Basilicata region, by describing Matera ironically states that until the recent past, the wider public was unaware of the existence of the province and the city (of the same name) of Matera, except for the rare few who had read *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli* (31).⁶ The author’s sarcastic remark suggests a general lack of culture and knowledge (with the exception of a few educated parties), and the wide presence of tourists which helped transform the space. She continues to comment, through the mouth of the deputy prosecutor Imma Tataranni, sarcastically confirming that if she could, she would ban tourism (34), *ergo* profit. This short passage summarizes the general idea behind the concept of spaces as protagonists, spaces that have a cultural and historical value, but have somehow been trivialized, or have over time endured various forms of violence and devastation, by being by-products of various social phenomena. To paraphrase Pezzotti, Italian crime fiction is a reflection of contemporary Italy. In order to explain this idea, we will consider the Southern Italian regions of Basilicata and Apulia, which have become crime scene locations in novels by Venezia and Genisi.

The two case studies that we are about to present determine the physical space behind the scenes, but at the same time include an anthropological dimension which is known to comprise the three constitutive elements of space, time and culture. In support of this argument, we should recall Lefebvre’s theory about the permeation of space and the influence of human activities, its active engagement, and the ways the space is shaped and influenced upon by social dynamics. Lefebvre (1991), namely, suggests that what humans perceive is physical space, a lived space that is something that humans experience through social relations in everyday life, whereas conceived space should be conceptualized by experts (e.g., architects, etc.). The fact remains that geographical space reflects

⁶ Among other novels, Mariolina Venezia authored five novels about Imma Tataranni, a public prosecutor in Matera: *Come piante tra i sassi* (2013), *Maltempo* (2014), *Rione Serra Venerdì* (2018), *Via del Riscatto* (2019), and *Ecchecavolo. Il mondo secondo Imma Tataranni* (2021). Imma Tataranni is an independent, strict and uncompromising investigator, relentlessly pursuing the truth. She is the deputy prosecutor in Matera, leading a mainly male team with authority.

social dynamics. Basilicata, and in particular Matera,⁷ have in the past decades become extremely attractive for many reasons to diverse interested parties, appealing not only to tourists who visit it for their unique cultural and historical sights, but also to other stakeholders who find in that region their economic or financial interests, or better to say profit. Namely, there are two faces of the region. On the one side, there is a beautiful landscape, brimming with historical sights, like the famous Sassi, and on the other, there is crime, problems arising from emigration and poverty, and the significant influence of mafia organizations looking to get rich through market and civil engineering speculations, which are referred to in Venezia's novels. The settings of the novels reflect these dynamics. In fact, one of the protagonists, confesses:

Eppure, il petrolio estratto in Basilicata copriva ottanta per cento della produzione nazionale. Le royalties del sette per cento sul greggio erano le più basse al mondo. I giacimenti, i più grandi d'Europa. L'occupazione creata nel territorio, quasi inesistente. La Basilicata restava la regione più povera d'Italia, mentre ogni giorno dal suo sottosuolo si tiravano fuori barili per milioni di euro. Fra le attività generate dall'indotto, una delle più fiorenti era la prostituzione. Perché lì si arrivava, si prendeva e si lasciavano i resti. La Val Basento era un cimitero di capannoni, per non parlare di quello che era successo alla Sinoro, all'ABL e a tante industrie dopo terremoto. Stavano distruggendo un'intera generazione: anche chi aveva studiato grazie a padri e nonni emigranti, ormai doveva lasciare l'Italia per trovare un lavoro dignitoso. (*Maltempo* 164)

Paradoxically, one of the regions in Italy richest in petrol was suffering from extreme poverty. The entire population was relocated from the Sassi di Matera (which later ironically became an obligatory stop for tourist itineraries) before the area became subject of real estate speculations for the benefit of the privileged few. Mariolina Venezia uses such crime settings to draw attention to important

⁷ Matera was appointed the European Capital of Culture 2019, and it attracted tourism, but also various cultural, civil engineering and other projects which seemingly brought progress to this province. Matera, with its cultural heritage was once a backward region that duly paid the price of progress. Reportedly, many activities, especially in construction, were carried out by entrepreneurs who were often in collusion with corrupt politicians and clandestine organizations, profiting from the poverty of the ordinary people under the pretext of bringing progress to the area. This problem is an important issue in the whole book series: "Sono venuto a sapere che vogliono candidare Matera capitale della Cultura. Non ho capito esattamente di che si tratta, solo che è un grosso business. Sperano in un incremento del turismo del cento per cento" (*Via del riscatto* 103). In other words, everything is subordinated to making profit.

social issues. She depicts such space and makes it just as important a protagonist as all the other characters in her crime fiction, so the reader can follow spatial transformations. Venezia wants the public to become familiar with the spatial context to better identify with the characters. These spaces play a crucial role in shaping the atmosphere. It does not represent only the background for investigations but, as we watch it transform, it actively contributes to the development of the storyline and the characters. Such space becomes a multilayer cultural medium suggesting, as Aucoin-McKenzie would put it, its own spatial practices (396). By immersing the reader in the crime setting, the author satisfies one of the indispensable prerequisites in making the detective novel successful: knowledge of geographical features appears to be of highest relevance, in an attempt to identify the role of the place. The book covers all the novels featuring Imma Tataranni contain a city map of Matera and a map of the Basilicata region.

It is not uncommon to find geographical agenda on the cover of a detective novel, for a “target readership” eager to focus on the “familiar *topoi*, and on a desire to conquer unknown and exotic territories” (Erdmann 275). The focus is on the changed taste of the readership, insisting on the newly acquired values like the “topographical panorama” displayed on the map, in order to provide an orientation for the reader and a “visual sign and pointer in the direction of a modified, more complex understanding of the location” (Erdmann 278). By looking at the map, the emotional immersion is stronger, and readers have the apparent satisfaction of solving a problem: the “art of the pleasure of reading depends on this sense of authenticity, allowing the reader to experience normally inaccessible or forbidden activities” (Pezzotti 140). Furthermore, through fiction, the reader (or the fictional detective, as Pezzotti would put it) comes across historical places, real locales, and buildings. This means that the fictional physical movement across the city could be read as an experience of the environment. In TV series of the same name about Tataranni, the spectators are meant to be mesmerized by the beautiful images of Matera: “Sembra proprio un presepe, con tutte quelle lucine!” (*Via del Riscatto* 3), as one of the characters describes it. Namely, the city itself represents the living image of the Nativity scene (or at least the presumption behind the idea itself), playing strongly with the emotional and symbolic significance of space, enhancing the understanding of how settings can play with feelings and with *topoi*, for instance, suggesting a combination of a physical and emotional elements. Spaces become protagonists, indispensable factors in Imma Tataranni’s investigations. The cases to

investigate are many: murders and assassinations, but also the abuse of land, the contamination of nature with nuclear waste owing to the corrupt locals, politicians and unscrupulous agents, often mobsters, who recklessly decide to expose the local population to dangerous and cancerous diseases for the sake of profit.

One special topic is the state and ministerial laws that brought the region to the brink of existence with highly questionable decrees. Deputy prosecutor Tataranni has reputedly dedicated her life to investigating cases against corrupt politicians and criminals, in particular cases related to nuclear waste disposal. In fact, the character is horrified that the Government was ready to sacrifice the region: “Eppure poco più di un anno prima, nel novembre del 2003, il governo voleva ridurre la Basilicata a discarica nucleare, e i lucani erano insorti bloccando le scorie” (*Maltempo* 82), appalled by the fact that the beautiful scenery of Matera could have become the landfill and the polygon for waste disposal. The deputy prosecutor is aware that the population and the Government witnessed a metamorphosis of the space: a once fertile soil became sterile, losing its vigourousness, its colors, its picturesqueness, its genuineness; but some dared to undertake action (like don Mariano Licinio, who gets killed by the mafia).

Even the government helped to disregard and neglect the region. Another issue was the conversion of space, in agreement with the local politicians, from agricultural to residential, with a regular building permit, and concern that due to this urban-fiscal coupling the state was significantly damaged in terms of taxes. Basically, the region had long been neglected until it became a platform for financial speculation. By highlighting the role of space behind crime scene investigations, Mariolina Venezia advocates the preservation of both space and history. To convey the same message, the director of the *Imma Tataranni* TV series⁸ successfully plays with such images of space to match the presence of spatiality in the novels, and to interpret the relevance of the landscape itself. It is not irrelevant that many scenes are introduced by sequences with images of landscape. Space has the role of either inserting a pause into TV dialogues, changing the rhythm, switching the tone in the following sequence, or contributing to the dynamicity of the action.

In her crime fiction, Venezia constantly reminds the reader that the landscape is a protagonist, and she manages to create an emotional link with the space. Let

⁸ Francesco Amato directed the first two seasons of TV series, while Kiko Rosati was the director of the third season.

us remember, at this point, that Bachelard (1994) strongly advocates the emotional and symbolic role of the space. The space in Venezia's novels is emotionally challenging, imbued both with personal and with cultural meaning, which can be seen in particular in interactions between the characters and the land.

3. 'Eulogized' Cities

If we wanted to give shape to Bachelard's idea of a eulogized space, we could recognize such a place in the emotional descriptions of the city of Bari. Bari and Apulia become the setting of crime investigations of the deputy superintendent Lolita Lobosco.⁹ Bari is the city of Lobosco's youth, which this character is very much attached to, the city she remembers with nostalgia and the city she decides to return to. Pezzotti (146), borrowing from Fredric Jameson, considers nostalgia as "the result of a commodified system of cultural production that precipitates a collapse between present and idealized past." We accept the argument of the *postmodern nostalgia* since the city presents all such characteristics: it has irrevocably changed, and Genisi uses the opportunity to bring the spatial context closer to the reader:

Un pomeriggio mi misi in macchina e attraversai la città deserta. La Bari del *bon vivre* aveva cambiato pelle, sembrava di essere in uno di quei posti fantasma che talvolta si vedono nei film o si incontrano tra le pagine di un libro. Guidavo cercando spiragli di vita sui balconi. Non c'era niente e nessuno, nemmeno i panni stesi ad asciugare, neanche i fiori. Solo i tricolori afflosciati per l'assenza di vento. E silenzio. (*Terrarossa* 15)

The city has grown silent and unpopulated, and with its metamorphosis, the people have changed too. There are two faces to the city: the picturesque Bari *vecchia* for the eyes of the tourists, which has preserved the tradition of living outdoors on the *agora*, in which all social activities took place in front of the neighbors' eyes. This is the old Bari, remembered for scenes of the votive Madonna and elderly ladies making famous shell-shaped pasta in the streets, the

⁹ Deputy Chief Lolita Lobosco returns to her hometown of Bari to lead an all-male team. In a male-dominated world, she stays true to herself despite many challenges, relying on her expertise and dedication to confront crime and overcome prejudice. Gabriella Genisi has authored the following books about this deputy superintendent: *La conferenza delle arance* (2010), *Giallo ciliegia* (2011), *Uva noir* (2012), *Gioco pericoloso* (2014), *Spaghetti all'Assassina* (2015), *Mare nero* (2016), *Dopo tanta nebbia* (2017), *I quattro cantoni* (2020), *Terrarossa* (2022), and *Lo scammaro avvelenato e altre ricette* (2022).

very same city that was once proud of its aristocracy. The other face represents modern Bari, a city that has grown to be the scene of confrontations, *suburra* and organized crime, human trafficking, political and judicial scandals, the ecomafia and other grim realities. The aristocratic houses, the city center, and the periphery, have partly evolved into monstrous spaces that hide terrifying secrets. In fact, the superintendent is very much aware of this frightening reality. The city has become the prey of the *Ndrangheta* and consequently, is a theatre of corruption, the illegal disposal of toxic waste, barrels filled with radioactive material, and submerged landfills filled with depleted uranium. Bari and its surroundings have changed. We should again remember that this crime setting is not only a physical location, but it reflects a much wider social context, mirroring problems like corruption, poverty, and crime. There is an apparently urban and civilized space that hides a more troubled city space, a peripheric, apparently idyllic scenery, an agricultural paradise with structured modern farms, which is a cover for organized crime. Namely, social farms are businesses that disguises secrets, such as modern slavery and human trafficking. The character of Abeba, that Lobosco interrogates, retells the horrifying story of modern slavery:

La schiava di altri schiavi. Sono rimasta incinta tre volte, e tre volte ho dovuto abortire a forza di calci in pancia e botte. Non ho mai visto un centesimo, il caporale segnava su un registro entrate e uscite, ma quello che guadagnavo spezzandomi la schiena nei campi e nei letti degli altri non bastava mai a pagare un piatto di minestra, l'acqua per lavarsi. il furgone che ci trasportava, il giaciglio nella baracca. Avevo sempre debito con il caporale. L'avevo capito che non avrei mai riavuto la libertà. Eppure tutti conoscevano le condizioni del ghetto e di chi ci viveva: i cittadini, le istituzioni, gli imprenditori che si affidavano ai caporali, i poliziotti come te. (*Terrarossa* 138)

The ugliness of corruptive activities is masked by the beauty of the pseudopastoral space. This *peripheral location*, which does not correspond to the conventional, stereotypical representation of the Italian landscape and cultural heritage (Coviello and Re 63), introduces additional dynamics into this crime setting, and reflects a much broader social context. Both authors, Genisi and Venezia, by introducing the reader into the world of their protagonists, call into account those who allowed the Italian south, so rich in history and tradition, to appear today as a forgotten part of the Italian territory, only sporadically revived by the influx of tourists.

Another important element to be considered, and which is typical of Genisi's fiction, is the element of water. Geographically, the city of Bari looks as if it were carved into the land and dropped onto the seascape. Thus, the Mediterranean context of the story is easily recognizable, given its maritime component. The contextualization of the seaside, descriptions of maritime activities with references to tradition, as the detective Lobosco proceeds with her investigations, gives an additional dimension to the space. Just the glance at the blue sea provides comfort to Lobosco, and takes her back in time:

Quando arriviamo sul lungo braccio che circonda il porto e conduce al molo Sant'Antonio, il sole sta per tramontare. Le saracinesche dei magazzini dei pescatori sono abbassate, ma qualcuno c'è ancora. Sono quelli più anziani, intenti a riparare le reti. A mano, come una volta. Senza fretta. Parlano del tempo, di calcio e di politica. E come si stava meglio prima. Ho un nodo di nostalgia che mi stringe la gola, vorrei fermarmi a chiacchierare con loro, per sentirmi dire stesse storie di mare che raccontava mio nonno. Tornare bambina per pochi minuti. (*Mare nero* 21)

The typical Mediterranean settings with old fishermen making fishing nets show the emotional component of Lobosco's character, which impacts her investigations. In order to preserve the authenticity of the space, she fully devotes herself to saving it. However, her detective work starts to unveil the horrifying reality: "qualcuno da decenni ha dichiarato guerra al nostro mare e noi non lo sapevamo" (*Mare nero* 144). As she proceeds with her investigation, she discovers that the sea has become the graveyard of barrels of nuclear waste. All additional detective activities are oriented towards discovering the complot behind the frightening truth and continue to be emotionally challenging.

Since both Genisi's and Venenzia's fiction could be classified as Mediterranean noir, we would agree with Gabellieri's argument claiming that some Mediterranean authors are more concerned with a spatial context (for example Camilleri), rather than with the elements of investigations, suggesting that "murder and theft are only the trigger for the detective's work, which involves reading the landscape, self-reflection and socio-geographical and psychological analyses" (3908). In our opinion, this would confirm the relevance of spaces as protagonists. Only authors with a profound knowledge of the context, tradition, and historical and social components of their work (Venezia was born in Matera, and Genisi in Bari) can be read in this key, meaning they foreground the inter-

relation between the space, the protagonists, and society, and insist on revealing the cultural identity of the space.

4. Conclusion

This paper has tried to show the role of space and place in contemporary Italian crime fiction, focusing on selected works of Gabriella Genisi and Mariolina Venezia. It has examined how the spaces in the two presented case studies of detectives Imma Tataranni and Lolita Lobosco act as crucial protagonists immersed in the social context. Such space is integral to the narrative, reflecting both real and imagined values, and using detailed descriptions of places to support the narrative, suggesting that spaces are more than mere settings: they actively shape and reflect cultural and social dynamics in the Mediterranean crime fiction (Gabellieri). This paper acknowledges the importance of literary geography and spatial descriptions in detective novels, showing how geographical and spatial elements contribute to narrative dynamics.

The paper portrays the space layers in the crime novels of Venezia and Genisi and highlights the contribution of the Mediterranean locations to the storylines, affecting characters and plot development. For instance, the Basilicata region and the Matera province, with the various issues that have been immersed in time, such as poverty and corruption, become pivotal to the stories, which are oriented towards centralizing the role of space. This paper, furthermore, suggests that the depiction of space helps readers connect emotionally with the story and characters.

As regards the cities of Bari and Matera, the paper discusses the contrast between their picturesque and grim aspects, defining it as “postmodern nostalgia” (Pezzotti). Matera’s depiction includes its historical and cultural significance, while Bari is shown as a modern city, plagued by organized crime, environmental issues, and social problems, in contrast to the old Bari. There is a type of constant ambivalence present in the descriptions of both the places, not only synchronically, but also diachronically, through images of heritage. The portrayal of these places serves to emphasize the stark realities and complexities of the regions, blending geographical and social elements into the narrative. There is a constant duality to be investigated, present both in the physical settings and in the imaginary. This paper argues that the spaces in the crime novels are vital for understanding emotional depth and cultural context, making them as significant as the characters themselves. It explores how space contributes to

the storyline development and the character engagement, reflecting a deeper understanding of spatial dimensions in storytelling.

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PROSTOR I MJESTO U SUVREMENOJ TALIJANSKOJ KRIMINALISTIČKOJ FIKCIJI: SLUČAJ IMME TATARANNI I LOLITE LOBOSCO

Sažetak

Antonela MARIĆ

Filozofski fakultet

Sveučilišta u Splitu

Poljička cesta 35

HR – 21 000 Split

antonela@ffst.hr

Cilj je ovoga rada ispitati ulogu prostora u suvremenoj talijanskoj kriminalističkoj fikciji, s posebnim naglaskom na djela Gabrielle Genisi i Marioline Venezije te njihove protagonistice, zamjenicu tužiteljice Immu Tataranni i zamjenicu šefice Lolitu Lobosco. Rad tvrdi da su prostor i njegove značajke ključni za narativ. Prostor nadilazi ulogu pukoga pozadinskog okvira; on aktivno odražava i oblikuje društvenu i kulturnu dinamiku unutar kriminalističke fikcije (Gabellieri). Oslanjajući se na teoretičare poput Gastona Bachelarda, ističe se kako prostori prožeti ljudskim vrijednostima mogu izazvati „topofiliju“, dubok osjećaj pripadnosti koji zauzvrat podržava kulturni identitet i povezanost s mjestom. Odabrani romani pokazuju snažnu pripadnost prostoru te kako ozbiljni društveni problemi, poput korupcije, zemljišnih špekulacija, ekomafile, profita i slično, mogu utjecati na angažman prema prostoru. Gradovi Bari i Matera, svaki sa svojim jedinstvenim karakterom, ilustriraju taj utjecaj: Matera se ističe povijesnim i kulturnim bogatstvom, dok Bari otkriva složenu modernost. Ipak, oba grada obilježena su kriminalom i društvenim izazovima. Ta dualnost istražuje se kao slikovita i uzneмирujuća, oblikujući identitet regije. Ovaj rad pokazuje kako ti prostori emocionalno angažiraju čitatelje, postajući ključni za razvoj radnje i likova. Integracijom geografskih i kulturnih elemenata naglašavamo da su prostorni okviri jednako važni kao i likovi u oblikovanju dubine i rezonance talijanske kriminalističke fikcije.

Ključne riječi: prostor, kriminalistička fikcija, kulturni identitet, topofilija, društveni kontekst