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Culture and Identity. Popular Culture as Characterizing Device in Håkan Nesser's sister novels *Kim Novak badade aldrig i Genesarets sjö* (1998) and *Och Piccadilly Circus ligger inte i Kumla* (2002).

Nesser's most popular crime novel *Kim Novak* and its pendant *Piccadilly*, set in the 1960's in Midsveden, share time, location, and the adolescence's search for identity. In that quest the merging popular culture plays an important role. (Grossberg 1997) Nesser catches the characteristics of the time; Erik, 14 years, reads and writes comics; Mauritz, 17 years, listens to the latest pop music and constantly adds to his album collection. He also writes poetry and reads classics while listening to his rock music. The preferences of music, film and literature as well as the media practices by the protagonists convey authenticity to the setting but also serve as a narrative device to characterize the protagonists. The paper illustrates how the references to popular culture are used to depict the complexity and the dynamics of the main characters' development.