

## CRITICAL APPROACHES TO THE ARTISTIC PECULIARITIES OF THE AUTHOR

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The writers who appear in the series “Critical Companions to Popular Contemporary Writers” are known as blockbuster authors. They don’t simply have one successful novel, however a string of them. Fans, critics and specialist readers are eager to read their next book. The authors included in this series were chosen by an Advisory Board composed of high school English teachers and high school and public librarians. “Revisiting John Grisham: A Critical Companion” by Mary Beth Pringle make John Grisham’s audience be proud of their favorite writer once more.

The author of “Revisiting John Grisham” begins her work with the following words: *“If author Nathaniel Hawthorne were writing in the twenty-first century instead of the nineteenth, he would have John Grisham to complain about instead of that “damn mob of scribbling woman” who regularly outsold him. Regardless of whether Grisham ranks first ... Estimating the number of books he has sold would quickly date this introduction. Like McDonalds hamburger’s sold, the number rises quickly. And he’s not just an American writer; he is an international phenomenon, with readers in Beirut and Belfast consuming his words as avidly as those in Buffalo and Boise.”*<sup>5</sup>

We several times paid attention to John Grisham’s popularity among readers and the main reason is the simplicity of the author’s language. From common readers up to scholars can read and understand the writer’s fictions and non-fictions and at the same time they can take pleasure from ordinary works by Grisham. Being common makes the writer famous to the whole world. In spite of the popular status among his readers, Grisham receives more negative attitudes to his works by critics and scholars. He once said in interview with bookreporter.com in 1997: *“I have learned not to read the reviews. Period. And I hate reviewers. All of them*

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<sup>5</sup> Mary Beth Pringle. Revisiting John Grisham: A Critical Companion. London: Greenwood Press Westport, Connecticut, 2007. p16

,or at least all but two or three. Life is much simpler ignoring reviews and the nasty people who write them. Critics should find meaningful work.”

Grisham’s fictional language prefers using simple constructions to using complicated structures. Intermediate ESL students can read his works without dictionary help and retelling their plots also doesn’t require much strength from speakers.

Michiko Kakutani, a number one reviewer who treats Grisham’s works negatively, considers that *part of the appeal of John Grisham’s humongously popular novels has always rested in their grabby beginnings, their twisty, if disorganized, plots. Unlike Scott Turow, Mr. Grisham has never excelled at creating psychologically nuanced characters or used anything but the most pedestrian prose.*<sup>6</sup>

An inevitable thing that the evaluation of Grisham’s works can be seen novel by novel, yet surprisingly in his stories he has shown off himself as a talented and skillful author. The stories in “Ford Country” story collection “Michael’s Room”, “Blood Drive”, “Fetching Raymond” and “Funny Boy” are rich in literary and stylistic devices.

In “Ford Country” the compositions of the stories are literally complete, and in his 6 stories he has used the traditional compositions and only “Fetching Raymond” perceives the circle composition. We have done stylistic analysis of this story and it helps to determine the stylistic peculiarities of the author’s works.

The composition of the story contains exposition (*Mr. McBride ran his upholstery shop in the old icehouse on Lee Street, a few blocks off the square in downtown Clanton.*)<sup>7</sup>, beginning (two brothers Leon and Butch borrow a van so they take their mother Inez Graney, who uses a wheelchair, they are on the way to the prison where little brother Raymond is), the development of plot (on the way the mother complains about not getting Raymond’s this month stipend (monthly money should be sent to Raymond by his brothers), they discuss Raymond’s daily letters to his mother, which is difficult to understand without Webster’s Dictionary, his multifunctional personal abilities as a novelist, a poet, a political prisoner, a songwriter and a lawyer, accepted well only by his kind mother, his breathless accounts of his conversion to Buddhism, then Islam, the Hinduism and his discoveries of meditation, kung fu, aerobics, weight lifting ,fasting and yoga, the crime Raymond has done and their arrival at the prison), culmination (in the prison around the table, which is full of Raymond’s favorite foods waiting for the lawyer and his answer, cancelling the sentence to the case), denouement (the only lawyer Mr. Tanner comes and announces the Supreme Court turned them down and the

<sup>6</sup> Michiko Kakutani. Chasing Ambulances Before Dreams. The New York Times Book Review, New York Times. (Apr.28, 1995)

<sup>7</sup> John Grisham. Ford Country. United States: Doubleday,2009. p.30

wardens take Raymond to the isolation room) and the end ( fetching Raymond's coffin, four boxes of Raymond's belongings - his guitar, clothing, books, correspondence, legal materials and manuscripts, giving back the van to its owner and continuing the life as usual going to work as every day).

In the philosophy of language and philology, chronotope is a term coined by M.M. Bakhtin to describe the way time and space are described by language, and, in particular, how literature represents them and Grisham's "Fetching Raymond" can be a good example to the category of chronotope. All the events happen at one night, if we say more exactly not during working hours of the day till 8 o'clock in the morning. The distance is shown between the Graney's house and the prison. Yet the author manages to describe the significance of time and place with the minor measures. Eight hours demonstrate one family with its horrible problems, how awful is the death of a son to his mother and at the same time to his brothers, despite the death of a family member how the responsibility to the work is important. Big brother Leon is at his work at 8 o'clock in the morning, but his colleagues will come at 8.30, in ordinary working hours.

Raymond's letters to his mother are written in such a way that readers try to read them repeatedly for the consumption of words do not have clues in the sentences. The usage of several words as "*recompense*", "*recalcitrance*" and "*pernicious*" shows the author's talent for making Raymond's letters difficult not only inside the story but even among his readers. One sentence from his letter sounds like that "*Your reluctance yes even your recalcitrance will be deemed pernicious neglect.*"<sup>8</sup> The family has only found the word "reluctance" as "money", yet the rest of words they can't realize. After years of reading with a letter in one hand and a dictionary in the other every day, it is amazing to see that Inez and her sons' vocabulary has expanded. Spelling of the words, how they are used and guessing their meanings are familiar exercises in language skills, have become as routine as talking about the weather in the Graney's family.

Another short story "Funny boy" is the most literary complicated work by John Grisham and he has used intertextuality and allusions very skillfully. As a writer, Grisham's great success lies in his ability to describe the main character's (Adrian) inner world with the help of William Faulkner's works, the reader can easily understand Adrian's thoughts and feelings via the titles of Faulkner's novels that Adrian wants to read. Near the death, when Adrian is at Emporia's house, he is eager to read Faulkner's fictions, he chose some of the writer's works, the selection includes "A Fable", "Requiem for a Nun", "The Unvanquished", "The Sound and the Fury", "The Soldier's Pay" and "As I Lay Dying". It is very

<sup>8</sup> John Grisham. Ford Country. United States: Doubleday,2009. p.39

interesting to see that Adrian begins his reading with “Soldier’s Pay” and finished “As I Lay Dying” and when he finishes the book he dies.

In John Grisham’s vocabulary activating knowledge-structure plays a significant role and it is one of the main signals to attract the readers’ attention. For instance, in “The Street Lawyer” the usage of “public interest law” refers to several meanings inside the novel. It means “contribution”, “charity”, “supporting the poor”, “profit”, “sacrifice”, “death of people”, “wealth”, “greediness”, “hypocrisy”, “victim”, “working for others”, “shelters of the poor”, “success”, “fail”, “marriage”, “divorce” and so other meanings.

*The great detectives have one thing in common. They almost never have sex. Sherlock Holmes nursed a secret admiration for Irene Adler but nothing occurred, there were no other woman in his life, and his long friendship with Dr. Watson was clearly platonic. The detective as an outsider, not only to the world he lives in but also to other people’s beds.<sup>9</sup>* Moreover, the lawyers of John Grisham’s legal thrillers are treated very accurately and his books can be read by all family members.

Proving this idea Dr. Rex M. Rogers states out about “[The Broker](#)”: *Like all of Grisham’s best-selling legal fiction, this book is well-written, interesting, and contains a plot taken from recent front pages. And most surprisingly of all, it’s clean! That’s right. Grisham has made a very good living as a contemporary author who has not found it necessary to resort to four-letter vulgarity and sex-laden chapters to sell books. His kind is increasingly rare.*

One of Grisham’s strength as a writer is his ability to draw readers quickly into the action. This is particularly true of “The Street Lawyer”’s opening scene. Grisham’s strategy of having a homeless man with moxie hold an office full of attorneys’ hostage gives the novel a powerful start. The bloody aftermath of the homeless man’s actions is sure to hold readers’ attention well into the body of the novel.

The author’s novel “The Testament” concerns several important social issues, not the least of which is Nate O’Riley’s ability to recover from alcohol addiction. Grisham appears familiar with alcoholism and alcohol treatment –including the philosophies of Alcoholics Anonymous. His depth of knowledge shows in the discussions of Nate’s background, his stay in a treatment facility, and his attempts, via Rachel Lane and, later, Father Phil Lancaster, to put his life back on track. At the age 48, Nate has much to regret and repair.

In a 1992 *USA Today* interview, Grisham said he wrote things he wouldn’t have embarrassed his mother read. He avoids sex affairs and bloody violence in his books; however more subtle issues of propriety and reassurance in his writing may

<sup>9</sup> John Mortimer. The Lawyer Vanishes. The New York Times Book Review.(June 6,1993):p7

explain his popularity. While a lot of authors depict such phenomenon in order to sell their books. For John Grisham common themes and simple language are also art and millions of people enthusiastically consider John Grisham their favorite storyteller. Since 1989 he has shown no signs of slowing down and he has said he will write until he gets tired of the process.

#### **USED LITERATURE:**

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