

Social Problems Reflected through Literature (On John Grisham's Creativity)

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Abstract — Changes in world literary criticism, along with the expansion of the ideological content and themes of legal detective works, have created individual artistic styles of writers to represent criminal and investigative processes. This allowed us to develop new artistic skills that allow us to effectively and convincingly analyze the human psyche and the spiritual world from different angles. That is why this article examines the literary features of legal detective work in world literature and analyzes its scientific and practical features. This is also explained by the fact that the formula for the development of legal detective work is the result of various partial changes, new methods of killing or specifically hiding the identity of the criminal, as well as the inevitable familiarization of the reader with the new methods and techniques used by the detective. The article also emphasizes the fact that among other fiction books, legal detective works also have a special place for the detective lover of the whole world. From a scientific point of view, it is justified that the renewal of social and legal relations in modern society and its concrete expression in fiction increasingly require legal detective works. This article mainly analyzes the content and stages of the development of the detective genre in world literature. The forms of manifestation of the concept of the genre in literature and art, as well as the features of detective works in world and Uzbek literature are covered by theoretical and empirical facts. In addition, it is scientifically substantiated that the content and stages of the development of the detective genre in the United States were to some extent studied by literary scholars from different countries.

Keywords — Genre, John Grisham, Critical Analysis, Fiction, Novel, History, Tragedy, Comedy, Pure Art, Detective Characters, Characters, Fiction, Crime, Justice, Detective, Legal Detective, Thriller.

I. INTRODUCTION

Literature has much more functions than other fields of art, for its interconnections with different spheres of activity of humanity. It is an unlimited world of thoughts, where writers can express their feelings in words with their powerful arm – a pen.

As a Peruvian-Spanish writer and recipient of the 2010 Nobel Prize in Literature Mario Vargas Losa asserted: “*I believe that literature must address itself to the problems of its time. Authors must write the conviction that what they are writing can help others become more free, more sensitive, more clear-sighted... Literature's mission is to arouse, to disturb, to alarm, to keep men in a constant state of dissatisfaction with themselves*”. [1]

Many social approaches can be based on political criticism, yet they should check how literary works can attempt to improve the social and political conditions of society. And these approaches judge fictional works to the extent to which they help make the world a better place. It is obvious that literature is a cultural arm of the struggle for social justice.

Social and political problems are directly and indirectly affecting the members of the society and the processes by which the groups of people make joint decisions. The main forms of political activities are the election and the behavior of civil governments, yet there are other interactions related to corporate, religious and academic institutions. Initially these forms consist of social relations and issues involving power or authority. Social problems are considered to be issues and controversies, often related to moral values, and religion usually plays an important role. Specific social issues include education, church and state, animal rights, crime and punishment, economy, environment, health insurance, abortion, human rights, poverty and etc., shortly, many people choose a problem which they care deeply about and want to do something about.

II. MAIN PART OF THEME

Political and social issues have deep roots in the literary studies, from the epics of Homer to the Bible. Many prominent ancient writers were political in their work, from the prominent Tang-era Chinese poet Du Fu (712-770) to the Japanese 'Tale of Genji's author Murasaki Shikibu (ca. 1000), from the ancient Greek playwrights to European writers such as Dante in Italy and Chaucer in England. At the period of romanticism the British poets of the late 1700s and early 1800s articulated some of the most powerful claims for political writing. The inspiration of enlightenment ideas inflamed democratic revolutions in the United States and France, and distressed the harsh realities of the industrial revolution in Great Britain. The writers of that time considered art as a powerful political tool. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Byron and Percy Shelley worked in political journalism and political causes as well as political art. Percy Shelley in his essay "in defence of poetry" made a great argument for the political force of imagination. We will not, he indicated, consent to exploit other people in factories or fields if we truly have the capacity to empathize fully with their circumstances, to imagine that we could be them. By means of cultivating that empathy, literature is revolutionary by nature.

While observing the appearance of social and political problems in English literature, it is important to note the discrepancies among Romantic, Victorian, post-colonial and

contemporary literature. *"First, the political and social implications differ greatly among them. In addition, Romantic and Victorian literature were labeled as such in hindsight, while post-colonial authors and scholars are aware of the existing style and movement that is labeled post-colonial."* [1] Nowadays, eclecticism is the dominant phenomenon in modern literature and it requires different items from different trends. Demonstrating social and political issues in fiction the authors use different literary techniques and tendencies: realism, surrealism, naturalism, post-structuralism, post-modernism, existentialism, and etc.

Another significant thing that we should pay attention to is the genre. As we know each genre has its own rules and at the same times its functions. For describing society life and society problems in the contemporary world literature the thrillers are much more available genre of fiction. In any thriller a gripping, plot-centered story, set in the detailed framework of a particular profession, this places heroes and heroines in dangerous situations from which they must extricate themselves. *"There is always a villain and a hero, a struggle of good versus evil. Part of the allure of thrillers comes from not only what their stories are about, but also how they are told. High stakes, non-stop action, plot twists that both surprise and excite, settings that are both vibrant and exotic, and an intense pace that never lets up until the adrenalin packed climax. In short, a thriller thrills!"* [2]

Radenka Vidovic and David Hansen in "A Guide for Readers' Advisors" defined the following types of thrillers and their specific characters:

1. Frame – believable extensive details and technical language should be generalized by writers. For example, readers expect the lawyers or doctors in the books to sound just like the ones they know or watch on TV.

2. Story line – stories center on the plot and the action, which contain national or international elements. Always protagonists must overcome frightening situations, and violence is present. The emphasis of the story line is action and conflict.

3. Pacing – *Generally thrillers are fast paced. Thrillers are compelling reading. They pull the reader in with the sympathetic portrayal of the hero and his plight, and the actions as well as the details keep the reader turning the pages. Sometimes readers are pulled into hero's moral dilemmas.* [2]

4. Characterization – Main heroes are usually strong, and secondary characters are less developed. Heroes operate alone, as they can never be certain, in their worlds of betrayal

and deception, which they can trust. This dilemma creates moral questions and drives the plot. Often characterizations are black and white, with the hero described as very good and the antagonist as very bad. Readers have no doubt which are the good characters and which are the bad ones.

III. DISCUSSION

If we look through the history of thrillers, Homer's "Odyssey" is one of the oldest stories in the Western world and is regarded as an early prototype of the thriller. Homer was a success because he was also a politician and a sociologist, and at the same time a writer. He used a lot of archetypes: a long way, overcoming all obstacles, fighting with villains such as Cyclops and the Sirens and others. Homer gave a lot of mythological characters, yet he managed to describe the ancient time society with the help of his master piece "Odyssey".

We may give as examples for the roots of thriller works a swashbuckling revenge thriller "The Count of Monte Cristo" by Alexandre Dumas, an adventure novel "The Thirty-nine Steps" by Scottish author John Buchan, an espionage novel "The Spy Who Came in from the Cold" by John Le Carre and a spy fiction thriller novel "The Bourne Identity" by Robert Ludlum.

Thriller is divided into several sub-genres: legal, medical/scientific, political/corporate, crime, espionage and techno thrillers. It is obviously seen that the most famous among the thrillers are legal thrillers in contemporary literature. The birth of the true legal thriller can be traced to Scott Turow's "Presumed Innocent", which was written in 1987.

Modern American legal thriller writer John Grisham comments: "Scott Turow rejuvenated and defined the genre. He brought all this attention to it with "Presumed Innocent". At that point, I took it to a different level, as far as commercial success." In fact, the popularity of legal thrillers is driven by two authors who represent an opposite ends of this sub-genre. John Grisham and similar authors represent an opposite trend of the fast-paced, easy-reading story, while Turow and his followers are focused more on measured pacing and detailed, complexly developed psychological studies. We will analyze them in more detail in the first paragraph of the Chapter III "Courtroom appearances in John Grisham's and Scott Turow's works".

Legal thriller writers depict lawyers and their employees as the major characters of their works. The system of justice itself is always the main part of these fictions. The legal system provides the framework for the legal thriller much as

the system of modern police work does for the police procedural. Usually crusading lawyers become involved in proving their cases to such an extent that they endanger their interpersonal relationships and even their own lives.

As we mentioned before the significance of political and social issues and their reflection through literature increases decade by decade. If we glance at the evaluation of any historical event, we can be aware of reasonable position of it every ten years. Poets and writers illustrated social and political problems of the society as a means of fiction, while they expressed their feelings explicitly or implicitly. In contemporary literature the same process can be observed.

Even at the beginning of the XIX century William Blake put in his poem "Jerusalem", "*I must create a system or be enslav'd by another man's*". *The writers of that period viewed their task as transforming society to reflect the values embodied in literary art – the celebration of individual creative freedom, the fidelity to truth by which literature challenges the lies of unworthy authority, and the empathetic imagination that commits one to social justice for all*".[3]

One of the notable works on interrelationship between language and politics is the famous essay "The Politics and the English Language" by George Orwell, which was written in 1946. The author complained angrily about accelerating word abuse by politicians and pundits. This is not only a problem of the style, Orwell proved, yet one serious issue with consequences. As Tim Gillespie criticized it is a lifeless prose that encourages orthodox thinking, euphemisms hide harsh truth, uncertainty makes precision stop existing precision, exaggerated prose nurtures insincerity, and clichés allow people to avoid thinking. So, the sloppy language destroys the thought. Writers, who used sharp, fresh and clear language, helped to make our political discourse more thoughtful and honest.

Literature's focus is on how the individual should respond to "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" as Shakespeare put it. American writer Robert Stone asserted, it is a writer's responsibility to address the question, "How do social and political forces condition individual lives?"

Maybe for this reason – the graduation of many voices and the celebration of the individual – make literature political by nature. If we make incomplete list of politically engaged literature, it can include Charles Dickens's "Hard Times", "Dombey and Son", "Bleak House", "Oliver Twist" and "David Copperfield", Jonathan Swift's "Gulliver's Travels" and "A Modest Proposal", William Makepeace Thackeray's "Vanity Fair", Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's

Cabin", Rebecca Harding Davis's "Life in the Iron Mills", Stephan Crane's "Maggie a Girl of the Streets", John Steinbeck's "Grapes of Wrath", Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World", Richard Wright's "Uncle Tom's Children", "Native Son" and "Black Boy", George Orwell's "Animal Farm" and "1984", Lorraine Hansberry's "A Raisin in the Sun", Arthur Miller's "The Crucible", Ayn Rand's "Atlas Shrugged", Barbara Kingsolver's "Animal Dreams" and countless other fictions. Literary craft and political commentary are intermingled for these writers.

Sometimes we can witness through political problems authors try to demonstrate social conditions and it is a great effect of literature on human being. In English literature the Victorian age representative Charles Dickens's works helped to determine the reform of English Poor Law System. *He created a new type of novel – a social novel. The great contrast between rich and poor Dickens considered abnormal in a civilized society. Dickens put all his hopes in the good qualities of human nature. To the end of his life he hoped to find means to better the world he lived in. But while painting hard reality, Dickens changed his attitude as years went by, as to the causes of poverty and exploitation.*[4]

The author's "Hard Times" can be the best example of a real social novel or we may call it as the best thriller ever written. Dickens believed in the ethical and political potential literature, and he treated his works with moral and social abuses. In his novels of social analysis Dickens became an outspoken critic of unjust economic and social positions. On every page "Hard Times" shows sharply its identity as a polemical work and it is still *debatable whether solutions to social problems are to be sought in fiction, but nevertheless, Dickens's novel anticipated the future debates concerning anti-pollution legislation, intelligent town-planning, health and safety measures in factories and a humane education system.*[5]

Charles Dickens had a great impact on later novelists as a social writer, in the works of Charles Kingsley, George Eliot, George Gissing, George Orwell, and in the postmodern works of Martin Amis and Zadie Smith there are sensible imitations under the influence of Dickens's world of literature.

Continuing the countless examples, Elizabeth Barrett Browning's popular poem "The Cry of the Children" sounds as lament foul conditions in English factories. The poet demanded the enacting of child labor laws even in 1843. Another contemporary writer of that period William Makepeace Thackeray made a great impact on literature via his novel "Vanity Fair (A Novel without a Hero)", and in this

work the author described not separate individuals, but the society as a whole.

Thackeray believed *that most people were a mixture of the good and evil, of the heroic and ridiculous. He knew that a human being was complex and avoided oversimplifying it.*[4] The main message of the book is that there can be no hero in the society where the cult of money governs the world.

The first American author who wrote a documentary novel Upton Sinclair exposed very awful conditions of meatpacking plants in Chicago in his famous work "The Jungle" in 1906. The author claimed that the society was a real jungle and always people couldn't appreciate others' hardworking, in developing countries there's no matter with other's problems and materialistic issues overweighed humanitarian grounds.

In places where freedom is restricted, literature is often considered downright dangerous, a vehicle for subversive ideas, and is often suppressed and censored because of its potential political power. [3] Literature has been used as a strong tool of the society and in future, it is sure, it will play an important role even wider than today. And it is useless to separate social and political problems from literature, any author's first task is to show the society which they belong to. In historical works they have to use some resemblances of his/her days' issues. Describing social and political issues sometimes make authors be in trouble with their governments, even prominent artists such as Nobel Prize winners Wole Soyinka in Nigeria, Nadine Gordimer in South Africa, Jose Saramago in Portugal, Gao Singjian in China, and Orhan Pamuk in Turkey. While seeing such histories one of the most valuable worldwide literary organizations, International PEN has been devoted since 1921 to freedom of expression and supporting the crucial role that writers play in changing and developing civil societies.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn said in his 1970 Nobel Prize speech: *"The simple act of any ordinary courageous man is not to take part, not to support lies. Writers and artists can do more: they can vanquish lies. In the struggle against lies, art has always won and always will."*

Arguing on not only national problems, but international ones insists on having a great courage in a writer. For this purpose XX century blockbuster English writer Graham Greene managed to show that some countries minor mistakes sometimes could cause global problems. "The Quiet American" is one of the author's best selected works of fifties. In this work, the author tells the truth about the war in Vietnam. The three countries America, France and Vietnam and their political positions are the central topic of the work;

Greene depicted some lines on French colonizers against the Vietnamese people, who were struggling for their independence. The book is also important to show the real nature of American diplomacy of that period. Another significance of the novel is presenting the idea that every nation has the right to decide its own future. From the beginning till the end of the book the author tried to explain that no man, no journalist or writer in particular, can remain neutral; sooner or later he has to take sides.

We may give the endless list of the authors who created effective works demonstrating political, social and economic problems of the society. Unfortunately, even today we come across "art for art's sake", which is accepted as a useless ornamentation by many scholars. Against this, political and social novels contain a very simple plot based on from common everyday matters around us up to unsolved global problems of the world's population. The first aim of the works alike which we have mentioned before is to make the society better with the knowledge of law, politics and sociology. Always such kind of authors have encouraged their readers' critical thinking about political and social issues in general. They make us believe there is a light at the end of the tunnel, we have ability of transforming the society and if we manage our all tasks, the bright future is waiting for us.

In political and social novels the features of realism, futurism, positivism and post-modernism are oft-used phenomenon. Mostly the representatives of these trends consume the character descriptions in details, a lot of explanations when they are not necessary and making distance from saying negative attitude toward villains.

In addition, literature can be a very strong arm when the writers send healthy messages to their readers possessing political and social knowledge. For instance Afro – American writer James Baldwin, *whose works powerfully exposed racism, interestingly criticized in his famous essay "Everybody's Protest Novel" the way he felt too many protest novels present characters more as symbols of a social wrong rather than as complicated individuals, thereby turning literature into propaganda.*[3]

Gender, race, social class and sexual orientation are repeated topics for social and political literature, and they form the variety of Political Criticism, but each of them has its own unique set of questions. The types of Political criticism included feminist criticism, multicultural criticism, Afro – American criticism, postcolonial criticism, Marxist criticism, lesbian, gay and queer criticisms and ecocriticism, sometimes called ecopoetics or biopoetics.

One of the contemporary American writers – John Grisham's works are full of political and social issues of the society. Without any hesitation, we can call him as a social commentator through his fiction. The analysis of his stories and novels introduced him as a great political writer of his time. We analyzed his works broadly in the next paragraphs of the dissertation. John Grisham claimed: "Everything I'm thinking about writing now is about politics or social issues wrapped a novel." The author could raise social and political problems in his writing. He describes that everybody has equal rights and duties and it doesn't depend on relatives or friends' high rank in the society. His works cover the themes of social issues and often deal directly with the legal and moral questions around such matters as the death penalty, homelessness, health insurance and prison conditions.

To sum up everything, the aim of political and social novels is to create thoughtful and critical citizens while establishing the ability of examining the society's positive and negative sides and after all make it better.

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