To Kill a Mocking Bird & The Client: A Craft Analysis

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To Kill a Mocking Bird (1960), a classic novel by Harper Lee, falls into a subgenre of American Literature known as Southern Gothic. This subgenre originated in the 19th century, and blossomed in the 20th century (Wikipedia). According to Wikipedia, "Common themes in Southern Gothic literature include deeply flawed, disturbing or eccentric characters who may or may not dabble in hoodoo ambivalent gender roles, decayed or derelict settings, grotesque settings or situations, and other sinister events relating to or stemming from poverty, alienation, crime, or violence" (Wikipedia). In To Kill a Mocking Bird, Lee exposes her young characters to rape, KKK activities, extreme poverty and murder- all common to Southern Gothic Literature in the 1960's. The Client (1993), a contemporary novel by John Grisham, falls into a subcategory of fiction known as legal thrillers. "The legal thriller is a hybrid of hybrids. Just as the courtroom drama pulls in elements of every form of drama and comedy in fiction, the legal mystery also takes elements from every other mystery subgenre- the regional mystery, the spy story, the locked room, the financial thriller, the gumshoe detective..."(Robinson). In The Client, Grisham has merged the regional mystery with a political drama with a mob thriller. Modern legal thrillers started with Wilkie Collins in the 1800's and popularity has sustained (Robinson). John Grisham could be considered one of the most commercially successful authors of this genre (Robinson). His novel, The Client, is not only appropriate to the literary conventions of the time, but arguably, is a contemporary working definition of the subgenre itself. In both To Kill a Mocking Bird and The Client, key storytelling elements are employed for narrative structure, syntax,
diction, rhythm, tone, character development, character desire, narrative voice and dialogue. The balance of these elements generates empathy to reach target audiences of the time, ensuring each author conveys intended meaning.

Part I: Analysis of a Classic Work

To Kill a Mocking Bird

The narrative structure of Harper Lee’s To Kill a Mocking Bird is chronological—conflict, crisis, resolution. The main conflict, Scout and Jem’s discrepancy over how Jem broke his arm, is established with the very first line of the novel. Lee writes, “When he was nearly thirteen, my brother Jem got his arm badly broken at the elbow” (Lee 1). As this main conflict meanders along its way to climax, various secondary plots are introduced, elevated and sometimes resolved. Eventually Lee brings readers full circle, and resolves the initial conflict. Jeremy Scott writes, “…novels contain many narratives…not just one (although there may well be a dominant central narrative). To draw an analogy with video games: these often involve a ‘main quest’ which the character must complete to finish the game, but from this main quest will spring many ‘side quests’, which the player does not have to follow or complete, but doing so will greatly enrich and augment the player’s experience and enjoyment of the game” (Scott 65). This applies to Lee’s narrative technique in To Kill a Mocking Bird, enabling her to reach her target audience.

Lee’s precision with diction and syntax is evident with Scout’s youthful description of her father’s and uncle's professional training. Lee writes, "...yet the tradition of living on the land had remained unbroken until well into the twentieth century, when my father, Atticus Finch, went to Montgomery to read law, and his younger brother went to Boston to study medicine” (Lee 3). Selecting "read law" as opposed to “attend law school” shows Lee’s ability to make
choices in diction and syntax which authenticate this youthful narrative voice. A nine year old
girl should mix up a few words now and again- evident in the above example. Selecting
appropriate diction and syntax enables Lee to transfers her tale to her audience through the eyes
of a reliable narrator.

Lee’s rhythm and tone authenticates Scout as a narrator, further increasing credibility.
Her rhythm fluctuates to match the energy of a nine year old girl. Sometimes steady, sometimes
sporadic: Scout skips about from story to story (as randomly as thoughts often jump into the
mind of a child). However Lee does not let Scout's age get in the way of credibility by
maintaining a steady tone throughout. With tone appropriate to a nine year old girl, readers are
happily sidetracked by neighbors, azaleas, schoolyard fist fights, and gum; yet throughout, Lee's
steady rhythm keeps her audience focused.

In To Kill a Mocking Bird, Harper Lee develops characters by defining character
relationships. Sambuchino writes, "What kind of friends and family does he have? How does he
relate to them? Is he very social or reclusive, or somewhere in between” (Sambuchino)? Writing
in the first person limits Lee's options for character development. She cannot give us the inner
most thoughts of all characters and character interaction becomes paramount. This technique
enhances Lee's intended meaning, and her audience can experience this literary world through
the eyes and mind of a nine year old child. Lee writes, "Jem heard me. He thrust his head around
the connecting door. As he came to my bed Atticus's light flashed on. We stayed where we were
until it went off; we heard him turn over, and we waited until he was still again" (Lee 208). From
this passage readers learn that siblings, Jem and Scout, share a loving bond. Lee’s audience is
also aware that Atticus is the authority figure. The children respect his authority in their own
youthful way. Defining character’s relationships to develop characters helps Lee convey her intended meaning to readers. Children rarely get the full story and they depend on others (having relationships with others) for almost everything. Fictional relationships, like real-life relationships, require time to cultivate. For this, the novel is the appropriate choice and allows Lee the necessary duration to apply this element and reach her audience.

In *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, Harper Lee develops character desire by building round characters. Mitchell writes, "Round characters must have both conscious and unconscious desires. Although a character’s conscious desires may shift from scene to scene, the unconscious desire must not, because the main character’s unconscious desire often forms the spine of the story. In fact, one way to look at plot is that it’s the events that push the main character’s unconscious desire to the surface" (Mitchell). Atticus wants his children to see the good in others. Lee reveals this desire through Atticus’ actions. He accepts payment for law services in the form of goods, represents black clients, and insists his children are kind to others. This unconscious desire is strong, builds with the story, and surfaces with these final lines. "...Atticus, he was real nice..." His hands were under my chin, pullin' up the cover and tuckin' it around me. "Most people are Scout, when you finally see them." (Lee 376). Since round characters need time for unconscious desires to surface, the novel is the best convention to employ this element.

*To Kill a Mockingbird* is written in first person point of view, specifically with an overt homodiegetic narrative voice. Jeremy Scott says it best, "In homodiegetic narration the matter is fairly clear: the narrator will be obvious and his or her act of narration highly ostensible by virtue of the very fact that she or he exists within the story world or text-world and is its source" (Scott
Lee writes, "Then I saw a shadow. It was the shadow of a man with a hat on. At first I thought it was a tree, but there was no wind blowing, and tree trunks never walked. The back porch was bathed in moonlight, and the shadow, crisp as toast, moved across the porch toward Jem" (Lee 71). The narrative voice is obvious: Then I saw a shadow. The narrative voice exists within the story world: At first I thought it was a tree. The narrative voice is the source of the story: the shadow, crisp as toast, moved across the porch toward Jem. Scout is clearly recognizable as Lee’s narrative voice and she exists within the story. This choice provides an all-inclusive experience for readers. They get the story chronologically and realistically, through the eyes of a child. Implementing this storytelling element into a southern gothic novel helps Lee convey intended meaning to her audience.

Harper Lee uses dialect in dialogue with phonetic orthography and dialect words as tools to simulate character speech with a "special kind of authenticity" (Scott 95). In To Kill a Mockingbird, Lee uses dialogue to convey Mayella Ewell's speech. "She nodded vigorously saying, " Papa told me to do it off while he was off in the woods but I wadn't feelin' strong enough then, so he came by... ...That'n yonder," She said, "Robinson"(Lee 241). Lee uses phonetic orthography: wadn't for was not, and a dialect word: yonder for over there. Lee simulates regional specific speech of characters at the time to convey intended meaning to her audience.

Part II: Analysis of a Contemporary Work

The Client

In The Client, John Grisham uses non-conventional narrative structure choosing to introduce crisis before developing conflict. He writes, “The body’s under my boat.”
“Your boat?”

“Yes, my boat. He was in a hurry. I was out of town, so my beloved client took the body to my house and buried it in fresh concrete under my garage. It’s still there, can you believe it? The FBI’s dug up half of New Orleans trying to find it, but they’ve never thought about my house” (Grisham 23). Prioritizing crisis ensures his audience accompanies his characters as they uncover conflict together. Readers become detectives and solve this mystery simultaneously with Grisham’s characters. Ultimately, resolution is achieved when Grisham writes, “The body is in the garage, behind Jerome Clifford’s house,” she said still wiping tears, “886 East Brookline” (Grisham 565). Jeremy Scott write, “Most narratives…require exposition, development, complication, sometimes resolution, and always change or transformation of some kind of another. It is also often possible to discern a ‘stylistic fingerprint’ (Simpson 2004: 14), which signals the presence of a (hopefully) interesting and beguiling individual authorial voice” (Scott 53). This applies to Grisham’s technique. With an overt third person narrative voice he moves from character to character, remains grounded, and keeps his audience focused on resolution.

Grisham’s diction and syntax in The Client authenticates his narrative voice and provides a deeper understanding of characters, their flaws, and their desires. Grisham writes, "They sat next to each other on the log under the tree, quietly smoking and staring at the grassy clearing beyond the shade...Ricky heard the car first. There was a low rushing sound coming from the dirt road. Then Mark heard it, and they stopped smoking, "Just sit still, "Mark said softly. They did not move. A Long back, shiny Lincoln appeared over the slight hill and eased toward them" (Grisham 5-6). Readers experience the feeling of surprise felt by Mark and his little brother. Choosing the word “softly” to describe Mark’s voice draws his audience in and they share
anticipation. Grisham’s diction and syntax also displays Mark’s desire to protect his little brother. “Just sit still” is Mark’s way of looking out for his little brother. This selection ensures Grisham’s audience understands Mark’s protective nature.

John Grisham's authorial rhythm is slow, steady and grounded. This enables his tone to fluctuate as his secondary narrative voice can move from character to character. This technique enables his audience to live inside the minds of multiple characters without feeling confused or overwhelmed. Grisham writes, “Yeah the bankruptcy lawyer was a real bozo too.”

“But you like Reggie?”

“Yeah Reggie’s cool.”

“That’s good to hear.”

The phone rang and Clint picked it up. A Lawyer from juvenile court wanted some information on a client…” (Grisham 211). This example shows Grisham’s ability to fluctuate his tone (with dialogue) and then return to his steady authorial rhythm.

On developing character thought, Sambuchino writes, "What kind of internal dialogue does your character have? How does she think through her problems and dilemmas? Is her internal voice the same as her external? If not, does this create internal conflict for her? In real life we don’t have the benefit of knowing someone’s innermost thoughts, but a novel allows us to do just that, so use it to your advantage" (Sambuchino). John Grisham does exactly this in his contemporary work of fiction, *The Client*. Grisham volleys between inner thoughts of characters, dialogue, and overt narration. In the following passage, Grisham brings to the surface inner thoughts of child attorney Reggie Love. "McThune's thoughts and opinions and speculations
were objectionable, but Reggie kept quiet. She'd been through many of these hearings with Harry, and she knew he would hear it all and decide what to believe" (Grisham 343). A half page later, Grisham, inside the mind of Judge Harry Roosevelt, writes, "From time to time, Harry watched Mark during the testimony of Hardy and McThune. The kid was impassive, hard to read, preoccupied with an invisible spot somewhere on the floor" (Grisham 344). Identifying character thought provides a backstage pass for Grisham's audience. Readers know what multiple characters are thinking, but characters don't know what other characters are thinking. Placing this element into a legal thriller brings the suspense felt by characters out of the pages and into the minds of Grisham’s audience.

Grisham uses “round characters” (Mitchel) to express character desire. In The Client, Reggie Love's unconscious desire is a second chance at motherhood. This desire drives Grisham's novel. With each page we learn more of Reggie's past. Her struggle with addiction, a nasty divorce, a new career, losing her family. Many times we see her go beyond "normal lawyerly duties" but this unconscious desire is only implied. Then, three pages from the end, she is exposed. "Reggie took a deep breath, and stood. She wanted to grab him, and take him home to Momma Love. He could have the bedroom upstairs, and all the spaghetti and ice cream he could eat" (Grisham 564).

The Client, is written in third person point of view, specifically with an overt heterodiegetic narrative voice. The narrator, although highly overt, exists outside the story. Using Jeremy Scott’s scale of overtness, The Client is a #6, Scott's highest level of overtness, and includes, "commentary, interpretation, judgements and generalizations. A narrator's commentary will either be on the narration, or the story itself" (Scott 79). Grisham writes, "Juries are hesitant
to convict without first knowing for certain that the victim is indeed dead. And Boyette was such an eccentric character that rumors and gossip had produced all sorts of wild speculation about his disappearance. One published report detailed his history of psychiatric problems, and thus had given rise to a popular theory that he'd gone nuts and run off with a teenage hooker. He had gambling debts. He drank too much. His ex-wife had sued him for fraud in the divorce. And on and on. Boyette had plenty of reasons to disappear. And now, an eleven-year-old kid in Memphis new where he was buried. Gronke opened the second beer” (Grisham 428). Clearly the narrative voice is heterodiegetic and exists outside of the story: Gronke opened the second beer. The narrative voice is overt with the presence of generalization: they are hesitant to convict. The narrative voice is overt with the presence of interpretations: why Boyette disappeared. The narrative voice is overt with the presence of commentary: Boyette had many reasons to disappear. The narrative voice is overt with the presence of judgements: Boyette was eccentric. Overt heterodiegetic narration provides a comfortable, but suspenseful atmosphere for Grisham’s audience. They know what most characters are thinking and become detectives along with the characters, as the mystery unfolds. This technique, placed into a legal thriller, strengthens Grisham's intended meaning for his audience.

In The Client, John Grisham simulates "normal non-fluency" with dialogue using false starts and syntactical anomalies. Grisham writes, "What's he done? Just tell me what's he done?" Dianne turned to the nurses.

“Can somebody help me here,” she pleaded and sounded so pitiful.

“Karen, do something, would you? Call Dr. Greenway. Don't just stand there” (Grisham 290). A false start, or repetition appears first: What's he done? Just tell me what's he done? Then, a
syntactical anomaly: Can somebody help me here. Grisham intentionally uses the declarative-enhanced by what follows: she pleaded and sounded so pitiful. Authentic dialogue enhances knowledge of characters. Grisham’s audience learns that Dianne Sway is not educated in legal matters, that she is concerned about her sons and that she loves her sons.

Part III: A Comparative Analysis

Both Grisham and Lee balance story telling elements to generate reader empathy and reach target audiences. Jeremy Scott writes, "We empathize in some way or other with the narrative; if not reliving it, then experiencing it by proxy; good writing exploits this crucial human capacity; the ability to experience the world from someone else's point of view" (Scott 57). When writing about Atticus Finch's nearly violent encounter with the KKK, Harper Lee writes, "So it took an 8-yr old child to bring em to their senses, didn't it?" said Atticus. “That proves something-that a gang of wild animals can be stopped, simply because they're still human. Hmp, maybe we need a police force of children...you children last night made Walter Cunningham stand in my shoes for a minute. That was enough" (Lee 210). Diction and syntax has been carefully selected to transport Grisham’s audience into "someone else's shoes". Readers think of a situation from their own lives, and can see this literary situation from a different perspective. Lee’s rhythm and tone in To Kill A Mocking Bird exposes closed-minded thinking in the actual story while simultaneously generating empathy from readers who can relate with (the desire for) acceptance. Lee employs this technique to reach her target audience. In The Client, Grisham writes, "This worried Mark immensely. There were many awful memories about the divorce, and he remembered his mother's inability to testify about any of the financial affairs of the family. She knew nothing. His ex-father paid the bills and kept the
checkbook and filed the tax returns. Twice in the past few years the telephone had been cut off because Dianne had forgotten to pay the bills, or so she said. He suspected each time that there was no money to pay the bills" (Grisham 288). Perhaps not all readers have been through a divorce or been a child whose parents got divorced but, certainly all know a friend or family member who has experienced a divorce. Regardless, Grisham’s diction and syntax cultivates sympathy for Dianne, and his tone and rhythm cultivates empathy. This technique enables Grisham to reach his target audience.

In *The Client*, and *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, Grisham and Lee combine storytelling elements to create intended meaning. The result is free indirect discourse. FID, as defined by Scott is, "a point of equilibrium between mimesis and diegesis, between showing and telling, to what is, arguably, the most fascinating and flexible methods in representing character discourse." (Scott 114). First, an example of Grisham's style, from *The Client*.

She understood, though she wouldn't admit it.

"I'm afraid you're making this decision based on facts not in evidence."

"Maybe so. But I have wide discretion in these matters, and until I hear the proof I'm not inclined to release him."

"That'll look good on appeal," she snapped, and Harry didn't like it.

"Let the record indicate a continuance was offered to the child until his mother could be present, and the continuance was declined by the child."

To which Reggie quickly responded” (Grisham 335).
Character development (thought): and Harry didn't like it. Character desire (round characters): she understood, though she wouldn't admit it. An overt heterodiegetic narrative voice: To which Reggie quickly responded. And a syntactical anomaly: Maybe so.

Now Harper Lee's style from *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

"He might have hurt me a little," Atticus conceded, "but son you'll understand folks a little better when your older. A mob's always made up of people, no matter what. Mr. Cunningham, was part of a mob last night, but he was still a man...

...Well, I hoped Jem would understand folks a little better when he was older; I wouldn't. "First day Walter comes back to school'll be his last," I affirmed.

"You will not touch him," Atticus said flatly, "I don't want either of you bearing a grudge about this thing no matter what happens." (Lee 211).

Character development (relationships): You will not touch him. Character desire (round characters): Mr. Cunningham was part of a mob last night, but he was still a man. A homodiegetic narrator: I hoped Jem would understand folks a little better when he was older; wouldn't. And a phonetic orthography: school'll (school will).

Great narratology places readers in a temporary fictional world created specifically for the act of telling said story appropriate to the literary conventions of the time. To communicate story concept to readers, Both Grisham and Lee combine story telling elements into a young narrative voice. This voice guides readers as they experience a whole new world. Scout Finch is Lee’s narrator throughout *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, while Mark Sway oscillates as Grisham’s secondary authorial voice in *The Client*. Jeremey Scott writes, "Whenever we encounter a
narrative presenting an alternative world we reconstruct this world as being the closest possible to the reality we know” (Scott 54). This is known as “the principal of minimum departure” (Scott 54). The more a reader emotionally identifies with a story, or with the vehicle by which a story is delivered, the greater there ability to relate to said story. By employing a young narrative voice, both Grisham and Lee effectively convey story concept and reach audiences of all ages.

In *The Client*, by John Grisham and *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, by Harper Lee, both authors use similar storytelling elements to establish setting and atmosphere. Grisham and Lee both pinpoint setting and atmosphere with historical timelines to inform readers how this literary world came to be, provide details of the community, its inhabitants and location. This technique allows the presentation of pertinent background information in a creative manner and helps avoid reader’s “inhibition of return” (Scott 144). First an example of Grisham’s technique from *The Client*. “Mark was eleven and had been smoking off and on for two years, never trying to quit but being careful not to get hooked. He preferred Kools, his ex-father’s brand, but his mother smoked Virginia Slims at the rate of two packs a day, and he could in an average week pilfer ten or twelve from her. Occasionally Kevin, the delinquent two streets over, would sell Mark a pack of stolen Marlboros for a dollar. But for the most part he had to rely on his mother’s skinny cigarettes” (Grisham 1). From this we learn facts about Mark and his family. Mark is eleven years old, has been smoking for two years and lives with his mother who divorced sometime within the past two years. From this passage we also learn characteristics about the inhabitants and the community. Mark is cunning, has good intentions, is not afraid of authority, and is willing to break rules. Mark and his mother live in a lower class neighborhood. Mark’s mother has nervous tendencies and at times can be preoccupied. Harper Lee uses a similar technique to establish setting and atmosphere in *To Kill a Mocking Bird*. “Our mother died when I was two,
so I never felt her absence. She was a Graham from Montgomery; Atticus met her when he was first elected to the state legislature. He was middle aged then, she was 15 years his junior. Jem was a product of their first year of marriage; four years later I was born, and two years later our mother died from a sudden heart attack. When I was almost six and Jem was nearly ten, our summer time boundaries (within calling distance of Calpurnia) were Miss Dubose’s house two doors to the north of us and the Radley place, three doors to the south. We never tempted to break them” (Lee 7). This passage provides historical facts. Scout’s Mother and Father were from different towns. They married ten years ago and had two children (four years apart) before Scout’s Mother died (four years ago). We also learn characteristics of inhabitants and the community. Atticus, Scout’s father, is a widower, works in the field of law/politics and is more than middle aged. Scout and her older brother Jem live in Alabama, in a house with nearby neighbors. Scout and her brother Jem obey family rules and respect the authority of Calpurnia.

Grisham and Lee use different world building techniques. Grisham employs a technique known as world switches in The Client. “Creative writing will almost always be made up of a series of text worlds, then, which interact with one another. Each time we move from one TW to another, we talk of a world switch (which can take the form of flashbacks, flash-forwards, and changes of scene or perception.” (Scott 143). Grisham incorporates multiple world switches in The Client-facilitated with his particular style of free indirect discourse and a visual cue. With each new world, Grisham’s narration takes the form of a different character with the first line expressed in ALL CAPITOL LETTERS- indicating the switch. Here is an example of Grisham’s world switching style.
“You’ll go on like nothing ever happened. You and Clint. Momma Love. Nice little law office. Lots of clients. But not us. We’ll live in fear the rest of our lives.”

“I don’t think so.”

“But you don’t know Reggie. It’s easy for you to sit here and say everything’ll be fine. Your necks not on the line.”

“You have no choice Mark.”

“Yes I do. I could lie.”

IT WAS JUST A MOTION FOR A CONTINUANCE. NORMALLY A rather boring and routine legal skirmish, but nothing was boring when Barry the Blade Muldano was the defendant and Willis Upchurch was the mouthpiece” (Grisham 402). The technique is effective for world creation, provides clarity and continuity, and allows Grisham to move his narrative voice amongst characters. Harper Lee uses an enactor, a different world building technique, in her novel To Kill a Mocking Bird. Jeremy Scott defines an enactor as, “…experiencing the text-world from the point of view of the persona of the narrator. Thus, the guide, Scout Finch, is an enactor. (I) feel like I am there experiencing things along with the narrator” (Scott 144). Lee writes, “Dill took a piece of paper from his pocket and gave it to Jem. The three of us walked cautiously toward the old house. Dill remained at the light pole on the front corner of the lot, and Jem and I edged down the sidewalk parallel to the side of the house. I walked beyond Jem and stood where I could see around the curve.

“All clear,” I said. “Not a soul in sight” (Lee 63). In this example Lee provides descriptive details about location; however, with an enactor, she is limited, and expresses only that which originates inside Scout’s mind.
The Client and To Kill a Mocking Bird are both novels and each offers multiple themes. For the purposes of this analysis I will focus on two themes from each work. Both escapism, from The Client and acceptance, from To Kill a Mocking Bird, are expressed using a motif. “In narrative, a motif is any recurring element that has symbolic significance in a story. Through its repetition, a motif can help produce other narrative (or literary) aspects such as theme or mood” (Wikipedia). In The Client, Grisham highlights escapism with a transportation motif. The story opens with Romey committing suicide in a Lincoln town car (to escape life). Then Mark runs from his house on a bicycle (to escape the police), Foltrigg camps out in a high tech mini-van (to escape flying), Mark escapes jail in an ambulance (to escape from testifying), Judge Roosevelt takes a boat trip (to escape from work), Reggie and Mark take Clint’s car (to escape police, a trial and the mafia), and Barry the Blade Muldano buries Senator Boyette’s body underneath a boat (to escape a murder conviction). As the story concludes, the entire Sway family flies off to the witness protection program in a private plane (to escape the mafia). Grisham describes the Sway family’s ultimate escape from Reggie Love’s perspective. “Minutes later as the plane taxied to the end of the runway, Clint eased to her side and took her hand. They watched silently as it took off and finally disappeared into the clouds. She wiped tears from both cheeks. “I think I’ll become a real estate lawyer,” she said. “I can’t take any more of this” (Grisham 565).

Expressing theme with a transportation motif effectively conveys Grisham’s concept to target audiences. The Client, a contemporary fiction novel was written in 1993. Travel by plane, boat, car and bicycle were all common during this time. Using a variety of transportation methods for this motif ensures appeal to a diverse audience. Likewise, Harper Lee expresses an acceptance theme with a home motif in To Kill a Mockingbird. Just as every human being is the same but different, each home in Lee’s novel is also the same but different- all providing shelter with
unique qualities and idiosyncrasies to match inhabitants. The Finch home, like Atticus, has a large and welcoming front porch, and the front door is always open. The Ewell home, like Bob, is beat up and dirty. The Robinson home, like Tom, is modest and full of family, friends and neighbors. Miss Dubose’s home, like Miss Dubose, intimidates the neighborhood but contains beautiful azaleas to give away its true warmth. Calpurnia’s church, like Calpurnia, is joyous and generous. The Radley residence, like Mr. Radley and Boo, is sad and mysterious. Scout describes the Radley house when Lee writes, “The misery of that house began many years before Jem and I were born. The Radley’s, welcome anywhere in town, kept to themselves, a predilection unforgiveable in Maycomb” (Lee 11). Expressing theme with a home motif effectively conveys Lee’s concept to target audiences. This classic was written in 1960. Using a variety of homes (and people) ensures appeal from a diverse audience.

“Theme can be an enduring pattern or motif throughout the literary work, occurring in a complex, long winding manner or it can be short and succinct and provide a certain insight into the story” (Literary Devices). Brotherhood, in *The Client*, and kindness, in *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, are expressed using different techniques. Grisham goes the complex route revealing a brotherhood theme in a complex long winding manner. Mark is a father figure to his little brother Rickey, providing guidance, leadership and protection. While the majority of action focuses on Mark’s legal issues, Grisham intermittently targets Mark and Rickey’s relationship—never flat out stating brotherhood as crucial, but repeatedly providing details and dialogue that does. The story opens with older brother Mark Sway initiating younger Ricky into their own private secret smoking club. As the story advances, Mark’s love and concern for Rickey becomes a top priority and his protective tendencies for his little brother are most evident while Rickey is
hospitalized. Grisham writes, “We have to make him feel safe. You must stay here at all times. Now, you said the father is of no use.”

“Keep him away from Rickey,” Mark said sternly. Dianne nodded.

“Very well. It’s imperative that you both stay in the room as much as possible for the next several days. Rickey must feel safe and secure” (Grisham 87).

Contrarily, Lee uses a short and succinct technique to express a kindness theme in *To Kill a Mocking Bird*. As the story concludes, Scout tells her father about meeting Boo Radley— that he was real nice. Kindness surfaces with Atticus’ reply, “Most people are Scout, when you finally see them” (Lee 376).

John Grisham wrote *The Client* in 1993 and this contemporary legal thriller appealed to a large audience, world-wide. During this time, legal dramas were popular in literature, film and television and The Client was so well received it was adapted into a feature film within a year. “A 1994 film based on the novel was directed by Joel Schumacher and starred Susan Sarandon, Tommy Lee Jones, Mary-Louise Parker and newcomer Brad Renfro. The film was released on July 20, 1994. The film was so successful that it spawned a television series of the same name, starring JoBeth Williams and John Heard. It ran for one season (1995–1996)” (Wikipedia).

Harper Lee wrote *To Kill a Mockingbird* in 1960 and this classic creative work fits nicely into the era that defined revolution. The 1960’s, predominately known for the civil rights movement, also sparked the feminist movement in the United States. Kenneth T. Walsh wrote, “Gradually, Americans came to accept some of the basic goals of the (Nineteen) Sixties feminists: equal pay for equal work, an end to domestic violence, curtailment of severe limits on women in managerial jobs, and an end to sexual harassment…” (US News and World Report). Set in
Maycomb Alabama, with diverse characters, a controversial atmosphere surrounding issues like rape and racial prejudices, and themes of acceptance and kindness ensured *To Kill a Mocking Bird* be well received. Lee purposefully and effectively wrote this novel to appeal to the target audience of the time.
Works Cited


