

John Grisham's Legal Thrillers and American Popular Culture

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Abstract

Availing itself of Foucault's genealogy of power, this thesis examines Grisham's representations of the different mechanisms of power in *The Brethren*. In the political world represented by Grisham, the balance of power shifts between the legal and the democratic systems on the one hand and the technology of biopower on the other. This thesis argues that Grisham's invalidation of the legal and the democratic systems is a political tactic that promotes the increasing advance of the apparatuses and techniques of biopower upon the formal principles of the law and the democracy. Grisham's *The Brethren* suggests that the mechanisms of biopower maintain greater efficiency and power than the mechanisms of the legal and the democratic systems. It calls for a wider application of the techniques of biopower in the government of the United States even if this encroaches upon the will of the people and violates individual liberties. Grisham implicitly argues that the predominance of biopower is necessary and inevitable even though it is not compatible with the principles of the democratic system.

Key words: Biopower, Biopolitics, Discipline, Panopticon, Racism