

DECONSTRUCTING THE STRUCTURED BELIEFS OF CHRISTIANITY THROUGH SYMBOLISM, IN THE MOVIE, *THE DA VINCI CODE*

Mr. Pranjal Protim Barua

Assistant professor
Department of English
Motilal Nehru College, University of Delhi,
Delhi, India

Robert Langdon, the principal character of the movie states in the beginning of the movie, “Symbols are a language that can help us understand our past. Understanding our past determines actively, our ability to understand our present. So how do we sift truth from belief?” The basic quest of my paper is to examine the huge mass of symbols impregnated with age old mysteries and secrets and related images the cinematic text is fraught with in order to arrive at certain truths(though may be not be definitive historically). In doing so, I am considering the author, Dan Brown’s words, “All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate.”¹ In this paper the legitimacy behind the facts of the book or the movie will not be examined as it has become one of the popular topics of debate. It will look thoroughly at the way the symbols and images are used to historically re-interpret facts which is questioning the very foundations of Christianity. Directly to hit the core of the debate, Langdon says “As the saying goes, a picture says a thousand words.. but which words?” Leigh Teabing, the obsessive priory scholar in the movie asks Sophie Neveau, the granddaughter of Jacques Saunier (later revealed as the living descendant of Jesus Christ), to close her eyes and remember “The Last Supper”². She was asked how many wine glasses was there on the table and she replied there was one, the Holy Grail. She was surprised to silence when she was allowed to open her eyes and find out that there was no single cup on the table. Here Dan Brown through the character of Leigh problematizes the widely accepted concept of ‘The Holy Grail’³. Leigh

¹ Dan Brown’s, *The Da Vinci Code*, 2003, p.1

² An artistic fresco by Leonardo Da Vinci

[http://www.google.co.in/imgres?imgurl=http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/08/Leonardo_da_Vinci_\(1452-1519\)_-The_Last_Supper_\(1495-1498\).jpg&imgrefurl=http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leonardo_da_Vinci_\(1452-1519\)_-The_Last_Supper_\(1495-1498\).jpg&usq=_Ozx2PnnzVoPZ_rX-t8rL55X394Y=&h=1016&w=1988&sz=368&hl=en&start=0&zoom=1&tbnid=oMK5sMROL5TzqM:&tbnh=93&tbnw=181&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dthe%2Blast%2Bsupper%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26biw%3D1366%26bih%3D677%26tbs%3Disch:1,isz:l&um=1&itbs=1&iact=hc&vpx=102&vpy=170&dur=3458&hovh=160&hovw=314&tx=165&ty=87&ei=8ZPtTMHCOoXsvQP-B5&oei=8ZPtTMHCOoXsvQP-B5&esq=1&page=1&ndsp=18&ved=1t:429,r:0,s:0](http://www.google.co.in/imgres?imgurl=http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/08/Leonardo_da_Vinci_(1452-1519)_-The_Last_Supper_(1495-1498).jpg&imgrefurl=http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leonardo_da_Vinci_(1452-1519)_-The_Last_Supper_(1495-1498).jpg&usq=_Ozx2PnnzVoPZ_rX-t8rL55X394Y=&h=1016&w=1988&sz=368&hl=en&start=0&zoom=1&tbnid=oMK5sMROL5TzqM:&tbnh=93&tbnw=181&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dthe%2Blast%2Bsupper%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26biw%3D1366%26bih%3D677%26tbs%3Disch:1,isz:l&um=1&itbs=1&iact=hc&vpx=102&vpy=170&dur=3458&hovh=160&hovw=314&tx=165&ty=87&ei=8ZPtTMHCOoXsvQP-B5&oei=8ZPtTMHCOoXsvQP-B5&esq=1&page=1&ndsp=18&ved=1t:429,r:0,s:0)

³ In Christian mythology, the Holy Grail was the dish, plate, cup or vessel that caught Jesus' blood during his crucifixion. It was said to have the power to heal all wounds. A theme joined to the Christianised Arthurian mythos

says, “Well, that’s a bit strange, isn’t it? Considering both the Bible and the standard Grail legend celebrate this moment as the definite arrival of the Holy Grail.” The symbols of male and female are shown as the blade and chalice respectively. Leigh goes on to explain “And Chalice resembles a cup, or vessel or, more importantly.. a shape of a women’s womb. No, the Grail has never been a cup. It is quite literally the ancient symbol of womanhood. And in this case, a woman who carried a secret so powerful that if revealed, it would devastate the very foundations of Christianity.” He then shows her the figure on the right of Jesus describing her as “Flowing Red hair, Folded Feminine hands, Hint of a bosom.” She is claimed by Dan Brown to be Mary Magdelene, but is accepted popularly as apostle John. Now Brown justifies his claim by referring to the ‘Gospel of Philip’⁴ which states that “And the Consort of the Christ is Mariam the Magdalene. The Lord loved Mariam more than all the other Disciples, and he kissed her often on her mouth.”⁵ Leigh says, “Mary Magdelene was Jesus’ Wife... but was smeared by the church as a prostitute in 591 anno Domini.” This point was justified further in the Gospel of Mary Magdelene where the discussion between Peter and Levi, Peter asks ““Did he then speak secretly with a woman, in preference to us, and not openly? Are we to turn back and all listen to her? Did he prefer her to us?.... Levi answered and said to Peter, "Peter, you are always irate. Now I see that you are contending against the woman like the adversaries. But if the Savior made her worthy, who are you to reject her? Surely the Savior knew her very well. For this reason he loved her more than us.”⁶ These are said to be two of the Gospels among the other gospels that were rejected at the Council of Nicaea⁷. Here it history behind Roman emperor Constantine’s religious origins and the circumstances that had compelled him to shift his religious ideologies are vehemently exposed. Leigh goes on to say, “The Good Book (The Holy Bible) did not arrive by facsimile from heaven. The Bible as we know was finally presided over by one man: The pagan emperor Constantine.” Sophie interrupts saying, “I thought Constantine was a Christian”. Leigh explains, “Oh, hardly, no. He was a lifelong pagan who was baptized on his deathbed. Constantine was Rome’s supreme Holy man. From time immemorial his people had worshipped a balance between nature’s male deities and the Goddess, or Sacred Feminine. But a growing religious turmoil was gripping Rome. Three centuries earlier a young Jew named Jesus had come along preaching love and a single god. Centuries after his crucifixion, Christ’s followers had grown exponentially and had started a religious war against the pagans.... The conflict grew to such proportions that it threatened to tear Rome into two. So Constantine may have been a life

relates to the quest for the Holy Grail. < <http://www.crystalinks.com/holygrail.html>> accessed in 24.11.10 at 0330 hours.

The Holy Grail was a vessel used by Christ at the Last Supper. Given to his grand-uncle, [St. Joseph of Arimathea](#), it was used by him to collect Christ's blood and sweat while Joseph tended him on the Cross.

<<http://www.britannia.com/history/arthur/grail.html>> accessed on 24.11.10 at 0345 hours.

⁴ The **Gospel of Philip** is one of the [Gnostic Gospels](#), a text of [New Testament apocrypha](#), dating back to around the third century but lost to modern researchers until an Egyptian peasant rediscovered it by accident, buried in a cave near Nag Hammadi, in 1945 < http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Philip> accessed on 24.11.10 at 0423 hours.

⁵ From The Gospel of Philip:57. < http://hq197.files.wordpress.com/2007/12/en_the_gospel_of_philip.pdf> accessed on 24.11.10 at 0430 hours.

⁶ From The Gospel Of Mary Magdelene, <http://www.gnosticjudas.com/texts/EN_The_Gospel_of_Mary.pdf> accessed in 25.11.10 at 0815 hours.

⁷ It is the ecumenical gathering called by Emperor Constantine to discuss matter related to Christianity and to lay down certain norms to run it.

long pagan but he was also a pragmatist. And in 325 anno Domini he decided to unify Rome under a single religion, Christianity. And to strengthen this new Christian tradition, Constantine held a famous ecumenical gathering named, The Council of Nicaea. And at this council, the many sects of Christianity debated and voted on, well everything, from the acceptance and rejection of specific gospels, to the date for Easter, to the administering of the sacraments, and of course the immortality of Jesus. Until that moment in history, Jesus was viewed by many of his followers as a mighty prophet, a great and powerful man but a man nevertheless. A Mortal Man.” He then goes on to show Sophie the ‘Grail’ in the masterpiece “The Last Supper”. It is shown that the widely accepted idea of ‘The Holy Grail’ being the cup is vividly problematized when Sophie is asked to take a close look at the fresco and tell the number of wine glasses on the table. To her surprise she found none. He calls it “Scotoma; the mind sees what it chooses to see.” He then shows certain codes given by Leonardo Da Vinci, like the colour of the dresses of Jesus and Mary are mirror images of each other, and the negative image formed between the two with their hips closer and the heads apart. (It forms a V-shape image, the shape of a chalice). It is this negative space which is coded as “The Holy Grail”. Leigh explains the meaning of the word ‘Sangreal’, a French translation of the word ‘Holy Grail’. He explains, “Now my dear, the word in French for Holy Grail. From the middle English “Sangreal” of the original Arthurian legend. Sangreal means Royal Blood. When the legend speaks of the chalice that held the blood of Christ, it speaks in fact of the female womb that carried Jesus’ royal bloodline.” The image of the “Holy Grail” is interpreted a multifaceted way to analyze the contours of its context or locatedness in historiography on hands of hegemonic seat of authority from its core and try to bring the truth out of it.

If the idea of Mary Magdelene and Jesus being married is considered to be true then one cannot reject the claims of legitimization of a bloodline of Jesus Christ. But if this claim of legitimacy is proved it will sweep off the very idea of Christianity. It will be the living descendant who will replace the status of Jesus and thereby deconstruct the entire structure of Christianity, by removing the present center; Jesus Christ. The “center”⁸ according to Derrida is never present within the structure yet it organizes the structure to form something definite. He says, “The center is at the center of the totality, and yet, since the center does not belong to the totality (is not part of the totality), the totality *has its center elsewhere*.”⁹ If Jesus who is considered the ‘center’ is deconstructed by the revelation of the living descendant, this will crumble the entire structure of Christianity.

‘Opus Dei’¹⁰, as claimed to be a conservative Catholic Sect in the movie, who is hell bent on destroying the Grail; the sarcophagus of Mary Magdelene and silence the ones who are protecting it; ‘The Priory of Sion’¹¹. As portrayed in the movie ‘Opus Dei’ was not sanctioned by Vatican to destroy the “Holy Grail”. The character Bishop Aringarosa says “I only offer a route

⁸ Derrida’s concept of center, from his essay “Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences”

⁹ <<http://hydra.humanities.uci.edu/derrida/sign-play.html>> accessed on 25.11.10 at 2237 hours.

¹⁰ Opus Dei, formally known as The Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei ([Latin: Prelatura Sanctae Crucis et Operis Dei](#)), is an organization of the [Catholic Church](#) that teaches that everyone is called to holiness and that ordinary life is a path to [sanctity](#). <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opus_Dei> accessed on 25.11.10 at 2245 hours.

¹¹ The Priory is portrayed in the book as an ancient, powerful organization guarding a historical secret of immense importance. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Priory_of_Sion_in_the_Da_Vinci_Code> accessed on 25.11.10 at 2247 hours.

to the renewal of faith of all men. The Vatican's unwillingness to support us is both impious and cowardly. Blood is being spilled because true Christian values lie in ruins. No more!" Now the under the apparent aim of 'Opus Dei' to re-instate faith in Christianity its deep seated politics of money and power is exposed by unveiling the secret 'Council of Shadow'.¹² A review on this Council of Shadow says, "The Council of Shadows may have been created in response to protests by Catholic conservatives and Opus Dei members who objected to the portrayal of the Church and Opus Dei in the novel, and had called on the filmmakers to change the content. While the novel implies that the Church had engaged in a destructive, centuries-long campaign to wipe out the Priory of Sion and the bloodline of Jesus, the Council of Shadows is used as an alternative antagonist, allowing the film to water down the novel's sinister portrayal of the Church. One of the members tells Aringarosa in the movie that if the Vatican found out about the council, the members would be excommunicated. Opus Dei as an organization is also distanced from the position of villain in this way. Aringarosa and Silas, the Opus Dei characters in the novel, are ultimately victims of the Teacher, who turns out to be a Grail historian attempting to publicly reveal the secret of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. However, Aringarosa's apparent motivation for joining the Teacher's plan to find the Grail is to use it to blackmail the liberal pope (whose election was portrayed in Dan Brown's previous novel, *Angels and Demons*), who is on the brink of disowning Opus Dei. By making Aringarosa an agent of the Council of Shadows, the movie avoids attributing such devious intentions to Opus Dei. It also helps keep the movie from running longer, and eliminates the allusions to *Angels and Demons*, which might be confusing to viewers unfamiliar with the first novel."¹³ The dichotomy of the deep religiosity vis-a-vis the monetary politics inherent in the Opus Dei is exposed as well. In the movie Opus Dei is accused as "a brainwashing cult, an ultraconservative Christian secret society." Bishop Aringarosa answers to these accusations saying "Obviously some people fear what they don't understand." On one hand he goes on to define the ideals of Opus Dei crudely as "we are not cafeteria Catholics. We don't pick and choose which rules to follow. We follow doctrines. Rigorously." On the other the financial bargains within it is shown debated in the "Council of Shadow", "20 million euro in untraceable bearer bonds. A tad more than petty cash." This exposes the misappropriation of the funds and abuse of power and authority. Now the question lies if the Grail is not the sarcophagus of Mary Magdalene and is only the cup, then why would Opus Dei(representative of the Church) try to destroy the cup; the chalice, the original understanding of the grail as spread by the Church. The point here is that if it is a cup then why they would try to destroy it. It does not threaten their hegemony of domination in the name of religion.

In this complex layering of historical facts and fiction, merging to give us a narrative, interesting enough by presenting the concept of "The Priory Of Sion"¹⁴, guardians of the

¹² The Council members are high-ranking officials in the [Catholic Church](#), but operate underground, without the knowledge of the Vatican. The Council seeks to find and destroy the [Holy Grail](#), and with it the evidence of [Jesus](#)'s marriage to [Mary Magdalene](#) and the survival of their descendants.

<http://www.worldlingo.com/ma/enwiki/en/Council_of_Shadows> accessed on 25.11.10 at 2315 hours.

¹³ <http://www.worldlingo.com/ma/enwiki/en/Council_of_Shadows> accessed on 25.11.10 at 2317 hours.

¹⁴ The *Prieuré de Sion*, translated from [French](#) as Priory of Sion, is a name given to multiple groups, both real and fictitious. The most notorious is a fringe [fraternal organisation](#), founded and dissolved in [France](#) in 1956 by [Pierre Plantard](#). In the 1960s, Plantard created a fictitious history for that organisation, describing it as a [secret society](#) founded on [Mount Zion](#) in the [Kingdom of Jerusalem](#) in 1099, which is devoted to installing a

ideological beliefs and ideas that protects the idea of the existence of the ‘legend’¹⁵. This society is believed to be the guardians of the royal bloodline(the bloodline of Jesus). But it has faced a lot of atrocities as mentioned by Langdon in the movie, “Any priory story ends in bloodshed. They were butchered by the church. It all started over a thousand years ago when a French king conquered the Holy city of Jerusalem. This crusade was one of the most massive and sweeping in history, was actually orchestrated by a secret brotherhood, the Priory of Sion, and their military arm, the Knights Templar... According to this myth, Supposedly the invasion was to find an artifact, lost since the time of Christ. An artifact, it was said, the Church would kill to possess.... One day the Templars simply stopped searching. They quit the holy land and travelled directly to Rome. Whether they blackmailed the Papacy or whether the Church bought their silence, no one knows. But it is a fact the Papacy declared these Priory Knights, these Knights Templars, of limitless powers. By the 1300s, the Templars had grown too powerful. Too threatening. So the Vatican issued secret orders to be opened simultaneously all across Europe. The Pope had declared the Knights Templars Satan worshipper, and said God had charged him with cleansing the Earth of these heretics. The plan went off like clockwork. The Templars were all but exterminated. The date was October 13, 1307. A Friday. The Pope sent troops to claim Priory’s treasure but they found nothing. The few surviving Knights of the Priory had vanished and the search for their sacred artifact began again.” (The artifact is the Holy Grail). Langdon tells Leigh that the ‘Priory’ is seen as a myth and “Philippe de Cherisey exposed that as a hoax in 1967.” Leigh answers patiently “And that is what they want you to believe. The Priory is charged with a single task: To protect the greatest secret in modern history. The priory protects the source of Church’s power on Earth.”

The movie uses the ‘Priory of Sion’ to let the audience arrive at the understanding of various symbols and metaphors like the ‘Fleur-de-lis’¹⁶, ‘Vitruvian Man’¹⁷, ‘Anagrams’¹⁸, the

secret [bloodline](#) of the [Merovingian dynasty](#) on the thrones of France and the rest of [Europe](#).

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Priory_of_Sion#Alleged_Grand_Masters> accessed on 26.11.10 at 0008 hours.

¹⁵ The legend is the Holy Grail which supposedly exists somewhere. The tangible existence of the Grail is something which is not clear but the existence of the idea is well-proclaimed and acknowledged.

¹⁶ The image is found in this link

<http://www.google.co.in/imgres?imgurl=http://suhloan.files.wordpress.com/2008/10/fleur_di_lis1.jpg&imgrefurl=http://suhloan.wordpress.com/2008/10/&h=600&w=476&sz=74&tbnid=sShXc4NoaxAPIM:&tbnh=252&tbnw=200&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dfleur%2Bdi%2Bli&zoo=1&q=fleur+di+lis&hl=en&usq=fA3hwQgQCI440_0yD8ualURr1qU=&sa=X&ei=gq3uTPnfKYS3cf6g9NQK&ved=0CCAQ9QEwAA> accessed on 26.11.10 at 0010 hours.

The fleur-de-lis is a stylized [lily](#)(in [French](#), *fleur* means *flower*, and *lis* means *lily*) or [iris](#) that is used as a decorative [design](#) or [symbol](#). It may be "at one and the same time, political, [dynastic](#), artistic, [emblematic](#), and symbolic", especially in [heraldry](#).^[1] It is represented in [Unicode](#) at U+269C (☐) in the [Miscellaneous Symbols](#) block. While the fleur-de-lis has appeared on countless [European coats of arms](#) and flags over the centuries, it is particularly associated with the [French monarchy](#) in a historical context. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fleur-de-lis>> accessed on 26.11.10 at 0012 hours.

¹⁷ The Vitruvian Man is a world-renowned [drawing](#) created by [Leonardo da Vinci](#) around the year 1487.^[1] It is accompanied by notes based on the work of the famed architect, [Vitruvius](#). The drawing, which is in pen and ink on paper, depicts a male figure in two superimposed positions with his arms and legs apart and simultaneously inscribed in a circle and square. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vitruvian_Man> accessed on 26.11.10 at 0101 hours.

‘cryptex’¹⁹, the ‘chalice’²⁰ etc. These symbols reveal various hidden meanings in the movie. The “Fleur-de-lis” is the symbol which is an identity of the ‘Priory’ and it is also the link or the key that sanctions the approach towards the quest for the ‘Holy Grail’. This key opens the doors for multiple layers of discovery to reach out to the “map that will lead us to The Holy Grail.” En route the discovery the key hints at the priory’s origin related to French monarchy. And it hints at the interpretation of the line “It hides beneath the rose” in different ways. Here lies two ways of interpretation based on different reference points. If we look at the word ‘rose’; there lies two meaning emanating from it; the ‘Roseline’ and the rosewood box containing the cryptex; the ‘keystone’. The other interpretation is what is it that is hiding “beneath the Rose”? Is it the sarcophagus of Mary Magdalene or the map leading to the ‘Holy Grail’. In one case you are close to the target by one level and in the case of the ‘keystone’ you are a level distanced from the target. Leigh asks Sophie “To be trained by the Grandmaster himself, Did he pass down the ‘Fleur-de-lis’? Is that how you found this?”(asks about her finding the ‘keystone’). ‘The Vitruvian man’ by Da Vinci, is based on the work of an architect Vitruvius but here the symbol referred is of Jacques Saunier as the chief architect of the events and the plot which is to be unfolded in the course of the movie, en route the discovery of the grail. It seems like the dead body speaks to Langdon in symbolic terms that I am the architect of the entire plot now decode the entire plot step by step. Everything that is conveyed by Saunier is a key to link the different levels that will lead to the discovery of the ‘Holy Grail’. The anagram, “O Draconian Devil. Oh lame saint” becomes the “Leonardo da Vinci; The Mona Lisa”. This is the first step towards the discovery and then these anagrams are later replaced by riddles which are accessible only by ones who had come closer to the discovery. The famous riddle in the movie, “In London lies a knight A Pope interred. His labor's fruit a Holy wrath incurred. You seek the orb that ought be on his tomb. It speaks of Rosy flesh and seeded womb.” The answer to this question is the key to the map to the ‘Grail’. As the riddle gets solved certain shocking facts are revealed, Langdon says, “The Knight we are looking for is Sir Issac Newton. His life’s work produced new sciences that incurred the wrath of the Church. Gravity, for God sakes. And if you choose to believe he was also a Grand Master of the Priory as well.” According a recent factual update, “The Priory of Sion -- a European secret society founded in 1099 -- is a real organization. In 1975, Paris's Bibliothèque Nationale discovered parchments known as Les Dossiers Secrets²¹, identifying

¹⁸ Any word or phrase that exactly reproduces the letters in another order is an anagram. Anagrams can be traced back to the time of Moses, as "Themuru" or changing, which was to find the hidden and mystical meaning in names. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anagram>> accessed on 26.11.10 at 0114 hours.

¹⁹ The word *cryptex* is a [neologism](#) coined by the author [Dan Brown](#) for his 2003 novel *The Da Vinci Code*, denoting a portable [vault](#) used to hide secret messages. It is a [combination](#) of the words [cryptology](#) and [codex](#); "an apt title for this device" since it uses "the science of *cryptology* to protect information written on the contained scroll or *codex*" (p. 199 of the novel) <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cryptex>> accessed on 26.11.10 at 0120 hours.

²⁰ A chalice (from [Latin](#) *calix*, cup, borrowed from Greek *kalyx*, shell, husk) is a goblet or footed cup intended to hold a drink. In general religious terms, it is intended for [drinking](#) during a [ceremony](#). <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chalice>> accessed on 26.11.10 at 0125 hours.

²¹ A collection of documents and genealogies, deposited anonymously in the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris between 1964 and 1967. The various documents are written under pseudonyms or attributed to people later found to be deceased. Pierre Plantard and Philippe de Chérisey are believed by some to be the authors although they denied any association. Fake or not, les Dossiers Secrets have been a catalyst for turning a local mystery into what is the Rennes-le-Château enigma today. The Dossiers Secrets were the foundation for the book [Holy Blood](#),

numerous members of the Priory of Sion, including Sir Isaac Newton, Botticelli, Victor Hugo, and Leonardo da Vinci.”²² The answer to this riddle is A-P-P-L-E, “The orb that fell from the heavens and inspired Newton’s life’s work.”

Now the location of the Grail is disclosed but the factual and artistic limitations of the author binds him in not going out of the way, to be another Newton, to incur the wrath of the church. The other riddle says, “The Holy Grail ‘neath ancient Roslin waits, The blade and chalice guarding o’er her gates, Adorned in masters’ loving art, She rests at last beneath the starry skies.” The perfect location of the ‘Grail’ cannot be shown as the author will himself not know of it, except for a rare chance of him being the present member of the Priory of Sion. His outward manifestations of his indulgences with the ‘priory myth’, stands deconstructed at the end, and also advocating for the cause of the priory, and not hiding it, hints at having a complex politics within it. If one is to consider Dan Brown, as one of the primary guardians of the grail (the Grand Master or one of the Senechaux) , he is keeping himself immune from being involved in controversial issues and making himself appear as an obvious advocate of the Priory. This obviousness serves a dual purpose. One, he can critically engage in a debate by his investigation of the historical narratives, and on the other hand he will not be doubted to be an advocate or even as the member of the Priory. This gives him ample opportunity to explore his debatable and controversial issues and make a ground for those issues to find a way out into the society. ‘The Priory’ is a truth or myth makes significant ground for those issues to find a way out into the society, which, neither an individual nor a society can definitely be sure of. Or for the matter of fact, any historical documented proofs cannot be accepted as definite, as very exercise of historiography entails some amount of obligatory and indispensable construction of a distorted edifice that manifests its distortion in form of an apparent warp of articulation, alteration and modification, which in a broader spectrum changes the contours of originality and saps off the element of unquestionable irrevocability and authenticity. To arrive at the truth one has to understand the conditions in which and by which these histories appear. All histories are constructed from varying contexts and dynamically divergent standpoints. Different things happen during a similar period, but these differences are channelized to form a broad unifying structure that constitutes the whole.

Leigh claims that misguiding the idea of the “Holy Grail” is “the greatest cover up in history” by the church to rule the world. He clearly says “Mary was pregnant at the time of the crucifixion. For her own safety and for that of Christ’s unborn Child, she fled the Holy land and came to France. And here it said she gave birth to a daughter, Sarah.” Langdon says “The pagan found transcendence through the joining of male to female. In paganism women were worshipped as route to heaven. But the modern church has a monopoly on that, in salvation through Jesus Christ.” Leigh answers, “He who keeps the keys to heaven rules the world.” Now this key is based on certain truth influenced by power. “According to Foucault, truth, morality, and meaning are created through discourse. Every age has a dominant group of discursive elements that people live in unconsciously.”²³ Langdon continues, “Women then are a huge threat to Church. The Catholic Inquisition soon publishes...what may be the most blood-soaked

<http://www.rlcresearch.com/2007/11/11/les-dossiers-secrets/>> accessed on 26.11.10 at 0628 hours.

²² <<http://bevets.com/dquotes.htm>> accessed on 26.11.10 at 0630 hours.

²³ <<https://www.msu.edu/~comertod/courses/foucault.htm>> accessed on 26.11.10 at 1145 hours.

book in human history.” There is reference to the book named ‘*The Malleus Maleficarum*; The Witches’ Hammer’ which was a illustrative instruction to torture and kill all free thinking women.” In the due process a huge number of women were killed in most horrendous manner. The societal hatred for women can be analyzed and understood in terms of Carl Jung’s concept of ‘collective unconscious’, wherein a society in varying scale of demographic constitution, geographic location and socio-cultural and historical contextualization has the fact of women being subordinated by dominant forces in the society lay buried deep within the psyche and the resistance in raising a voice after having understood the power dynamics in operation testify the unflinching condition of women who continue to be oppressed by various forces driving the society: religious, cultural and the patriarchal order of norms.

Towards the end of the movie it is shown it is hinted that the sarcophagus or “The Holy Grail” lies under the pyramid structure at the point of intersection between the ‘Bloodline’ and the ‘Roseline’. So the movie can be seen as a documentation of a journey towards the discovery of the concept of ‘bloodline’ and a critical investigation of the possibility of Jesus’ living descendant. The movie shows the characters coming in terms of different historically documented ideas and issues, and its critical engagement is enhanced by the use of symbols and images that is the driving force within the plot. The movie hints at the image of a circle in the principal character ‘Robert Langdon’ landing up in the same place from where his quest for the ‘Grail’ started off. The movie starts from his arrival at the glass pyramid in the city which is a gate to the museum which has some of world’s famous paintings like ‘The Monalisa’. At the end of the movie Langdon reaches the pyramid where the grail is hinted to be underneath it. So the movie is not an account of the quest for ‘The Holy Grail’(the sarcophagus of Mary Magdelene) but an enquiry into the understanding of the facts and truths behind the general understanding of it.

In the movie, it is accounted that Mary fled to France to give birth to her child, and towards the end it is shown that her sarcophagus lay somewhere underneath the louvre²⁴. Therefore “France” is shown as a safe haven for the “Holy Grail” to be in. Here it is hinting at the shift of power and its location. It is in France that Mary is given conducive and safe conditions so that the child, the descendant can find a way into the world. Hence, the country of France can be seen as a liberating space where the royal bloodline found its existence. The politics of space is brought out by looking at ‘France’ as an alternate space vis-à-vis ‘Vatican’, with respect and reference to the “savior”; Jesus Christ. The movie debates, regarding the bloodline and the living descendant of Jesus Christ. And if it goes right then the very core behind the running the Vatican and legitimizing its religious authority on the entire christen world; of finding “salvation through Jesus Christ”, will be shaken and the entire faith in the institution of the Church and its religious dominance through ages will be shattered.

Langdon says towards the end, “The only thing that matters is what you believe. History shows us Jesus was an extraordinary man, a human inspiration. That’s it. That’s all the evidence has ever proved. Why does it have to be human or divine? Maybe human is divine. Why couldn’t Jesus have been a father and still been capable of all those miracles?... Well here is the question, A living descendant of Jesus Christ, Would she destroy faith or would she renew it? So again I

²⁴ The *Musée du Louvre* (French pronunciation: [\[myzɛ dy luvʁ\]](#)), or officially *Grand Louvre* — in English the Louvre Museum or simply the Louvre — is one of the world's largest [museums](#), the [most visited art museum in the world](#) and a historic monument. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louvre>> accessed on 26.11.10 at 1230 hours.

say what matters is what you believe.” So I end my paper with the note of hope of your self-critical engagement with the anxiety of modern world, by the renewal of faith and hope in the existing structures. The movie can be understood as a vivid portrayal of the feelings of anxiety and doubt in this modern world. This is the reason why the movie was chosen as my object of study. The movie has a tremendous box office reaction, “Despite the protests and poor pre-release reviews, the film still opened with an estimated \$29 million in box office sales on its opening day, averaging \$7764 per screen. During its opening weekend, moviegoers spent an estimated \$77 million in America, and \$224 million worldwide, according to Sony Pictures. *The Da Vinci Code* is the best domestic opening for both Tom Hanks and Ron Howard. It also enjoyed the 3rd biggest opening weekend for the year to date (after *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest* and *X-Men: The Last Stand*, and the second biggest worldwide opening weekend ever, just behind 2005's *Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith*.) This has led some critics, particularly in the UK, to moot the idea of the 'critic-proof film'. Number 1 movie at the USA box office during its first week grossing more than \$111 million. Fifth highest gross of 2006 in the USA, and grossed \$758 million worldwide in 2006 — the 2nd highest of 2006. On June 20, 2006, it became only the 2nd movie of the year to pass the \$200 million mark in the USA.”²⁵

This is a clear example of how the inherent anxieties in the psyche of humans, are being excited by such controversial issues. This exposes our unconscious inner doubt for the establishments and the power structure that determines our existence. The end the paper I see the movie as a psychological enquiry towards the understanding of our ‘location’²⁶ defining our existence, spiced up with the modes of symbols, codes and untold historical narratives. As the movie is very complex it is not possible to interpret and examine everything within the scope of the paper, and therefore not every single issue could be paid attention to. The question that rises is that could the movie or the novel de-center the core within Christian beliefs, or was it just an attempt to do so, which was overshadowed by the related controversies. The issue needs to be accessed with a pinch of salt because had it been the case then, why would it turn out to be mega hit in box office. On the other hand one can question interpret that was it controversies that was on demand based on which the movie was selling or was it trying to reach out to the masses to give an alternate route to challenge the dominant hegemonic structures of operational power structures based on these hidden historical narratives and facts. Or was it just a figment of imagination and fantasy that was collated well semantically with contested yet astounding historical claims with the authorial pen and the inquisitive mind of the author Dan Brown, is still a debatable issue as far as the far-fetched overwhelming global reception and mass response to the book is concerned.

²⁵ <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Da_Vinci_Code_\(film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Da_Vinci_Code_(film))> accessed on 27.11.10 at 0120 hours.

²⁶ Here I refer not only to Geographical Location but our location vis-à-vis our culture, society, ideologies we adhere to and faith.

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