

DAN BROWN

Symbology in
"THE DA VINCI CODE"

NOW A
MAJOR
MOTION
PICTURE

THE
DA VINCI
CODE

THE #1 WORLDWIDE BESTSELLER

Syrian Arab Republic
Ministry of Education
National center for the distinguished



Course:

English

Supervised by:

Ms. Bayan Soufi

Presented by:

Al-Abbass Mohamed

2014-2015

Research problematic

- Are the historical “facts” Dan Brown had mentioned true or not?

Aims of this research

- To show that not everything we read is true.
- To lighten and discover some historical facts that we don't know.

Preface

Biography:

Dan Brown was born on July 22, 1964 in Exeter, New Hampshire to Richard G. Brown (A mathematics teacher) and Connie Brown (Professional musician involved in performing sacred music). He grew up in a house where science and religion coexisted peacefully. While the foundation of science relied on proof, claims, equations and codes, religion relied on faith only, so Dan Brown had the best of both of them together.

Educationally, Brown graduated from 'Philips Exeter Academy' after which he attempted 'Amherst College' and graduated with a degree in English and Spanish in 1986. Whilst in 1985, he went to Seville Spain to do an art history course from the University of Seville.

Dan Brown had a short musical career as a songwriter and pianist in which he released four CDs. Then a switch in his happened when he read Sydney Sheldon's (Doomsday conspiracy) and turned his interest into writing instead of music. He released "Digital Fortress" in 1998, after which he turned to full-time writing. Moreover, in 2000 "Angles & Demons" was published. It set the stage for the best to come from Dan Brown, and was the first novel that introduced the character "Robert Langdon", which was subsequently seen in the future works of Brown. The book became 2000's bestselling mystery-thriller novel. In 2001, he released "Deception Point". However, Brown's fourth novel that unleashed the success story for the author to never-experienced-before heights. "The Da Vinci Code" is until date the best-selling book from the Brown camp. With over 81 million copies worldwide as of 2009, the book topped the New York Times' best-seller list in its first week of release itself. Brown is estimated to have earned about 250 million \$ from this book only. However, in 2009 he

released "The Lost Symbol" and "Inferno" in 2013, in which the both of them were very successful too.

Amusingly, all of these novels: (Angles & Demons, The Da Vinci Code, The Lost Symbol and Inferno) have the same protagonist, Robert Langdon, a Harvard Symbology expert. Additionally, they share historical themes and Christianity as motifs.

Most of his works have garnered immense positive response from the publics and the critics, selling over 200 million copies as of 2012. Also, his books have been translated into 52 languages, while two of them, 'Angels & Demons' and 'The Da Vinci Code' have been adapted into films.

Introduction

What is the Da Vinci code?

It is a thriller story involving secret societies, conspiracies, the Catholic Church, and the fictional "truth" about Jesus Christ. During the course of the novel, it is alleged that the Catholic Church is perpetuating a major, centuries-long conspiracy to hide the "truth" about Jesus Christ from the public, and it or its agents are willing to stop at nothing, including murder, to do so.

What does Leonardo da Vinci have to do with the story?

Da Vinci is portrayed as a former head of the conspiracy guarding the "truth" about Jesus Christ. In the novel, he is said to have planted various codes and secret symbols in his work, particularly in his painting of the Last Supper. According to the novel, this painting depicts Jesus' alleged wife, Mary Magdalene, next to him as a symbol of her prominence in his true teaching. In reality, the figure that Dan Brown identifies as Mary Magdalene is John the Evangelist, who traditionally has been regarded as the youngest of the apostles and so is often pictured in medieval art without a beard.

Summary of the novel:

While in Paris on business, Harvard symbologist Robert Langdon receives an urgent late-night phone call: the elderly curator of the Louvre has been murdered inside the museum. Near the body, police have found a baffling cipher. While working to solve the enigmatic riddle, Langdon is stunned to discover it leads to a trail of clues hidden in the works of Da Vinci -- clues visible for all to see -- yet ingeniously disguised by the painter. Langdon joins forces with a gifted French cryptologist, Sophie Neveu, and learns the late curator was involved in the Priory of Sion -- an actual secret society whose members included Sir Isaac Newton, Botticelli, Victor Hugo, and Da Vinci, among others. In a breathless race through Paris, Langdon and Neveu match wits with a faceless powerbroker who seems to anticipate their every move. Unless Langdon and Neveu can decipher the labyrinthine puzzle in time, the Priory's ancient secret -- and an explosive historical truth -- will be lost forever.

Chapter 1: The Mona Lisa Smile

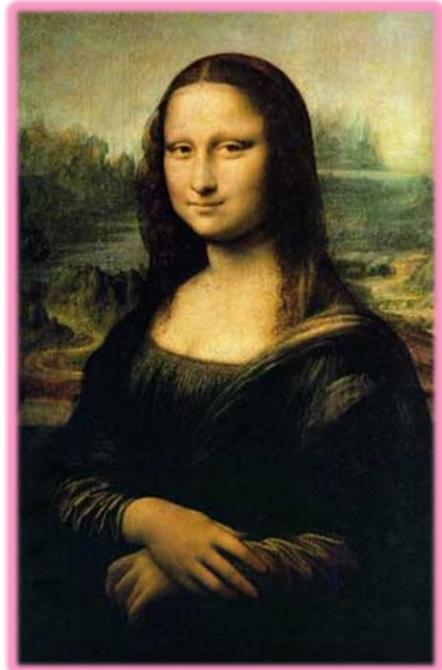
Portrait of the Mona Lisa (1479-1528), also known as 'La Gioconda' The wife of Francesco Del Giocondo. Painted by Leonardo Da Vinci.

As we see in the novel "The Da Vinci Code" The Mona Lisa was portrayed as an androgyny, neither a male nor a female but a combination of both. Moreover, her name –as Brown has claimed – is formed of two parts AMON (The god of male fertility) and L'ISA or ISIS (The goddess of female fertility) to become AMON L'ISA.

We see how Dan Brown has linked the name of the painting to gender though the name was not given by the artist, but by Giorgio Vasari whom had written in 1550 a biography on Leonardo Da

Vinci's life. Also Dan Brown didn't say this relying on a base or previous information.

Another point of view says that the Mona Lisa or (the lady Lisa in Italian) is a man! Silvano Vincetti, chairman of the Italian national committee for cultural heritage, made his startling revelation. He said the identity of one of the world's most iconic paintings was a young man called Gian Giacomo Caprotti, also known as Salai. Salai was an apprentice for Da Vinci and worked with him for about 25 years, and it's believed that he was the inspiration for most of Da Vinci's works and masterpieces. Mr. Vincetti proved his point of view saying: "Close examination for a high-quality digital copy of the portrait had revealed an L for Leonardo and an S for Salai". But the experts at the Louvre museum where the painting is kept checked it two times in 2004 & 2009 saying: "No



inscriptions, letters or numbers were discovered during the tests".

Silvano Vincetti also said that not only the Mona Lisa was based on Salai's portrait, but also St. John the Baptist and other portraits.

Also this point of view is not convincing, because the Mona Lisa obviously a woman, why? Her breast is clearly seen and the soft hands of her. The experts at the Louvre also discovered that she (the lady in the painting) was wearing a transparent dress pregnant women used to wear in that era. In addition to her swollen hands which is something that happens on pregnancy, but this might just a coincidence because Leonardo may have painted her hands like this according to the standards of beauty in that era of time.

Eventually, Dan Brown's and Silvano Vincetti's points of view are almost not true and need more evidence to be proven.

Chapter 2: The last supper and the Holy Grail



Robert Langdon and Sophie Neveu arrives in Leigh Teabing's house, when Langdon and Teabing start telling the story about the real *Holy Grail* or *la sangreal*. As it said, the Holy Grail is a person not a thing and it was Mary Magdalene, how did they know? According to the novel, the Holy Grail is supposed to be shown in the painting of *The Last Supper*, though this piece of information is not sure to be true, but let's skip it. The writer, presented by his own characters, says that there was no grail or chalice on the table, which is true, so where was the grail? They explained that the grail or the chalice was the sign of the woman, and the blade was the sign of the man. In the painting, Jesus Christ was formed in a shape of a triangle or a blade, and with his right side and John's left side there was a space formed like a chalice or the letter V, which like I already mention indicates to women, so the person seated in the place of honor was not John the Baptist, but was the companion of the Christ and his beloved wife Mary Magdalene with her red smooth hair, soft hands and the feminine face characteristics.

Based on this, he, Dan Brown, moves on with a long story about the history of Christians, starting from that Jesus was a descendant of king Solomon of the Jewish and Mary Magdalene was a descendant of king David, and they were married, because Jesus was a Jew, and Jew people back then and Mary Magdalene was pregnant, the thing that proves that Jesus was not divine but he was a normal man, then when Jesus was crucified and put her in charge of taking care of his religion and the church, the thing that raged the male society and didn't agree with that so they followed her trying to forbid her from her right, so she ran away to France and gave birth to her daughter Sarah, in which she had the royal blood of the two Jewish kings, and her bloodline continued until these days.

These claims if they were true, which is far to be believed, would shake the foundation of Christianity and dissolve the church so that the royal bloodline descendants would be in charge of the leading of the religion of Christianity.

But don't worry, because these claims are not true!

I said before that the novel didn't have a convincing proof that the holy grail was in the painting, so this collapses the whole theory. Still going to discuss the rest parts, Jesus was not necessarily married because some Jew men back then were celibate. Also, no documents, sculptures, texts or historical fact that Jesus Christ was married, and the text of Philip doesn't contain the word mouth or companion in it.

Moreover, analyzing "symbols" and hidden messages is not that strong proof to anything, because points of view may differ.

So in conclusion, we don't know for sure if Jesus Christ was married to Mary Magdalene or not, but as it's said in the gospels which are the only reference about the life of Christ, Jesus was married to the "church" only.

Chapter 3: Christianity

In the novel, foundations of Christianity are blown. First, saying that Christianity had stolen ideas and concepts from Mithraism and other forms of paganism, ideas such as the pre-Christian god Mithras “son of god” or “the light of the world” that was born on December 25 and his story that matches exactly with the story of Christ (died – buried in a rock tomb – resurrected in three days). But simply this is not true, for Mithras was a god with many forms, and Mitharic studies did not find any attribution of the titles “Son of god” or “light of the world”. There is also no mention of a death and resurrection motif in Mitharic mythology. As for the matter of December 25, it is true that many Christians choose that time of year to commemorate the birth of Jesus. But that doesn't mean that they believe that Jesus was actually born on Dec. 25. The fact is, the Bible does not specify a birth date for Jesus.

Another Dan Brown claim, that the Vatican killed around 5 million women during the witch-hunts. Many scholars also dispute the claim that 5,000,000 women died during the witch hunts, often suggesting instead that the number is somewhere between 20,000 and 100,000, and that 20 percent to 25 percent of the victims were male, and that the trials generally were handled by local secular courts, and that the majority of witch hunts actually took place in non-Catholic countries.

Third and final point in this chapter, that a pagan emperor set the foundation of Christianity! This is essential to the plot in *The Da Vinci Code* because it requires that the reader believe that Constantine replaced the "original" Gnostic writings with what we now call the New Testament. But, Constantine could not have had a hand in shaping the New Testament for two reasons: He wasn't born soon enough and he didn't live long enough. Based on writings from early church leaders, including documents dated from the year 96 through the year 112, at least 24 of the 27 books that comprise the New Testament were already regarded by early Christians as being authoritative, a full 200 years before Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea.

Conclusion

The Da Vinci code is not a reliable reference in history facts, because as many people think, everything mention in this novel is true and facts that been hidden through history.

However, Dan Brown insists that they, the facts, are true in his review about his own book.

Finally

In the finally I would like to say that Dan Brown did a very good Job when it comes to entertainment and empathy in his novel, and he has a very special and joyful way of writing, but when it comes to history, he wasn't the top on his class!

I classify this novel as dangerous, because any scholar person can differentiate between facts and fiction, but ignorant people won't be able to tell the difference and will consider all the information true if they don't have a good background.

So not only historical fact can be changed but also, our principles, morals, ethics, beliefs, all can be changed if someone was able to deliver his message in the right way.

References and bibliography

- Brant James Pitter, *Debunking the Da Vinci Code: Revealing the False Claims Behind Dan Brown's The Da Vinci Code*
- Mary Ann Beavis: *Who is Mary Magdalene?*
- Jason Leung: *The fiction in Da Vinci's facts*
- Elizabeth Clare prophet: *Mary Magdalene and the divine feminine*
- Clay Ham: *The Last Supper in Matthew*
- <http://witcombe.sbc.edu/>
- <http://www.lairweb.org.nz/>
- <http://www.traditioninaction.org/>
- <http://www.age-of-the-sage.org/>
- <http://www.ibiblio.org/>
- <http://www.unmuseum.org/>
- <http://www.cbcg.org/>

Contents

RESEARCH PROBLEMATIC	3
AIMS OF THIS RESEARCH	3
PREFACE	4
INTRODUCTION	6
CHAPTER 1: THE MONA LISA SMILE	8
CHAPTER 2: THE LAST SUPPER AND THE HOLY GRAIL	10
CHAPTER 3: CHRISTIANITY	12
CONCLUSION	13
FINALLY	14
REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY	15
CONTENTS	16