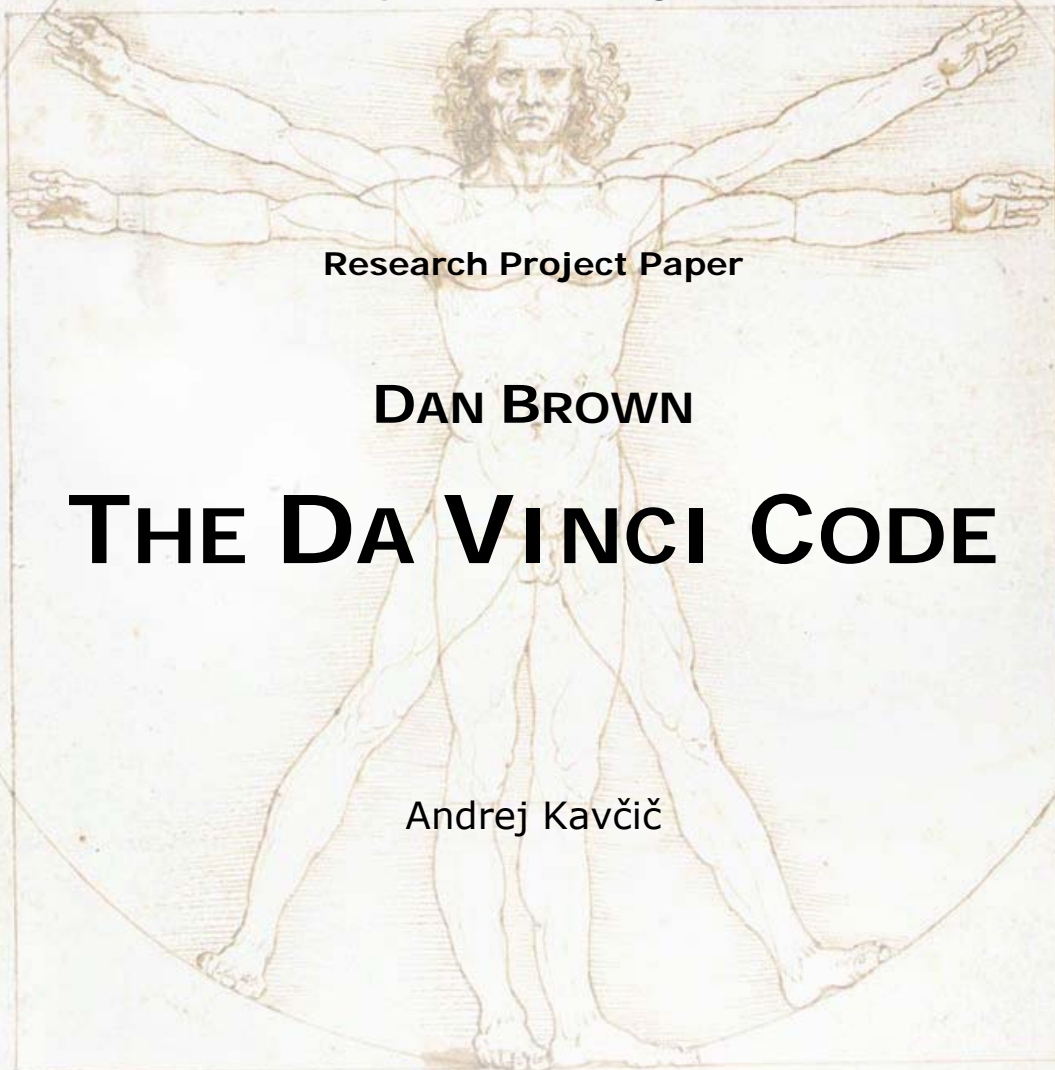


University of Ljubljana

Faculty of Arts

Department of English



Research Project Paper

DAN BROWN

THE DA VINCI CODE

Andrej Kavčič

Mentor: asist. dr. Mojca Krevel

Ljubljana, April 2004

Table of Contents

| | | |
|-------|---|----|
| I. | Introduction | 2 |
| II. | Biography and Bibliography of the Author..... | 3 |
| III. | Postmodernism in <i>The Da Vinci Code</i> | 5 |
| IV. | Summary of the Plot..... | 8 |
| V. | Character Portrayal..... | 12 |
| 1. | Robert Langdon | 12 |
| 2. | Sophie Neveu | 12 |
| 3. | Captain Bezu Fache | 13 |
| 4. | Silas..... | 13 |
| 5. | Jacques Sauniere | 14 |
| 6. | Leigh Teabing | 14 |
| VI. | Themes and Motives..... | 15 |
| VII. | Style | 16 |
| VIII. | Conclusion..... | 17 |
| IX. | References | 18 |

I. Introduction

The Da Vinci Code by a yet relatively unknown author Dan Brown is currently one of the bestselling “exhilaratingly brainy thrillers that marries the gusto of an international murder mystery with a collection of fascinating esoteria culled from 2,000 years of Western history” (Amazon). The ‘jist’ of this book is to reveal the greatest conspiracy of the past 2000 years, the one that has been whispered for centuries in countless languages and countless works of art, music, and literature. Several well-known personas of the past have left the ‘truth’ disguised in symbolism, anomalies, and codes, say, Leonardo Da Vinci, of whom art historians agree that his “paintings contain hidden levels of meaning that go well beneath the surface of the paint”, providing clues to a powerful and potentially dangerous secret in Christianity (Brown: 2003).

This paper will give information on the biography and bibliography of the author, and discuss certain characteristics of the literary period this work belongs to or has the characteristics of. A short summary with certain most controversial and attention-catching elements will be produced, followed by character portrayal, discussion on major themes, motives of the novel, and on style of writing

II. Biography and Bibliography of the Author

Dan Brown was born and raised in the small New England town of Exeter, New Hampshire. The son of a teacher at Phillips Exeter Academy, he grew up in a house full of books on a street where John Irving used to live. He was surrounded by the paradoxical philosophies of science and religion. After graduating from Exeter and from Amherst College, Dan followed in his father's footsteps by teaching English at Exeter.

In 1996, his interest in code-breaking and covert government agencies led him to start writing his debut novel, *Digital Fortress*, which proved a huge success (#1 national bestselling eBook), when published in 1998, and gave a fresh impetus for his further writing. This techno-thriller is set within the clandestine National Security Agency, and explores the fine line between civilian privacy and national security. It is a combination of non-stop action, cutting edge intelligence data, romance and a very real controversy about personal privacy versus the threat of terrorism. He got the inspiration for this book in his classroom, when once U.S. Secret Service detained one of his students claiming he was a threat to national security. The student was having a light-hearted political debate via E-mail with a friend the day before, and wrote that he was so mad at the current political situation that he was ready to kill President Clinton. What started to interest Dan Brown was how the Secret Service could know what he was writing in his e-mail. He found out that the NSA works as an eavesdropping vacuum cleaner sucking in intelligence data from around the globe and processing it for subversive material, just by observing for word combinations such as 'kill' and 'Clinton' in the same sentence.

His second novel, *Angels & Demons*, published in 2000, opens a series of symbology thrillers. It is a science vs. religion thriller set within a Swiss physics lab and Vatican City introducing a Harvard professor of iconography and religious art, Robert Langdon, for the first time. The symbologist Robert Langdon is shocked to find proof that the legendary secret society, the Illuminati – “dedicated since the time of Galileo to promoting the interests of science and condemning the blind faith of Catholicism - is alive, well, and murderously active” (Amazon). It all begins with a murder of some physicist with his eyes plucked out, and the society's ancient symbol branded upon his chest. Langdon and Vittoria, the two main characters, embark on a frantic hunt through

the streets, churches, and catacombs of Rome, following a 400-year-old trail to the lair of the Illuminati, to prevent the incineration of civilization.

Brown's follow-up techno-thriller, *Deception Point*, centred on similar issues of morality in politics, national security, and classified technology, was published in 2001. The story begins when a NASA satellite discovers an astonishingly rare object buried deep in the Arctic ice. This means a victory for NASA's policy and the impending presidential election. The White House calls upon a team of experts to verify the authenticity of the find. What the scientists find is "the evidence of scientific trickery – a deception that threatens to plunge the world into controversy" (Amazon). Rachel and Michael tried to warn the president but were ambushed by a group of assassins and their only hope to survive was discovering who is behind the plot. The truth, they learn, is the most shocking deception of all.

Brown's most recent novel is an astounding brain-thriller *The Da Vinci Code*, published in 2003. It is an "exhaustively researched page-turner about secret religious societies, ancient cover-ups and savage vengeance" (Amazon), based on many well-known history writers and facts brought up by them. According to Brown, his novel is 99% true. "All of the architecture, the art, the secret rituals, the history, all of that is true, the Gnostic gospels. All of that is - all that is fiction, of course, is that there's a Harvard symbologist named Robert Langdon, and all of his action is fictionalized. But the background is all true" (CNN, Brown 2003).

Dan's wife Blythe, an art historian and painter, collaborates on his research and accompanies him on his frequent research trips, the most recent to Paris, where they spent time in the Louvre gathering information for *The Da Vinci Code*.

III. Postmodernism in *The Da Vinci Code*

Seeking for conspiracies, uncovering old dogmas, interpretations and re-interpretations of the history are all subject to countless attempts in demolishing and rebuilding the ‘universal truths’ provided by the Church (in this novel).

“The novel is based on the belief that Jesus was a mere man, that Christianity is a despicable sham and that all claims to objective religious truth are to be avoided” (Olson: 2004). Postmodernism is distrustful toward totalizing claims about truth. Just because Christianity survives a prevailing philosophy it does not mean that it gets closer to the ideal, or to truth, or whatever else may be defined as the end, perfection. It is entirely possible for the prevailing philosophies of the day to corrode rather than enhance. The problem with the truth is that it is relative. Truth can always be rediscovered by observing reality. A huge amount of scepticism toward commonly-accepted theories is expressed, which was written down quite well by the French cultural theorist, Jean Baudrillard. “In his book *Simulations*, he contends that social ‘reality’ no longer exists in the conventional sense, but has been supplanted by an endless procession of simulacra. The mass media, and other forms of mass cultural production, generate constant re-appropriation and re-contextualisation of familiar cultural symbols and images, fundamentally shifting our experience away from ‘reality’, to ‘hyperreality’” (Wikipedia). And this is exactly what happens in *The Da Vinci Code*. The novel is dealing with constant interpretation of meaningful symbols, say the Holy Grail, Mona Lisa, The Last Supper, according to common belief or accepted ‘truths’, and then suddenly discards these theories and provides re-interpretation of those symbols – the Holy Grail (is no more a grail (a cup) from which Jesus drank during the Last Supper but serves as a disguise to the ‘truth’, which is that of the Holy Grail serving as a metaphor for Jesus and Mary’s bloodline. The word Holy Grail is derived from the word ‘Sangreal’, which can be read in two ways – ‘san greal’ in the modern word-division being the holy chalice, and ‘sang real’, an ancient division and a direct translation of ‘blood royal’. The re-interpretation fits perfectly into the myth of Mary Magdalene, pregnant with the child of Jesus (royal bloodline), being carried on a vessel to Europe.

According to Wikipedia, works of postmodernism tend to comprehend fluid and multiple perspectives, eclecticism, irony, the breaking of barriers, the reversal of roles, and the conflation of opposites. The ideal that in modernism was considered subordinate or inferior is emphasized in postmodernism, say, localism over universalism, and

feminine over masculine become prevalent. In the novel, the concept of feminine is raised to an equal level as masculine, according to historical ‘facts’ that claim men and women were equal in the time of Jesus.

But how historically accurate is the history itself? Brown takes a postmodern approach to the Bible and history. He claims there is no ultimate truth, only power. Those in power impose their ‘truth’ on everyone else. History has so far always been written by the winners, societies and belief systems that conquered and survived. So, the books in the New Testament were chosen by powerful elite who wanted to hide the truth about Jesus and Mary having children and being in love in order to create and portray the perfectly perfect divinity (the concept of absolutism). Ancient world religions have celebrated the feminine, her amazing reproductive role and seductiveness to the masculine (Goddesses of love and passion, Virgins, Sacred Prostitutes, Fertility, Mother Earth), Brown speaking the language of the Divine Feminine, The Goddess, The Sacred Mother. These are the archetypes dwelling in our collective minds and streams of consciousness. It is hard for us to acknowledge the concept of feminine heroism, divinity, because we had not grown up with such stories. Otherwise we would have less difficulty in recognizing references to those stories in the art we view. It is a fact (?) that women are still recovering from the stereotype of “emotionally unstable producers of babies” (Miller). If we take Brown’s claiming that the person sitting on Jesus’ right is Mary Magdalene, the painting showing Mary and Jesus as a pair. Leonardo Da Vinci’s painting possesses a huge amount of symbols. The empty space between Jesus and Mary in the shape of V and further taking the two as compositional elements leads to the letter M (Brown: 244-245), standing for Matrimonio or Mary Magdalene (not certain). The theory of Jesus, being a bachelor is disputable, because the social decorum during that time virtually forbade a Jewish man to be unmarried, celibacy was condemned. According to Brown, the Bible itself acknowledges that the two had a romantic relationship (taken from The Gospel of Philip):

“And the companion of the Saviour is Mary Magdalene. Christ loved her more than all the disciples and used to kiss her often on her mouth. The rest of the disciples were offended by it and expressed disapproval. They said to him, »Why do you love her more than all of us?«” (Brown: 2003)

Companion, in those days, literally meant spouse.

“The novel mixes together elements that are quite appealing within a postmodern culture: a relativistic attitude toward truth and religion, conspiracy-based claims, radical feminism, dislike for religious authority and the implicit belief that reality is malleable and can be customized, so to speak, to each person’s wishes.” (Olson: 2004)

Postmodernism is a true philosophy, and the postmodern Christianity is the step forward on the infinite path to Truth, rather than an oxymoron.

Another feature of the novel is that it develops its themes to a logical conclusion. We are given elements of secret, to some of us probably yet unknown symbols and symbolic meanings, to build on our expectations and a possible conclusion. We observe character development through their development of the story, discovering and interpreting symbols. More is discussed in the chapter on themes.

The Da Vinci Code operates on several levels; it is a mystery novel, a romance, a thriller, a conspiracy theory, and a spiritual manifesto, all at once. It holds the ‘real’ answers to life’s big questions, a postmodern approach concerned with “fragmentariness of contemporary experience, the artificiality of identity and meaning, and with the ultimately subjective nature of all experience” (Wikipedia).

The *Da Vinci Code* is very much alike the Umberto Eco’s *The Name of the Rose* dealing with consecutive murders of monks in medieval abbey in the north of Italy, and *Foucault’s Pendulum*, which is about a research on the Templar history. Eco plays with “the notion that everything might be mysteriously related to everything else,” suggesting that we ourselves create the connections that make up reality (Amazon). As in his best-selling *The Name of the Rose*, he relies on abstruse reasoning without losing the reader, for he knows how to use ‘the polyphony of ideas’ as much for effect as for content. Themes common to *The Da Vinci Code*, *The Name of the Rose*, and *Foucault’s Pendulum* are discussed in the chapter on themes.

IV. Summary of the Plot

The story opens with the murder of Jacques Sauniere, curator of the Louvre Museum in Paris late at night at the hands of a fanatical albino monk. As he is lying fatally wounded in the stomach, Sauniere tries to think of a way to pass on ‘the secret’ that has been protected since the days of Christ by a clandestine society, the Priory of Sion. Only four men, the Grandmaster and the three so-called *sénéchaux*, possess this secret at a time.

The novel's hero, Robert Langdon, a Harvard professor of religious symbology, is awakened after midnight by a visitor to his hotel room in Paris. Earlier in the evening he had given a lecture and slide show on pagan symbolism hidden in the stones of Chartres Cathedral. The visitor is from the Judicial Police (the French equivalent of the FBI). He informs Langdon of the murder of Sauniere, and says that his name was in Sauniere's day planner. Langdon is wanted for questioning. Before escorting him to the murder scene at the Louvre, the visitor shows Langdon a photo of the body. Before he died, Sauniere stripped and lay down on the floor in the position of a male figure in a famous anatomical drawing by Leonardo Da Vinci, the *Vitruvian Man*. He also drew a pentagram on his stomach in his own blood, and left a bizarre message written in a black light marker near his body:

13-3-2-21-1-1-8-5

O Draconian devil!

Oh, lame saint!

This, it turns out, is all an elaborate coded message Sauniere had left for Langdon. However, since Sauniere had originally intended to meet Langdon earlier in the evening, Captain Bezu Fache of the Judicial Police has all but concluded that Langdon is the murderer.

Meanwhile, Silas, the murderous albino, has spoken over the phone to a man identified only as ‘the Teacher,’ informing him of the success of his mission. Silas is the devoted follower of Bishop Manuel Aringarosa, and both men are members of a rabidly militant Catholic organization called Opus Dei (Latin for ‘the Work of God’), bent on destroying a

secret society called the Priory of Sion, founded in 1099, and preventing the secret from being revealed.

Back at the Louvre, Fache is irritated by the arrival of the beautiful cryptographer from the Judicial Police, Sophie Nevue. By an elaborate wit she secretly communicates to Langdon that he is the murder suspect and is in danger. She then proceeds to unravel part of Sauniere's mysterious message. The numbers, when sequenced from low to high, are a Fibonacci series:

scrambled: 13-3-2-21-1-1-8-5

unscrambled: 1-1-2-3-5-8-13-21

This is a sequence of numbers created by adding the last two numbers in the sequence to get the next one. This sequential system was invented by the 13th-century Italian mathematician Leonardo Fibonacci. Sophie then reveals to Langdon the final line of the coded message, which Fache had covered up: "P.S. Find Robert Langdon."

This is why Fache suspects Langdon of the murder. However, it turns out that the message Sauniere left wasn't for the police at all, but for Sophie Nevue: P.S. stands for Princess Sophie, Sauniere's nickname for her. Sophie is his granddaughter. Langdon figures out that the rest of the coded message is an anagram:

O Draconian devil! (Leonardo Da Vinci)

Oh, lame saint (The Mona Lisa)

Sophie also shows him that Fache's men have planted a tracking device in his jacket. They throw it out the window to make Fache and his men believe that Langdon has fled the Louvre. With the police gone, Sophie and Langdon go to where the Mona Lisa is hanging and find another cryptic black light message scrawled over the protective plexiglass cover: "So Dark the Con of Man." This, it turns out, is another anagram, leading to another work by Leonardo Da Vinci: "Madonna of the Rocks".

Sauniere, it turns out, was the most recent of the leaders of a secret society called the Priory of Sion, of which Leonardo, among other luminaries, including Sir Isaac Newton, Botticelli, Victor Hugo, Jean Cocteau, Robert Boyle, Claude Debussy, was the

Grand Master (Brown: 326-327). The Priory has been preserving the true religion started by Jesus and brought to France (then Gaul) by his wife, none other than Mary Magdalene. This religion is much more egalitarian than historical Christianity, and Da Vinci and others were devoted to the sacred feminine, which was early on excluded by the church. The Priory has also kept secret the bloodline of Jesus and Mary Magdalene, still in existence today. This bloodline, it turns out, is also the Holy Grail (the Grail as the cup of Christ, holding Christ's blood, being merely symbolic).

The reason the society has to keep the bloodline secret is that the Catholic Church wishes to extinguish it and wipe out all traces of the 'rival religion', which it sees as a threat to its existence. This is why the crazed albino monk from Opus Dei is out to murder all of the leaders of the Priory.

The rest of the story is a well-balanced mix of a harrowing, protracted chase - in which the hero and heroine are pursued both by the Judicial Police and the albino monk - and the gradual unraveling of the Da Vinci Code. It is full of meanings beneath meanings. For example, the "P.S." in Sauniere's message not only means Princess Sophie, but Priory of Sion as well. We learn certain facts, we might not know before, say, the number Phi, or the so-called Divine Proportion (big / small then $\Phi = 1.618$; small / big then $\Phi = 0.618$). We learn about the secret of the Knights Templar, and the symbolism in many of the world's most treasured paintings, as well as architectural symbolism in some of history's most sacred churches. We come to know, where the superstition about the Friday the 13th comes from. It is connected to the "notorious Templar round-up in 1307 [...] when Pope Clement killed and interred hundreds of Knights Templar" for he thought he had a chance of finally confiscating the four chests of documents holding the secret about the Holy Grail (Brown: 338). The chests were last seen in 1447 when numerous eyewitnesses described a fire that had broken out and almost engulfed the documents before they were carried to safety (Brown: 169), probably to Great Britain, the Land of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. Brown also twists the entries of the Bible, claiming: "At this point in the gospels, Jesus suspects He will soon be captured and crucified. So He gives Mary Magdalene instructions on how to carry on His church after He is gone. [...] According to these unaltered gospels, it was not Peter to whom Christ gave directions with which to establish the Christian Church. It was Mary Magdalene" (Brown, 247-248). Jesus was the original feminist and wanted the Church to be in hands of Mary Magdalene, but Peter had a problem with that, which can be seen in *The Last Supper*, where "Peter

was leaning menacingly toward Mary Magdalene and slicing his blade-like hand across her neck. The same threatening gesture as in *Madonna of the Rocks!*” (Brown: 248). There is also a disembodied hand wielding a dagger.

There are many references and allusions to the Bible, many interpretations of works of well-known authors, a great many of new hypotheses claiming the ‘truth’. The reader of this book may find him/herself sucked into accepting the new truth. Therefore, the power to resist the authority of the printed world is needed here. Logically deduced secret elements of this book should be accepted with hands, just as open as for any other ‘truth’ coming from the past, the point being that such respectable books as the Bible may be telling the ‘truth’ – however, the truth, that has been accepted thousand and more years ago by those who wrote the Bible, by the winners, and especially by the Church, which has been striving toward perfection from its coming into existence.

To believe is very dull. To doubt is intensely engrossing. To be on the alert is to live, to be lulled into security is to die.

Oscar Wilde

V. Character Portrayal

There are not many characters in this novel, which makes the novel much easier to read and construct a better view of the character cast and the plot. Characters in *The Da Vinci Code* are said to be fictional, but are very believable and seem real. Their personalities are built up relatively well. What I missed with the characters was their critical approach toward their theses, but I suppose it might have been done on purpose for the reader to take that approach. They embody our scepticism as well as our ability to take another look at the picture of religious history, but do not try to contradict themselves very often, which characterizes them as commonly human.

1. Robert Langdon

Robert Langdon is a well-known Harvard professor of religious studies who specializes in symbolism and arcane wisdom. He is actually the only real living character and is not just made-up for the novel (acc. to my research). In the novel, however, he is a bachelor described as early middle aged man with slightly graying hair, wearing a tweed jacket and a Mickey Mouse watch. He is an appealing figure, less decisive, more reflective, and an intuitive figure. He is not aggressive and does not seem to be fully confident. He likes being in the background in terms of action, but stands out with his superior intellect when scientific matters are discussed. He possesses a touch of sardonic wit and is ready to admit when he doesn't know something. "Langdon presents a winsome, postmodern knight in shining armour" (Stortz), the one the reader can easily identify with.

2. Sophie Neveu

Sophie Neveu is a French criminal investigator and code cracker. She happens to be the curator Jacques Sauniere's granddaughter, living with him since early ages, when her parents were supposedly murdered (as revealed later on in the novel). She is a tough, highly intelligent, witty, and impulsive young woman, who has been taught all she knows about symbolism, deciphering codes in strange combinations, and solving anagrams by her grandfather, who left a significant mark on her. Once she witnessed a

strange ritual – the Hieros Gamos – at her grandfather’s vacation château in Normandy and cracked down. After that she left her grandfather and never spoke to him again, though he desperately tried to reach her. The night before his death he called her to warn her of the danger but she was relentless and this made her feel guilty for her grandfather’s death throughout the novel. She does not possess as much knowledge as Langdon, but helps him a great lot in deciphering her grandfather’s messages. Sophie and Robert are just like Yin and Yang complementing one another. They fall in love in the end.

Brown chose the name Sophie, because “Sophia is not only the Biblical and Greek Wisdom but also carries weight in Gnostic myth as the goddess who sent/birthing the Christ to us to reveal true Gnosis” (Szimhart: 2004). Brown’s Sophie as it ends up is a true daughter of the royal line of Magdalene and Jesus. Sophie Neveu is the character who ties everything together and brings the proper sense of humanity and morality to the story. Dealing with the death of her beloved grandfather, coming to understand more of her past, and being the possessor of information that could change history and religion, she strikes the right tone of strength and vulnerability to make everything else in this novel believable.

3. Captain Bezu Fache

Bezu Fache is the ruthless, yet objective captain of the Direction Centrale Police Judiciaire (equivalent of the US FBI). He is very smart, always thinking one step ahead, and always aware of the political implications of what he is doing. He is arrogant, and not very sensitive to others’ feelings. He has a cynical sense of humour but is mostly serious with occasional humour. Work, results, and respect mean everything to him. Nevertheless, in the end, he is willing to recognize his ‘mistake’, and he actually reveals himself as quite warm a person.

4. Silas

Silas is an albino Opus Dei monk believing everything he’s doing is for God. He murders the three sénéchaux and the Grand Master by instruction from The Teacher, an

unknown man who directs the search for the Priory's secrets. His penitence is expressed through wearing a spiked cilice belt around his thigh causing pain to the body – “Pain is good,” Silas uses to repeat many times, as a perpetual reminder of Christ's suffering. Silas is ruthless, has no conscience and is used as an object of manipulation by The Teacher and Bishop Aringarosa. He shows his submission to his masters by wishing he intercepted the bullet, which hit Aringarosa instead of him, blindly following the path, outlined by others. He is definitely a flat character.

5. Jacques Sauniere

Jacques Sauniere, the chief curator in the Louvre Museum, the Grand Master of The Priory of Sion, and grandfather to Sophie Neveu is a character presented through the eyes of other characters in the novel, namely Sophie and Langdon. He is shown as a very intelligent man, a loving grandfather, a possessor of great secrets. He inherits the knowledge of his past members of The Priory of Sion, passing it over to his daughter. We do not know much about his personality, but his love for his daughter, passion for his work, immense loyalty and steadfastness to the secret society are quite often implied in the novel.

6. Leigh Teabing

Leigh Teabing is presented as a harmless, a bit eccentric poliomyelitis-survivor, academic, and millionaire who has devoted his life to the quest of the Holy Grail. He takes advantage of Langdon and Sophie to find the grail and intends to reveal the long-buried secret to the world, albeit causing chaos, the collapse of Christianity, of everything this world is based on. He believes in himself, has an already formed opinion on the matter and will not turn from his course, no matter what. Teabing reveals himself later on through the story as The Teacher, the murderer from the very beginning to the end of the story. He has no concepts of moral right, ethics, and even uses his disability as an escape mechanism. He also has a typical mocking British attitude toward the French.

VI. Themes and Motives

There are great many motives that constitute several major themes of this novel. The novel constantly questions our faith, the major theme thus being the quest for truth. Motives, such as murders for religious and ideological reasons, identity of the Holy Grail, authority of the Bible, bringing of Pagan symbolism in Christian art, researching the role of Mary Magdalene and the theories of the ‘sacred feminine’, questioning Jesus’ chastity, purity and celibacy, identifying keys to the ‘truth’ in history’s greatest personalities, and last but not least, exposing some of the secret pagan and Christian societies,... all of them constitute the relationship theme between ancient and modern concepts of feminine and masculine, raise questions and cast doubt on the accuracy of our history, provide contrasts to our beliefs and everything this world (Christian) is based on, accuse the Church for concealing the ‘truth’, and make us aware of the on-every-step integration of symbols into our every-day world (e.g. Disney cartoons hiding occult wisdom). This novel is the supporter of subjective individualism.

Umberto Eco’s *The Name of the Rose* also has this theme of quest for the truth; however, the truth there is more narrow. It is about mysterious murders and the hunt for an unknown murderer, a novel where “very little is discovered and the detective is defeated” (McHale: 1992). Besides it is set in the Medieval Ages. On the contrary Eco’s *Foucault’s Pendulum* takes place in the modern world, researching the mysteries of the Knights Templar’s fall, integrating Diabolical secret societies, occult knowledge and conspiracy theories – just like in *The Da Vinci Code*. As McHale (1992: 173) quotes, it is not about discovering the Templars’ secret, but constructing it – “reconstructing the history of the world”

The basic implied idea of *The Da Vinci Code* is to become aware and suspicious of the surrounding ‘truths’ and realities following from them.

VII. Style

Reading Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* is often reminiscent of watching an *Indiana Jones* movie, but Brown achieved much more by 'riddling' the novel with anagrams, symbols, word codes, meanings within meanings. He is basically telling nothing new regarding conspiracy theories, etc. He is just putting together pieces of information taken from various sources that he researched and are, according to him, credible. The novel is loaded with brain-thrilling details, keeping you in suspense from page to page. He constantly shifts between three subplots, and uses a couple of flashbacks, thus leaving the majority of 105 chapters end in anxious suspense (cliffhangers). It is "perfect for history buffs, conspiracy nuts, puzzle lovers or anyone who appreciates a great, riveting story" (Harlan Coben). Brown's story is told mostly in 3rd person; amounts of description and dialog are roughly even. The plot and data from his researches are finely intertwined. The story logically follows from previous deductions, thus forming unity of all information. There is quite some techno jargon, which does not make it difficult to read but rather enhances it. It is a fast-paced book and you may find yourself rushing through the book and reading it in one sitting without becoming bored, even though it is 454 pages long.

VIII. Conclusion

Everyone interested in numerological symbolism, verbal puzzles, aspects and interpretations of Western history and Christianity, and holding 'real' or possible answers to life's big questions will find this novel a great read. He sets his story in the modern place time, which emphasizes the importance of the subject matter of the novel. The mythic elements within the novel have given energy to a set of beliefs about the real world, beliefs that fall under the scope of sceptical investigation. The reason why The Da Vinci Code became so popular is because of the novelty of its central idea, the soundness of Brown's research, and the professional intertwining and crafting of the plot and characters, and at its core the provocative religious theory and mythic themes. Recommended, unless you are a Christian fanatic.

IX. References

- Amazon.** *Dan Brown: The Da Vinci Code* [On-line]. Available:
http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0385504209/qid=1081089932/sr=2-1/ref=sr_2_1/002-4040763-9778469 (4 Apr. 2004).
- Amazon.** *Umberto Eco: The Name of the Rose* [On-line]. Available:
http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0156001314/qid=1081090039/sr=2-1/ref=sr_2_1/002-4040763-9778469 (4 Apr. 2004).
- Amazon.** *Umberto Eco: Faucault's Pendulum* [On-line]. Available:
http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0345368754/qid=1081090125/sr=2-1/ref=sr_2_1/002-4040763-9778469 (4 Apr. 2004).
- Anderson, C. A.** Review. *The Da Vinci Code by Dan Brown* [On-line]. Available:
<http://www.disabilitystudies.com/davincicode.htm> (4 Apr. 2004).
- Brown, D.** 2003. *The Da Vinci Code*. London: The Random House Group.
- Brown, D.** [On-line]. Available : <http://www.danbrown.com> (4 Apr. 2004).
- Boucher, B.** *Does 'The Da Vinci Code' Crack Leonardo?* [On-line]. Available:
http://www.newagepointofinfinity.com/new_page_10.htm (4 Apr. 2004).
- Callahan, T.** *The Royal Myth of the Da Vinci Code* [On-line]. Available:
<http://www.skeptic.com/davincicode.html> (4 Apr. 2004).
- Hartman, G.** *'The Da Vinci Code': Exciting New Novel, Tired Old Conspiracy Theories* [Online]. Available: <http://www.family.org/married/growth/a0029682.cfm> (4 Apr. 2004).
- Kos, Janko.** 1995. *Na Poti v Postmoderno*. Ljubljana: Literarno-umetniško ruštvo Literatura.
- McHale, B.** 1992. *Constructing Postmodernism*. London: Routledge.
- Miller, R. G.** Beneath the Brushstrokes. *What Art Can Tell Us About the Divine* [On-line]. Available: <http://www.explorefaith.org/daVinci/miller.html> (4 Apr. 2004).
- Olson, C.** 2004. *The Truth behind "The Da Vinci Code"* [On-line]. Available:
<http://www.ewtn.com/vnews/getstory.asp?number=44713> (4 Apr. 2004).
- Opus Dei.** [On-line]. Available: <http://www.opusdei.org> (4 Apr. 2004).
- Sandon, L.** *'Da Vinci Code' generates discussion* [On-line]. Available:
<http://www.tallahassee.com/mld/democrat/7209398.htm> (4 Apr. 2004).
- Stortz, M.E.** *The Da Vinci Code: A Cultural and Religious Phenomenon* [On-line]. Available: <http://www.plts.edu/articles/stortz/davincicode.htm> (4 Apr. 2004).
- Szimhart, J. P.** *The Da Vinci Code* [On-line]. Available:
http://www.users.fast.net/~szymhart/da_vinci_code.htm (4 Apr. 2004).
- Wikipedia.** *Brief Outline of Postmodernism* [On-line]. Available:
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postmodernism> (4 Apr. 2004).

- BLANK -