

A SYMBOLIC ANALYSIS OF HOWARD'S MOVIE THE DA VINCI CODE

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Abstract

*The Da Vinci Code movie is Ron Howard's master piece which is laden with symbols where the cradle of mystery is arranged in series of symbols. Additionally, the movie sparks controversy relating to a feminine figure, Mary Magdalene. The present study revolves around the symbols which contribute ominously to the controversy that the movie sparks. This study is intended to uncover the symbols related to the Holy Grail and to elaborate the meaning of symbols found in context of the Holy Grail. Moreover, this study aims to demonstrate the relation built between the movie and modern day Christians as its viewers. The descriptive qualitative method is employed in this study, using Charles Pierce's Semiotic Theory as a theoretical framework. The movie *The Da Vinci Code* is the primary source. The secondary sources are texts concerning semiotic theory which is employed to study the symbols. The study reveals twelve symbols which are closely related to the controversy that *The Da Vinci Code* movie sparks. They are Opus Dei, Vitruvian Man, Pentacle, The Mona Lisa, Madonna of the Rocks, Star of David, Rose Line, Rosa Ragusa, Holy Grail, The Last Supper, Cruciform, and Church. The study finds out a contrast between modern Christian beliefs and the hidden message or the signified of the symbol studied i.e. Church signifies sexism. The study suggests future researchers to study symbols using Charles Pierce's semiotic theory and triadic model of semiotics.*

Keywords: *Semiotics, Triadic Model, Pierce's Theory, movie, Symbols, Meaning, Holy Grail.*

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

The present study aims to do the symbolic analysis of Howard's movie *The Da Vinci Code*. A symbol is an essence of thoughts and ideas. The present chapter of the study deals with different meaningful symbols present in the movie *The Da Vinci Code*. This movie is an example of symbolic excursion that is laden with symbols. The present study is influenced by Charles Pierce's theory of semiotics.

The researchers have a keen interest in decoding the codes hidden in the symbols presented in *The Da Vinci Code*. The understanding of the creation of the stunning messages in the hidden layers of symbology is the only urge the researcher has in the present research. For this purpose, the researcher has used semiotics as a tool to study symbols. Semiotics can be described as the scientific study of sign system and how the sets of signs form symbols. Semiotics is the key to unlock signs. The researcher has applied the semiotic approach to comprehend the signs and symbols portrayed in *The Da Vinci Code*. Daniel Chandler (2007) identifies semiotics, as symbols that can take form of an object, or can be illustrated as a picture, sound, colour or gesture. In simple words Semiotics is linked with everything that can be categorized as a sign.

The researchers have an innate interest in symbols and the understanding of their meanings and hence motivated to watch symbolic movies. *The Da Vinci Code* is laden with symbols and so the reason for the researcher to analyze and study the hidden meanings of the signs portrayed in the movie. To make sure the quality of the research work, the researcher has adapted Charles Peirce's Triadic Model of semiotics for the analysis of the movie.

1.2 Significance of the Study

The present study urges to explore two fold significant aspects of symbology. On one hand it contributes to the theoretical applications of semiotics whereas adds to the practical aspect of semiotics on the other. Theoretically, with the help of present study, researcher is motivated to provide an additional source specifically in view of Peirce's theory of semiotics to enhance our acquaintance and familiarity of semiotics. Practically, the analysis of the present research will guide and assist the future researchers for the comparable researches as the other reference. The researchers are hopeful that the present study provides the additional and essential source which can be used as a reference for the advancement of the semiotic theory specifically Charles Pierce's theory of semiotics.

1.3 Research Objectives

The research questions motivate following objectives to be achieved:

1. To uncover the symbols related to the Holy Grail in *The Da Vinci Code* movie. As the movie is laden with symbols so researcher's focus is on those earthshaking symbols that hit the controversy regarding the concept of the Grail.
2. To elaborate the meaning of symbols found in context of the Holy Grail. Researcher extracts the true essence of the meanings conveyed by the symbols regarding Holy Grail in a systematic way under the structure of Pierce's triadic model of semiotics.
3. To understand and demonstrate the relation built between the movie and modern day Christians as its viewer.

Furthermore, each symbol is observed, studied and analyzed individually as well as in connection with the other relevant symbols that are displayed in the movie.

2. Literature Review

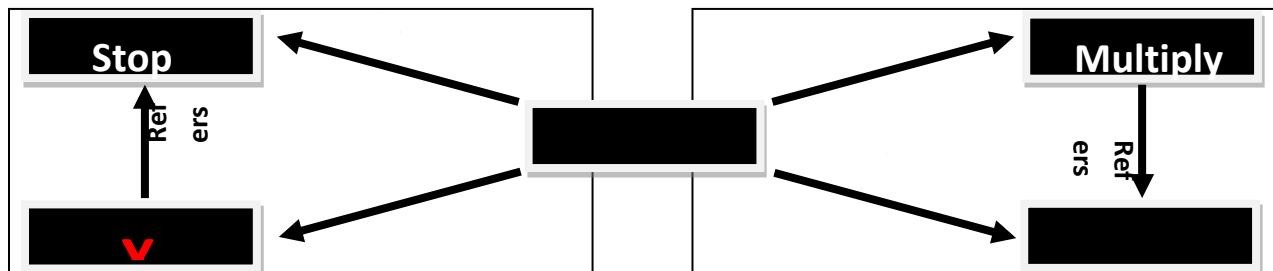
Researchers have piloted a number of studies in the past which are closely related to the semiotic applications, approaches and analysis. Nisa (2017) directed a research study entitled, "Cattleya Orchid Signs in the Colombiana (2011) Film". The researcher has analyzed the signs and symbols appeared in the said movie in general and Cattleya Orchid form of signs in particular. The movie is a thriller action in which the main plot of the story revolves around a feminine character 'Cattaleya' and focuses on the conception of the self-identity of the leading character with the help of the symbols portrayed in the Colombiana (2011) movie. Nisa applied descriptive technique of data analysis to describe the meanings of signs and their role in developing develop Cattleya's identity in the movie in the light of the theory proposed by Roland Barthes regarding denotative and connotative meanings of signs and symbols.

Pauzan (2017) steered a thesis entitled "A Semiotic Analysis of the John Wick 1 Movie Using Charles Sanders Peirce's Semiotic Theory" in which he explored the signs, symbols and indexes that are found in the John Wick 1 movie and analyzed the data in the light of Charles Pierce's semiotic theory whereas the data for the analysis had been collected through qualitative tools of data collection.

Keeping the flow of the continued research, another example of Shadiqi’s semiotic analysis (2014) of South Park is given which is one of the most popular cartoon series in America. Shadiqi (2014) has highlighted and discussed 21 symbols and their meanings in his study on South Park cartoon. On interpreting the data, symbols are interpreted by putting forward a meek explanation of the text as suggested by Chandler. These symbols are further interpreted by the order of significance, Hjemslev, in order to convey the message and value in two-folds meanings: denotative and connotative. After the main problems are solved and acquired by the researcher then after that the analytical interpretation of those symbols is conducted by mentioning the main problems.

3. Research Methodology

The data used in this research has been gathered out of *The Da Vinci Code* movie which is needed to establish inference later on. The researcher in the present study has applied the qualitative method for the collection and analysis of the data under the theory of Semiotics where the analysis is specifically descriptive in nature. The descriptive analysis primarily focuses on the signs and symbols which are appeared in the said movie, and tends to describe the signs and symbols along with their meanings and the impacts of the meanings on the viewers. The researchers have analyzed the symbols displayed in *The Da Vinci Code* movie in light of the Charles Pierce’s triadic model of semiotics. If we consider Sugiyano (2014), he states that a qualitative method or otherwise interpretive method is the method technique which is related to the data gathered in the field which is to be analyzed, assessed and interpreted.



4. Data Analysis

The present section deals with analysis of six symbols which are associated with the controversy of the Holy Grail. The symbology of the movie under analysis when decoded, uncovers an alarming fact that Mary Magdalene is Jesus’ wife and bearer of his future generations which exists even today. The early Christian Church tried to hide this fact in order to strengthen male dominance over the Church in the form of Papacy.

4.1 Findings

Sr#	Symbol	Description	Scenes spotted
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1	Vitruvian Man	Ideal proportions of human body.	14:24 - 14:30
2	Pentacle	The apparent path of planet Venus as observed from Earth.	14:24 - 14:30
3	Holy Grail	Symbol for carrier of Jesus's bloodline.	1:14:10 - 1:14:50
4	The Last supper	A painting, which depicts Christ and his disciples and his companion Mary Magdalene.	1:19:10 - 1: 23:10
5	Cruciform	Cruciform is a symbolic representation of a divine balance between male and female.	8:30:00 - 9:00:00
6	Church	Church is a symbol of sexism	2:22:39 - 2:41:45



Figure 4.1, Datum 1

Description	
Scene	Scene two in minute 14:24- 14:30
Context of situation	When Fache brought Robert Langdon to the louvre, they saw the dead body of Jacques Saunère in the form of Vitruvian man and a pentacle etched through his chest.
Conversation	The Vitruvian Man. It's one of Leonardo da Vinci's most famous sketches. And the star on his skin? A pentacle.
Symbol	The Vitruvian Man
Signified	Harmonic balance among sexes



Figure 4.2, Datum 2

Description	
Scene	Scene three in minute 14:24- 14:50
Context of situation	The pentacle etched through the chest of Jacques Saunère made Langdon thought of the female half of all things and by combining both Vitruvian man and pentacle, Langdon thought of Mona Lisa which is the union of male and female.
Conversation	The pentacle is a pagan religious icon. Devil worship. No. No, no, no. The pentacle before that. This is a symbol for Venus. It represents the female half of all things.
Symbol	Pentacle
Signified	Female favor, devil



Figure 4.3, Datum 3

Description	
Scene	Scene nine in minute 1:14:10- 1:14:50
Context of situation	The secret of Priory of Sion is being revealed here whose members took pledge to safe guard the ancient secret of the marriage of Jesus and Mary.
Conversation	The Priory is charged with a single task: To protect the greatest secret in modern history. The source of God's power on earth. No, that's a common misunderstanding. The Priory protects the source of the Church's power on earth: The Holy Grail.
Symbol	The Holy Grail
Signified	Divine feminine, Mary Magdalene



Figure 4.4, Datum 4

Description	
Scene	Scene ten in minute 1:19:10-1: 23:10
Context of situation	Robert and Neveu are at Teabing's house where they are trying to study <i>The Last Supper</i> in order to find out the true meaning of Holy Grail.
Conversation	<p>Now, mademoiselle, where is Jesus sitting?</p> <p>-In the middle.</p> <p>-Good.</p> <p>He and his disciples are breaking bread.</p> <p>And what drink?</p> <p>Wine. They drank wine.</p> <p>Splendid. And one final question:</p> <p>How many wineglasses are there on the table?</p> <p>One? The Holy Grail?</p> <p>Open your eyes.</p> <p>No single cup.</p>
Symbol	The Last Supper
Signified	Jesus and Mary Magdalene are a pair



Figure 4.5, Datum 5

Description	
Scene	Scene Eleven in minute 8:30:00 - 9:00:00
Context of situation	The Albino monk enters his chamber to chastise his body in front of the cross which depicts the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.
Conversation	I chastise my body
Symbol	Cruciform
Signified	Harmonic balance between male and female, torment.



Figure 4.6, Datum 6

Description	
Scene	Scene Twelve in minute 2:22:39 - 2:41:45
Context of situation	Robert and Neveu are entering the Roslin Chapel in order to find out the truth of The Holy Grail by following the ancient rose line.
Conversation	The Holy Grail 'neath ancient Roslin waits The blade and chalice guarding o'er her gates Adorned in masters' loving art, she lies She rests at last beneath the starry skies.
Symbol	Church
Signified	Sexism

4.2 Discussion

Ron Howard's movie is based on the eponymous novel written by Dan Brown which has initiated the biggest controversy in Christianity. This movie is a cinematic depiction of *The Da Vinci Code* which has unraveled an entire Pandora box about Christian Church Institution. The controversy has raised questions on the integrity of the millennia old institution and for this to answer the researcher is moving towards the analysis of the research work. The researcher has been discussing the controversy and the questions it is raising, are of great interest to his peers. The researcher has taken notes and tries to limit the questions only to historical perspective. These historical questions are put in front of the Council of Nicaea where the King Augustine chaired the council.

The symbols are small windows through which the main idea is transferred to the viewers. It is necessary to define what symbols are and what relationship they hold with the main idea. Are

they able to convey the whole idea or not. Symbols are usually put forward to convey an implicit meaning whose true explanation can be given by analyzing them in every perspective. Basically the meaning given by the symbols are a connotation which follows up to something beyond the literal explanation as a symbol cannot be taken into its literary terms. Resulting of which studying connotations will be similar to the study of connotations. Therefore, this symbolic study is focused on the connotative meanings and how they are yielded. This is the benefit of applying theory of semiotics on this research as the production of meaning or the mechanism of derived connotation is taken care of (Sebeok, 1978).

A symbol is a connotation which is constructed from denotation and a symbolic explanation. The denotation is a signifier and the symbolic explanation or meaning is a signified. At the denotative stage the literal meaning point towards signified and the connotation point towards the signifier (Barthes, 1981). By following this logic the denotation is pre-level stage of semiotics and connotation is the post-level stage of semiotics (Hawkes, 1977). Keeping in mind the above given arguments, the researcher has focused the study on symbols which take on a different path than Christianity has told us. These symbols which include *Opus Dei*, *Vitruvian Man*, *Pentacle*, *Mona Lisa*, *Madonna of the Rocks*, *Fleur De Lis*, *Rose Line*, *Rose*, *Holy Grail*, *The Last Supper*, *Blade*, *Chalice*, *Cilice* and *the star of David*. These symbols which are related to this research are analyzed in detail below.

Datum 1

The plot kick starts from the murder of Jacques Sauniere who is the curator of famous Louvre Museum in Paris, France and also head of a secret society named Priory of Scion in secret. Priory of Scion is a secret society dating back from the birth of Christianity whose sole purpose of creation was to protect the sanctity of Mary Magdalene which is in fact in conflict with what modern day Christians believe. The mysterious murder of the curator attracts Sophie Neveu and Robert Langdon on the crime scene and eventually inspires them to solve the mystery by decoding the symbols which try to lead them to the ultimate truth. Robert Langdon is a professor of semiotics and Sophie Neveu is a cryptographer at Paris police department. While in his dying, Sauniere strips off his clothes and acts in a strange manner. He dies on the hall floor making a bizarre position which the police will solve. His strangely posed body is the initial clue or symbol followed by messages written in the parquet and the pentacle weaved in his abdominal area. Upon initial inspection, Professor Langdon is unable to comprehend the symbolic meaning of the pose but later on he is able to decode that the symbol in which Jacques Sauniere body lies is the replica of Leonardo Da Vinci's painting – *Vitruvian Man*. Vitruvian Man is an illustration of human male naked body whose legs and arms are outstretched like 'X'.

Vitruvian Man is the most anatomically correct representation of the human body. It entails every single bit of possibility in which the body can be pleasantly depicted. This drawing has become a popular cultural icon in today's world. It is depicted on t-shirts, cover stories, magazines, brands and posters across the globe. The inspiring masterpiece contains an accurate circle in it lays a naked man with spread eagle like position. However, does not only mean a drawing of some naked human male but it signifies a deep message within its existence that is: "The Circle had been the missing element which is the feminine symbol of protection and gender equality thus completing the desired message of Leonardo Da Vinci – Male and Female's peaceful co-existence". According to its creator, Da Vinci, this drawing illustrates interdependent harmony

among Man and Woman which is good by nature. The human society was pre-dominantly in tilt of feminine in nature. Female characters were more or equal in social status to that of male. With the passage of time, this norm became replaced with males in dominant positions of the society. Since then gender disparity have grown until philosophers like Leonardo Da Vinci realized the original method of getting rid of this imbalance and reinstating the lost harmony between the two genders. The millennia old distortion in the harmony has brought a disaster to this world and in turn male supremacy has gone too far. Hence the world can achieve harmony by eliminating this imbalance between the two sexes.

In the study of semiotics, the term *Vitruvian Man* means the signifier and the signified is Da Vinci's drawing of a naked man with outstretched limbs. This approach is taken at the denotative level. While at the connotative level, the drawing means an equal harmony between male and female which is the hidden message of its creator. Hence at connotative level, signifier remains same but the signified becomes changed.

Datum 2

As for the symbol of *Vitruvian Man*, Jacques Saunère's body was lying posing in the bizarre position. On further inspection, Langdon and Neveu find out five straight lines intersecting each other to form a five-pointed star. The symbol was drawn by the blood used as an ink by the deceased curator. One symbol after another was not just there for any reason, it had a purpose which only after combining them could be realized. In the movie the relative symbology is depicted in such a way that a dead man is lying in the likes of the *Vitruvian Man* and on his abdomen is carved a pentacle with blood ink. Neveu and the rest start contemplating on the symbol as it is a common concept in Christianity that five-pointed star is demonic in guise. But to their surprise, Langdon acknowledged them about the pre Christian origins of this pentacle symbol and told how it was actually considered as sacred in ancient pagan religions. At this point, there are two possible explanations of the pentacle used and why Jacques Saunère drew it.

Professor Langdon further adds about the pentacle's history of origin. The Pentacle is originally the symbol of nature worship of feminine half of everything and it dates long before Christianity. The concept of male gods and female goddesses is the result of this pagan custom. The ancient pagans believed everything in this universe is created in pairs. One of them is the male and the other being the female in the universal parity. These two creates an air of eternal harmony which keeps the world at balance in peace. Langdon says a dialogue in the movie that when male and female were at equilibrium, peace prevailed in the surface of earth and when the equilibrium was compromised, it brought along chaos. He added while pointing to the pentacle at dead curator's abdomen. The pentacle symbolizes the planet Venus which was considered a powerful goddess of sexual female health, love and beauty. The planet orbits in a pentacle shape in a span of eight years. Thus having so much closeness to Venus, Pentacle also became the symbol of female sexual health, love and beauty. Christianity has this concept of divine feminine as they have sanctity of Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus but this concept is not of symbolic importance. Instead of the hardline Christians, the pre-dating signified of pentacle symbol is important in the circles of *Priory of Scion* who have taken the concept of Sacred Feminine and linked it to Mary Magdalene. The presence of Mary Magdalene in Jesus's life and how the symbol portrays them both to be a perfect pair which is further substantiated and explored by symbols analyzed in this research.

Datum 3

...” according to the Priory of Scion, the Holy Grail is not a cup at all. The claim the Grail legend – that a chalice – is actually an ingeniously conceived allegory.” (*The Da Vinci Code*)

In general terms, Holy Grail is widely known as the cup in which Jesus drank his last wine. The Last Supper is known as the last dining which Jesus attended with his disciples. There was so much activity being done which is portrayed in another painting of Leonardo Da Vinci, “The Last Supper”. At this time, Church related Jesus to his cup of wine. The same cup was used to collect the blood of Jesus by Joseph Arimathea while he was on the cross. There are two views on this grail from Jesus drank. One is originating from Early Church and other is originating from *Priory of Scion*. Both of these views will be compared and analyzed later on.

In linguistics, the Holy Grail is also known as *Sangreal* which is roots, *Sang* in French and *Sangre* in Spanish. Both of these roots mean blood in general. It refers to the blood of Jesus which was collected in the Holy Grail by Joseph Arimathea. On signifier level, it is alright to infer from this symbolic connection. This meaning can be used in the favor of Church’s claim somehow until further layer of meaning – the signified in this symbol, is cut open. Another point of view which is held true by *Priory of Scion* is presented by Robert Langdon in the movie where he tells that the Holy Grail has been perceived as the cup of Jesus.

The world came to know that something’s wrong about church history when Leonardo Da Vinci delivered a requested work titled “The Last Supper”. In his masterpiece work, Da Vinci has depicted that there was everything in the painting except the chalice from where Jesus was supposed to be having in front of him. That picture created another controversy and as Da Vinci has associated his affiliations with the Priory his entire life, this painting also needed to be interpreted in the context of the fundamentals of the Priory. In the movie adaptation, Professor Teabing interprets the meaning of the Holy Grail as a symbol of feminine presence in Jesus’s life. In its structure, the Holy Grail resembles a chalice which depicts its upper part in the form of ‘V’. ‘V’ further resembles womb of a woman. It is also the symbol for Venus which is termed as the goddess of female sexual love and fertility. Teabing further clarifies and seconds Langdon’s point of view that *Sang* meant ‘blood’. Blood is also taken as meaning of descendants – line of biological off springs, from where the legacy of the ancestor can be continued. If we combine these interpretations together, it becomes clear as crystal that why Holy Grail was missing from the painting “The Last Supper”, but mentioned in both the early church traditions and those of the Priory.

Leonardo was a genius that is why he made such works with shocking details which could be interpreted only after knowing both sides of a coin. So as the message could only be perceived by those who are able to absorb and interpret. The Holy Grail’s interpretation of blood of Jesus taken in the cup means blood of Jesus was actually his royal lineage which continued through Mary Magdalene. Mary Magdalene was the female womb ‘V’ that carried the royal blood of Jesus. Upon observing the painting “The Last Supper”, there is John the handsome standing with Jesus as presumably perceived generally but all these interpretations depict that as John resembled with a female so much, therefore it was actually Mary Magdalene who was present there and her hand covered by the hand of Jesus meant there was a special bonding between these two. It was also substantiated by Da Vinci’s another painting “Madonna of the Rocks” where Mary Magdalene has

been shown along with baby Jesus, baby John the Handsome also the Baptist along with the angel Uriel. Thus, it clearly indicated that both Mary Magdalene and John the Baptist were two separate individuals in the course of history. The position they are making while holding hands and slightly tilted away from each other in the form of 'V' which again takes the writer to conclude that only Mary Magdalene was making the symbol 'V' with Jesus and 'V' is the symbol of Holy Grail. This implies Mary Magdalene is the Holy Grail.

The Holy Grail is symbolic for womanhood, it symbolizes the concept of sacred feminine vehemently denied and extradited by the early Church. The life producing power was once deemed sacred but it became unacceptable to the male dominated church and therefore, sacred feminine was ridiculed, demonized and declared filth. It is probably the greatest cover-up of the human history of religions. If we take the word Holy Grail it derives another important word *Sangreal* which is actually composed of two words *Sang* and *Real*. The word *Sangreal* in literal term means 'Royal Blood'. Hence *Sangreal* refers to Mary Magdalene in *The Da Vinci Code* movie. Her, not only being the closest aide of Jesus but also, being an influential woman as she belonged to the noble origin – the House of Benjamin. This clarification on the Holy Grail as it is analyzed to be the symbol of female power, fertility and womanhood, links it to Mary Magdalene – maternal ancestor of Jesus's lineage.

Datum 4

"Hold on," Sophie said. "You told me the Holy Grail is a woman. *The Last Supper* is a painting of thirteen men." "Is it?" Teabing arched his eyebrows. "Take a closer look."
(Brown, 2003)

The Last Supper depicts the portrayal of Jesus and his apostles at the last dining right before the crucifixion of Christ where Judas the traitor hold a pack of silver coins which he took as a price for his conscience to deceive his prophet at the most crucial part of life. This is a common notion towards this greatest artwork of all times which is revealed by uncovering the first layer of symbology by the general public and for the general public. The last dining of Jesus holds an important part of that supper, the concept of the Holy Grail which is generally considered as a cup of Christ in which he drank vine at his last supper with twelve others. The absence of the cup leads our protagonists in thirst to meet Leigh Teabing, a worn out devotee who has given his life to one thing that is uncover the truth of Holy Grail. Teabing's interaction with Sophie and Langdon interprets the Last Supper as shown in the movie under analysis in several symbolic layers, ultimately claiming that the Holy Grail has nothing to do with stories centuries old where Teabing deduces the conclusion that one is for sure that Holy Grail is not a cup of Jesus rather something bigger than that, something that holds deeper meaning.

The painting is a pictorial representation of an event told in Bible that afore taking the passion, Jesus undertook a divine meeting with his disciples at his last dining. This biblical story is painted by the master painter Da Vinci and named the painting, The Last Supper. The event of the last supper is of utmost importance due to its theological implications in the religious teachings of the Catholic Church. As per the church record, Catholic Christians decipher that the painting is of 13 men including Jesus and his twelve disciples who were altogether present at the supper.

However, the movie takes it to the level where it successfully sparks a shocking controversy by revealing the hidden mysteries of the painting, painted centuries ago. Here Teabing interprets the painting as a painting of 12 men including Jesus and his 11 disciples and one woman

that is the most beloved sitting beside Jesus, Mary Magdalene. The painting of 13 men is now showing a woman in the painting as a disciple and her status among others, is dignified that she resides beside Jesus in the painting. Hence the standing of the painting for the Catholic teachings of the Holy Grail is shook by the portrayal of a divine feminine in the form of Mary Magdalene. Teabing, in other words, deciphers the presence of a woman in the painting, known as the painting of the 13 men.

Thirdly, the clothing of Jesus and Mary reveals another secret of a hidden bonding between Jesus and Mary when Sophie observed the painting of 13 men in search of a woman, she by her instinct acknowledged that their clothes were inverse colors as Jesus was wearing a red robe and blue cloak and Mary was wearing a blue robe and red cloak, hence, maintaining a balance of male and female as 'Yin and Yang'. The truth roared out of the painting that Jesus and Mary were, but a couple at the last supper, as the inverse colors of their dresses suggest that Jesus and Mary were in an intimate relationship – Yin and Yang. The Church deliberately hides the secret of this divine marriage for its own reasons of ruling over the Christian religion.

Lastly, by the observance of the portrayals of Jesus and Mary Magdalene in the painting and by critically examining the dialogues while going through the course of the movie the research points out that the positioning of Jesus and Mary in the painting confirms the notion of an intimate relationship between the two central figures of the painting. By maximizing the focus on the two central attendants of the dinner the symbolization of Da Vinci's "The Last Supper" stands to reason. The painting reveals that Jesus and Mary were married before the crucifixion of Christ therefore Mary is painted right beside Jesus in clothes inverse in color clearly depicting the presence of a similar relation that is of a husband and wife. The Last Supper finally stands as a sign which itself serves as a signifiers and the signified is the notion of the secret marriage of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. It is breathtaking that the signified of the painting as displayed in the movie is clearly comes in opposition to the Christian teachings by the Church regarding the last supper of Jesus Christ.

Datum 5

The movie under analysis originates the symbolic quest of Langdon and Sophie from the crime scene at Louvre museum in Paris where curator of the museum is murdered by the gunshot. As per the movie, Sophie encounters Langdon at crime scene where they jointly try to decipher the written message of the dead curator who is also the grandfather of Sophie. Sophie convinces Langdon that he is in a trap and she can help him to take him his embassy but Langdon chose to help Sophie to find answers to the questions raised by the symbology on the dead body of the curator. Along with the course of the movie Langdon and Sophie try to understand the message and found a lead towards the painting of Da Vinci which is one other than Madonna of the Rocks where they found an object having four arms, hidden by the curator behind the painting. This four armed object is considered as the cruciform. Cruciform in such a cross which has four arms, all equal in length and it stands as an important symbol which is also sacred for Christians due to its significant belonging to the religion.

A cruciform is the cross which symbolized the crucifixion of Christ and serve as the founding symbols for the Christians of all times as the incidence related to cross is of utmost importance for Christians in particular while for the world in general. The death of Jesus gives birth to new concept of cross. The history of cruciform goes back to the ancient Roman civilization

where the accused or criminal is tied to cross in a torturous way to punish to death a criminal. Crucifixion was not something done to Christ alone rather it was a Roman tradition to punish a criminal who had given a death sentence. As a first symbolic layer the cross stands for the symbolic Roman torture that they traditionally used to do to with the one accused of crime. This interpretation of cross is based on its historical existence that dates back to the Roman tradition of crucifixion so the point becomes clear that its history dates back to the crucifixion of Christ. This provides enough evidence to claim the cruciform as a symbol of torture.

On the other hand Ron Howard depicts the cruciform in a completely dissimilar manner and declared in his movie that the equal armed cross is symbolizing something deeper than its apparent standing as a symbol of violence which is the result of the common sense of the people.

The cruciform is signifier for the conception of the cross as the signified. The cruciform is believed to be the symbol which symbolizes torture on the basis of the historical Roman tradition of crucifixion on one hand whereas the same symbol symbolizes the harmonic balance between male and female on the other. The signification of the first concept is the Roman law which provides the evidence for crucifixion as a punishment of death to the accused criminal whereas the signification of the second concept which reveals the universal harmonic balance among the opposing sexes relates to the symbolically carved sides of the cross all equal in length forming a cruciform.

Datum 6

“Langdon weighed his words carefully.” I was just thinking that Saunère shared a lot of spiritual ideologies with Da Vinci, including concern over the Church’s elimination of the sacred feminine from modern religion... (Brown, 2003)

When it comes to the role of Church for the purpose of elimination of the presence of sacred feminine in religious events of early Christianity, the conversation among Langdon, Neveu and Teabing, is worth mentioning here as the three key figures indulged in a discussion that reveals the facts to uncover the real face of the Catholic Church. Hornby (2000) highlights that in modern world the term *Church* with capital ‘C’ stands alone for the whole of Christianity in its totality. Here in this concept the church is basically a symbol for the followers of the Jesus Christ since the beginning foundation of the religion up to its glorious present with the largest number of followers in comparison to the other religious societies or relevant ideologies. Even today Christians are more in numbers and power in comparison to any other nation yet this fact cannot be ignored that there are Christians who do not follow the Church as other Christians do, Catholics, specifically. The Church is now a symbol as per its historical record and its standing against something more than its literal signified.

The movie talks about the Church through its characters where Langdon and Neveu try to find out Leonardo’s belief regarding early church and papacy rule and Teabing is someone whose presence is basically the presence of the beliefs that long time ago Leonardo had about early Christianity. Leonardo preserved his beliefs in his artworks through which the truth survived. Leonardo was the greatest artist of his time who also led a secret sect, called Priory of Sion and the movie illustrates a fine resemblance between the ancient Priory with the one, present even today, as the curator, with whose murder the quest for truth has been initiated in the movie, seems to be the member of the same secret society, Priory of Sion. The major conflict between the Priory and the Church is of community’s leadership after Jesus’ brutal murder by the Romans where



Catholics believe in the truthfulness of the Church, the Priory on the other hand challenges its authority over religion even today.

Teabing, as displayed in the movie, believes that the patriarchal hierarchy of the church in the form of papacy was an unwanted addition to the religion by the rulers and the care takers of the religion. Similar is the case with the priory's conception of Catholic Church which symbolically stands for the patriarchy of the pop culture. Teabing, an English man having a lot of money and wealth, wants to reveal the mystery of the Holy Grail by uncovering its truth. The opposing belief is that what Catholics believe about the creation of women by the rib of man as per the Bible they have and so rejecting the notion of a woman as a life giver. On the basis of such verses the Catholic Church gave favour to the male patriarchal system of popes in order to lead church for the Christian community. The followers of the Priory understands Jesus as a true feminist who wanted to give his nation's future in feminine hands while on the other hand the Church after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ formulated papacy and took over the religion unrightfully. The foundation basis for Catholics originates from a belief that it was Peter who meant to lead the Church as per Jesus's instructions and not Mary Magdalene.

Therefore, Mary wasn't a prostitute at all rather she was a noble woman but the Church manipulated the masses by initiating a mischievous propaganda against Mary and went across the boundaries of ethics by giving a church verdict against her claim by portraying her as a whore or a prostitute. This is how they made people to accept papacy by rejecting Mary at the first place. So the church and its tasks were taken by men of that time in their hands and hence the papacy took place and so it exists today. It wasn't only Mary who was suppressed but the patriarchy of the church continued to suppress female gender for more than two millennia. The religious figures manipulated the masses by displaying woman as inferior to man as men are the right and females are the left just as goodness is at right and evilness is at left, that is how the church attributed male and female as halves of the one whole of society. In most simple of words it can be deduced from the above discussion that Church for now stands as a symbol of sexism which deliberated marginalized the feminine gender.

5. Findings, conclusion and recommendations

To uncover the hidden layers of symbol is the essence of semiotics which offers the understanding of a symbol by interpreting its two fundamental constituents as signifier and signified. The present study deals with the symbol as something meaningful or something that contain some purpose for someone in some capacity or context. Undoubtedly, a symbol is hidden under the symbolic layers and its real meanings can be decoded only by uncovering the layers where signifier and signified are the two important layers of symbol. The study conducted finds twelve symbols which are appeared in the movie *The Da Vinci Code*. The purpose of selecting the twelve symbols is that they are purposefully appeared in the movie, in such a chronological sequence to lead the protagonist towards truth, and most importantly, to the discovery of the Holy Grail.

A part of the movie and its symbols are purposefully highlighting the issues of feminine inequality in the male dominant society through the hidden layers of symbology. The symbols of the movie roar upon the marginalization the female gender as a second sex. The study reveals eleven symbols with their decoded signifieds which are divine feminine, harmonic balance among opposing powers, harmony among the two sexes, Jesus' bloodline, Christ's true heir, and sexism.



Moreover, few symbols have more than one signified and it is difficult to find the harmony among the signified and the common belief. The study reveals that *Pentacle, Mons Lisa and Holy Grail* symbolize the concept of divine feminine in connection with the Church and Christianity. On the other hand, as per pagan beliefs, Pentacle as a symbol stands for devil. By the same token, there are symbols which are associated with the harmony and balance among the sexes. Such symbols include: *Cruciform, the Vitruvian Man and Mona Lisa. The Last Supper*, which is in the form of a painting, is an iconic sign which roars upon the secret that Mary and Jesus were a pair through its ancient symbology preserved in it by its creator.

The future researchers who are interested in analyzing *The Da Vinci Code* movie can consider this research as a reference especially when it come to positioned the semiotic approach to study signs and symbols which are displayed in the movie. The process of symbolization is multifaceted. Charles Peirce triadic model of semiotics is highly recommended to study the signs and symbols presented in any visual artwork, such as movie, animation and other media.

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