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Detecting the Detective Elements in Dan Brown's

The Da Vinci Code

*An Extended Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for
a Master's Degree in Anglo-Saxon Literature and Civilisation*

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Abstract

This dissertation aims at investigating the extent to which Dan Brown's *the Da Vinci Code* conforms to the techniques of the detective novel. The desired results of this work will be concluded through many processes of analyzing the different characteristics of the novel concurrently comparing them and reflecting them to the existing techniques of the genre. The detective novel is very unique in style and so it has established a certain distinctiveness of components presented in special plot, characterization and settings; the individuality of these apparatuses are described and identified in order to understand how the detective novel is specially built. Through carefully examining and scrutinizing the varying elements of the novel the results show that the novel does not only conform to the standards of the detective novel but also goes as far as contributing with being a masterpiece and stunning success to the American detective literature.

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My entire appreciation goes to the members of the jury and all my teachers of the English department at Abou Baker Belkaid University for their considerable efforts throughout my years of study.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my father and my mother, who are my models and best companions in life.

To the sweetest teacher I have ever known Dr. Mouro Wassila.

To my beloved Selma, the sweetest person ever.

To my dear brother, and my crazy beloved sisters.

To my beloved cousins whom my words cannot express my love and gratitude to.

To my best friends, Yassine Farhi, Taki and ziad.

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General Introduction

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For most people, the desire to study literature begins with a love of reading, which embodies a tense atmosphere of pathos that captures the readers' imagination, and drives them to be engaged in a world that differs from the one they live in. Literature can be defined as the artistic work, mostly written pieces, that are sensed to be especially valuable. On the other hand, one may identify a novel as a fictional prose of the literary genre that has a considerable length. Novels are actually stories that are concerned with variable interests such as, romance, adventure, history, mystery and detection...etc.

Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* is actually regarded to be one of the best detective novels in the American contemporary literature, since it brought the western critics to the right place where they can witness the revival of myths and mysteries. What have mainly been observed during the analysis of this novel were the total different rules and steps needed for writing a detective novel, which are distinguished from the other types of stories.

In the detective novel, we noticed that there are different skills and most importantly logic, that must be acquired by the writer, in other words, including any irrelevant elements that are out of the detection process such as love interests or supernatural means which are completely not allowed, and that would ruin the special taste of the detective novel, and probably would no more sound interesting for readers.

Actually, in this work, many questions arise and they are stated as follows

- Can Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* be considered as a detective novel?
- What is a detective novel and its features?
- What are the detective story aspects applied by Dan Brown in *The Da Vinci Code*?

Dan Brown seems to follow almost all of the techniques that are set for writing a detective novel. In this dissertation, we will try to see to what extent this American writer

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really does this. Probably, at first reading, we may think that Dan Brown seems to be missing some of the needed techniques, yet when we delve into the novel; this story in fact, seems to be perfectly plausible.

This research work, in fact, attempts at putting an analytical sight on the detective elements in *The Da Vinci Code*, and see if Dan Brown has furthered the perfect detective novel which proclaims definite rules and techniques. While analyzing the novel, we will follow the structuralist theory in the sense that we are dealing with the novel's structure trying to analyze its various aspects and characteristics. Yet, we can say as well that we will use deconstruction concept because we are going to deconstruct the *Da Vinci Code* in order to see its different components.

This work actually is mainly divided into two chapters; the opening chapter is the theoretical part that is going to deal in general sense with the detective novel and its characteristics. Actually, in this part we are going to know what the detective novel is, and then have a slight dive into its history. After that, we will also be acquainted with the aspects and techniques of the detective novel; the most important part of the chapter which will take a significant practical part in the second chapter. At last but not least, we are going to discuss a point which will help us know about the different forms of detective novels that are shaped by different plots, settings and characterization.

The second chapter as a practical part is going further specific by bringing the chosen detective novel *The Da Vinci Code* into practice. What initially appears in this chapter, which will give us knowledge about the rolling events of the story, is the given summary of the novel. Then, we move to Dan Brown's characterization of his detective novel, which will enable us to have a plain view about the appearance of each main character; the protagonist, antagonist and victim. The techniques of writing a detective story are practically applied

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while the chapter deals with the plot of the novel. Eventually, the setting of the novel takes place at the final part of the second chapter, which will shed light on time and place of the crime scene portrayed by Dan Brown in the opening chapter of *The Da Vinci Code*.

Chapter One

The Detective Novel

and

its Characteristics

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1.1. Introduction

The literary work is known generally as an imaginative or creative writing, which has a special taste of artistic value. This artistic value emanates from the distinguished and enriched varieties of literature. A story is assumed to be one of these valuable and rich literary varieties since it has a wide formula among the literary world. Stories are normally known as fictitious prose narratives or tales presenting a picture of real life, especially of the emotional crises in the life history of the people portrayed.

Actually, the story as well has its own diversities; which can be dramatic, romantic, heroic, horror or detective...etc. And when it comes to the genre of detective story, it is persuadably agreed that a considerable number of readers resort to this genre since it is amiable, thrilling and amusing due to the special excitement and breathtaking mystery yielded in this literary genre of crime fiction. Therefore, this first chapter will deal with the detective story, its history and characteristics.

1.2. The Detective Story

The mystery genre or as it is also known the detective story is a popular type of literary fiction which can be presented as a novel or short story. Detective stories or mystery genre are also known as detective fiction or crime fiction, and informally also known as whodunits which is the alternation of: who done it?¹

¹<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/whodunit>

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The story of detective fiction is considered to be one of the most amusing literary fiction works. This point is supported by R. Freeman Austin in his book *The Art of The Detective Story* as he says:

There is no type of fiction that is more universally popular than the detective story. It is a familiar fact that many famous men have found in this kind of reading their favourite recreation, and that it is consumed with pleasure, and even with enthusiasm, by many learned and intellectual men, not infrequently in preference to any other form of fiction (1924)

According to the traditional events of the detective story, we usually find the unhelpful or dim-witted police who often fail to get the crime solved. The often amateur detective is usually depicted by the writer of the mystery genre in a way that he acts differently from any other character in the story. In this literary genre, the reader clearly notices the greater powers of observation and the superior mind of the detective who in his mission is eventually going to solve the puzzle or clarify the aim of the murder or crime by a logical solution to the problem.

The detective story also involves suspects who appear to be guilty of committing the crime according to containing information and clues about that crime or murder which make the reader think that something is true about that. Yet, it does not completely prove it. Thus, it is the writer's responsibility to reveal how he has found out the culprit throughout the detective's investigations, and this responsibility can be done and

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accomplished perfectly to the reader when the writer provides realistic clues and evidences, rational and impeccable reasoning in the unraveling of their detective story².

1.3. History of the Detective Story

As it has already been mentioned above, the detective story is a story in which there is a murder or other crimes and a detective who tries to solve it. In fact, the detective story has a very long history, and what is coming next is a slight dive into history to know more about the tradition of detective novel.

The older type of British detective story often has its settings in a large house located in the countryside or an isolated place. At the beginning of the story, a murder is mainly discovered unexpectedly. In the British detective story we also find a small group of characters who are all suspected of having committed the murder, and eventually, the writer fairly reaches a surprising solution of the murder and the unexpected murderer at the end. In the American detective stories the police are most of the time involved herewith involving the adventures of a private eye or as it is also known as the private detective. In the American crime fiction, realistic elements and violence are largely contributing to the story³.

In 1841, the mystery genre was given birth by the brilliant American writer Edgar Allan Poe, and the literary world at that time witnessed the very first detective story by Poe titled “The Murders in the Rue Morgue”. Poe in fact seemed to have been influenced by the Mémoires of François-Eugène Vidocq, who in 1817 founded the world’s first detective bureau, in Paris (Ibid).

²<http://study.com/academy/lesson/detective-fiction-definition-history-authors.html>

³<http://www.britannica.com/art/detective-story-narrative-genre>.

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In 1845 Poe's fictional French detective Auguste Dupin, appeared twice in two of his mysterious stories "The Mystery of Marie Roget" and "The Purloined Letter". Moreover, since the audiences were not satisfied enough with exciting short stories, this literary genre, and in order to be more satisfying, expanded eventually to novel length⁴.

In France 1866, "L'affaire Le rouge" written by the French author Émile Gaboriau had an enormous success after it was published in a form of serial books. One of the best detective English novels was Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone* in 1868, as well. Furthermore, nowadays it remains one of the finest English detective novels (Ibid).

The Leavenworth Case by the American Anna Katharine Green had as well a huge success after she became one of the first American detective novelists in 1878. *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* (1886) by the Australian Fergus Hume was a phenomenal commercial success and one of the best-selling books at that time (Ibid)

Undoubtedly, The most famous and the greatest of all fictional detectives, *Sherlock Holmes*, along with his loyal fellow Dr. Watson who is usually known in this detective novel with his humorous obtuseness, and who both made their very first appearance in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's novel *A Study in Scarlet* in 1887, which offered Conan Doyle the opportunity to give up his job as a doctor and dive into this exciting type of fictional narration to continue into the 20th century in such collections of stories as The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes 1894, and the longer Hound of the Baskervilles 1902. So great was really the right appeal of *Sherlock Holmes*'s detecting style however the death of Conan Doyle did nothing but a little to end Holmes's career; after they were deeply influenced by this mystery genre, many writers were excitedly determined to be on this path and carry on the Holmesian tradition (Ibid).

⁴<http://www.britannica.com/art/detective-story-narrative-genre>

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The early years of the 20th century, produced a considerable number of detective novels, one of these novels was Mary Roberts Rinehart's *The Circular Staircase* published in 1908 and G.K. Chesterton's *The Innocence of Father Brown* in 1911 and many other detective writings. From 1920, since the detective novel gained great renown, readers became well acquainted with the names of many fictional detectives after these fictional characters were given household words; Inspector French in 1920 was in *The Cask* written by Freeman Wills Crofts. Hercule Poirot, in Agatha Christie's *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* in 1920, and Miss Marple in *Murder at the Vicarage* (1930), Lord Peter Wimsey in Dorothy L. Sayers' *Whose Body?* (1923), Van Dine's *The Benson Murder Case* (1926), Albert Campion, in Margery Allingham's *The Black Dudley Murder*, and many others. All these fictional detectives in this mystery genre were all well known to those who were and still are fond of detective stories⁵.

The 1930s were marked as the golden age of the detective story along with the fictional detectives mentioned above that continuously made a great appeal in many other novels. Those years were also marked by the brilliant writer Dashiell Hammett, who stepped upon the stage of mystery genre; drawing his own experience as a private detective to produce both stories and novels. In Hammett's work, ratiocination is the most significant aspect that a writer must have which gives the taste of logicity to his detective story (Ibid).

Hammett had many successors including Raymond Chandler and Ross Macdonald, who also chose to emphasize on Hammett's disciplines that concern the detective story. At the last three years of 1940s, Mickey Spillane gained a wide appeal in the literary world.

⁵<http://www.britannica.com/art/detective-story-narrative-genre>).

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Spillane gave a totally distinguished taste to the crime fiction when he made a noticeable emphasis on sex and sadism. By his crude style, he obtained a wide formula among the literary critics, and that brought him amazing commercial success (Ibid).

In the late of 1930s, a huge mass of softback books was produced, and that made some detective-story writers very wealthy, among them the Americans Erle Stanley Gardner, Rex Stout, with his fat orchid-raising detective, Nero Wolfe and his urbane assistant Archie Goodwin and Frances and Richard Lockridge, with another bright married couple, Mr. and Mrs. North⁶.

France also is considered to be one of the first places where literature gained wide notability, where the detective novel rose. This literary genre widely expanded and is well known even nowadays in this country. Georges Simenon, the French man, was a clever and impressive detective-story writer. After he produced his novels at a rapid-fire pace, he became very successful, making his hero, Inspector Maigret, one of the best-known fictional detectives since Sherlock Holmes. Henceforth, there are other writers who carried out the Holmesian traditions, or broke new ground like Nicholas Blake, Michael Innes, Dame Ngaio Marsh, Josephine Tey and Carter Dickson. After 1945, writers such as John le Carré adapted the detective-story format to the spy novel, in which he addressed the mysteries and character of the Cold War (Ibid).

In 1945, a professional American organization was founded to raise and flourish the standards of mystery writings, involving the detective story. Through its annual Edgar Allan Poe Awards for excellence, many people in America were encouraged to enter the world of mystery writings. And that is for sure what have encouraged the American writers to appear brilliantly along with their detective and mystery writings (Ibid).

⁶ <http://www.britannica.com/art/detective-story-narrative-genre>

1.4. Aspects of the Detective Novel

In order to entertain themselves, readers usually come to novels for amusement, to spend time, to lose themselves in a world different from their own. They want to imagine themselves as the lead characters, having exploits, visiting places they never visited in their real lives. Readers want to dive into a novel desiring to be in a journey of self-discovery, and also willing to learn and experience what the protagonist and other main characters learn and experience; “they want to identify with personalities other than themselves, experience events far from those of their daily lives, become immersed in a new country or city or world. They want characters, plot, and setting”⁷.

Actually, it is not that simple for a writer to be involved in the field of detective fiction, since the writer must stick to restricted literary rules and techniques. This actually was discussed by Austin Freeman in his book *The Art of The Detective Story*

The rarity of good detective fiction is to be explained by a fact which appears to be little recognized either by critics or by authors; the fact, namely, that a completely executed detective story is a very difficult and highly technical work, a work demanding in its creator the union of qualities which, if not mutually antagonistic, are at least seldom met with united in a single individual (01).

The detective novel, in fact, acquires highly artistic techniques that the writer should be aware of, then he must apply them in his detective story while being counted. This is what was approved as well by Freeman Austin in his saying:

⁷ <http://www.homeofbob.com/literature/genre/fiction/ficElmnts>

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On the one hand, it is a work of imagination, demanding the creative, artistic faculty; on the other, it is a work of ratiocination, demanding the power of logical analysis and subtle and acute reasoning; and, added to these inherent qualities, there must be a somewhat extensive outfit of special knowledge (2)(how come that here we have a page here and in the others no?)

Actually, the detective story is considered to be a kind of intellectual game in which intelligence has to appear. Thus, for writing detective stories, there are many rules and highly literary techniques that must be applied in this genre by either, amateur or professional story writers, both should acquire different skills that are needed in the detective genre. Hence, we are going to have further explanation of the most important aspects or rather, literary techniques of the detective novel, that writers have to take into consideration:

1.4.1. Crime and Clues

First, as an important point to start with, while counting a detective story, the writer should give equal opportunities to the reader that fictional detective has for solving the mystery. All clues must be plainly stated and described. So that, the reader can have the right to be the detective too if he thinks he is clever enough to solve the problem⁸.

1.4.2 Love Interest Omission

Since the detective story tends usually to push the reader's intelligence to be present while its events are being counted, there must be no love interest, otherwise the reader's mind would be disturbed and the story details might be obfuscated. So love interest in

⁸<http://www.thrillingdetective.com/trivia/triv288.html>

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detective story usually ruins its special taste of mystery. Thus, the writer's objectives are to bring a criminal to the bar of justice, or a puzzle to its resolution, not solving love issues (ibid).

1.4.3 Logicality

The detective novel should contain no pretences, and one of the worst pretences is that when one of the official investigators turns out to be the culprit and this is not and can never be amiable for the reader, and it is confusing for them, since it does not sound logical. Accordingly, the culprit must be determined by logical deductions not by accident or coincidence or unmotivated confession. Therefore, a successful writer should not act like sending the reader on a deliberate wild-goose chase when he tries to solve a problem in a detective story. That for sure would make the reader fail at finding out the criminal, then he would certainly get disappointed by this bad writer's strategy of writing his detective story and probably regret reading it from the beginning. So, the writer should be providing clues and evidences as true, logic and plain from the beginning till the end⁹.

As far as logicality is one of the most important artistic techniques in the crime fiction, having no victim in this genre seems to be as well illogical.

There simply must be a corpse in a detective novel and the deader the corpse the better. No lesser crime than murder will suffice. Three hundred pages is far too much pother for a crime other than murder. After all, the reader's trouble and expenditure of energy must be rewarded (Van Dine, 1928).

⁹<http://www.thrillingdetective.com/trivia/triv288.html>

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While solving the problem in the detective story, it would be completely irrational too if supernatural means take place in the novel, and since this is illogical, it is totally unaccepted. Such problem of the crime must be solved by strictly naturalistic means; such methods for learning the truth as slate-writing, Ouija-boards, mind-reading, spiritualistic, crystal-gazing, and the like. Thus, the problem of the crime should be resolved strictly and logically. Consequently, a reader can have a chance when matching his intelligence with a rationalistic detective, but if he must compete with the world of spirits and go chasing about the fourth dimension of metaphysics, he is going to get completely defeated and that for sure put him in circles of wonder and boredom and he might quit reading¹⁰.

Finally, when all these techniques are put into the right place in the detective novel, and, when this novel is reread by the same person, it makes the reader feel as if the solution of the crime, puzzle or mystery, in a sense, was staring at him all the time, and all the clues are pointed to the culprit, and then he would realize that, if he had been as clever as the detective, he could have solved the mystery himself without going on to the final chapter.

1.4.4 Characterization

Forster (1966) in his book *The Aspects of The Novel* argues that characters are the beings, the actors, of story. They can be human beings, animals, mechanicals or any kind of these. And since a character in a story answers the question who; readers typically look for a specific character with whom they create a special relation while reading the story(08). In other words, readers want to feel themselves as if they are similar to main characters in a sense they can understand them and their situations.

¹⁰<http://www.thrillingdetective.com/trivia/triv288.html>

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Actually, characterisation is the most significant aspect of the novel, when the writer gives enough credit and emphasis to this important aspect; it certainly makes the fiction very rich, exciting and attractive. Normally, readers cannot feel emotion for a character they do not know; one who they do not care about. They cannot care about a character who is not developed; who is merely a physical caricature without thoughts, dreams, goals, and motivations. In fact, many readers prefer a novel to spend much more time dealing with character's thoughts, conflicts, desires and dilemmas. They want the events of the story to be driven by the interests and goals of characters (Forster, 1966,p 12).

In fact, portraying characters in a story as real, opens a wide door for the reader to make a tight connection with them, thus realistic portrayal of characters plays its role significantly in the novel. This point in fact was discussed also in Lionel Stevenson's passage: "no matter how believable the action may be in itself, it does not win the reader's full credulity unless it is performed by distinct individuals who are recognizable in terms of our experience" (1960, p. 8).

Generally, when it comes to characterization, in any type of novel, a well portrayal of the protagonist plays its role significantly. Moreover, the realistic portrayal of the called protagonist or hero of the story determines its type, and this is actually discussed by Bakhtin (1986) as he claims: "the principle for formulating the hero is related to the particular type of plot, to the particular conception of the world, and to a particular composition of a given novel" (p. 10).

In a novel, a reader usually finds that the lead character is challenged or opposed by the antagonist who apparently creates obstacles on the way of the protagonist. Going further specific to the detective genre, characters are portrayed in the detective novel in a

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way that differs from other characters that are portrayed in other types of stories. In the detective story, usually there is a restricted number of main characters; a protagonist, who usually plays the role of the detective, and the antagonist who might be the murderer or the provocator of the murder. Both, protagonist and antagonist are the lead characters who thrill the rolling events and incidents of the story, yet they both need their accessories, in other words, these two main characters have friends who assist them to further their goals and prevent the opponent from reaching his. By having their completely counteractive goals, this, in the story, creates an atmosphere of conflicts which is considered the major driver of the plot.

For most readers, when reading either a detective genre or any type of stories, being too much acquainted to characters and having a deep knowledge about them, provide a fine and more satisfying reading. Otherwise, they cannot feel involved in the events happening in the story, thus connection with characters gives them a tight and strong connection to the story. What is going to be provided next is an explanation for the importance of different characterization in the detective novel, by stipulating who are the main characters of the detective novel, and how they appear.

1.4.4.1 The Detective

Another aspect of the detective novel is the detective. To be fair with the reader, in a detective story, there must be one detective; creating the minds of three or four, or sometimes a band of detectives to bear on a problem certainly is going to disperse and scatter the reader's interest and ruin the special taste of detective novel which is logicity.

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Furthermore, this is going to disturb and confuse the reader after becoming unaware of his true conductor in the story¹¹.

The detective novel must have a detective in it; and a detective is not a detective unless he detects. His function is to gather clues that will eventually lead to the person who did the dirty work in the first chapter; and if the detective does not reach his conclusions through an analysis of those clues, he has no more solved his problem than the schoolboy who gets his answer out of the back of the arithmetic (Van Dine, 1928)

The protagonist in the detective novel is usually portrayed as the detective; his role is mainly restricted to further his goal by his smart and skillful way of thinking and carefully played actions. Nonetheless, this protagonist in the detective story is going to put himself at stake while being on the path of seeking the truth that reveals reasons behind the dirty work. In addition to the deceiving puzzles and difficulties of solving them, the protagonist is going to have a kind of struggles against the antagonist, who may possibly be the criminal.

1.4.4.2 **The Criminal**

Another important aspect of the detective story that is listed under the term of characterization is what can be called the criminal or the culprit. This character is usually portrayed as the antagonist, who must turn out to be a person who has played a more or less prominent part in the story, that is; a person the reader is familiar with and in whom he takes an interest. However, a servant must not be chosen by the author as the culprit; because usually, it is a too easy solution for the reader to find that out. The culprit must be

¹¹<http://www.thrillingdetective.com/trivia/triv288.html>.

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a decidedly worth-while person, a one that would not ordinarily and easily come under suspicion¹²

In the crime fiction, only one culprit must be pointed to at the end of the story regardless of the considerable number of murders that are committed. The culprit may, of course, have a minor helper or co-plotter. Nevertheless, the entire onus must rest on one pair of shoulders. (Ibid).

In a good detective story, a fascinating and truly beautiful murder, is certainly going to be spoiled if any kind of secret societies, or mafias are involved in the story, thus, these should have no place in a detective story. In other words, the murderer in a detective novel should be given a sporting chance. And that would be more exciting for the reader (Ibid).

1.4.4.3 The Corpse/ The Victim

Actually, a detective story without a victim portrayed in it makes no sense, therefore there must be a corpse highlighted by the detective writer while narrating his story. The murder of the victim should be intended by the criminal, and in this crime fiction, the act of killing should not be created to happen as an accident but rather, there must be an incentive thrill that lies behind the dirty work of the killer. In fact, this is one of the secrets beyond the breathtaking crime fiction; the fascinating portrayal of the crime scene.

Generally, a perfect novel requires memorable characters to engage the reader. They need to be active, involved with others, with setting, with the events happening around, so that it is the writer's onus to create connection points for the reader, connections to tie reader to both, character and plot.

¹²<http://www.thrillingdetective.com/trivia/triv288.html>

1.4.5 Plot

The plot of a story actually is the band of actions, events and incidents that take place in the novel, with a cause behind them. These actually create what is called the climax that makes the reader hold his breath, waiting eagerly to see what is next:

The plot is the actual story around which the entire book is based. A plot should have a very clear beginning, middle and end with all the necessary descriptions and suspense so that the reader can make sense of the action and follow along from start to finish¹³

E. M. Forster (1966) defines it as “a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality” (93). Plot is the aspect of story that answers the question what happened in the story. Although, characterisation is an important aspect of the novel, some writers make their stories driven by the plot and its events rather than by lead characters. Not in all cases readers can be fond of characters in a story nor can make a tight connection with them. In other words, they might dislike them and get bored with the story. However, if the reader does not like the main character or cannot connect with him, there is greater chance for him to focus on the plot rather than on characters; his focus should be on what is happening and how characters are affected by events rather than the way characters grow or how they direct events¹⁴

In L. Stevenson's book *The English Novel* it is argued that a good plot of story should be rich of conflicts, struggles, suspense, alternatives, so that, a story becomes undoubtedly satisfying for the reader. A novel with intricate or exciting plot always keeps readers on the edge of their seats, anxious to see what is coming next and how the lead

¹³

<http://www.penguin.com/static/packages/us/yreaders/camjansen/CamDownloadables/FiveEssentialElementsofaMystery.pdf>

¹⁴ <http://www.homeofbob.com/literature/genre/fiction/ficElmnts>.

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character will resolve the problem. A well thought out plot can also reverse the reader's dislike toward a character; if a plot has fleshed-out events and incidents that reverse the character's behaviours from negative to positive, a reader may start to like the character since the latter has things at stake and is going to be invested in the story, so that the reader would feel invested in the story too, and has emotions towards this character, and his state of being removed from any emotion or involvement in the scene starts to disappear (1960).

In the detective novel, as it was mentioned earlier, rationality strengthens the structure of the plot, so all what happens must happen rationally, and the methods of murder especially, and the means of detecting it, must be rational and scientific. That is to say, pseudo-science and purely imaginative and speculative devices are not to be tolerated nor accepted in detective fiction, and once detective-story writers include these unreal tools in their writings, they are absolutely out of the bounds of detective fiction¹⁵.

What is usually considered hoodwinking for the reader in a detective fiction is that when a crime in a detective story turns out to be an accident or a suicide. Another important point is that when a professional criminal turns to be shouldered with the guilt of a crime in a detective story and this is absolutely mistaken. Actually, crimes by housebreakers and bandits are the provinces of the police departments not of authors and brilliant amateur detectives. A really fascinating crime is one that is committed by a pillar of a church, or a spinster noted for her charities. The motives for all crimes in detective stories should be personal. International plotting and war politics belong in a different category of fiction and other literary genres and have no place in detective stories (Ibid).

¹⁵ <http://www.thrillingdetective.com/trivia/triv288.html>.

1.4.6 Setting

Although characterisation and plot were given too much importance as it is mentioned above, no one as well can doubt the importance and value of setting. Setting is the place and time that are portrayed in a story. Ian Watt (1957) in his book *The Rise of The Novel* discussed, that from time to time, a writer of a novel produces a new story into the same story whenever he changes the setting of the story, that is to say, setting contributes to the tone and plot of the novel. Furthermore, setting influences character type, word choice, pace and even genre. Setting enhances a story by unfolding plot and character in a place where they fit, where their strengths can best be highlighted (24).

As far as the time-shift is concerned with setting of the novel, David Lodge (1992) discusses its importance and clarifies that time-shift should be emphasized as follows:

The simplest way to tell a story...is to begin at the beginning, and go on until you reach the end...But storytellers perceived the interesting effects that could be obtained by deviating from chronological order...[...] Through time-shift, narrative avoids presenting life as just one damn thing after another, and allows us to make connections of causality and irony between widely separate events (p. 74-75).

Time, actually, plays an important role that enhances the quality of the detective novel and makes it more thrilling. When the crime scene of the mystery genre is portrayed at night, in isolated and dark place, this would make the crime scene look more attractive and fascinating.

Concerning the place, It includes locations such as office, bedroom, bar, cave, forest, cities or countries or planets, era or age, time of day, and cultural milieu. Thus,

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setting answers the questions where and when. It is usually expected from readers to assume that a story has to take place somewhere and at some time. Undoubtedly, it is widely recognized by both, writers and readers, that events of a story, mood of characters and their behaviours are influenced by setting. So, a writer of a novel should be well aware that setting is a necessity¹⁶.

Setting helps characters and events shine, it gives them a backdrop that allows them to show what best fits the story and hides what does not belong. For bolstering their weak areas in a novel, naturally, a writer uses setting to bring depth to the plot of his story by introducing a setting that heightens the characters' strengths and weaknesses, like creating a special place or time in his novel which both may have great meaning for the main character. Consequently, this creates dramatic scenes in the novel. Therefore, the reader's emotions and interest are arisen (Watt, 1957, 23-24).

As it was clarified above, plot, setting and character are naturally interrelated and connected aspects of the novel. Generally, a clever writer, whether of the mystery genre or of other genres, puts always into consideration the reasons why readers resort to fiction; because they want to be entertained, to explore something new, to be challenged mentally or emotionally, to be satisfied by the story, a story that turns around some person doing something somewhere. Thus, readers are satisfied by giving them a pleasing blend of character, plot, and setting.

1.5 Conclusion

Generally, novels are not likely to be as any other literary genres, they must be skillfully accomplished by a clever and smart writer who can feel the needs of the reader and fulfill his eagerness. Then, must come the perfection of the literary work by which the

¹⁶ <http://www.homeofbob.com/literature/genre/fiction/ficElmnts>.

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reader undoubtedly would certainly get pleased with. A novel that is proficiently written with impeccably interrelated plot, settings, and characters, for sure would make the reader's breath held till the last moment of the final chapter.

Going further specifically, the detective novel is as well not like any other kind of novels, it needs both; highly certain applied rules and techniques, and a detective's mind which the writer should own, and if all these go along together homogenously, the writer eventually gains the perfect artistic work.

Chapter Two

The Da Vinci Code

as a Detective

Novel

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2.1. Introduction

The Da Vinci Code as a detective novel, though it is eventfully complicated, is a tightly-plotted thriller, where Dan Brown carefully created a plain balance between its events. The complication of the novel lies on the enigmas and mysteries that the events and incidents of the story turn around. What probably makes *The Da Vinci Code* an enjoyable thriller is the unexpected fact that appears from behind each enigma. One of the enigmas is the Holy Grail, which is assumed to be the most sought-after element in the story; since all the main characters seem to burst toward the truth that lies behind this confusing puzzle. It is conceivably convincing that Dan Brown made the Holy Grail as the major mystery, yet *The Da Vinci Code* is not only restricted to this; Dan Brown also gave other mysteries enough fairness to contribute as well to the events of the story.

2.2. Dan Brown's Biography

Dan Brown, the famous American writer of fiction, was born on June 22, 1964 in Exeter, New Hampshire. He attended Phillips Exeter Academy and Amherst College. After college, he returned to Phillips Exeter to teach English. Actually the desire of writing arose in a late age of his life, inspired by Sidney Sheldon's *Doomsday Conspiracy* which assumed to be one of the mystery genres¹.

Brown's first book was *Angel and Demons*, and then lately he gained a phenomenal success when his fascinating novel *The Da Vinci Code* was published. With this book, Dan Brown revived the history of myths which seemed to have no more place in the contemporary literature. Since *The Da Vinci Code* is very connected to the former Brown's written books, readers were thrilled by it and went back to his previous novels hoping to discover more about the mystery genre and thriller. By making a huge success as becoming

¹ www.sparknotes.com.

a great writer, Dan Brown gave up teaching and shifted his academic interests towards writing².

2.3. Summary of the Novel

The very first events of the story start to take a place at the Louvre, in France. An albino monk named Silace demands to know from the museum's curator named Jacque Saunière where the keystone is located. After obtaining a convincing answer yet a falsified one, Silace shot the curator and left the Louvre calling the Teacher that he knows the keystone's location; "wincing in pain, he summoned all of his faculties and strength. The desperate task before him, he knew, would require every remaining second of his life"(04). Saunière recognized that he still has last few breathes to pass his secret, so he hurried to draw a pentacle on his stomach with his own blood and a circle on the floor then he dragged himself into it forming the position of Da Vinci's Vitruvian Man. Besides, he left a code and a text of two lines with an invisible ink.

Robert Langdon, a professor of Symbology and the male protagonist of the story, was called to the Louvre by a police detective named Jerome Collet to help the police interpret the murder scene. Langdon is not yet aware that he is suspected of killing Jacque Saunière, and he was about to be under arrest, because he already arranged an appointment to meet Saunière before he died:

Langdon was braced for the words, and yet they still sounded utterly ridiculous. According to Sophie, Langdon had been called to the Louvre tonight not as a symbologist but rather as a suspect... the police calmly invited a suspect to a crime scene and interviewed him in hopes he would get nervous and mistakenly incriminate himself (55).

²www.sparknotes.com

However, Sophie Neveu the female protagonist, Saunière's grand-daughter; a police inspector and a cryptologist came also to the scene. She recognized that P.S; two letters included in the texts left by her grandfather, denotes a warning that alerts her. Langdon also decodes two lines of the text, and he ordered Sophie to take a look at Da Vinci's the Mona Liza and Madonna of The Rocks where she found a key of her grandfather. After that she helped Langdon escape from the police once they gathered all the puzzles and coded elements for their detective mission that meant to solve the murder, and found the secret of the Priory of Sion and the Holy Grail by managing to disarm the police officer who already pointed a gun at Langdon.

On their way seeking the truth behind the secrets that Saunière died to protect, they face many obstacles; the dim-witted police was running after them all the way, yet Sophie's intelligence seems to have great benefits helping herself and Langdon getting away of the police sight. Sophie and Langdon were oriented by the key that Sophie found in the Louvre to the Swiss bank after they found out that the numbers left nearby Saunière's body is certainly the account number that opens the vault in which later they found a cryptex:

"Now there was a glint in Sophie's eye. 'My grandfather used to craft these as a hobby. They were invented by Leonardo Da Vinci... Yes. It's called a cryptex. According to my grandfather, the blueprints come from one of Da Vinci's secret diaries" (167).

The cryptex is a device made by Da Vinci and crafted by Saunière. However, this cryptex needs a password to be opened too. All of a sudden, the police came, yet, Vernet, Saunière friend and the bank's manager helped them both to escape.

Langdon and Sophie headed to the historian Sir Leigh Teabing seeking for his help opening the box after they have discovered that the cryptex is the keystone that Silace

asked Saunière about before he killed him, which is the key to all the secrets that Saunière died to maintain, including the location of the Holy Grail, the most sought-after element in the story.

Teabing welcomed them to his great castle, and revealed the great unexpected secret about the Holy Grail which is actually a person not the cup that Jesus used to drink from. He proved that from the symbols that are hidden in Da Vinci's *The Last Supper*. Teabing pointed at Mary Magdalene in the portrayal and told them her true story, the divine blood and the royal family she belonged to. Not only this, yet Teabing seemed to be convincingly knowledgeable about the history of Christianity. He completely denied that the Bible did not come directly from God, and the thrilling fact, is that it was rewritten by the king Constantine, who drew his own amiable laws on it.

While the two protagonists are hosted in Teabings's castle; listening to his confusing stories about history and religion, all of a sudden an unpleasant incident happens; "Sophie Neveu, despite working in law enforcement, had never found herself at gunpoint until tonight. Almost inconceivably, the gun into which she was now staring was clutched in the pale hand of an enormous albino with long white hair."(233). Silace appeared pointing a gun at Sophie demanding the keystone. Teabing attacked Silace, and in a way Sophie kicked him on the face then tied him up. The police tracked Langdon and Sophie to the castle and Teabing orders Rémy, his servant to arrange a private plane to England.

On their way to London, Sophie found out that the cryptex can be deciphered when viewed in a mirror which actually was a poem. The box was deciphered yet they found another cryptex with a clue that led them to the Temple Church in London. When they arrived to London, the British police were surrounding the airport after they were informed

by the French Interpol, but Teabing convincingly tricked the police that there was no one in the plane but only him.

When they got to the Temple Church, Rémy freed Silace and confessed that he worked for the Teacher too. With the help of Silace, Rémy held Teabing as a hostage threatening to kill him forcing Langdon to give up the cryptex. The Teacher called Silace to meet him and Rémy to hand the Cryptex, and when he meets them the Teacher killed Rémy and called the police to take Silace. After getting shot by the police Silace tried to escape and he accidentally shot his master Bishop Aringarossa, who sadly realised that the Teacher betrayed both of them as he lied promising the Opus Dey to regain favour with the Church if they handed him the Holy Grail.

After that, the Teacher called Sophie and Langdon telling them that he has Teabing and they should meet him in the garden, but for their surprise they only found that Teabing himself is the Teacher. "I have Teabing. Go through Chapter House. Out south exit, to public garden. Langdon read the words twice, his heart pounding wildly" (338). Teabing ordered Langdon threateningly to help him open the cryptex putting Sophie at a gunpoint. Langdon found out the password and he secretly opened the cryptex and got the papyrus, then he threw the empty cryptex tricking Teabing to rush after it and fearing the paper inside would get damaged. Suddenly the police came in and arrested Teabing. Both protagonists were directed to Scotland by the papyrus found in the second cryptex. There, Sophie was reunited with her grandmother and brother where she confirmed that her family is, indeed, of the blood line of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. Back to France, Langdon understood the poem which led him to the Louvre again where he is absolutely sure that the Grail is hidden in a certain place, there under the ground.

2.4. Aspects of the Detective Novel in *the Da Vinci Code*

Since *The Da Vinci Code* is the most successful novel of its type, it seems logically persuadable that Dan Brown provides a well formed novel with perfect characterization, plot and settings. In his book, Brown gives each aspect a fair importance. While reading the *Da Vinci Code*, the reader feels amused, and no doubt, would he feel the definite coherence between characters, who affect each other, and the plot which most of its events are driven by the characters and their behaviours, and between the very relevant setting that from time to time changes the character's behaviours and bring a new story to the same one. All this, undoubtedly, have added more perfection to the story.

2.4.1. Characterization

What should usually be fair for the reader while reading a story is that characters, especially the protagonist, are given a great chance in the novel to interact. In other words, they should be given a fair time through which the writer makes them and their imaginative feelings plain and real, so that the reader can feel the character's conflicts and struggles.

2.4.1.1. Protagonists

Dan Brown in his story *The Da Vinci Code*, made two protagonists appear in pair as if one, male and female protagonist, named Robert Langdon and Sophie Neveu who both sprinkled the ancient Chinese myth Yin and Yang. This myth is based on the idea that everything in the universe is formed and influenced by the combination of two forces, work greatly together, a male and female one.

2.4.1.1.1. Robert Langdon

Getting started with the male protagonist, and according to the story, Robert Langdon is a professor of Symbology at Harvard University. He was a successful academic and the writer of many books. Langdon is somehow a soft man, though the author did not mention any of this in his book, yet, the reader can feel that from his behaviours throughout reading the novel.

In the opening chapter, when the concierge bothers him at a very late time in a night asking him to get up and see someone out the door Langdon said "if u would be so kind, could u take the man's name and number and tell him I'll try to call him before I live Paris on Tuesday"(7). Going further to serious scenes, when they were in danger, Langdon was not exactly aware how to deal with such situations, he was somehow haunted by hesitation and fear since he was inept with using guns: "As Langdon walked toward the front of the truck, he felt surprisingly alert. Staring into the barrel of yet another gun tonight had given him a second wind. He took a deep breath of night time air and tried to get his wits about him" (180).

However, it was Sophie who always rescued his life. Nonetheless, it is certainly undeniable that Langdon was very smart and clever when it comes to puzzles, mysteries, history and religion. Dan Brown portrayed Langdon cleverly as an honest and trustworthy man in the story.

2.4.1.1. 2. Sophie Neveu

When it comes to the female protagonist of the novel, intelligence and self-confidence appear in the story. Sophie Neveu is a French police inspector and quite

knowledgeable about cryptology. The author portrayed her as a beautiful, attractive, very intelligent and strong woman who was about thirty years old.

At an early age, passion and love towards puzzles and codes were instilled in her by her grandfather who raised her. Throughout the events of the novel Sophie, with the help of Langdon, is on her way trying to crack the codes that her grandfather Saunière left behind after his murder. While being on their mission detecting Saunière's puzzles, and though their lives were at stake as they ventured into seeking the truth, Sophie proved that she is capable and strong, and very helpful to Langdon who found himself several times in embarrassing situations, yet only Sophie was there to rescue him with her intelligence.

She was attractive and looked to be about thirty. Her thick burgundy hair fell unstyled to her shoulders, framing the warmth of her face. Unlike the waifish, cookie-cutter blondes that adorned Harvard dorm room walls, this woman was healthy with an unembellished beauty and genuineness that radiated a striking personal confidence(48).

In fact, Dan brown was successful as he portrayed Sophie as a sexually attractive woman having masculine toughness with typically feminine qualities, and by this combination he confirmed one of his crucial points in the story that woman is dependable and capable, so obliterating and underestimating what she is able to do lead sometimes to abyss. At the end of the novel, Sophie is reunited with her family; all of them descending from the blood line of Mary Magdalene.

2.4.1.2. The Antagonist: Sir Leigh Teabing as The Teacher

The antagonist of the novel, Leigh Teabing, as it was mentioned above is a man who knows alot about history and very wealthy:

Leigh Teabing was wealthy in the way small countries were wealthy. A descendant of Britain's First Duke of Lancaster, Teabing had gotten his money the old-fashioned way he'd inherited it. His estate outside of Paris was a seventeenth-century palace with two private lakes (183).

As it is mentioned in the novel Teabing is crippled from polio, and had no wife. At his first appearance in the novel Sir Leigh Teabing seems to be gentle and pleasing. He welcomed Langdon and Sophie to his house, and then pretended to help them escape from the police but only for his own benefits. His actions reveal his eagerness that bursts forward to reach the Holy Grail. For years, Teabing's passion about the Holy Grail made him think that the absolute Truth turns around it. His obsession to know, led him to sacrifice and do anything; he eventually turns to be a murderer when he killed his servant Rémy.

At the end of the story he revealed himself as the Teacher who ordered the obedient monk Silace to kill the curator of the museum Jacque Saunière and commit other killings, and he even threatened Sophie and Langdon when he kept Sophie under a gunpoint:

Langdon could not fathom that Leigh Teabing would be capable of killing them in cold blood here in the Chapter House, and yet Teabing certainly had been involved in killing others during his misguided quest. Langdon had the uneasy feeling that gunshots in this secluded, thick-walled chamber would go unheard, especially in this rain. And Leigh just admitted his guilt to us (344).

Teabing found himself finally arrested by the police after bishop Aringarossa cooperated with them.

2.4.1.3. The Victim: Jacque Saunière

Actually, there are many victims in the novel, but the main victim that launched the chain of events that take place in the story is the murdered Jacque Saunière, the curator of the Louvre and Sophie's grandfather, who was killed by Silace in the opening chapter

Jacques Saunière was considered the premiere goddess iconographer on earth. Not only did Saunière have a personal passion for relics relating to fertility, goddess cults, Wicca, and the sacred feminine, but during his twenty-year tenure as curator, Saunière had helped the Louvre amass the largest collection of goddess art on earth...(20).

Saunière died protecting a secret that he passed to his granddaughter Sophie and Langdon. Secretly, he is the head of the Priory of Sion; a secret brotherhood charged with protecting the Holy Grail. Saunière had a great passion towards Da Vinci's high art, and also puzzles and codes. Dan Brown creatively portrayed the victim and the crime scene, and without the undeciphered codes and mysterious puzzles that Saunière left behind the story could not be launched at first place, because resolving Saunière's puzzles occupied too much of the novel's chapters.

The above analysis of the main characters that are portrayed by Dan Brown in his novel *The Da Vinci Code*, actually aimed to show the emphasis that the author put on each character in order to create a tense atmosphere of struggles and incidents that shape the rolling events of the story. This analysis, as well, confirms the important role of the characterization process, through which the writer makes the main characters lead the events of the story, hence, this shows the point that characterization and plot are two interrelated and important aspects of the novel.

2.4.2. Plot

Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* is one of the most special and best thrillers that the contemporary literary world has recently witnessed. As this mystery novel gained a wide formula among the literary critics, it also raised a great debate among them. This debate was about the hidden pagan meanings in Da Vinci's fine art, the dark side of the Catholic Church, the false conflict between knowledge and faith, the obliteration of the history and eventually the feminine divinity. Actually, all these debatable subjects by which Da Brown built the plot of his story are mainly based on symbols, enigmas, mysteries, clues and solutions.

2.4.2.1 Symbols

Since *The Da Vinci Code* is a novel of the mystery genre, Dan Brown made symbols brightly shine in his story, and here are some of them.

2.4.2.1.1. Blood is The Truth

Symbols are things that foreshadow other things and other meanings. Symbols are almost everywhere in the novel. The first symbol that the story started with is blood. In *the Da Vinci Code*, blood always foreshadowed the truth. In the opening chapter, as he drew a pentacle on his stomach with his own blood, Saunière's blood stood as a symbol that the church tended to cover up and obliterate the true history of the world.

Sophie also recognized that the drop of blood of her grandfather near the Mona Liza was a sign of a message left for her; "Sophie said, I think he wants me to get to the Mona Lisa before anyone else does."(88). When Silace put Sophie under a gunpoint, Teabing saw drops of blood on his pants and realised that his thigh was surrounded by a

barbed belt of punishment called cilice, so Teabing took his chance and hit him there and rescued Sophie.

Silace himself saw blood as truth, yet in a different way; for him blood was a way to clean him from sins, therefore he had to punish himself by flagellation and tightening the cilice around his thigh. At the very end of the novel, the blood line of Sophie's family was the symbol that proved they are descendant from Mary Magdalene.

2.4.2.1.2. Red Hair

Dan Brown portrayed red hair in his novel as another symbol. In the very first scene when Sophie appeared, Langdon called her red hair "burgundy" which foreshadowed her divine blood. Into Teabing's great castle, Sir Leigh Teabing brought Sophie to see that Mary Magdalene is depicted with red hair in Da Vinci's *The Last Supper*.

Langdon also mentioned that the red hair was used as an allegory of Mary Magdalene's story in the movie titled *The Little Mermaid*, presented by the famous American film producer Walt Disney; "Langdon had learned not to underestimate Disney's grasp of symbolism. *The Little Mermaid* was a spellbinding tapestry of spiritual symbols so specifically goddess-related that they could not be coincidence" (220). At the end of the story, as Sophie's brother appeared, his hair was red too and described by the author as "strawberry blonde" from which the reader can understand that Sophie and her brother are really descendants of Mary Magdalene's divine blood.

2.4.2.2. Enigmas and Mysteries

In order to make the mystery genre really exciting and thrilling, writers include mysterious and enigmatic elements as it is the case in Dan Brown's thriller *The Da Vinci Code*.

2.4.2.2.1. The Mystery of Fake History

Since *the Da Vinci Code* is a thriller genre, it is clearly noticeable when reading it many confusing enigmas can be raised, one of them that whether history is telling the truth or not:

History is always written by the winners. When two cultures clash, the loser is obliterated, and the winner writes the history books which glorify their own cause and disparage the conquered foe. As Napoleon once said, ‘What is history, but a fable agreed upon?...history is always a one-sided account’ (215).

Dan Brown expounded a very mysterious idea in *The Da Vinci Code* that history is just a story written by winners. This statement was actually uttered by Teabing when he had Langdon and Sophie at his castle. Langdon agreed with Teabing's enigmatic point. Both of them agreed that the Bible holds into its pages changed and fake symbols and meanings, and there are certain missing gospels that were erased by the winning leaders. Even more, people who kept their faith for paganism were ordered to be killed by the church. And according to Dan Brown two reasons were behind that. The first was the thirst towards grasping the leadership that would further the political goals of the church, and the second aimed to change people's beliefs from Pagan to Christian. And this is undoubtedly, for a faithful Christian, mysterious and arising a lot of questions.

2.4.2.2.2. The Mysterious Mary Magdalene

Another enigma that Dan Brown sheds light on was the confusing story of Mary Magdalene:

The Church, in order to defend itself against the Magdalene's power, perpetuated her image as a whore and buried evidence of Christ's marriage to her, thereby defusing any potential claims that Christ had a surviving bloodline and was a mortal prophet (214).

In the most common stories of Mary Magdalene, it is believed that she was a prostitute yet; Teabing provided a counteractive story to those common ones. He declared that Mary Magdalene is from a divine and royal blood and more likely assumed to be the wife of Jesus rather than a prostitute and in this sense history is proved to be fake and truth needs to be raised.

2.4.2.2.3. The Mystery of Mona Lisa

Dan Brown expounded a weird mystery of Da Vinci's Mona Lisa, one of the most famous paintings in the world. For a long time people, till now, are still wondering about the mysterious smile upon Mona Lisa's face. Langdon in the novel explained to Sophie that the weird smile upon that woman's was done on purpose by Da Vinci, and the painter wanted his smart fans to see it but from another angle.

According to Langdon, the Mona Lisa is actually two faces but of one coin, the first face as all people know, is a woman's face, but if one stares at that face carefully, he would find out that the painting is somehow also a man's face

Langdon nodded. Gentlemen, not only does the face of Mona Lisa look androgynous, but her name is an anagram of the divine union of male and female. And that, my friends, is Da Vinci's little secret, and the reason for Mona Lisa's knowing smile (102).

Here Dan Brown confirms one of the major points of the novel that support the myth of Yin and Yang. As Sophie kept listening well to Langdon astonishingly, he told her that most of Da Vinci's paintings are hiding pagan meanings and most people do not realize that. Langdon said that wiping this mystery out lies on realizing that the Mona Lisa is not just a fine art of Da Vinci's but rather a great truth lies behind that, which is definitely related to paganism. Da Vinci hid the pagan meaning behind the mysterious smile and weird name of the woman he painted.

Langdon gave Sophie more convincing explanation when he split the name into two, Mona and Lisa, which were both set for ancient Greece and Egyptian God and Goddess; Amon and Lisa.

2.4.2.2.4. The Mystery of the Holy Grail

The most enigmatic and sought-after element for all characters portrayed in *The Da Vinci Code* is undoubtedly claimed to be the Holy Grail.

Sophie scanned the work eagerly, does this fresco tell us what the Grail really is? Not what it is, Teabing whispered. But rather who it is. The Holy Grail is not a thing. It is, in fact... a person, Sophie stared at Teabing a long moment and then turned to Langdon. The Holy Grail is a person? Langdon nodded. A woman, in fact(199-200).

For all Christians, the Holy Grail is widely known as the holy cup that Jesus used to drink from. However, Dan Brown in his novel provided a total counteractive image about the Holy Grail. For years, the Holy Grail seemed to be the great mystery that the antagonist, Sir Leigh Teabing, could do anything to discover the real truth behind it, even if murdering is the cost for that.

2.4.2.3. Clues and Solutions

Since the *Da Vinci Code* is a type of mystery genre, it certainly contains a lot of enigmas, obsceneness yet eventually there must be always clues that lead certainly to solutions.

2.4.2.3.1. Abstract Clues

Da Vinci's Art

Dan Brown in his novel talked over several of Da Vinci's paintings, and every painting has its own secret which people cannot figure out unless they have a clue about that. However, the clue actually is the painting itself, and that was one of Dan Brown's major points in *The Da Vinci Code* expounding that art can tell secrets that intended to be obscured for a long time by history. One of those artistic arts of Da Vinci's is the Mona Lisa that contains a clue of paganism and Goddess worship, and the other clue was the woman's face which plainly denotes to a man's face as well, and that confirms the feminine divinity that the Catholic church tends to obscure too.

Da Vinci's *The Last Supper* also was the clue that Dan Brown reveals the secret of Mary Magdalene's innocence which counterparts convicting her for being a prostitute and proves her royal and divine blood. Other art objects are considered also as clues. Dan Brown also denotes to the famous church of Saint Sulpice, which till nowadays, contains an obelisk which is a clue of pagan worship, and tarot cards that hide signs of pagan mythology.

Dan Brown, with all these clues, wants to remind people that clues about secrets are everywhere, yet one just needs a deeper view which will allow them to see things with their hidden meanings.

2.4.2.3.2. Concrete Clues

The Code: "P.S. Find Robert Langdon"

Hidden meanings of Da Vinci's fine art are logically assumed to be just abstract clues. On the other hand, concrete clues are everywhere in the novel. Starting with one of the first clues that Saunière left: "P.S find Robert Langdon" (57). Langdon was really terrified as he saw his name written in the scene of the crime, but there was no longer any wonder about that, when Sophie Neveu figured out the solution, and she told him that P.S refers to her name that her grandfather gave her when she was young; Princess Sophie. Saunière wanted his granddaughter to find Langdon because he was his immense hope to deliver his secret to safe hands, since he was well aware that Langdon is very acquainted to puzzles and mystery.

Blood

Going further to more concrete clues, as Dan Brown portrayed the crime scene of Jacque Saunière, there were series of codes and enigmas which were actually clues created by Saunière leading to the solution for the puzzle and uncovering the mystery he left behind. The other clue was Saunière's drop of blood close to Da Vinci's Mona Lisa which led Sophie to a key left there by her grandfather that will later open the vault that contains more confusing puzzle.

The Crafted Key

At first Sophie Neveu and Langdon were wondering what that key could open and how, then they found out that the secret was behind the code crafted on the back of that key, which seemed after that to be the solution of opening Saunière's vault in the Swiss Bank; "Sophie could not begin to imagine what a key like this opened, but she sensed

Robert would be able to tell her. After all, he had described the key's embossed seal without ever seeing it"(117).

After they opened the vault, Langdon and Sophie found a Cryptex which was a device like a box made by Da Vinci and crafted by the victim Jacque Saunière, which seems to be another clue yet, they will be competing with another puzzle.

This cryptex was also one of the clues, yet it needed a password to be opened. In the scene of the crime Saunière left a piece of paper as a clue, in which he wrote a short poem written in a language never known to Sophie and not even to Langdon and Teabing who were both acquainted to ancient languages, they just fell in wonder;

Taking a deep breath, Teabing feasted his eyes upon the engraving. He said nothing for a very long time. With each passing second, Teabing felt his confidence deflating. I'm astonished, Teabing said. This language looks like nothing I've ever seen! (254).

Then, with Sophie's bright intelligence, helped them found out the solution was just staring at them, and that the poem was simply written in English yet it can be only read from a mirror against it. When they became able to read the poem, they found that Saunière asked them to look for a word of wisdom in Hebrew formed of five letters which would guide them to his secret. Then the solution occurred when Langdon and Teabing seemed to know about the Hebrew language so that they figured out the word was SOFIA.

Issac Newton's Tomb

When Sophie entered the five letters on the cryptex hopefully she could know her grandfather's great secret, however, there was something wrong. Astonishingly, the cryptex was opened revealing another smaller cryptex with another clue which was a scroll:“When

Langdon saw the object inside the sheet of vellum, his heart sank. God help us, Teabing said, slumping. Your grandfather was a pitiless architect. Langdon said in amazement: I see Saunière has no intentions of making this easy" (273).

Indeed, Jacques the head master of the secret society, Priory of Sion, was not able to give up his secret so easily. When Sophie unrolled the scroll, they found another letter which led them to a tomb belonging to a scientist who was a former member of the Priory of Sion; it was actually Isaac Newton's tomb.

At the end of the story, Langdon discovered that Saunière was referring to something that is strongly relative to Isaac Newton which was the password of the second cryptex, and then he just figured out that the password was simply APPLE. Finally, after all the puzzles and clues he passed by, Langdon was eventually sure that he had got the solution that must lead him to where the Holy Grail was hidden; to a certain place, under the ground, in the Louvre.

2.4.3. Setting

Dan Brown seems to be carefully selective in his detective story by setting it at the beginning in one of the brightest museums in the world, the Louvre, Paris. Normally, this place is not associated with scene of crimes, and probably, that what makes *The Da Vinci Code* a famous thriller. Since the Louvre contains the greatest pieces of art, the reader would first suspect that the murder has something to do with art, yet so far, the secret of murder would not be that easy to know, which is the fact that the reader will later cover up, after diving much deeper into the events of the novel.

Concerning time in the setting, generally, all the events of the story, except for flashbacks, are claimed by Dan Brown to be happening during the contemporary time, and

that is proved by the use of technological tools such as cell phones, planes, cars and tracking devices. And what probably adds more fascination to the story is when Dan Brown sets the scene of the crime exactly before the first chapter, in the prologue, by giving the accurate time and place, "Louvre Museum, Paris 10:46 P.M."(02).

Since the author initiatively timed the story at 10:46, in the Louvre, what might occur in the reader's mind at the first glance, is that there would be probably some trials of smuggling a precious piece of art stealthy, or likely something relevant to that. Yet, the reader later, to his astonishment, would unexpectedly find a more surprising and thrilling incident, which is the murder of the curator of the museum, Jacque Saunière.

2.5. Conclusion

The literary genre of thrilling mystery has its own taste, its special fascination and its distinguished rules. This clearly claims that the detective novel, since it is considered to be a thriller, has its own rules to be written, and that is probably what led Dan Brown to create such an enormous and complicated, yet perfect story, *The Da Vinci Code*. The fascinating settings of the crime scene, the reasonable clues and solutions for confusing enigmas, and including no pretences nor love interests; all these respected rules have brought Dan Brown to write the most enormously successful story of his own, *The Da Vinci Code*.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

The secret that lies beyond the fascination of literature is always its variable and rich genres. Actually, novels are one of these literary genres that readers resort to, seeking for fascination and amusement and hopefully to get out of the boring zone of reality they are surrounded by.

The detective novel is a special type of stories which has its own taste since it is a far cry from other story types. The detective novel is actually a thrilling story based on enigmas and mysteries. In fact, a clear difference seems to be noticed when this thriller is compared to other types of story; it has its own techniques and rules that proclaim certain portrayed characters, well carefully plotted events and the appropriate settings for a fascinating crime scene. Undoubtedly, if these techniques are carefully applied while recounting a detective novel, readers cannot feel that they are out of the story, but rather they will deeply be involved with it in a sense they feel as if they are the characters themselves who lead the events, sense the incidents and hold their breaths at the climaxes.

Dan Brown in his novel *The Da Vinci Code* was to a far extent very successful when it comes to applying all the techniques that are needed for this mystery genre. Yet, when it comes to the enigma of history; whether history is telling the truth or not, and the enigmatic story of Mary Magdalene; besides the secret of the Holy Grail, Dan Brown here needed to provide more convincing evidence that are supposed to strongly support the validity of these stories, not just by giving abstract clues but rather, concrete clues should appear in the plot.

Finally, for sure this work aimed to shed light on the defective elements presented in *The Da Vinci Code*, and whether they are perfectly applied or not, yet, what we think of as most important is actually the benefits of this research; in fact, we have learnt what makes the mystery genre of literature so special, and how we can possibly write a detective novel by following certain techniques.

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