



Literary Studies

## Reflection of Faith in Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* Novel (2003): New Criticism

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### A B S T R A C T

The Da Vinci Code Novel is one of the famous works from Dan Brown, it narrates about the conflict between Priory of Sion and the church a long time ago. The novel would show us the sacred of Holy Grail which has been covered and the mystery of the codes. The conflict of faith is something that makes the novel complicated and more interesting to read. a faith is also important in determining people's life because it is an attitude even though it is not always true, thus it cannot become a standard of truth. The writer uses New Criticism approach to find the main problem and conflicts related to research question. The writer also uses a qualitative method to describe the finding. In the end of the study, the writer finds that The Da Vinci Code novel have several faiths reflected, namely; (1) the last supper painting that breaks people's faith, (2) holy grail and the secret of Christianity's faith, (3) the priory of sion as the guardian, and (4) the truth of faith. At the same time, the main problem in the novel is a different perspective on the Holy Grail due to the lack of relevant information and their long-established faith, thus they assume that it is true. We cannot claim either of them was wrong because it refers to their own needs. In fact, there is no absolute truth for human being, it is because the truth we have is only own perspective and it does not apply for everyone.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Every human being has an attitude which is called a faith. It is shown by humans when they felt that they understand about something, thus they can conclude that they have founded the truth. However, someone's faith is not a standard of truth, because a faith is a psychological condition which a person considers about a premise to be true or real. As only someone in the past who believed that the earth was the centre of the solar system, but it was wrong. A faith has a big meaning in life, even a person has a faith, it will not only be able to change a person or his mindset but it will also be able to change his life. A faith does not need any reason, it only asks to be put in the soul. A faith will never change but only an accompanying phenomenon which is changed. Until an anomaly occurs, the extent to which we place our faith. As the human being, authors also have their own faith, it gives the distinctive features in their works. One of them is

the author of the novel *The Da Vinci Code* (2003), Dan Brown.

Dan Brown is a novel writer who was born on June 22, 1964 in New Hampshire, America. He is very famous for his extraordinary works. The one of them is *The Da Vinci Code* which is very phenomenal for its era. Dan Brown was born in a good circle which a father as a math teacher and a mother who is a professional musician in discussing especially in sacred music performances. Dan Brown passed the education levels so well, so he became a musician and teacher who was quite successful. But, in 1995 Dan Brown turned into a novel writer accompanied by his wife, Blythe, they produced some famous works even some of them are filmed. The novelist, Dan Brown, uses his books to communicate his personal views about the faith generated by metaphor and the others opinion. He hopes that his books will not only entertain readers but it can also be used as material for discussion.

Brown admits that the theories in his books are not his, but these have been around for centuries. Probably, the theories are rarely published and Dan Brown's works are the first to be published. One of his books which is the subject of discussion is *The Da Vinci Code* (2003). Brown transferred his opinion about the truth of Mary Magdalene and her descendants in the book.

Historical facts from the events in the novel *The Da Vinci Code* is one of the most interesting and it has marvelous success. Dan Brown's novel is so phenomenal that it raises few reflections of readers. In a culture flooded with information that overly provided by various types of media, none of us are protected to the attraction of truth, especially from something hidden. As we record the rumbling and turning hypermedia tubes, we are often forced back into our intuition, to a reflexive feeling about what we feel right.

A faith is something that is owned by everyone, it is also important in determining someone's life path, because it is an attitude and someone's faith is not always true so it is not a guarantee of truth. The relationship between faith and science is so close. Someone who have their own faith usually argue that they know all about argumentation, like saying that the sun is almighty and it absolutely almighty. However, the terms of faith and science used by the use of philosophy will be different. In an idea derived from Plato's dialogue, traditional philosophy has established that the truth of faith is justified. The relationship between faith and science is that science is a part of faith if it is true and if it has justification.

A faith is an attitude that was owned by everyone, they have the faith on something based on the point of view they want to believe it. However, it is not a measure of truth, even the faith that someone believes is sometimes a metaphor they make up themselves to calm their mind. Dan Brown expresses his opinion in the novel *The Da Vinci Code* (2003) about the truth of everyone's belief in Mary Magdalene which has a bad impression among Christians. The fact of Christ's divinity began to be debated in the book. That is what attracts the writer's attentions to discuss what kinds of faith are reflected in the novel *The Da Vinci Code* (2003) by Dan Brown.

Ifa Nur Rofiqoh (2015) argued that *The Da Vinci Code* novel has a theme which aim to expose the lies of the Catholic Church, the controversy of *The Da Vinci Code* novel is related to tweaking

a secret code which states that Jesus has married Mary Magdalene and they has descended from their relationship. The *Da Vinci Code* novel tells that the secret has been tampered with approximately 2000 years through the conspiracy of Church and a militant. It is the same opinion with M. Fatih Al Aziz (2015) that *The Da Vinci Code* novel carries a conspiracy especially related to the mythical symbols of the holy grail, a symbol which focuses on Mary6 Magdalene who has a special relation to Jesus. So, this study tries to reflected the faith that have been criticized by the Church and the writer will reflect the main problem of the novel that have been conspiracy by many people.

In the interest of finding out the description of main problem certainly that have been conspiracy. Therefore, New Criticism approach is needed, its subject is the main problem in the literary works, conflicts related to the literary work, or ambiguities that are resolved harmoniously which means there are a resolution of the problem. Hawkes (2003) states that the structure of the poem is a structure of meaning, evaluation, interpretation that uses the principles of unity. It means that the structure and all elements contained must run in harmony, so it can become a form of meaning that the author want to convey. New Criticism also focuses more on close reading to find the function and the truth meaning of the literary work then interpret it based on context.

The major problem of the study is how the life and death instinct are reflected in *The Da Vinci Code* novel. The problem of the study is dissected further into the following research questions. (1) How *The Da Vinci Code* novel presented the faith? (2) What is the cause of faith conflict in *The Da Vinci Code* novel? (3) What is the Message Discovered Through *The Da Vinci Code*?

## II. METHOD

This study used a qualitative method with purpose to know the meaning of the phenomena that happen. A qualitative method is the method which aims to find the answer of phenomena through systematic scientific procedures.

The steps of collecting data are conducted as follows: (1) The writer read the whole novel entitle "*The Da Vinci Code* (2003)" several times. (2) The writer attaches the paragraph, conversation, or the content related to the research. (3) The writer clarifies the whole data attached. (4) The writer collects the data needed to answer the research

question. (5) The writer writes the data collected in the MS Word. After collected the data, the writer will analyse them with several steps, namely (1) Assess the authenticity of the document. (2) Data reduction. (3) Display data. (4) Analyze content. (5) Conclusion.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The behaviour and decisions we make are always influenced by the faith Without realized it that we believe, it was the truth. Unfortunately, the truth that we believe is actually only the truth for one side and it was not the real truth. In fact, there are many people who have believed on something they thing are true but it had many secrets behind the truth. The historical object that we have learned during school, we are always told by the teacher that the history is what actually happened but who knows? History is just a biography of one side that has won the war.

The Da Vinci Code novel contains some interest things from historical lies that have been believed by thousands of people today. History that changes the faith of people and they who tried to tell the truth even though they were under pressure. In this study, the writer found several things from the novel, they are; The Last Supper that can breaks people's faith if people know what contains in the painting, The Holy Grail and the secret of Christianity's faith, The Priory of Sion as the Guardian, and also the truth of faith.

#### *The Last Supper Painting That Breaks People's Faith*

The Last Supper painting was a famous painting even in the real world, people are not aware of the great secret hidden in that one painting. In the Da Vinci Code novel, Dan Brown portrays a character, Sir Leigh Teabing who has studied the Holy Grail for many years. One day, Teabing discovers a secret from Da Vinci's painting, The Last Supper, which provides some clues to release the secrets of the Holy Grail that can shake the world.

Leonardo Da Vinci was not only painted the Last Supper but he had the purpose of the painting by providing some anomalies as the key to the secret of Holy Grail and divinity of Christ. The anomalies in the painted were physical and behavioural anomalies which means that Da Vinci depicts an unusual figure. The depiction of a figure that goes against the knowledge of the majority of

society and the details of the depiction that make it the key to unlocking a bigger secret.

The main female character, Sophie Neveu, was really confused about the true nature of the Holy Grail. She was shown a painting of The Last Supper by Teabing who wants to reveal the true nature of the Holy Grail – that is a female. The female figure drawn by Da Vinci was graceful and harmony with Jesus, it also had meaningful posture.

The conversation between Teabing and Langdon above, we can understand that Leonardo Da Vinci was not an ordinary painter. He knew the true facts of the Holy Grail, he also wanted to convey the truth through his works. He Last Supper was the one of his works that contains the true story of Holy Grail, he depicts the figure Jesus and Holy Grail, Mary Magdalene, harmoniously. Da Vinci also described a figure who was much opposed to Mary Magdalene and the figure would become one of those who opposed the existence of Mary Magdalene. This is one of the behavioural anomalies included by Da Vinci, thus people could find out what really happened at that time.

#### *Holy Grail and The Secret of Christianity's Faith*

The legend of the Holy Grail has been heard for centuries, many historians and intellectual leaders have debated the truth of the Holy Grail. The protagonist, Robert Langdon, would reveals a surprising secret of Holy Grail that was not a chalice but a person or rather a woman in the Da Vinci Code novel.

The contradicting facts to the faith were difficult to believe for people certainly, Sophie also felt that it hard to believe that Holy Grail was a female not a chalice. It confusedly, many people tried so hard to look for a chalice because they are believed that the Holy Grail was a chalice itself. However, Langdon knew that the fact would make Sophie hesitate, he carefully reassured her with his statement.

Langdon emphatically pointed out that the often-heard legend of the Holy Grail as the search for the holy chalice was just an allegory – an indirection meaning. It serves to protect the true nature of Holy Grail. Thus, the legend uses the chalice as a metaphor to describe something important or its secret. Teabing continued Langdon's explanation by confirming that the figure of Holy Grail was not just human being, but she was a person who could destroy the foundation of Christianity that had existed for centuries.

Teabing's statement would made us

understand that the figure of Holy Grail who holds a great power and she was the key to the secret of Jesus's divinity. Sophie was still hesitating because this was so extraordinary. Only need one woman to destroy the foundation of Christianity that had been built for centuries, the history of Christianity which was built by tragedies would be destroyed which one figure, Holy Grail.

Although, Sophie was curious to the true of Holy Grail and it was unexpected when she heard Teabing mention – Mary Magdalene – as the figure of Holy Grail. Sophie's spontaneous answer something angered anyone who believed in Mary Magdalene like Teabing who had been researching the Holy Grail for years. Teabing holding back himself and tried to explain that Mary Magdalene was not a person she was known to be. She was the victim of the misunderstanding, the slander, launched by the church at their beginning. It was for their advantage that they tried to cover up the secret that Mary Magdalene carried out – her role as the Holy Grail.

The true legend of Holy Grail was not a legend about holy Grail or anything like that but it was the legend that tells the true story of royal blood. The chalice they tell actually refers to the female womb that carries the blood of Christ's descendants. It clearly states that Jesus had a relationship with Mary Magdalene as well as he was a father and Mary Magdalene was the one who carried the bloodline of Jesus Christ.

The relationship also become a trigger to the conflict between Peter and Mary Magdalene. Peter as one of 12 disciples felt jealous because Jesus cared deeply for his lover, Mary Magdalene, more than his disciples. Even Jesus gave instruction to Mary Magdalene to run his church after his crucifixion. As a result, Peter was dissatisfied with Jesus's decision.

Sangreal documents was one part of the Holy Grail that become highly after by people even the church. It because the documents contain thousands of pieces information about the secrets off the church that had been stored up for centuries. Langdon openly shared one of the contents of the Sangreal documents with Sophie.

It also surprised, the new covenant that has become the faith of many Christians was the result of fabrication on the part of the church. Obviously, the church really wanted to find the location of Sangreal documents and immediately destroy them to cover up their weaknesses. Unfortunately, they

couldn't find it, thus they could only cover up the truth and suppressing various elements for the years since the conquest of Constantinople. The church also uses its soldiers, crusaders, to judge those who don't have any faith to church. Even today, the influence of the church was still strong in the public. Teabing reveals the truth of the history from the Christian church that can endure for years.

Teabing's statement was very clear that the truth of Jesus Christ was something falsified. Jesus was actually a prophet, an ordinary human being, not an immortal that the church insulted to its followers. However, the church has certain goals that require them to manipulate the Bible, the Holy book, by removing some elements of the world from Jesus's life like the relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene which can be provident the mortality of Jesus Christ.

The original sin was a concept created by humans, the church, which aims to confronting Mary Magdalene who had dominated the church with the command of Jesus. In the end, the figure, Mary Magdalene, was successfully removed by the church for centuries, the church was pursuing the existence of the descendants of Jesus even today.

#### *The Priory of Sion as The Guardian*

The priory of Sion was an organization formed with a long history to protect the sacred descendants of Jesus Christ from the church who fears to the power of the truth and secrets they carried out, the secrets that might undermine church's authority and wealth. The history of the church dates back to the first crusade to the creation of the Knights Templar as a military and financial section that served to maintain the confidentiality of the Sangreal documents.

The Priory of Sion was not only protected the Sangreal documents that containing the secret of Holy Grail but they also protected the descendant of Jesus that Mary Magdalene had carried out by risking their selves. Christ's descendants will never be safe as long as the church still has ambitious to destroy the evidence of the secret they seek to bury forever. It was the reason why the war between the church and the Priory of Sion has been going on for centuries. Although the Priory of Sion has the duty of protecting the secrets of the Holy Grail, they are also the ones who tried to tell the story of the Holy Grail itself through various mediums such as literature and art. Ironically, this is also what makes Teabing believe with the results of his research that one day, The End of The Day, Priory of Sion will

reveal the truth to end a long war with the church.

Teabing convinced his opinion by seeing the efforts of the Grand Masters of the Priory of Sion such as Issacs Newton, Leonardo Da Vinci, and others who was trying to convey the true story of the Holy Grail with the literary and artistic medium which metaphors contained. They are using the metaphors because they are pressured by the church. Without realized, the true story of Holy Grail was everywhere even the film series that we watch, it conveys the story of Maria Magdalene. However, Teabing was disappointed with Jacques Saunière because he never reveals the truth of the Holy Grail, while he has an opportunity. Teabing thought that Jacques had failed to fulfil his duty as Grand Master of Priory of Sion, then someone had to take over the duty.

Teabing attempts to persuade Langdon and Sophie who were engaged in a war that has been going on for centuries. Teabing persuaded under the pretext of the fate of everyone in the world who had been blinded from the truth by the church, the fate of people who were unconsciously victims of the war between the church and the Priory of Sion. Even Teabing had devoted everything he had just to seek the truth of the Holy Grail and reveal it.

It was a pity that Teabing had believed something just from his own perspective. In fact, the Priory of Sion never had any plans to reveal the truth of Holy Grail even though they still telling the story of their venerated Mary Magdalene which many mediums as they could. Priory of Sion's said that Holy Grail was not what everyone needs but a miracle that people need for their souls because the Holy Grail was beauty with a gentle and honest nature.

### *The Truth of Faith*

A faith or a belief was something every living being needs in their life. It can also change a person's perspectives of life in doing something. The faith that has been passed down through their history for the next generations by teachings a thing that they believe it was true and expect the next generation also do the right thing according to the instruction handed down.

Unfortunately, the history presented today is not entirely the truth that happened at the time. Of course, it was because the current history was written by those who have won the war, and for the losing side just could be the antagonist from the historical story that written by the winner. In fact, there was no measure to be able to decide who

was right and who was wrong for human being. We are all just trying to survive and live in this world as best as we can do, but everyone has their own way to survive. Some of them would use the right way but neither would use a mask to survive in the world.

A faith and belief also play an important role in maintaining someone's identity to survive. Although, most of the faith in the world are based on fabrications carried out in order to satisfy our selves. A metaphor uses to process the image of God which the human brain cannot explain. They think it could satisfy themselves but it just the beginning of the problems come to arise in the future. But someone who have believed on their faith are those who have understood the history or story of what faith they believed.

In The Da Vinci Code novel there are some conflict of faith based on the different perspectives between the characters' faith. Although they have a different perspective that affect to the conflicts happen, it often occurs because there is some goal of the character or the organization in the novel. The factor that causes the conflict in the novel are a character or organization who considers himself the most correct and a difference of interest.

The Da Vinci Code novel has several causes of conflict which are based on certain factor as mentioned in the previous paragraph. Stimulatingly, the factors have contradictory reasons where the cause of the conflict is the secret of the Holy Grail that society does not know the whole story or the fact.

The Holy Grail is a woman and it is not a chalice anymore, the previous statement is surprising many people who do not know the whole story of the Holy Grail. The fact is also become the center of the dispute between the Priory of Sion and the church which is well known to many people and it is also the cause of the conflict of faith contained into The Da Vinci Code novel. The history of church has been covered up for centuries, they have tried their best to cover it up are naturally worried about the secrets that Marry Magdalene carried out as the role of Holy Grail. Mary Magdalene is not an ordinary woman or a prostitute anymore like the church spread her with aim to cover their secret up, she has a role as the Holy Grail that own the power to ruinous the church with only her existence. In the early of the divinity of Jesus being proclaimed to society, the church watches her existence out carefully. Therefore, the church made several

concepts and plans to maintain the authority and faith of society which inappropriate ways such as remove physical evidence of the humanity of Jesus, relationship with Mary Magdalene, and also manipulated history and some verses in the new testament.

In the modern era, the church still tries to minimize their wounded that can happen at any time, that is why they are trying to find the whereabouts the Sangreal document, tombs, and descendants of Mary Magdalene as the physical evidence of the fake divinity. They are worried that one of the descendants will appear in public at any time, it will greatly affect to the church and even a piece of the world. Their faith will be shaken by the publicized of the heir to the royal blood of Jesus which cause a priestly crisis that has never happened in centuries, it is detrimental to the church and society even continues to the war.

Leigh Teabing who is a researcher of the Holy Grail and he has put all his efforts in this field, he is confident to what he achieved so far. He believes that revealing the truth of Holy Grail could save society from the history fooling and a faith deviation from the church that they have been doing it all the time. Therefore, he believed that the Priory of Sion would reveal the secrets of the Holy Grail which had been hidden all the time at the appointed time, the End of the Day. However, Teabing was deeply disappointed in the Grandmasters of the Priory, Jacques Saunier and others who did not initiate a plan to reveal the secrets to the public. Teabing thought that they had fallen into the church influence, thus they could not reveal the truth.

Unfortunately, what Leigh Teabing had been thinking all along did not appropriate to what really happened. In reality, the Priory of Sion has no plans to reveal the truth of the Holy Grail. Marie, Sophie's granddaughter, state that it was such a paranoid thought in people who believe too much in the legend. The Priory of Sion is not a faction against the church but they carry the duty of protecting the Holy Grail from the church.

Although the mystery of the Holy Grail is the main problem that occurs in The Da Vinci Code novel, there are several factors that are become the cause and the beginning of Langdon and Sophie's journey during the night filled with tension just for reveal the message and secret they want to convey from Jacques, Sophie's grandfather. Some of these factors include individuals or organization's own faith and differences in interests between them that

contradict for each other.

"Learning as a child is like carving in stone." This idiom is suitable with the message in The Da Vinci Code novel. A lesson taught to children will always be remembered by them even a faith, and many other things that are instilled in children. It will determine their path of life and they will take it in the future. It could happen because children will always believe what was they learnt in the first place especially taught by someone they admire, they will difficult to accept other thing that contradicts to what they have known before. Thus, we have to be careful in educating children then they do not take the wrong way of their life.

It is important for learner to learn one thing thoroughly. They have to learn it from various perspectives then they have a broader view before drawing conclusions and believe it. Likewise, the society when learning something at least we have to learn it from various perspective because one side perspective is not necessarily true and there is no absolute truth for a human being who lives socially.

From The Da Vinci Code novel we can see each character who has their own faith and firmly holds it to their selves and they does not give up until the end. It means a faith and a believes can change a person in making decisions and his way of life. Is that good thing or a bad thing, it just how reader get a message from The Da Vinci Code novel.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis and discussion in the previous chapter, the writer came with a conclusion regarding to the reflection of faith contained in The Da Vinci Code. If we talk about faith, everyone will definitely be connected to religion matters and all of its aspects. It is undeniable that the word 'faith' closely relates to religious affairs but the religious is only a part of faith that created from the faith concept that is entrenched in many people with the same belief, thus it made a form of system belief.

The Da Vinci Code novel have several faiths reflected, although the main problem in the novel is a different view on the Holy Grail due the lack of relevant information and their long-established faith, thus they assume that it is true. We cannot claim either of them was wrong because it refers to their own needs. We can take a certain point regarding the reflection of faith in The Da Vinci novel, namely; (1) the last supper painting that

breaks people's faith, (2) holy grail and the secret of Christianity's faith, (3) the priory of sion as the guardian, and (4) the truth of faith.

The conflicts between Priory of Sion and Church stems from the church's desire to monopolize the authority for running the whole church organizer and strengthen their position in the society, it is the reason why they claim the divinity of Jesus then they are claim their selves as an intermediary for God. In order to defend the divinity of Jesus claimed by the church, they try to eliminate all elements of his humanity's provident whether it have the shape of text or physical that could be proven Jesus was an ordinary human. In other hand, Priory of Sion have a duty to protect the secret and the descendants of Jesus in order to survive the oppression of the church.

Meanwhile, the cause of the main problem in The Da Vinci Code novel is the difference of opinion in revealing the secret of the Holy Grail to the public between Leigh Teabing and the Priory of Son. On the other hand, Teabing thought that the Priory of Sion would reveal the secrets of the Holy Grail to the public and he was disappointed to Priory who had never done it, thus Teabing initiate to find the whereabouts of Holy Grail in various ways. In other side, Jacques maintained the secret of Holy Grail by sending Langdon to assist Sophie in solving the code that leads them to the truth of Holy Grail. Teabing thought that his plan would be protect the world from fallacy on history and a faith, while Priory of Sion considers that publication is too dangerous and it would be chaos and many innocent victims on it.

In other words, we can still take some lessons in The Da Vinci Code novel. A faith can determine a path we will take in the future. Thus, we must understand what we will believe before we take the faith. Even though, we already had our own faith, it does not mean that our faith is the most truth. In fact, there is no absolute truth for human being, it because the truth we have is only own perspective and it does not apply for everyone. Everyone has a difference situation, thus do not limit our perspective of reality that is different from what we belief so far.

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