

## **Chapter 1**

### **Chronology of Orthodox Christianity**

The Orthodox Christianity is a religion which was founded by Jesus Christ in the Middle East 2,000 years ago. Eventually Orthodox Christianity spread from the Middle East to the West: to Rome, Europe, and simultaneously to America. And in further decades the faith and practice in these western lands changed, leading eventually to the Protestant Reformation. The first Orthodox Church was established by Jesus Christ and his apostle, in the year 33 A.D, which was known as the Eastern Orthodox Church or the Greek Orthodox Church. It is also called as Orthodox Catholic Church, the Orthodox Christian Church, holy, Body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, or simply as the Catholic Church. Later non-denominational Churches also tried to determine from the Bible what the Ancient Church "must" have been like. Different people read the same Bible but understood it differently, and now as a result there are hundreds of quite different denominations of Churches in the West.

Orthodox Christianity believes in worshipping. To worship God is to fulfill the purpose for which we were created. Orthodox worship is transformative in its nature, bringing the Christian more deeply into communion with God and with his cooperation changing him into a holy person, a saint. Worshipping God is something where you become totally united with God, totally giving over of self. The Catholic Church is taken as the locus of salvation for human. The Orthodox Christians worship the Holy Trinity in Spirit and in truth to obtain salvation. The Orthodox Christians worship the Father, Son (Christ) and Holy Spirit-the Holy

Trinity, the One God. According to Holy Scriptures and Bible's teaching, the Trinity is three divine persons who share one essence. Bible teaches God is beyond and before time and yet acts within time, moving and speaking within history and there was never a time when any of the persons of the Trinity did not exist. Though there are three gods (i.e., polytheism), but the Orthodox faith is monotheist and yet Trinitarian. The unity of this Holy Trinity is the Father, from whom the Son was born and also from whom the Spirits proceeds. So the Orthodox Church approaches God in divine mystery. The Orthodox Christianity has prophets and saints, angels and demons.

Orthodox Christianity is a religion based on the life in faith of the Orthodox Church. This faith is handed once to the saints, passed in Holy Tradition to the apostles by Jesus Christ afterwards passed down from one generation to the next. The objective of the Orthodox Christianity is the salvation of mankind, uniting man with Christ in the Church, washing away his sins, transforming him in holiness and imparting eternal life. Incarnation of Jesus Christ is taken as God choice to become a physical, living, breathing human being; he also chooses to work in and through human history to bring about salvation.

The most important chain or the second person of the Holy Trinity, the Son of God, begotten by the Father without a mother before all ages, was begotten in time by the Virgin Mary without a father. He, Christ is taken as the Word of God, the Logos. He became flesh and lived among humans; Christ is God in the flesh. This is doctrine of the incarnation where God had become a man to preach

his teachings. The Orthodox Christianity does not say Jesus was half God or half man but he was fully God and yet fully man too, perfect in his divinity and perfect in his humanity. According to Orthodox belief and Bible, Jesus is the truth and life, he is the God before the ages, come on earth as a child and died on the cross as a man and rose from the dead. Jesus and Father are the one. Christ is the Messiah, the one of God, foretold in the Old Testament by the prophets. As mentioned in the Gospels, Christ was born of a virgin woman, grew into a man, preached, healed, taught his disciples, died in physical reality on the cross and then rose from the dead on the third day of his death. He is considered the Savior of the mankind, the Lamb of God. As it has mentioned in New Testament after the death Christ ascended into Heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Father and of the entire human who has lived in earth he is alone without sin. He was in this world with the purpose of saving mankind. HE died for the salvation of human. And furthermore Bible says, because of who he is and of what he did for us, we have the opportunity to become by grace what he is by nature. That is, we can put on the divine, becoming partakers of the divine nature.

Metaphorically speaking the Catholic Church is taken as a Body of Christ, a divine-human. The sole head of the Orthodox Church is Christ. The Orthodox belief in the Church is attested to in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed as the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. Orthodox Church is not a divided institution but undivided and one, sanctified by the work of God. And its essence is to preach the world the gospel and baptizes the nations. Orthodox Christianity takes Catholic Church as the bride of Christ, the eschatological spouse of the Son

of God united to him in faith and love, for which he gave himself up on the cross. The intimacy of a husband and wife is an earthly image of the intimacy that Christ has with his Church, and the union of an earthly marriage is a shadow of the union of that marriage of the Lamb of God with the Church. The Catholic Church is believed to be eternal, and the gates of hell will never prevail against it.

Orthodox Christianity teaches that man was created by God to worship him in communion with him, made in his image. Man was created sinless, though not perfect, so Adam was sinless when he was created but being imperfect he committed sin. And all human are composed of both a soul and body, which are part of human nature.

As a religious tradition develops it always has women as an integral part of its expression. Similarly Mary Magdalene and her story has also very significant role in Orthodox Christianity though she is interpreted differently in three Christian sects of Catholic, Orthodox and Lutheran nevertheless importance her story is evident because she had a leadership role within the early Christian community. It is clear from the Gospels that Mary Magdalene had a great love for Jesus. She had been freed by him from possession by seven devils, and she also felt it her role to support Jesus. Not only that according to Bible she had undying support and allegiance to Jesus. It is clear that this trust was both sided because Mary Magdalene was so loyal that Jesus, above all other disciples decided to reveal himself to her and she was also entrusted with the responsibility of pronouncing his resurrection to the rest of the ancient world. According to the version of Orthodox Roman Catholic Christianity Mary Magdalene was a sinner

living a sinful life, she was infamous prostitute who washed her sins on the feet of Jesus with her tears and dried them with her hair. Mary Magdalene has been made a Saint in the Roman Catholic Church and is known as the Queen of Penitents. In terms of lived tradition, the Catholic variant emulate Mary Magdalene as the sinner who changed her ways, and when a Catholic turns from sin they should be like Mary and be truly repentant and change.

Constantine is known for being the first Christian Roman Emperor and his institutionalization of Christianity in Roman Empire. In 313 Constantine announced toleration of Christianity in the Edict of Milan, which removed penalties against Christians, persecutions of Christians and returned confiscated Church property. He is also known as Constantine I, Constantine the Great or Saint Constantine, who ruled over Roman Empire until his death. Constantine was baptized only shortly before his death. Constantine long rule, conversion and devotion to Christianity redefined the status of Orthodox Christianity and Roman Catholic Church in the Roman Empire. In 325 he summoned the First Council of Nicaea, which formulated the Trinity as it is known today. It also formulated the Bible of today. The Council of Nicea traditionally marks the end of the early Christian era. There are different views on the conversion of Roman Emperor Constantine, was it of devotion or of convenience, because in Constantine's regime it is estimated that about twenty percent of Roman population were Christian with an significant proportion of the military force following Christianity.

The novel *The Da Vinci Code* redefines the established notion of Orthodox Christianity; the conventional notion is established upon the belief that the Jesus of history is identical with the Christ of Faith. The Orthodox Christianity is based on the teaching of Jesus which is accumulated in Bible. The Orthodox sect believes this as a complete truth and follows these rules. They lead their life according to the teaching of the Bible or Jesus. The Bible shows Jesus as a celibate and son of god, who is savior of mankind. According to Orthodox Christianity Jesus was not a mortal but divine, part of holy trinity and son of god who was send on earth to teach the people, how to lead a holy life and obtain salvation. Orthodox Christians believe in Jesus, they are taught to commit their lives to Jesus, and he is regarded as a personnel savior. In brief Orthodox Christianity is based on the teaching of Jesus and Bible.

*The Da Vinci Code* achieved unprecedented success when it debuted at number one on The New York Times Bestseller list, simultaneously topping bestseller lists at The Wall Street Journal, Publishers Weekly, and San Francisco Chronicle. Later, the book went on to hit number one on virtually every major national bestseller list. Dan Brown's novels have been translated and published around the world. He is currently at work on another book. '*The Da Vinci Code*' was published in March 2003 and sold 6,000 copies on the first day. The book is now reported to have has sold more than 18 million copies worldwide, but still the sell is steady and the figure keeps growing! *The Da Vinci Code* is the fastest-selling adult novel ever and has reputedly earned Dan Brown fame and economical upsurge.

Number of Intellectuals, Theologians, and Professor has given their own interpretation and analysis of *The Da Vinci Code*, since its publication in 2003. Especially, evangelical churches have been very conscious about the popularity of the book and have put great deal of energy into responding to it. *The Da Vinci Code* though it's just a book of fiction, yet it is fused with the ideas, moreover the book presents the argument of skepticism about the religion, about the Bible, about the church, and about Jesus as human rather than divine.

After the publication of *The Da Vinci Code*, there has been much controversial speculation about the topic of authenticity of its historical foregrounding. The controversy presented in *The Da Vinci Code* has been topic of numerous articles, Television Shows, and about the question is there any truth behind this work of fiction. While Brown also seems to want his readers' own judgment on the topic of fact and fiction, and their own logic, because in the beginning of the novel itself, Brown has presented some evidential facts; under the very topic "Fact:" which states,

The Priory of Sion - a European secret society founded in 1099- is a real organization. In 1975 Paris's Bibliotheque Naionale discovered parchments known as Les Dossiers Secrets, identifying numerous members of the Priory of Sion, including Sir Isaac Newton, Sandro Botticelli, Victor Hugo and Leonardo da vinci. The Vatican prelature known as Opus Dei is a deeply devout Catholic sect that has been the topic of recent controversy due to reports of brain-washing, coercion and a dangerous practice known

as 'corporal mortification'. Opus Dei has just completed construction of a \$47 million National Headquarters at 243 Lexington Avenue in New York City (ii).

Furthermore in this very topic he also mentions, "All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents and secret rituals in the novel are accurate." (ii) So from these very statements by Brown himself, before the prologue of the novel *The Da Vinci Code*, puts readers' in dilemma on the author perspective on the fact and fiction and they are left alone, with their own judgment, reason and logic to distinct the blurring line between fact and fiction on the novel.

Nevertheless, Brown himself seems, wanting to create controversy and environment of suspense among the readers' to create thrill, mystery or publicity the fact it remains unknown. But the readers are left wondering because at the very end of the novel all the whirlwind created by Brown is calmed and everything seems to be in harmony with the general environment.

As stated above there are many scholars who have shed light of their intellect and discussed *The Da Vinci Code* novel from their different perspectives. Some scholar take the code as a controversy against the Catholic Church, while other credit the controversy theories for its popularity, some find other way around, for instance they take the code as publicity stunt. Scholars like, Diana Morris has done their thesis in *The Da Vinci Code* as well from the perspective of myth she takes the novel as a form of myth and she sees many similar characteristics between the novel and myth.

While these distinguished scholars have given their idea on the novel which seems like a spectrum of a single ray of light which has passed through a prism. Indeed the present research breaks away from all these perspectives and is trying to apply Foucauldian theory in the same novel. Ignoring all the controversies created by the novel about the fact and fiction, about the author perspectives on fact and fiction, and all the conspiracies theory. The present research will be based on the textual analysis of the book under the 'Foucauldian' light and how the power has shaped the present Orthodox Christianity inside the novel, and how the characters are trying to resist it.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Christianity and Power**

Literary theories are essential to understand the work of art. It helps to understand, appreciate and analyze the literary work in a critical way and to develop one's critical knowledge as well as strengthen one's understanding of literary text. Criticism in terms of literature is primarily an art of making judgments for instance evaluating the qualities of literary works and examining the Excellencies and deficiencies of literary works. Close Textual analysis is very essential to understand and for the development of central idea of any literary works.

#### **A Theoretical Development**

Michel Foucault, one of the pinnacle of French intellectualism, worked in so many different fields for instance Philosophy, History, Psychology, Sociology, Medicine, Gender Studies and Literary or Cultural Criticism so it is very hard to categories his work. What held together his wide field of study was an interest in Power and Knowledge and how they work together. He started with truism, took the power and knowledge apart, analyzed it, and put it back together. He was particularly interested in knowledge of human being, and power that acts on human beings.

Foucault was born in 1926, in a provincial city called Poitiers, and was named after Paul-Michel Foucault his father who was a surgeon. Foucault went from school to school, like Lycée Henri IV, Poitiers, Collège Saint-Stanislaus, Académie de Poitiers, Lycée Henri IV, Paris and Ecole Normale Supérieure,

doing extremely well in his exams, he did remarkably well at the entrance exam of Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris which was the most exclusive and intellectually intense college-level school in France, he scored fourth among all the students in the country competing. Though fourth among all, Foucault was not a happy boy. He grew more and more depressed did not get along with the other students and finally attempted suicide. His father took him to see a psychiatrist, whom young Michel told of his sexual interest in men. Psychiatrists then tended to treat homosexuality as an illness than inevitably caused misery, which did not do much to relieve Michel's depression. But he began at this point to get the idea that perhaps psychiatrists were doing more than just helping the distraught - maybe they were mental police, deciding what should or should not be allowed in society. Then Foucault was obsessed with Psychology so he started studying reports of Freud and Kinsey.

In 1955 Foucault started working as a French instructor in Upsalla, Sweden. There he found medical works from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in a huge library, then he started doing research and absorbed himself completely in these book, and these research became the famous book *Folie et déraison* (Madness and Civilization) and *Naissance de la clinique* ( The Birth of the Clinic).

In *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault interests himself in the question how the categories of mad and normal developed over the years and how this idea/category interacts with our ideas about madness. First he assumes the hypothesis that madness is something in which people exclude some from the

society by either confining them or locking them up. He starts his studies from the Middle Ages when people were confined due to epidemic leprosy, who were not only contagious but disturbing to look at. But in 14<sup>th</sup> century leprosy disappeared but people still had these huge places to confinements. So for time being it was left empty only up to 15<sup>th</sup> century. In 15<sup>th</sup> century, however, those who contradicted with reasoning of society or authorities were again thrown in these cells bar-coded as mad. In 17<sup>th</sup> century these cells were drastically filled with as many people as possible- criminals, madmen, anyone who acted strangely, sick and poor as well. The mad became the subcategory of the unemployed. Not only with mad but with the idea of madness as well people were ashamed and think that it should be hidden. At the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century madness fall in the category of physical science, it was said that only physical treatment can cure madness.

In *The Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault discusses entry of the doctor in the realm of madness as physical disease. The doctor was certified wise and noble man. So all that was needed for these madmen was presence of great moral authority and model, gradually these asylums started hiring doctors. In course of time doctor seems to have forgotten they were their only because they were considered wise and noble. But they started thinking they were in the asylum as scientists and that they could shed exact light upon this disease. Now everything centered on doctor, and they became power/authority to control all the mad and to add or remove bar-code of mad from the madmen. Everything depended on doctor-patient relationship now- in fact the cure was how the patient reacted to the doctor the figure of authority. Foucault credits French revolution for the birth of

clinics, there was two great medical dreams of revolution, a nationalized, almost religious order of doctors, who would care for the body as the priests had formerly cared for the soul and a perfected social order, with no more disease at all. After the revolution everything had to be built from the foundation, because everything was destroyed in revolution. Hospitals, universities had to be rebuilt so usually hospitals were built side by side with universities, which unified teaching and practice. The Clinic became official institution for the licensing of the doctors. Everything fall under doctors observation and gaze, he was examining the patient at the same time also teaching the students. Now doctors became very powerful figure. Dissecting the human corpses was now common practice, now doctor could see outside as well inside of the human and his power came from his way of gaze rather than from his abstract theories, consequently the idea of death changed, till now the death and disease had been associated with human life. It had transformed from something negative to part of life, so death was normalize.

In his next book *The Order of Things*, he looked at the history of the human sciences as a whole. The book was immediate best seller in France. In this complex book Foucault examines linguistic, biology, economics, three vital realms of human sciences. Moreover, he examines the structure of knowledge of given time, which establishes order. He also examines the shift that occurred in modern world from 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, God lost his place as a center of all. All that was left was man in center, who was source of all knowledge. Now, human science played vital role and it re-examined man both as the object and the subject of study. As Nietzsche had said the death of the God, Foucault was triggered

by the thought; man was an invention which might die as well. In this book, *The Order of Things*, Foucault, implied direct challenge was to Sartre Humanism.

*The Archaeology of Knowledge* was an explanation of Foucault's own aims and method. In this book Foucault did not believe economics to be the basis for history, he believed discourse as a source, and this discourse affected further other discourses. He explained each time period has its own discourse and it may vary radically from each other in course of time. And these discourses shaped the structure of our society.

Nietzsche had enormous influence on Foucault. Foucault idea of history changed after rereading Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*. Foucault was very much influenced by Nietzsche's rejection of man as rational and absolute truth, and history as accident and irrational. Foucault stated in his book as follows,

To follow the complex courses of decent to identify the accidents, the errors, the false appraisals and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth or being do not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents (102).

Foucault, together with his research group of graduate student published a collection of documents on a French murder case of 1835. These documents raised the question whether the accused Pierre Riviere was Crazy or not, who have committed patricide. These documents made the connection between madness and his next book, "*Discipline and Punish*". *Discipline and Punish* talks about the power relations and oppression. Now, his focus was on how discourse

formed the power and how this power was practiced on subjects. He also gives an account, on how the prison became the form of punishment. Foucault also mentions about the notion of power being systematized, refined and fully exercised over the years by the authority. By using minute control of activity and with repetitive exercise now science of discipline was established. Those who followed the discipline were rewarded as normal and a good behavior while those who transgress the line of discipline were termed as abnormal and a bad behavior. In this way, power and discipline were used to gain control. And science of discipline judged the normality of subjects.

The other book *The History of Sexuality* again shows the changing picture of society on the notion of sex in period of time. Foucault starts with the Victorian era where sex was repressed. They pretended as if sex did not exist or people did not have bodies. However scenario differed in reality because out on the streets, there were prostitutes everywhere and secretly Victorians were sex-mad, which gave birth to different sex-crimes in society and what was needed was sex to be taken as openly and normally. Sigmund Freud was the first person to explain sex openly and healthily. And with Freud sex proliferated, now it was object of scientific study and of careful regulation among institutions. These discourses are part of the major western procedure for producing the truth of sex, for defining sex and its cultural meaning, which Foucault calls a *scientia sexualis*. Meanwhile the science of sex grew as a power; power over patients controlled by a psychiatrist simply by listening.

In aforementioned sections I have discussed how gradually Foucault introduced his different ideas and how different books introduced different ideas to its reader. Though the various book of Foucault may seem not even slightly interconnected to each other because they present different topics, different ideas, and different subjects. But the fact is all of Foucault works were bonded by the notion of power; where discourse formed the power and this power structured the society in given period of time. So indeed, Foucault books were interconnected though they may vary in subjects and topics. Now let's discuss how Foucault was influenced by Nietzsche, because Foucault's model of history changed after rereading Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*, which explained human history as ratiom and linear and also rejected the idea of man as rational and absolute truth. Since this research also deals with ancient Christianity it is worthwhile to explain the Foucault view of History which was highly influenced by Nietzsche.

### **Foucault and Nietzsche**

Foucault owes much to the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). He adopts Nietzschean phrase "will to power". Nietzsche had said that each person has a "will to power". All knowledge is infact an expression of this "will to power" and that we use language to suit our aim. Hence all linguistic activities are related to our will to power. Nietzsche was best known as a radical critic of the western tradition, with its belief in truth, morality and god. He is one of the central figure in the re-evaluation of western metaphysics. He opposed the history, which saw itself as tracing the development to culmination, implicitly outside time based on the behalf of an eternal truth, a stand point from which all

can be measured. He argued that everything that was thought to be immortal must be placed within history. He questioned the hitherto existing belief about history as unquestionably and absolutely true. He defines history as a human construction that evolves from interpretation, theorizing, inference from data and records and subjective biases of the individuals who make it up. He radically rejects the traditional idea of history.

Foucault was aware of how the seemingly divergent issues of power, knowledge, the idea of truth and pleasure resided within *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault's one of the hardest books, in the introduction chapter of this book entitled "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" Foucault saw history in terms of power. Foucault viewed power not simply as a repressive force or tool of conspiracy but rather as a complex of forces that produces what happens. Foucault states his own idea about history, that every epoch of history is rejected by Foucault because his idea of genealogy conceives history as a process of discontinuity. He states:

Why does Nietzsche challenge the pursuit of origin (upspring), at least on these occasions when he is truly a genealogist? Firm, because it is an attempt to capture the exact essence of things, their purest possibilities and their carefully protected identities because this search assumes the existence of immobile form that precedes the external world of accident and succession. This search is directed to "that which was already there" the image of a primordial truth fully adequate to its nature, and it necessitates a

removal of every mask to ultimately disclose an original identity (318).

Furthermore Foucault also said history can be analyzed in three different ways, which were Periodic, Dissociative and Sacrificial history. The ideas of these were derived from Nietzsche's Monumental, Antiquarian and Critical history. These histories of Foucault and Nietzsche are both similar and different from each other. Periodic history is used as a mask to hide one's identity by bringing up the images of the great figures of the past by taking up the common mask up for the unreality of their own identity, which would make possible to overcome this falsity by parodying the parody themselves Nietzsche, later neglected and renounced the idea of monumental history as parody in itself but Foucault sees this history equally important. Dissociative history is the systematic dissociation of history from history instead of imposing it on identity. These traits are similar to Nietzsche's antiquarian history but in opposite way, whereas Nietzsche's antiquarian history seeks to discover continuities in which our present is supposed to have been rooted whereas dissociative history seeks to explore the discontinuity so that the origins and the series of logical progression are more impositions and not reality of history. In this use of history Foucault and Nietzsche differ from each other, the purpose of history that is guided by genealogy is to show that there is not definite root but not to discover the root or origin of our identity, since identity is a matter of process and perpetual change. The third use of history, sacrificial history, is similar to Nietzsche's critical history. Such use of history, according to Foucault, sacrifices knowledge and its

destructive uses. This uses of history transcends common concepts of knowledge and so-called history and reaches close to the more reliable truth about the past. It reveals that all knowledge of past is based upon injustice of the system that created the so-called history in its favor. The will to knowledge is not a nature of universal truth rather it endlessly multiplies the risk and danger and it dissolves the unity of subject. Foucault supposes it's the most reliable one. He takes it as an alternative to critical history since he sees problem with critical history.

Nevertheless the central concern in this research is Foucauldian ideas of power but it's equally relevant to go briefly Foucault's idea of history in relation to Nietzsche, since these concepts are interrelated to his concept of power. In western history in evolution of ideas, his ideas of discourse, power and knowledge deserve great importance. Thus multi-conceptual rethinking goes beyond the structuralism and hermeneutics. He argues reality is constructed out of the human consciousness and its ability to perform interpretation. Foucault makes clear demarcation of his re-evaluation in the traditional history of ideas. Traditionally power discourse and knowledge are associated with respectively Marxism, structural linguistics and traditional history of 1960 and 70s. Now, in following chapter we will discuss the ideas of Discourse, Power and Truth/Knowledge given by Foucault which is the central theoretical tool of this research.

### **Discourse, Power and Truth/Knowledge**

Foucault views every historical event and every action as an exercise of power. In Foucault's concept of power, discourse/language and truth/knowledge are closely webbed together. Foucault developed a kind of historical approach

which dealt with the relationship between truth and power. His central area of focus is the mutual relations between systems of truth and modalities of power. It rejects the linear development of history, as proposed by archeology, rather provides gaps in the historical developments. Adopting the term “genealogy” from Nietzsche he tries to probe beneath the abstract system in which discursive practices are interwoven with social practices by the circulation of power. Supporting with Foucault’s notion of history in terms of power Hazard Adams in a book *Critical Theory Since Plato* says, “Foucault’s influence in literary theory has been strong among revisionist literary historians known as “new historicists” who study the circulation of power through society and the literary texts that are part of it.”(1133)

For Foucault discourses are large groups of statements- rule-governed language terrains defined by strategic possibilities. Foucault says, at a given moment in the history, there will be a particular discourse; a set of rules and conventions and systems of mediation and transposition which govern the way what are talked about. Whenever we come across the system of dispersion and regularity, we are dealing with the discursive formation. All societies have procedures whereby the production of discourse is controlled, selected, organized and redistributed and the purpose is toward the mono-centrism of power and prevent the power from being malicious or dangerous. These procedures govern the discursive practices, discursive objects and discursive strategies, such that in all discourses the discursive regularities can be observed. Discourse makes possible disciplines and institutions which in turn, sustain and distribute

discourses. Rather considering discourses as secondary to the brute facts of the world, we should move to seeing such brute facts in some way produced or enabled by these discourses. The proper way to define an object is not to refer it back to its foundation, but relating it to the rules that enable it to form as an object of discourse thus constitute the conditions of all historical appearance.

Foucault says that it is not only discipline and institution produced by discourse, but when we avoid relating it to the primary ground of experience; we seek the rules of its formation. Thus there is a possibility or say sureness of the production of discourse within itself.

As he was interested in knowledge of human beings and the power that acts upon them, he says that knowledge is power and it's used to exercise power. There is the relationship between society and knowledge because of the exercise of power. Power is generated out of knowledge and knowledge comes from society.

The power is not a dominance of one to another. It is a creative source for positive value which is practiced hegemonically. The various discourses like religions, educational and political influence the way of writing of history of a particular phase. These discourses are always directed by certain power. Foucault also presents his anti-Marxist notion of power. He does not take power in a negative way as Marx does. Foucault stress that power becomes suppressive only when it is used politically otherwise it is always productive and creative. He asserts the omnipresence of power in the society and rejects the hierarchical notion of power is always pervasive and horizontal. And there is a no power that

is exercised without aims and purpose. He defines power as a network of society made up of such forces such as cultural, educational. Society cannot escape the force of power. The multiplicity of forces which constitutes the social institutions in its biggest form becomes power. Power is productive because it always creates truth. In every concept of power there is always resistance with in resistance there is evolution and revolution a capable of bringing drastic change in a particular era replacing all the established tradition it is always dynamic.

Foucault, while defining truth and power points out that these two are interwoven and attached. They are not isolated concepts. He states,

The important things here, I believe, is that truth isn't outside of power, or lacking in power: contrary to a myth whose history and function would repay further study, truth isn't the reward of free spirit, the child of protracted solitude, nor the privilege of those who have succeeded in liberating themselves. Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth its 'general politics' of truth, that is, the types (1144).

It is always determined by the network of forces-power, which one neither true nor false. And as the system changes it changes. Truth and power are interwoven but it is the linguistic discourse that originates the truth and truth produces the power and it is knowledge that brings the better discourse and effective power produced through the better discourse and effective power

produced through the better knowledge. So by given concept we can say knowledge and discourse are closely inter-related. Discourses are produced within real world of power struggle. Power is made out in relation to knowledge and the power changes with the change of knowledge. Alec Mc Houll and Wendy Grace in *A Foucault Primer: Discourse Power And Subject* observe:

Foucault's thought of the human subject itself is an effect of, to some extent subjection. Subjection refers to particular, historically located disciplinary process and concepts, which enable us to consider ourselves as individual subjects and which constrain us from thinking otherwise (3).

Hence all stated theory can be summarized in one paragraph by Lydia Alix Fillingham. She says,

The new methods of power are not ensured by right but by technique, not by law but by normalization, not by punishment but by control, methods that are employed on all levels and in forms that go beyond the state and its apparatus. As we began to see in *Discipline and Punish*, right and wrong, good and sin, get translated, but only directly, into normal and pathological. This new form of power is much more subtle than our traditional notion. It is thus much easier to overlook, and much harder to resist (141).

Foucault sees the language in relation to society. He propounded the concept of discourse because Foucault's discourse is related to the production of any information which provides knowledge and this knowledge provides some

aspect of life, which is neither true nor false. Through this knowledge power is generated in society. For Foucault power is not vertical but horizontal. Power is not domination by one on other but power in the society functions in a horizontal way. Thus power conducts everywhere in society and in every social body. It is accepted in the society and that acceptance is the outcome of our constructed truths. The discourses about morality and religion are pervasive. We construct the truth and speak about the things in the same light. These discourses construct the knowledge and truths are constructed and power is created on the basis of it. Alone with the power resistance is necessary just as our body has shadow in sunlight, power always needs resistance. This resistance is necessary in the response to change in power, truth and knowledge and eventually the social constructions.

Foucault sees ideology as constructed truth and strategy of ruling the subjects as argued by Marx and Engels but he argues that all knowledge and truth and discourses are constructed. It is subjective, contextual and plural directed by power. There is no such category of absolute truth. While analyzing the whole history of western metaphysics, he has made a genealogical study of truth and knowledge which is constructed by the power in discursive practice.

Since the main focus area of this research is on the play of the power to create the present orthodox Christianity in the novel *The Da Vinci Code* it was relevant to understand and discuss the Foucauldian notion of power. In the following chapters close textual analysis of the novel will be done, and the use of power to create the truth will also be discussed.

## Chapter 3

### The text and the context

As has been aforementioned in the preceding chapter, along with Foucauldian theory; truth cannot be divorced from discourse, knowledge and power. Literary text cannot be set in either stable antithesis or stable social background. It is in the light of the textuality, centrally includes the context, reference, background from the Foucauldian notion of truth which is constructed through the discourse which consequently generates the power that constructs the social truth for its subjects on this basis research will attempt to analyze the text. This present dissertation has been made to study and analyze Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*. In general, texts commonly have a 'context' - the literary, religious, intellectual, socio-political circumstance which can be felt in their composition or they themselves may as well have these overtones. The general textual analysis of this thesis is that *The Da Vinci Code* has redefined the Orthodox Christianity with in the text, it has also questioned on the established Orthodox Christianity which was constructed by political power play as it has been mentioned in this work of fiction.

It has been already discussed in previous chapters about the relation of discourse, power and knowledge/truth, according to Foucault's notion of power. Foucault opines power cannot remain aloof from the truth/knowledge and discourse. Furthermore, Foucault shows us the webbed relation of power, Knowledge/truth and discourse. And how one triggers another.

Though Brown is not a historicist to all his intent and purpose, but a close reading of his novel *The Da Vinci Code* reveals that he has been able to discuss the long history of Christianity and to controversies it. As an author, Brown speaks from the privileged position of narration, he is omnipresent. In the novel, author seems to sympathize with the lead characters (i.e. Robert Langdon and Sophie Neveu) and share their assumptions, which can be realized by the tone of the author. Brown himself, to some extent seems to support the arguments created in novel, which can be justified by his page 1 in the book, the last printed page before the Prologue where he has boldly labeled “FACT” (all capital letters) and on the FACT page, the author try to convince that they have done good research and fairly represented both the Priory of Sion and Opus Dei and then go on to boldly proclaim: “All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate.” (1) And Brown also provides reasoning, logic and historical documents for the claims done by characters.

To analyze *The Da Vinci Code* from the perspective of Foucauldian power, we have to turn our attention on Brown’s hints in the novel where Brown shows his readers how power has played the vital role in the structuring of the Orthodox Christianity in the novel.

Textual interpretation is another specification of this basis structure. The textual interpreter helps the reader understand the meaning of the text. So when the power theory of Foucault is applied in this given text it will shed light in the central interpretation of the text. Knowledge of a text’s description and of relevant historical context and references is presupposed or must be supplied before

interpretation begins. The interpreter's task is to make the text speak again in a diverse ways and in this research it is to show the play of power to form the Orthodox Christianity inside the plot.

Interpreting and evaluating literature has been a challenging job because to interpret not only its social and historical contexts but every possible phenomenon that the writer might have undergone its contexts. Literary historians are generally committed to contextual studies. They use them to dissolve historical generalizations. So, Derrida quotes Montaigne in his essay *Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences*, "we need to interpret interpretations more than to interpret things." (108)

*The Da Vinci Code* is very charming, intriguing, uplifting but it is also challenging, troubling and controversial while reading. The novel reconstructs the past of Christian history by which we understand the historical context of the text, we are able to see more clearly and also from different perspective through the lens of characters (i.e. Robert Langdon and Sophie Neveu). So this text has its direct connection to history of Christianity and use of power in past to construct the Orthodox Christianity.

Every age has certain relationship with its past. History leaves us some traces with its past whenever we approach it from the perspective of present. A created text always has some links to past ages. Such texts need to be approached from the present time for the sake of studying. *The Da Vinci Code* creates the new form or redefined form of Christianity which differs from the established one. In the redefinitions the author has also provided with the relevant arguments and

logic. Brown seems to consider vital role of power politics to overshadow the truth and by providing the different influential discourses rather than truth the Orthodox Christianity was established by the church. Brown makes his claims with such strong facts, for instance: The *Gnostic Gospels* are works reflecting the Gnostic take on Christianity. Some have been known for centuries, but previously unknown works- in the Nag Hammadi scrolls – were discovered in Egypt in 1945. Brown presents this factual information in his text *The Da Vinci Code* to justify his claims with the following logical explanations. Brown writes:

These are photocopies of the Nag Hammadi and Dead Sea scrolls, which I mentioned earlier,' Teabing said. 'The earliest Christian records. Troublingly, they do not match up with the gospels in the Bible.' Flipping toward the middle of the book, Teabing pointed to a passage. 'The Gospel of Philip is always a good place to start.'

Sophie read the passage:

And the companion of the Saviour is Mary Magdalene. Christ loved her more than all the disciples and used to kiss her often on her mouth. The rest of the disciples were offended by it and expressed disapproval. They said to him, 'why do you love her more than all of us? (331)

This above mentioned passage is from the *Gospel of Philip* which is often cited as proof of the union between Christ and Mary Magdalene. And in the novel *The Da Vinci Code* the excerpt is read by Sophie who in search of the Holy Grail encounters with the Sir Leigh Teabing, a former British Royal Historian, who has

specialized in different areas of the legend about Holy Grail. In order to prove his theory about the union of Mary and Christ Teabing is asking Sophie to read this statement. As we can see clearly, how Brown has used the available documents to make his arguments much stronger.

Furthermore Brown has also logically and reasonable used the setting of a real place like Oxford University (like Sayers' *Gaudy Night*), streets of France, Louvre Museum, Paris and its painting to convey his ideas. Sayers makes a caveat on the first page, that any coincidence to any factual person or event is purely coincidental and not on purpose. *The Da Vinci Code* makes no caveat. In fact, *The Da Vinci Code*'s "FACT" page says otherwise. One single word: "Fact."

Not only that, Brown enjoys naming characters in the book from real life cases. Jacques Saunière is named after Bérenger Saunière (1852 - 1917), a Parish priest at Rennes-le-Château who is said to have found four mysterious parchments in a hollow pillar. Also, Brown's actual editor, and his publisher, Doubleday, are masked under "Jonas Kaufman" and "Double Knight Publishers."

Especially he has used the painting of *The Last Supper* of Leonardo Da Vinci and Da Vinci's several quote. Brown's visual interpretation of *The Last Supper* seems pretty solid. Ain Marissa in her article *Hidden in Plain Sight* writes,

The famous fresco is frequently referenced in popular culture, from Andy Warhol's oversize silkscreens to *The Matrix Reloaded*.

Brown brings to life unnoticed details in Leonardo's paintings that the average viewer might not ponder. By examining the *Mona*

*Lisa's* elusive smile or *The Last Supper's* floating dagger in a new light, he scrutinizes valid visual discrepancies in the art (2).

His suggestions are so engaging that even the casual reader will want to reexamine Leonardo da Vinci's work in detail to judge the credibility of the author's claims. Brown has cleverly used the painting of *The Last Supper* in order to strengthen his argument. He also reveals many of his ideas and logic through the character of Sophie, who in conversation with Teabing. Sophie notices as follow,

[...] the figure to Jesus' immediate right, focusing in. As she studied the person's face and body, a wave of astonishment rose within her. The individual had flowing red hair, delicate folded hands, and the hint of a bosom. It was, without a doubt...female. 'That's a woman!' Sophie exclaimed.

Teabing was laughing. 'Surprise, surprise. Believe me, it's no mistake. Leonardo was skilled at painting the difference between the sexes.'

Sophie could not take her eyes from the woman besides Christ.

The Last Supper is supposed to be thirteen men. Who is this woman? (327)

In the following page Brown writes:

Sophie moved closer to the image. The woman to Jesus' right was young and pious-looking with a demure face, beautiful red hair and

hands folded quietly. This is the woman who singlehandedly could crumble the Church? (328)

In the upper given section where Sophie is looking at the painting of the Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper*, she seems to notice something that she did not notice before, the presence of woman near the Jesus. And she believes that this is the woman whose identity can change the whole history of western Christian religion.

So far many intellects seem to have been highly influenced by the appeal of the novel *The Da Vinci Code* in the context of its historical foregrounding and working of political power. In the Yale Review of Books under the title *Hidden in Plain Sight* which is sub-titled *A new novel reworks the history of creative genius*, by Marissa Ain, she is all with praise for the novel and she seems to accept that the book is creating radical ideas and challenging the established form of western history and religion with its redefinition of Christianity. She states:

The latest art history mystery by Dan Brown is a fast-paced book that is hard to put down. With deliciously short chapters that usually end in cliff-hangers, *The Da Vinci Code* is an exciting summer read with serious undertones. An intelligent spin that challenges the typical interpretation of Western history, the novel draws upon historical backing to suggest radical theories on art, politics, and religion - all set in a Bond-like context throughout the streets of Paris. Unfolding dark secrets in a modern-day setting,

*The Da Vinci Code* appeals to Harry Potter fans as well as history buffs due to its smart blend of myth and reality(1).

As we have discussed above there are many appealing ideas inside the novel which make its readers to question the established form of Orthodox Christianity and reconsider the facts. The novel also presents several facts and historical documents to prove its point and to establish its claim. But this research will primarily focus only on the Orthodox Christianity and redefined version of Christianity which is done inside the text, delimitating itself from the Bible and other controversies concerning facts and fictions. The research will show the open use of power to suppress the marginal scriptures and use of power to create the discourse which can form the general truth for the subjects. And this power is also used to discipline the subjects. And in the following chapters we will discuss the role of power to define Orthodox Christianity in *The Da Vinci Code* and the redefinition done by Brown in his fictional book *The Da Vinci Code*.

### **Role of Power to define Orthodox Christianity in *The Da Vinci Code*:**

*The Da Vinci Code* generated a great deal of criticism and controversy after its publication in 2003, many of the complaints centered on the book's speculations and alleged misrepresentation of core aspects of Christianity and the history of the Roman Catholic Church. Additional criticisms were directed toward the book's inaccurate descriptions of European art, history, architecture, and geography.

In the given section we will discuss and do the brief textual analysis of the text *The Da Vinci Code*, concentrating in the area of the role of power in the text

to form the Orthodox Christianity inside the novel's plot. We will not give any emphasis whether Brown is presenting fact or fiction we will strictly focus only inside the text while doing the analysis from the Foucault perspective of Power and mentioned Orthodox Christianity is only related to fictional text *The Da Vinci Code* so we will not justify it with Bible. We will concentrate in play of 'Power,' according to the Foucault's notion of power or 'Foucauldian Power', and its implication in the text while doing the textual analysis.

*The Da Vinci Code* rejects the idea that the Bible is a complete truth and it does not try to defend its truth by attributing it the Catholic Church. But the one truth in *The Da Vinci Code* is when Brown mentions the index of banned books. Now that is not just a fiction. The book claims Catholic Church used its power to censor certain books that questioned its power, allowing it to completely regulate ideology. It also suggests Jesus was married and that the Christian Church hid this information. The main issue in the book is the lineage of Jesus and Mary Magdalene, who was not a prostitute, but a close companion of Jesus. Her real identity was concealed by early church leaders who feared the truth would undermine church teaching on celibacy.

The general concept of power is centralization within the system of hierarchy. The absolute power is conceived as the center from where the things around are dominated and ruled. In this pattern, power is practiced for more power. Furthermore, the exercise of power always tends to be in the favor of its masters simply for their benefits and rule in the everlasting way. Church used its power to control the ideas of the people and in forming the discourse accordingly

to suit it; with the purpose of gaining power and authority over the subjects. Here we can see the cyclic relationship of power and discourse. Inside the novel we can see how one discourse is forming the truth and power while at the same time this power is used to control the resistance and create other discourses. Power has suppressed unwanted discourses while again with the use of power new discourse is formed which in long term generates power and authority in the case of *The Da Vinci Code* to the Roman Catholic Church. It had destroyed the documents of the Mary Magdalene and represented her as a prostitute, who she was not, Church has formed this discourse about Mary Magdalene as being a prostitute which stigmatizes her personality and her character in order to gain control over the power, which Magdalene had over Church. One of the characters (Teabing) explains breathlessly, while explaining these facts to Sophie. He says, “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.”(340)

As we can assume by upper line the book questions on the divinity of the Jesus himself, the divinity of the Jesus was the propounded by the Roman Emperor Constantine for the political power so Jesus being Son of God and the divinity was itself a discourse created by the Emperor Constantine to suit his purpose and to gain power and authority on his subjects. As Foucault mentions there can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis these associations. He

says that we are subjected to production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth.

Foucault has rejected as history being completely true and absolute. The history is written by the power holders so they can twist it accordingly to suit themselves. In the text Brown also claims as biblical history being completely misrepresented. He tries to argue that,

[...] history is always written by the winners. When two cultures clash, the loser is obliterated, and the winner writes the history books - books which glorify their own cause and disparage the conquered foe. As Napoleon once said, "what is history, but a fable agreed upon?" 'He smiled. 'By its very nature, history is always a one-sided account' (343).

According to book, the true version of Christianity was Gnostic Christianity, but Orthodox Christianity became more powerful and won out over the Gnostics. Because the Orthodox Christians won over the Gnostics, they wrote history in a way favorable to their version of Christianity.

No one can disagree that some of the world religions and cults are based on manmade fabrications. So there is every possibility that Christianity might be as well. Moreover Brown being rational defines Christianity as being metaphorical rather than absolute. He disagrees to take it on truth-value. He also questions on the blind faith on any kind of religions and their literal interpretations. He argues,

[...] every faith in the world is based on fabrication. That is the definition of faith - acceptance of that which we imagine to be true, that which we cannot prove. Every religion describes God through metaphor, allegory and exaggeration, from the early Egyptians through modern Sunday school. Metaphors are a way to help our mind process the unprocessable. The problems arise when we begin to believe literally in our own metaphors (451).

Furthermore Browns says,

Those who truly understand their faiths understand the stories are metaphorical. Sophie looked skeptical. 'My friends who are devout Christians definitely believe that Christ literally walked on water, literally turned water into wine and was born of a literal virgin birth.' [...] Religious allegory has become a part of the fabric of reality. And living in that reality helps millions of people cope and be better people (452).

Brown also claims only those Gospels which agreed with the authority of church were chosen for the *New Testament*. Church used those Gospels which confirmed their power and church overshadowed those Gospels which contradicted. So church used its power to suppress those marginal Gospels.

Brown claims,

More than eighty gospels were considered for the New Testament, and yet only a relative few were chosen for inclusion – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. 'Who chose which gospels to include?'

Sophie asked. ‘Aha!’ Teabing burst in with enthusiasm. ‘The fundamental irony of Christianity! The Bible, as we know it today, was collated by the pagan Roman emperor Constantine the Great’ (313).

For the established format of Orthodox Christianity Brown accredits Roman Emperor Constantine who choose which books belong in the Bible for political purposes according to the text *The Da Vinci Code*. Constantine “upgraded” Jesus to be god to increase his political power. So Jesus divinity is itself in question. Jesus divinity was mere discourse constructed by Constantine to gain unity and political power on his subjects. Brown states,

Nonetheless, establishing Christ’s divinity was critical to further unification of Roman Empire and to the new Vatican power base. By officially endorsing Jesus as the Son of God, Constantine turned Jesus into a deity who existed beyond the scope of the human world, and entity whose power was unchallengeable. This not only precluded further pagan challenges to Christianity, but now the followers of Christ were able to redeem themselves only via the established sacred channel – the Roman Catholic Church (315-316).

Browns again writes in following page how Constantine did a cooperate operation to destroy those gospels which gave Christ the attribute of human. To create his own version or discourse and to gain political power over his subjects Constantine used his own power as emperor. Browns writes, “The modern Bible

was compiled and edited by men who possessed a political agenda- to promote the divinity of the man Jesus Christ and to use influence to solidify their own power base.” (317) The production of truth is integrated with the discourse which are meant for the making of knowledge. Discourse produces truth/knowledge. So it is obvious that discourse, knowledge and power are inseparable. He further justifies,

[...] Because Constantine upgraded Jesus status almost four centuries after Jesus death, thousand of documents already existed chronicling His life as a mortal man. To rewrite the history books, Constantine knew he would need a bold stroke. From this sprang the most profound moment in Christian history. [...] Constantine commissioned and financed a new Bible, which omitted those gospels that spoke of Christ’s human traits and embellished those gospels that made Him godlike. The earlier gospels were outlawed, gathered up, and burned (316-317).

Not only that Brown also claims, while creating his own discourse about the Christianity Roman Emperor Constantine also collaborated paganism and Christianity and converted the world from Matriarchal Paganism to Patriarchal Christianity. Therefore we can find hints of paganism in today’s modern Orthodox Christianity. For instance Brown writes,

Nothing in Christianity is original. The pre-Christian God Mithras- called the Son of God and the Light of the World- was born on December 25, died, was buried in a rock tomb, and then

resurrected in three days. By the way, December 25 is also the birthday of Osiris, Adonis, and Dionysus (314).

Brown further writes, “Constantine and his male successors successfully converted the world from matriarchal paganism to patriarchal Christianity by waging a campaign of propaganda that demonized the sacred feminine, obliterating the goddess from modern religion forever.” (Page 124)

However the question may arise what for Constantine was giving so much effort to establish his own version of Christianity. The answer is because Rome was suffering for religious turmoil. Constantine's empire was suffering religious disharmony and division. There was constant war between Christians and pagans. After the crucifixion of Christ the number of Christian had rose dramatically so Rome was on the verge division in two. So Constantine cleverly united Rome in one single religion ‘Christianity.’ Nevertheless he did not left paganism so easily he fused pagan symbols, dates and rituals into the Christian tradition and created the hybrid religion that was acceptable to both Christians and pagans. To strengthen this collaboration Constantine also held a council known as Council of Nicaea which voted and decided what to include and what not into Orthodox Christianity. Brown argues, Constantine called the Council of Nicea so the bishops could settle the controversy. Brown writes, “[...] many aspects of Christianity were debated and voted upon – the date of Easter, the role of the bishops, the administration of sacraments, and of course, the divinity of Jesus.” (315)

The novel is literally the complex network of power and its controlling over the privilege through various discourses. Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* is a true manifestation of power and justice associated with it. Therefore through this novel he wishes to picture the true nature of truth and craving for gaining power. In the text all is exercise of power relation which characterizes and constitutes the social body; as Foucault mentions that these relations of power can't be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production of accumulation, circulation and functioning of discourses. Writer clearly argues on the use of power by Church to create their own discourse more powerful and in long run which would become truth for the subjects and source of authority for Church. Brown writes,

[...] this was a secret the Vatican had tried to bury in the fourth century. That's part of what the Crusades were about. Gathering and destroying information. The threat Mary Magdalene posed to the men of the early Church was potentially ruinous. Not only was she the woman to whom Jesus had assigned the task of founding the Church, but she also had physical proof that the Church's newly proclaimed deity had spawned a mortal bloodline. 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 (340).

As we have discussed above from the excerpts of text about how the power and political motivation has established today modern Orthodox Christianity. From the pure textual analysis it would be wrong to assume anything passed down from generation as an absolute truth in the context of this text the established format of Christianity. As Foucault have presented in his theory of power, discourse forms the power and generates truth/knowledge for the public to follow. Similar scenario can be observed in the text *The Da Vinci Code*, Roman emperor Constantine has created a discourse to suit him, to gain political power and to unite his nation, which is implemented in his subjects as discipline which in long run has turned into the truth (i.e. established Orthodox Christianity) for the people. Now the established form is so strong any kind of resistance is not forgiven. Inside *The Da Vinci Code*, the main protagonist Robert Langdon and Sophie Neveu are standing against the established discourse of Orthodox Christianity, which creates power for church authorities, so they are facing deadly threats. In the following chapter research will focus on the redefinition of Christianity done by Dan Brown the novel *The Da Vinci Code*.

### **Redefined Christianity in *The Da Vinci Code***

Just because an assertion supports a religion does not mean that it was made because of the religion nor does it mean that it does not have factual merit because it is associated with a religion. Religion is not the opposite of fact.

As Foucault has mentioned every immortal thought must be placed within the history. He questioned every established belief in history and it being absolutely true. He defined history as a mere human construct that origins from

interpretation, theorizing, inference from data and records and subjective biases of the individuals who make it up. He radically rejects the traditional idea of history. So Brown also dares question and to redefine the western religion with the help of his fictional work *The Da Vinci Code*.

In today's modern western society, everything falls under the microscope of authenticity so is the case with religion. Intellectuals in this modern day do not settle disputes by having their followers kill and murder other people because of different interpretations of God; "religious disagreements" are handled in a civilized manner. And everyone is entitled to give his or her interpretation based on the research they have done and evidence they have collected. *The Da Vinci Code*, a fictional work is one of the interpretation and argument done on the established Orthodox Christianity, where Brown has redefined the Christianity with his arguments and reasoning.

Foucault has argued, with the power resistance is necessary, power always has resistance close by it. This resistance helps to respond to power and to change the established truth and knowledge and eventually it changes the social constructions. Brown has also created some resistance against the established notion of Christianity through his book *The Da Vinci Code* which stands outside system.

Brown argues that present Orthodox Christianity is established on the foundation of power, which was used by Constantine in early age to unite his kingdom but it consequently has become truth for the general public. This use of power has shifted in the direction of thinking that forms basis for the production

of truth which implies for the subjects in society. Power comes from a discourse which produces knowledge and truth for the subjects. Constantine on the power of his sword has created a discourse on Christianity which has become truth for his subjects. It shows the basic link between power relations and their capacity to the truths humans live by. Brown states, “[...] is that almost everything our fathers taught us about Christ is false” (318). Nevertheless though Brown disagrees with Christ divinity but he does not question on his good will. He reasons Christ being merely human, but who possessed great charisma, influenced millions and established his own philosophy. One of the major character Teabing says, “[...] until that moment in history, Jesus was viewed by his followers as a mortal prophet...a great and powerful man, but a man nonetheless. A mortal” (315). Brown gives Christ human attribute by calling him inspirational leader and furthermore he also traces family tree of Jesus Christ. He writes,

Jesus Christ was a historical figure of staggering influence, perhaps the most enigmatic and inspirational leader the world has ever seen. As the prophesied Messiah, Jesus toppled kings, inspired millions and founded new philosophies. As a descendant of the lines of King Solomon and King David, Jesus possessed a rightful claim to the throne of the King of the Jews (314).

He argues that all the things in the Bible should not be taken in truth value and he rejects the idea Bible being absolute truth. He argues, “The Bible is a product of man, my dear. Not of God. The Bible did not fall magically from the clouds. Man created it as a historical record of tumultuous times, and it has

evolved through countless translations, additions and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book.” (313). He also writes, “[...] Church version of the Christ story is inaccurate, and that the greatest story ever told is, in fact, the greatest story ever sold?” (356) Teabing statements while explaining Christian history to Sophie Neveu:

[...] Jesus was indeed a great and powerful man. Constantine’s underhanded political manoeuvres don’t diminish the majesty of Christ’s life. Nobody is saying Christ was a fraud, or denying that He walked the earth and inspired millions to better lives. All we are saying is that Constantine took advantage of Christ’s substantial influence and importance. And in doing so, he shaped the face of Christianity as we know it today (316).

With the craze of power and subjectification, there are endeavoring to act to be disciplined for achieving it at any cost. Sometimes it seems to have gone beyond the convention of normalization of power. Human lose is done to obtain desired result and to establish the desired discourse. The protagonist Robert Langdon says while explaining Christian History to his partner Sophie Neveu “Anyone who chose the forbidden gospels over Constantine’s version was deemed a heretic. The word heretic derives from the moment in history. The Latin word haereticus means “choice’. Those who “chose” the original history of Christ were the world’s first heretics.” (317)

In his redefinition Brown has also questioned about the Bible view on women position, Brown argues today Orthodox Christianity takes women as

subordinate which can be proved from The Old Testament. The Old Testament makes plenty of references about women being not equal to man. In fact it states that women should not talk in church and if they have a question to ask their man at a later point. He writes,

[...] that this concept of women as life-bringer was the foundation of ancient religion. Childbirth was mystical and powerful. Sadly Christian philosophy decided to embezzle the female's creative power by ignoring biological truth and making man the creator. Genesis tells us that Eve was created from Adam's rib. Woman became an off-shoot of man. And a sinful one at that, Genesis was the beginning of the end for the goddess (322).

Brown also establishes privileged position of woman in Christian religion which he argues has been omitted by men to gain total control on authority. He also raises the issue of Mary Magdalene and her position in today's Orthodox Christianity who he claims to be the original founder of Church. Browns states,

[...] Jesus suspects He will soon be captured and crucified. So he gives Mary Magdalene instructions on how to carry on His Church after He is gone. As a result, Peter expresses his discontent over playing second fiddle to a woman, I daresay Peter was something of sexist. [...] According to these unaltered gospels it was not Peter to whom Christ gave directions which to establish the Christian Church. It was Mary Magdalene (333-334).

He writes, “A woman who carried with her a secret so powerful that, if revealed, it threatened to devastate the very foundation of Christianity.” (322)

In his redefinition Brown argues Jesus as mortal being but with a charismatic personality and who philosophies about ideal life. He claims Jesus as being normal human being with human traits, he had wife, a child. But due to political power play of Roman Empire especially by the Emperor Constantine Jesus was given divinity and to gain power he was awarded with title The Son of God by church. He also claims, established Orthodox Christianity being hybrid between paganism and Christianity with examples for instance stories in Bible and holidays being inspired by pagan beliefs and holidays. He blames church for hiding the truth and marginalizing those scriptures which does not serve its interest. While shaping of today’s established Orthodox Christianity Brown shows the intricate use of power to establish present format. And main actors of this arena are Roman emperor Constantine and Roman Catholic Church. He also raises the issue of relation between Mary Magdalene and Christ, since Christ was human he puts his logic forward that Christ and Mary Magdalene were married and also begot child bloodline of Christ, which jeopardizes the Church authority. Writer also reveals Mary Magdalene to be the Holy Grail, whose true identity was suppressed by Christianity: She is also said to represent the lost “scared feminine,” which, if rediscovered, would supposedly bring balance to the world once again. Brown writes, “Magdalene was no such thing. That unfortunate misconception is the legacy of a smear campaign launched by the early Church.

The Church needed to defame Mary Magdalene in order to cover up her dangerous secret – her role as the Holy Grail” (328).

Characters in the book claim that the sacred feminine has been suppressed by Christianity. The sacred feminine refers to the representation of the mystical power of the earth or mother Goddess and is often linked to symbols of fertility and reproduction.

Moreover Brown *The Da Vinci Code* has inspired research on female deities and important women in religions that were suppressed earlier and were marginalized. The immense popularity of the book by Dan Brown has certainly helped raise questions about women’s place in religious history for a lot of people who never thought about it before.

## 4. Conclusion

There is no doubt that there have been widespread criticisms and controversies about the book reflecting antiquated Protestant calumnies against Catholicism. The main issue surrounding the book is that it claims that prior to AD 325, Christ was considered no more than a “mortal prophet” by his followers and it accredits Emperor Constantine’s politicking and a vote at the First Council of Nicaea that Christianity came to view him as divine. The book also claims that the Holy Grail is not a chalice, but rather a bloodline sprung from the marital union of Jesus and Mary Magdalene, whose identity by Church is stigmatized as a prostitute, to obtain the authority.

A number of scholarly, intellectual analyses of *The Da Vinci Code* have already been produced by different scholars. Mostly these researches tend to concentrate on historical and factual errors, and the false conclusions these errors can produce. While this research is different, it highlights the text of *The Da Vinci Code*, as the redefinition of Orthodox Christianity and use of power to shape the Christianity in early age based strictly on the text. It attempts to go to the conceptual and political essence of the book, instead of focusing on fact or fiction or mistakes it is the thesis about what is being presented in the book.

Author Dan Brown presents his ideas and arguments through his characters, about the use of power in earlier era to shape the Christianity which is established in modern era. He shows the power relation of different communities, which has contributed in the definition of Orthodox Christianity to gain control, power and authority among their subjects. The ulterior purpose of this political

power was to gain control over the subjects. Brown has shown how earlier Christianity was shaped with full evidences and historical documents. For instance, he credits Constantine as the true propounder of today's Christianity which he claims to be the hybrid of paganism and Christianity. Brown also raises the issues related to the marginal scriptures and the Bible's historic validity bears tremendous implications. Brown claims that Constantine commissioned campaign to destroy contrary scriptures and manipulated existing texts and thereby divinizes the human Christ.

In my thesis I have attempted to show the role of power, to define modern day Orthodox Christianity from the perspective of 'Foucauldian Power.' In addition to that I have also shown the role of earlier discourses which have consequently formed the truth/knowledge for subjects and power for authority. These discourses were formed by Constantine and Roman Catholic Church which is taken as an absolute truth.

And in the later section of textual analysis, I have tried to show how Brown is standing against the system of established power and creating resistance. He has raised the question on the established truth/knowledge about the Orthodox Christianity; he rejects Christianity as being absolute truth. He has redefined the Christianity and he also shows the loopholes of history because history is always written by the people in power so there is always a doubt of authenticity on the established notion. Moreover there is always a lingering dilemma in the notion of absolute truth because truth is obtained from the discourses which can neither be truth or false. So the whole Orthodox Christianity can be taken in the area of

doubt and questioning. Brown has done likewise and has dared to give his bold ideas and argument through this text.

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