

Reflection of the Spirit of the Age in Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*

Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* offers a surprising alternative account of Christianity. The novel's details are critical of Jesus Christ's divinity and Lordship. Primarily the antihero Sir Leigh Teabing narrates that Christ is a mortal human, married man and the Bible is a human product. The novel's protagonists Robert Langdon and Sophie Neveu undergo a series of quests, solve puzzles, face conspiracy and finally learn that Sophie is Christ's heir. It is the fierce incredulity towards Christianity. A major concern of this research is on Brown's motive behind relativizing accepted facts of Christianity and examine whether Brown is an eye opener or hurter over religious sentiment of people. What is Brown's hidden motive behind his problematization of the beliefs of the Christianity? So, overall aim of this research is to explore Brown's intellectual engagement related to religious belief system of people as per the spirit of age. Further, this paper will contribute to the faith community as an opportunity to check their foundation of belief and to acknowledge multiple realities. For the research community, this research work will be milestone to gauge the novel from purely literary theoretical lens. For accomplishing this aim, the novel is critically analyzed in the light of contemporary spirit and thoughts of time that is postmodernism.

Brown, an American author, is one of the most acclaimed thriller writers of the contemporary time. He was born and raised in Exeter, New Hampshire on June 22, 1964. His mother Constance was a professional sacred musician and father Richard G. Brown was a famous mathematics teacher at Philips Exeter Academy. Brown, after graduating in 1982 from Exeter went to Amherst College, where he received a Bachelor's Degree in English Literature. Brown has written well known novels: *Digital Fortress* (1998), *Deception Point* (2001), *Angels and Demons* (2000),

The Da Vinci Code (2003), *The Lost Symbol* (2009), *Inferno* (2013) and *Origin* (2017). His recurring themes in his novels are cryptography, keys, symbols, codes, art and conspiracy theories. Three of them, *Angels and Demons* (2000), *The Da Vinci Code* (2003), and *Inferno* (2013) have been adapted into films and his books have been translated into various languages. *The Da Vinci Code* (2003) is his fourth novel which explores a radically alternative view to Christianity that is Jesus Christ is just a human being. *The Da Vinci Code* is credited as one of the most popular books of all time, with 80 million copies sale worldwide till 2009. In 2005, *Time* Magazine lists him as one of the 100 most influential people of the year.

The Da Vinci Code offers a detective story that begins in Paris with mysterious murder of the renowned curator of the Louvre, Jacques Saunière done by Opus Dei monk Silas after being forced to reveal where the Holy Grail is hidden. Before dying, Saunière leaves a bizarre religious cryptic message at a scene of crime. Expert of religious symbology, Robert Langdon, a professor at Harvard who is in Paris to deliver a lecture, is called to investigate joined by cryptologist police officer Sophie Neveu, Saunière's grand-daughter. She reveals that he is in great danger. By deceiving police captain Fache's surveillance, Sophie and Robert reach to Mona Lisa's painting through clues left by Saunière on his body and around. They find a key for a safety deposit box. They come to know that Saunière was the head of a secret religious group known as the Priory of Sion, protector of the Holy Grail. Meanwhile, murderer Silas reports to Bishop Aringarosa that the keystone is in the Church of Saint Sulpice in Paris according to Saunière. Silas proceeds and finds out that the place given by Saunière was a false clue. In a rage, he kills Sister Sandrine, the Church's keeper.

At the Bank of Zurich, Langdon and Sophie use Saunière's key and a passcode to open his safe-deposit box. There is a cryptex inside the box in a cylindrical vessel containing a secret message that needs a passcode to open. They believe that this cryptex is the key to finding the Holy Grail. Thereafter, Sophie and Langdon visit the Holy Grail expert, British Royal Historian Sir Leigh Teabing and urge him to explain about true nature of the Holy Grail to Sophie. Teabing narrates a number of surprising claims about Jesus Christ and the Christianity. The Bible in its present form omits other several books, early Christians believed that Jesus Christ was mortal and his divine status was decided by council of Nicaea in 325. Similarly, Christ was married to Mary Magdalene and had a daughter too. Holy Grail is actually Mary Magdalene and the set of Sangreal texts buried with her. Leonardo Da Vinci knew it and painted in his famous fresco *The Last Supper*. *The Da Vinci Code* is a set of symbols in Vinci's art representing this 'other' radically different Christian (hi) story.

Silas enters the palace and attacks them just minutes before the police arrive. The group controls Silas and takes him to London with them in a private jet. During their flight, Sophie tells her grandfather's engaging in sexual ritual and makes harsh judgment to her grandfather. Langdon, Sophie and Teabing decipher the latest clue and open a cryptex which reveals that it requires another password. When they land at the Kent airport in England, French police searches the plane but Langdon, Sophie and Silas are already hidden in his limousine. They move to Templar Church in London.

Langdon, Sophie and Teabing move in search of the Church. Meanwhile, Teabing's manservant Remy Legaludec sets free to Silas because Silas reveals that he is an employee of the Teacher as well. They are on the mission to recover cryptex

from Langdon. Langdon and Sophie visit the library at King's College to research on the latest clue. Remy drops Silas off to Opus Dei house and notifies the police that Silas is there. When police arrive at Opus Dei house, Silas fires and is shot to Bishop Aringarosa. Likewise, Teabing kills Remy when his job is completed. As per the King's college latest clue, Sophie and Robert head to Westminster Abbey to Isaac Newton's tomb, which is supposed to find the correct code for cryptex. As they approach to headstone, the Teacher [Teabing] watches them from a distance. When they arrive at the Chapter House, Teabing shows up a loaded revolver pointed at them and forces them to open the cryptex for him. Robert replies that he does not know the code and throws the cryptex up in the air and the cryptex shatters. Immediately, French police arrests Teabing, leaving Langdon and Sophie free to interpret the final clue. Later Robert tells Sophie that he has figured out the correct code and opens the cryptex just before he throws it up into the air.

Bishop Aringarosa finds himself carried by an injured Silas and learns that the Teacher is the same person Teabing. Aringarosa realizes that he is deceived by the Teacher. He helps Teacher, assuming that he is a member of the Vatican, who wants to save his organization. Afterwards, Saunière's final clue leads Langdon and Sophie to Rosslyn Chapel in Scotland. Sophie feels as if she has been there before and learns that her grandmother and brother have been living there in secrecy to protect her grandfather's identity. Finally, she learns that she is a descendant of Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene.

The Da Vinci Code is the most popular and widely read book due to its radical distortion of certain religious facts of the Bible associated with religious sentiments of people. Brown's novel has generated contesting of critical responses. Irrespective of their theological positions, some critics have either scrutinized the novel as

historiographic misrepresentation that an alter account is inaccurate, or some have taken it as old and discredited ideas about conspiracies repacking them. The issue he fictionalizes in the novel is very sensitive and radical. This radical issue brings ferocious criticism along with its celebration. Some of the prominent critics' ideas are given bellow.

Theologian, Bock L. Darrell, in his book, *Breaking The Da Vinci Code* asserts that the major controversy in the novel is due to the author's claim rooted in historical fact "novel clothed in claims of historical truth" (9). It means, it is a fiction with a solid non-fiction skeleton. He scrutinizes basic three problems in the novel: (i) Was Jesus Married? Basic novel's story line claims that Jesus Christ was married to Mary. He refutes this idea by saying that Jesus had spiritual relationship with Mary, not a companion but a fellowship that Jesus and Mary shared as believers. (ii) The Emergence of the Gospels: The novel claims that the four gospels were chosen late from about eighty gospels to be a part of the Bible but he says, "Scholars of the canon agree that by the end of second century the four-fold gospel (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) was recognized as authoritative" (53). (iii) Did Jesus' 'divinity' receive sanction through a "close vote" at Nicaea in AD 325? He refutes it saying that Nicaea is gathered to discuss about Arian view of Jesus, who believed that Jesus was Son as the first created being. Nicaea ended up affirming that Jesus was eternally the son and was not created (48). Thus, Bock analyses *The Da Vinci Code* from traditional historicist perspective.

Bart D. Erhman identifies some factual errors in *The Da Vinci Code* in his book *Truth and Fiction in The Da Vinci Code*. He astutely disagrees with novel's claims. Erhman defends Jesus's divinity by refuting Teabing claims that there were no eighty gospels considered for inclusion in the New Testament, council of Nicaea met

to decide issues on Trinity that God, Dead Sea Scrolls were found in early 1947 and does not contain any Gospels. The Nag Hammadi documents do not tell the Grail story and emphasize Jesus's human traits. Further Erhman argues regarding gnostic texts, that the text is written not in Aramaic but in Coptic, and the word "Companion" means not "companion" "spouse" but "friend," "associate" (144). Thus, Bart clearly refutes *The Da Vinci Code's* fascinating claims against Christianity.

Ben Witherington III in his book *The Gospel Code* critiques *The Da Vinci Code* from religious point of view. He pinpoints some of the novel's historical errors and responses on them. He argues Canonical Gospels are the earliest gospels, Jesus's divinity is not proclaimed at the Council of Nicaea, Emperor Constantine did not form the canonical gospels, and Jesus was single and never married to anyone. The author is speaking from the ground of historical and biblical accounts to refute *The Da Vinci Code's* major claims.

Due to Brown's fascinating historical speculations, many have been enthralled and left wondering on what is in actual history and what has been invented by the author. The Medieval scholar Sharan Newman, indeed, targeted to meet that need by revealing the historical truths and myths behind *The Da Vinci Code* in his book *The Real History Behind the Da Vinci Code*. Newman clearly gives answers of the questions like: was Mary Magdalene a prostitute or an apostle or the wife of Jesus? Why does New Testament exclude "Apocryphal Gospels"? What is the Holy Grail, and does this powerful treasure exist? Newman discusses *The Da Vinci Code's* issues in an alphabetical order with further reading suggestions and comments. Summing up, Newman as the medieval expert provides clear succinct answers about the people, places and events in *The Da Vinci Code*.

Bradley Bowers, editor of *The Da Vinci Code in the Academy* views on regarding *The Da Vinci Code* controversy as the postmodern dilemma in the introductory section. He argues everything is a text and we need text and story, “We have always had stories, and are, for most of human history, stories were true” (vii). Bowers views *The Da Vinci Code*'s account about Christianity may be true than that of standard version. Bowers' idea of viewing everything is text suggests that Brown's story in the novel may contain unedited history.

Rachel Wagner finds *The Da Vinci Code* debate is due to influence of postmodernism. Postmodernism is the new Gnosticism, the relativism which is the enemy of Christian faith. She sees Gnosticism and postmodernism synonymously. She delineates Christian view on postmodernism in two ways: one is enemy and another is the friend of faith. For Orthodox Christian, postmodernism is enemy since it rejects the absolute truth and advocates for relativity. The second view of Wagner is that when Christianity uses postmodernist insights to expose the limitations of human reasoning that will be rewarded with the gift of faith. So, Wagner analyzes *The Da Vinci Code* as enemy friend relationship.

Douglass Merrell in his book *Umberto Eco, The Da Vinci Code, and the Intellectual in the Age of Popular Culture* examines Italian novelist Umberto Eco's novel and brings discussion on both. He discloses Eco's fierce criticism to Brown's novel and its issues. Merrell makes comparative study of these two authors and argues that Brown is collecting old and discredited ideas about intellectual conspiracies and repackaging them. Most of the issues about conspiracies were already written in Eco's novel *The Name of the Rose* and *Foucault's Pendulum*. Eco states, “It's all old material that's been covered a thousand times before. Brown was very good at taking trash lying around and turning it into a page turner. But it makes me laugh that people

take it seriously” (qtd. in Merrell 8). Merrell concludes that both Eco and Brown were dealing with the elite and popular culture but with different approaches and motives. Brown arouses interest of a mass through the medium of historical whodunit in exploration of mystery of art and occult knowledge. And Eco’s motive is to analyze the corruption of elite aesthetics by popular culture through the medium of an essay. Merrell compares *The Da Vinci Code* and Eco’s novels and concludes that Brown is very caliber in copying other.

Mary Ann Beavis explicates *The Da Vinci Code* in the light of Medieval Cathar doctrine and scrutinizes that this doctrine offers little support for these contemporary concerns in her article, “The Cathar Mary Magdalene and the Sacred Feminine: Pop Culture Legend vs. Medieval doctrine.” Cathar was like gnostic medieval Christian sect a twelfth and thirteenth century that was considered heretical by Catholic authorities and disappears by the beginning of the fifteenth century from southern France. Cather’s doctrine as *The Da Vinci Code* claims that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married and had children and the holy couple provides a model for human marriage. Cathar’s notion of the sacred offspring is St. Sarah daughter of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. The idea of Magdalene as Jesus wife is at first Cather’s’ inner teaching. Beavis studies on Cather doctrine and concludes that whatever Brown makes a conjecture about Jesus’s marital status is from Cather’s treasured secret of Messianic lineage, the ‘Jesus dynasty.’

Robert Sheaffer in his article “The Da Vinci Code Cult: A Critical at Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code*” scrutinizes the sources that Brown has taken as an accurate view in his novel and concludes that fact is mixed in the fiction. He examines the Nag Hammadi texts which are of fourth Century and argues that it is incomparable to the canonical first century texts. Sheaffer refutes the novel’s claims that the gnostic texts

contain matriarchy. He says, “All known human societies, past and present, are patriarchal” (no page no). He discloses charge against Brown for plagiarism from *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* by Michael Baigent et al. Sheaffer gives an account of the Priory of Sion is same as straight from *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* that is sole purpose of the Priory is to guard the secret of the Holy Grail, blood line of Jesus (no page no). Regarding the Constantine conspiracy, Sheaffer makes a point in the line of biblical view, which is centered on theological debate Arius view, “none of which involved Mary Magdalene, matriarchy, feminism, new gospels” (no page no.). He concludes that *The Da Vinci Code*'s alleged facts are no more credible than that of *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*.

Christopher Douglas calls *The Da Vinci Code* as Dan Brown's postmodern gospel in his book *If God Meant to Interfere*. He argues that Brown's novel is out looked as a postmodern attack on the Bible, the sacred, inerrant status of Protestant theology than Catholic. He considers *The Da Vinci Code* as postmodernist text in its content about Jesus but not in its form. As Douglas states, “*The Da Vinci Code* is seemingly multicultural plot of discovering one's ancestral religious identity turns on the postmodern expertise of reading signs and clues” (251). Thus, Douglas remarks *The Da Vinci Code* as made up on shaky postmodern foundation.

Comparing and examining the sources and the actual documents used in *The Da Vinci Code*, Nancy Calvert-Koyzis in her scholarly research article, “Re-sexualizing the Magdalene: Dan Brown's Misuses of Early Christian Documents in *The Da Vinci Code*” argues, “Brown not only misrepresents the documents that he claimed to have used but that he actually replicates the errors of the early Church by concentrating on Mary's sexual status rather than upon her status as the apostle to the apostles” (no page no). She minutely scrutinizes Mary Magdalene in different sources

comparatively. Like in *The Da Vinci Code*; the Bible; the gnostic gospels and Brown's sources book by Michael Baigent et al., Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince and Margaret Starbird. Finally, she concludes that Brown misrepresents Mary Magdalene by ignoring the actual earlier Christian documents in which she is portrayed as having apostolic stature. Mary Magdalene's close relationship with Jesus is based upon her superior spiritual insight and maturity, not upon a sexual relationship.

Jenn Brandt's analysis of *The Da Vinci Code* in her Master's thesis entitled "The not So Sacred Feminine: Female Representation and Generic Constraints in The Da Vinci Code" on whodunit genre based. She maintains that *The Da Vinci Code* offers a radical view of history that argues for the equality and power of women, at the end of the novel nothing actually has changed because of the conventions of the classical mystery/detective genre. Thus, her analysis shows *The Da Vinci Code* lacks female empowerment due to its generic constraint.

The review of literature shows that critics, scholars and apologists have heavily argued against the novel's claim and neglected in the field of literary criticism. Above discussed critics Darrel, Witherington III, Newman, Beavis, Sheaffer and Calvert-Koyzis have analyzed the novel from historical point of view. They contend that Brown's alternative account about Jesus and Mary Magdalene is inaccurate. They inspect history, theology and some non-canonical gnostic texts in order to refute Brown's claim. However, critics like Bowers, Wagner and Merrell have out looked the novel as postmodern dilemma, gnosticism and postmodernism synonymously, imitative and alter gospel. Brandt analyzes the novel as a novel in the generic convention of detective fiction. In this regard, critics have analyzed the text from the viewpoint of its authenticity or falsity. Thus, a niche is no research has done to show Brown's zeitgeist agenda, that is 'view from nowhere.' Therefore, this thesis

argues that Brown's relativizing the truth claims of Christianity is actually an epitome of the spirit of our age. The argument is backed up with the ideas from contemporary literary theorists namely Jean Francois Lyotard, Linda Hutcheon, Julia Kristeva, Adrienne Rich, Michel Foucault, Stephen Greenblatt and Catherine Gallagher.

Lyotard claims that postmodern condition is characterized precisely by a mistrust of grand narratives. His most quoted definition of postmodernism as an, "Incredulity towards metanarratives" (xxiv). It means collapse of grand narratives due to replacement by local stories. Similarly, the researcher incorporates the idea of prominent postmodern thinker Linda Hutcheon. She argues that contemporary fictions question the accuracy and credibility of historical facts and interrogate the existing philosophical strategies and world view. It is imperative to bring Greenblatt and Gallagher's view on the relation between history and literature. Equally, the researcher employs Foucauldian notion of effects of truth to examine the novel. Finally, the researcher examines the novel in the light of Julia Kristeva's notion on intertextuality and Adrienne Rich's idea about re-visionary writing. The theory of intertextuality is a literary theory which investigates referentiality within a text. It aims to subvert the dichotomy between high and low art. Likewise, Rich's technique of re-visionary writing revises and rewrites historical texts. *The Da Vinci Code* is actually rewriting biblical history.

The important issue focused in *The Da Vinci Code* is that it questions upon the canonization of New Testament. Brown charges twenty-seven books of the Bible design as word of God by fallen men at fourth century council. According to Christianity, canonization of the New Testament is selected by general usage not by any authority pronouncement. Especially, the elders of local Church were constantly selecting, evaluating and deciding canon which of the many writing of their day

carried an authority of the apostle and which also represent the life and teaching of Jesus and apostles (McDowell, *A Ready Defense* 38). As Geisler and Nix argue, “Canonicity is determined or fixed by God; it is merely discovered by men” (qtd. in McDowell, *A Ready Defense* 38). In brief, canon was established on the basis of word of Jesus and the writing of the apostles, an authority of the divine inspiration equating with Old Testament. Scholars of the canon agree that by the end of the second century, the four-fold gospel was recognized as authoritative (Darrell 53) that excluded other later writings. Accordingly, due to divine inspiration the Bible is inerrancy.

This is the grand narrative of Christianity regarding its canonicity and authority of the scripture which is challenged by *The Da Vinci Code*. Brown argues that the Bible is a human product and Constantine decided the canonicity of the New Testament and excluded other eighty gospels during his rule. In Teabing’s words:

The Bible did not arrive by fax from heaven 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 countless translations, additions and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book.... More than eighty gospels were considered for the New Testament, and yet only a few were chosen for inclusion – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John among them... The fundamental irony of Christianity! The Bible, as we know it today, was collated by the pagan Roman emperor Constantine the Great. (309-10)

Brown’s alternative account about New Testament clearly loosens the metanarrative of biblical inerrancy and authority as divine inspiration. This problematization of Biblical authority suggests us to be skeptical towards any universal systems or truth.

Lyotard is inclined towards “little narratives” (60) that operate locally and according to specific rules and he calls them “language game” (10). The modern world is too complex to be understood from one totaling grand narrative and he invokes pluralism: “The principle of a universal metalanguage is replaced by the principle of a plurality of formal...” (43). In fact, Brown’s interrogation on the authority of the Bible is replacing one goal imposed grand narrative of scripture. Brown’s idea of the Bible is human product that was compiled during the reign of Constantine is similar to Hutcheon’s notion of looking at the past that she notes, “[P]ast or present is always mediated by powers and limits our representations of it” (*The Politics of Postmodernism* 51). Thus, *The Da Vinci Code* is incredulity towards Christianity by offering little narratives because whatever story is said and taught is one sided and polluted by power-politics.

Desacralization of Christ is the burning debatable issue formed by Brown in the novel. Christian philosophy teaches that Christ is only God, the redeemer and the eternal Son of God who is incarnated in a flesh so as to save human beings. However, Brown’s claim shows Christ is no more divine, just a mortal human being “everything our fathers taught us about Christ’s is false” (315). Further in Teabing’s words:

‘I don’t follow. His divinity?’ ... Jesus was viewed by His followers as a mortal prophet ... but a man nonetheless. A mortal.’ ... ‘Jesus’ establishment as “the Son of God” was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea.’ ... four centuries *after* Jesus’ death, thousands of documents already existed chronicling His life as a *mortal* man. ... Constantine commissioned and financed a new Bible, which omitted those gospels that made Him godlike. (312-314)

The Da Vinci Code's representation as only a mortal human being is restoring a marginal voice that "early followers of Jesus revering Him as wholly human teacher and prophet" (340). It is as Rich's idea about re-vision writing that is "the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction..." (18). So, Brown rewrites authorized history by way of revising its master narratives.

Hutcheon reviews past with modifiable attitude, "The past as referent is not bracketed ... it is incorporated and modified, given new and different life and meaning" (*A Poetics of Postmodernism* 24). Brown correspondingly amalgamates and revises the past. On the one hand, he acknowledges as per "Jesus was indeed a great and powerful man.... Nobody is saying that Christ was a fraud, or denying that he walked the earth and inspired millions to better lives" (313). On the other hand, Brown illuminates a new meaning that Christ is just a mortal human being. Differing to Christianity, Brown's idea of Christ's 'divinity' is updated by Constantine to take advantage from Christ's influence to unite his empire. Thus, *The Da Vinci Code* rereads the past of Christianity and imparts a new idea about Christ as a mortal human. It is Adrienne Rich's notion on writing back to historical texts. She states, "We need to know the writing of the past, and know it differently than we have ever known it; not to pass on a tradition but to break its hold over us" (19). So, novel astutely challenges Christianity through revision in the light of contemporary thoughts.

Brown's claim upon the exposition of Jesus's marital status is the most shocking and another relativizing of truth. The canonized Bible and Christian theology normally indoctrinate that deity and humanity are unified in one person of Christ. Jesus had a human body (Luke 2.7), mind (Luke 2.52), soul and emotions

(John 12.27). Yet Jesus was fully God “in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell” (*English Standard Version*, Col. 1.19). Christ was fully human yet did not share inherited sin from Adam because of divine intervention. Wayne Grudem succinctly summarizes, “Jesus Christ was fully God and fully man in one person, and will be so forever” (563). By being God and man, Jesus works as a mediator between God and man to bring deprived human beings back to God. Although the Bible and Christianity advocate Christ’s bachelorship and believe that Jesus never married to any one and had no offspring too.

The Da Vinci Code provides a clear marital account of Christ who had a daughter and his dynasty is still in France. The novel’s secret is the Holy Grail that is Mary Magdalene. All these are hidden by early patriarchal church. In Teabing’s view, “More specifically, her marriage to Jesus Christ ... Da Vinci was certainly aware of that fact. *The Last Supper* shouts at the viewer that Jesus and Magdalene were a pair” (326). The novel offers references to prove that Jesus was married as in Robert Langdon’s words, “... Jesus was a Jew.... According to Jewish custom, celibacy was condemned, and the obligation for a Jewish father was to find a suitable wife for his son. If Jesus was not married at least one of the Bible’s gospels would have mentioned it” (327). In this regard, Brown problematizes Christ’s bachelorhood by offering Jewish tradition and other earliest Christian records which contradict with gospels in the Bible.

Certainly, Brown brings both the recorded historical facts and other sidelined records so as to make “[H]ybrid and inclusive” (Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism* 30) reality. Brown reviews the past events from the contemporary perspective and makes a remark that past events are biased. Mainstream history never proclaims that Jesus was a married man, whereas Brown interrogates Christ’s celibacy

by abolishing main account of Jesus as in Hutcheon's words, "[A]lternative histories, both actual and potential, can only be generated once the illusion of a single overarching story is fractured, dispersed and re-formed" (qtd. in Pope 133). Brown brings references from Jewish custom [condemned celibacy] and veils patriarchal early Church's hegemonic nature. Undeniably, Brown's novel is mounted on "shaky postmodern foundation" (Douglas 269), meaning "certain known historical details are deliberately falsified in order to foreground the possible mnemonic failures of recorded history" (Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism* 114). Thus, Brown's explanation deliberately falsifies Christ's celibacy and generates fiction as per zeitgeist of the time.

Brown draws the passages from *The Gospel of Philip* and *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene* in order to validate Christ's humanness. In Teabing's voice, "Jesus was ... [a] mortal ... early Church... hijacking His human message" (312-13). Sophie reads *The Gospel of Philip*, "And the companion of the Saviour is Mary Magdalene. Christ loved her more than all the disciples and used to kiss her often on her mouth..." (328). Brown interprets companion as spouse "as any Aramaic scholar tell you, the word companion, in those days, literally meant spouse" (328). It indicates Brown motive to prove as just a human being. Further, Sophie reads *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene*, "Peter said, Did the Saviour really speak with a woman without our knowledge?... Did he prefer her to us? and Levi answered, 'Peter, you have always been hot-tempered. If the Saviour made her worthy, who are you indeed to reject her? Surely the Saviour knows her well. That is why he loved more than us'" (330). This quote remarks that Jesus's one of the hot tempered disciple called Peter criticizes Christ's relation with Mary Magdalene as a lover. Here, Brown's and Bowers's views are similar. Bower states, "[E]verything is a text... now all of our stories – myth,

legend, religion, history, opinion, news, novels, films—are only texts, devoid of the authority they once had ... may exist even greater authority than the standard version (viii). In this regard, Brown restores past excluded texts and reevaluates the original concept regarding Jesus's divinity.

Brown exposes Christ's discontinuities and historical lies. It is Lyotardian notion of privileging petty narratives that is applicable to the novel, which means not taking narrative of religion, high art, philosophy and morality as universal truths. Further, Brown charges the early Church as oppressor and liar as in the novel, "The church, in order to defend itself against 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" (337). In this context, Richard J. Lane precisely states, "[M]etanarratives are often regarded as hegemonic and oppressive" (151). The agenda of Brown's change of Christ's personality in to a mortal creature is "of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new direction" as Rich view (18). Brown's taking references from the Nag Hammadi texts and speaking on behalf of those exploited, excluded and marginalized texts is privileging little stories and seeing thing through fresh eyes. Thus, Brown's idea of revisiting and digging truth on those excluded texts [gnostic] is none other than the spirit of the contemporary time.

The novel not only articulates Jesus's marital life but also unveils that he was fathered to a daughter too. In Teabing's words, "...he [Jesus] was a father ... Mary Magdalene was the Holy Vessel.... She was the womb that bore the lineage, and the vine from which the sacred fruit sprang forth!" (332-33). While Christ was hanging on the cross, Mary Magdalene secretly commutes to France [Gaul], there she found refuge and protection in the Jewish community and gave birth to a daughter named

“Sarah” (339). However, Christian scholars do not bother Christ for being married and having children because they believe that he had just performed his role as humanity (MacDowell, *A Quest for Answer The Da Vinci Code* 75). Here, Brown tries to “preserve unedited version of history” (Ferris 64) as Hutcheon states, “History itself, the Grand Narrative, the filler of vacuums, the dispeller of fears of the dark” (*The Politics of Postmodernism* 53). Who knows what the reality is? This is the age of celebration of death of grand narratives. Intriguingly, *The Da Vinci Code* portrays the Christ fathered to a daughter.

The Da Vinci Code's another crucial issue is questioning of convention, historical facts and knowledge. Brown argues at the first page of the novel: “All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents and secret rituals in this novel are accurate” (12). This makes Brown's version of fascinating historical speculations shadow down the mainstream historical facts and knowledge. He subverts dichotomy between fact and fiction as Gallagher and Greenblatt opine, “That both the literary work and the anthropological (or historical) anecdote are texts, that both are fictions in a sense of things made, that both are shaped by the imagination and by the available resources of narration and description helped make it possible to conjoin them” (31). In fact, *The Da Vinci Code* discusses real people and organizations which are historical figures and artifacts. Some of them are: Leonardo Da Vinci and *The Last Supper* fresco, Emperor Constantine and Nicaea Council and the Priory of Sion [secret society] are notably to be discussed.

The reinterpretation and call of the Council of Nicaea and its role in shaping Christianity is one of the major historical facts discussed in the novel. According to official history, in June 325 AD, Emperor Constantine called a council of all the Christian bishops of the Roman world. This was held in Nicaea to address Arian

heresy (Erhman 21). The council of Nicaea issued a list of canon, laws regarding how the Church should be run. Yet, it did not settle the question of the nature of Christ and never set forth a list of the books of the Bible (Newman 43-44). After all, Brown's counter history makes a surprising claim that is Jesus's divinity was a result of a vote. In Teabing's view, "... the son of God was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea" (312) and the canon of the Bible also decided at that meeting. Again Teabing narrates, "[S]ome of the gospels that Constantine attempted to eradicate managed to survive" (314). Brown has not totally denied the existence of past as the real one rather he acknowledges as Hutcheon's writes, "Both paradoxically rewrite the historical events and works of art of the past, thereby questioning the stability of the meaning of both. By incorporating known historical events and personages within their texts, both manage to problematize historical knowledge and to break any illusionist frame" (*A Poetics of Postmodernism* 220). It indicates that Brown's problematization of the liberal humanist concept of originality, authority and universality of Christianity. In other words, Brown's destabilization of historical facts of Christianity implies the condition of value-vacuum.

Brown says that historical narratives are always documented by the winners, which are contaminated with power and politics. He explicitly mentions, "[H]istory is always written by the winner... by its very nature, history is always a one sided account" (340). It means history is always subjective and painted by the person on "power neglecting untold stories of marginalized ones" (Dobie 179). Foucault rightly remarks that, "Power is relations ... a relationship which is such that one can direct the behavior of another or determine the behavior of another" (*The Politics of Truth* 155). So, winners are power holder as Brown view. Obviously, it is Hutcheon's notion of postmodernist attitude of looking at the history, that she notes, "... its

discursive context and then uses that situating to problematize the very notion of knowledge – historical, social, ideological. Its use of history is not a modernist look to the “authorizing past” for legitimation. It is a questioning of any such authority as the basis of knowledge –and power” (*A Poetics of Postmodernism* 185). In this case, Brown maintains a healthy distrust on the blindly accepted history and yet problematizes the historical facts, knowledge and its natural hierarchies. Thus, Brown sternly becomes a skeptic towards Christianity and rewrites canonical religious texts.

Da Vinci’s *The Last Supper* fresco is the most famous artifact and Brown draws the most shocking alleged clues from the painting. Even Brown names *The Da Vinci Code* from that painting and Da Vinci’s name. Brown claims that, “Leonardo was one of the keepers of the secret of the Holy Grail. And he hid clues in his art” (308) In fact, Da Vinci painted the true Grail” (309). Brown means to reveals that Vinci knew hidden earthly life of Jesus and leaves clues in his fresco. So, Vinci is critiquing Christianity through his arts. *The Last Supper* painting is taken as Christ’s The Last Supper with his twelve disciples just before his crucifixion which was sketched by Vinci. There were just thirteen person and all were men. On the right hand to the Jesus is Apostle John whom Jesus loves the most (John 21:20) and he was very young breadless (Newman 134). Interestingly, *The Da Vinci Code* discloses that the apostle John is a portrait of Mary Magdalene. The dialogue between Teabing and Sophie in the novel clarifies this: “That’s a woman!’ Sophie exclaimed.... ‘Teabing was laughing... It’s no mistake. Leonardo was skilled at painting the difference between the sexes....’ ‘who is she?’ Sophie asked. ‘That’s my dear,’ ‘Teabing replied, ‘is Mary Magdalene” (324-25). Here, Brown reveals a mystery and reinterprets the *The Last Supper* for his own favor to problematize the accepted history.

Brown has represented the past in the discursive nature just to understand world from postmodernist point of view. As Hutcheon notes, “Postmodern texts consistently use and abuse actual historical documents and documentation is done in such a way as to stress both the discursive nature of those representation of the past and its narrativized form in which we read them” (*The Politics of Postmodernism* 84). In the novel, Brown uses and abuses the past or historical documents randomly in his representation so as to look at the world from current thoughts and belief. The accepted fact was that in the Last Supper of the Christ and his disciples, there were thirteen men altogether, but not any woman. This very artifact Brown reinterprets and claims Christ’s right side was Magdalene but not the apostle John is “an acknowledgment of the meaning-making function of human constructs” (*A Poetics of Postmodernism* 89). This is a process of revisiting the past with the use and abuse of the historical artifact. Just as Rich notion of breaking oppressive tradition which “hold over us” (19). In fact, conducting such an act is the need and demand of the age itself.

Another historical interpretation of *The Da Vinci Code* is the Priory of Sion as a secret society. The Priory of Sion was a real and short-lived organization formed in Eastern France in the mid-1950s. It was registered by its chief officer Pierre Plantard, the creator of Dossiers Secrets. The Priory of Sion listed itself as the “knighthood of Catholic institutions and laws and of the independent and traditional union.” Its purpose was “restoration of an ancient knighthood, the pursuit of knowledge and the practice of solidarity” (Newman 238). Hence, the Priory of Sion has nothing whatsoever to do with a medieval crusader’s organization.

According to Brown, The Priory of Sion (a European secret society) was formed in 1099 by a French king called Godefroi de Bouillon. Bouillon and his family was supposedly the powerful holder of a secret since the time of Christ (213). The

murdered Saunière is also a member of the Priory of Sion including other different figures as Sir Isaac Newton and Da Vinci. It was the secret society formed to protect Jesus's bloodline to protect the secret of its existence till "the right moment in history to reveal the truth" (217). Brown's reinterpretation of the Priory of Sion creates ambivalence position towards past that neither acknowledges history as absolute nor denies the existence of it. It is entirely constructed by human and conditioned by textuality. In this regard, Hutcheon argues that, "We can not know the past except through its texts: its documents, its evidence, even its eye-witness accounts are texts. Even the institutions of the past, its social structures and practices, could be seen, in one sense, as social texts" (*A Poetics of Postmodernism* 16). Here Brown does not deny importance of historical knowledge, yet he does not find any objective truth in it. David Couchman rightly notes that, "[R]elativizing of truth claims in postmodernity is used to justify revising history in the service of contemporary agenda" (72). Thus, revising of the Priory of Sion is certainly one of the points where *The Da Vinci Code* resonates with the spirit of our age.

Brown's subversion of historiography blurs and redraws the boundaries between facts and fictions. The real Priory of Sion and mythical claim seem plausible as Hutcheon's understanding of postmodern fiction that

refutes the natural or common-sense methods of distinguishing between historical fact and fiction. It refuses the view that only history has a truth claim, both questioning the ground of that claim in historiography and by asserting that both history and fiction are discourses, human constructs, signifying systems, and both derive their major claim to truth from that identity. (*A Poetics of Postmodernism* 93)

The novel's the Priory of Sion as the secret society formed to protect the bloodline of Jesus Christ and maintain secrecy of Sangreal documents till the right moment.

However, the real Priory of Sion is very recent and short live Catholic institution. This is instituted to restore an ancient knighthood, pursuit of knowledge and practice of solidarity. Brown's idea of breaking the circle of fact and fiction and creating neither true nor false situation are the quintessential representation of contemporary spirit of time.

The Da Vinci Code calls attention to distrust of the Church as an institution is a predominant sensibility of the time. Traditionally, the Church, the King, Government or Legal System are considered as the most respectful and powerful institutions. People believe in those institutions with due respect. *The Da Vinci Code* depicts fierce distrust and disbelief towards the Church as an institution. In the novel:

[Y]et the Church had a deceitful and violent history. Their brutal crusade to 'reeducate' the pagan and feminine-worshipping religious spanned three centuries.... *The Witches' Hammer*- indoctrinated the world to 'the danger of freethinking women' and instructed the clergy how to locate, torture and destroys them ... three hundred years of witch hunts, the Church burned at the stake an astounding five *million* women. (170)

The passage exposes wicked acts of the Church, such as merciless killing and burning activities of numerous women. Faith, ideologies and religions are viewed as particular reality in society constructed by human being, which "urge to unmask the continuities that are taken for granted" (Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism* 98). Thus, Brown's expressing distrust towards the Church is a service to contemporary thoughts.

Brown's acerbic feeling towards the Church exemplifies disbelief towards the Church as an institution. The Church's hegemonic and loathsome activities as Brown notes, "...the Church has two thousand years of experience pressing those who threaten to unveil its lies...the Church has successfully hidden the truth about Mary Magdalene and Jesus.... The Church ... influence is no less persuasive. No less insidious" (532). The Church is considered as dwelling place of Triune God, where human being finds ultimate rest, peace and hope. Yet above lines explicate its historical lies that the patriarchal Church successfully had hidden the truth about Jesus and Magdalene for ages. Brown not only indicates the Church's suppression of sacred feminine but also signposts "insidious" activities of the Church like Crusades, witch-hunts, the inquisition, abuse of children by priests, corruption and creating binaries. Undeniably, Brown suggests, "perhaps we need a rethinking of the social and political representations by which we understand our world. May be we need to stop trying to find totalizing narratives which dissolve difference and contradiction" (Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* 67). So, by uncovering hypocrisy of religious leaders and the Church, Brown is proposing that we should acknowledge paradox, differences and reconsider our social and political representation.

Catholic prelature's [Bishop Aringarosa] representation of a villain to hide secret just to save Catholicism and monk Silas as murder represent Brown's distrust towards the Church. He works with Silas to find the location and retrieving the Holy Grail under direction of Teacher for the Catholic Church and his Opus Dei. Aringarosa, the president-general of Opus Dei is portrayed as a man motivated by money and thrust for power: "Aringarosa eyes travelled the length of the log table to a large briefcase... [t]he funds are exactly as I requested?" (233-34). The dialogue between Vatican's secretariat and Aringarosa regarding cash reflects his Bishopship

only for the money. Further the novel reveals that “[H]e had no intention of discussing morality” (235) while leaving Vatican with briefcase. Similarly, Silas is depicted as assassin of named Saunière and Sister Sandrine. Bishop, priest, monk and religious person are stewardship and workmanship of God for good works. However, Aringarosa and monk Silas are characterized as selfish, money minded and murderer respectively. This implies the demystification of religious person’s hypocrisies which is taken for granted. This describes the time we live in where “anything goes” that is in a time of absolute relativism where nothing is certain and there is a feeling of living in a value-vacuum (Ferdinand 240). It is in small and multiple narratives that seek for no universalization, stabilization or legitimatization as Lyotard privileges.

Brown’s mission of relativizing the truth claims of Christianity is actually seeing the past in the perspective of the present. Postmodern world is questioning the authenticity and doubt everything but never tell where to believe. Just as *The Da Vinci Code* questions on formation of the Bible, divinity of Christ, historical facts and hypocrisy of the Church. In Teabing view: “[T]he early Church needed to convince world that the mortal prophet Jesus was a divine being. Therefore, any gospels that described earthly aspects of Jesus’s life had to be omitted from the Bible” (325). Certainly, Nicaea council’s Constantine discourses hegemonies Christianity which affects entire ages. Before 325 AD, canon of the Bible was not formed and Christ’s divinity was debatable. It is indeed Foucauldian notion of effects of truth that he states, “[S]eeing historically how effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false” (*The Foucault Reader* 60). Nicaea council produces certain discourse about Christ but its effects remains neither true nor false. Likewise, Brown claims that the novel’s facts are accurate and true than

accepted history but its reliability is also disputed. Garlow and Jones appropriately comment: “Brown discounts much of accepted history because it was written by the Church. And winners write history. Yet, he says everything he presents in *The Da Vinci Code* is historical fact. So who are the new winners that Brown relies on for his historical facts?” (25-26). Thus, both accepted and Brown’s version of history seem plausible; so history is a battlefield. Yet their effects of truth leave neither true nor false as Foucauldian notion.

The Da Vinci Code is interweaved from several texts, art works, architecture, documents and secret rituals which collaborates several issues together as religion, history, art and culture aiming to blur the boundaries between the high and low art. Hutcheon intelligently states, “Postmodern intertextuality is a formal manifestation of both a desire to close the gap between past and present of the reader and a desire to rewrite the past in a new context” (*A Poetics of Postmodernism* 118). The theory of intertextuality is a literary theory which investigates referentiality within a text. Brown has taken the references from several other sources and incorporated them for novelty. Such as the Bible, texts, documents, artworks. Eco makes a criticism as “Brown was very good at taking trash lying around and turning it into a page turner” (qtd. in Merrell 8). Pinsker calls *The Da Vinci Code* as “a copycat” (no page no). The researcher argues that the novel, in its style, is heavily intertexted with other references aiming to destabilize the western metaphysics of God.

Brown takes most of the issues from the Bible. The novel’s story moves in search for the Holy Grail related to the biblical characters, theme and the formation of the Bible. For instance, novel figures out the major figures and canonized books of the Bible itself. In the novel “As the prophesied Messiah...As a descendant of the lines of King Solomon and King David, Jesus possessed a rightful claim to the throne of

the king of Jews.... Few were chosen for inclusion – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John ...” (310). Brown considers historical events similar to Hutcheon, that she states, “All past ‘events’ are potential historical ‘facts’ but the ones that become facts are those that are chosen to be narrated” (*The Politics of Postmodernism* 72). There is also direct quote from the book of Job 38:11, as Monk Silas reads, while he was inside at Saint-Sulpice in search for keystone, “Hitherto shall thou come, but no further” (176). Priory of Sion uses this Bible verse so that the Holy Grail is left in peace throughout the centuries. Here, texts are co-presented effectively in the novel as an allusion just like Kristeva remarks, “[I]n the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another” (36). Accordingly, the novel’s insertion of the Bible verses and stories in the form of intertextuality indicate an abolishment of the biblical hierarchy as an authoritative and inerrancy.

Brown makes an explicit intertextuality comprising some gnostic texts, which are discarded by Christianity. He constructs his major idea of just human Jesus based on those the Nag Hammadi scrolls. From *The Gospel of Philip*, “And the companion of the Saviour is Mary Magdalene. Christ loved her more than all the disciples and used to kiss her often on her mouth ...” (328). This direct quote suggests Christ human affairs with Magdalene. Another quote from *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene*, “... surely the Saviour knows her well. That is why he loved more than us” (330). This line also suggests that Christ had an affair with Magdalene as a lover. Here, Brown plays the role of a synthesizer because he has emphasized and highlighted the text which was once been excluded. This is relation of co-presence between two or more texts effectively as Kristeva states, “To the extent that every book in our civilization is a transcription of oral speech, citation and plagiarism...” (54). Thus, for the author the concept of intertextuality blurs the boundaries between canonized high

texts and excluded low texts. Brown, in this way, subverts the metaphysics of Christ's divinity by bringing the marginalized texts in front line.

Brown borrows the concept of blood line, the mystery and the secret society from the book entitled *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*. The content, issue and mystery of the novel are the same. This very concept has already been written in the book *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*. For instance, about the Grail, "... Magdalene brought the Grail to France, not a cup...original sources, the Grail is something much more than a cup" (Baigent et al. 294). It signals that the Grail is not just a cup but Magdalene herself and Jesus's blood line. In another place, "Perhaps the Magdalene that elusive woman in the Gospels was in fact Jesus's wife" (Baigent et al. 324). Regarding Jesus's heir and their refuge, the book tells "... Jesus's wife and offspring, ... after fleeing the Holy Land, found a refuge in the south of France, and in a Jewish community there preserved their lineage" (Baigent et al. 424). The same issues are narrated in the novel, which fiercely divests Christ's divine status by exploring that Jesus was just a mortal being and his heir is still in France under the protection of Priory of Sion. Brown copies explicitly *Holy Blood, Holy Grail's* issues literally and effectively in *The Da Vinci Code* by means of plagiarism.

In this regards, Eco accurately says, "Brown was very good at taking trash lying around," (qtd. in Merrell 8). The extensive readings can make clear that the issues and mysteries of the novel are old and discredited. Even *The Da Vinci Code* copies words, phrases and organization's name as exactly as in *Holy Grail, Holy Blood*:

[T]he Holy Grail would have been at least two things simultaneously. On the one hand it would have been Jesus's bloodline and descendants -the "Sang Raal", the "Real" or "Royal" blood of which the Templars, created by the

Prieure de Sion, were appointed guardians. At the same time the Holy Grail would have been, quite literally, the receptacle, or vessel, which received and contained Jesus's blood. In other words, it would have been the womb of the Magdalene. (425)

Jesus's marital status, the Grail is the 'womb' of Mary Magdalene, the respectable vessel and 'Royal blood' guards by Priory of Sion are ditto copy in the novel from *Holy Grail, Holy Blood*. Hence, the same idea is repeated in the novel as Kristeva's notion, "... the foreign text (citation) having been copied down, both of them form a written text ... of exchange object" (55). The novel's major content about Jesus's humanness is directly inserted from book by Baigent et al. and other.

Brown builds his idea of Christ's human affairs with Mary Magdalene from *The Templar Revelation: Secret Guardians of the True Identity of Christ* by Picknett and Clive Prince. They believe that "Mary Magdalene as Jesus's sexual partner" (no page no). Further they accept as true that without her, Jesus was nothing "it was through sexual union with her that he actually became the acknowledged king" (no page no). Likewise, Brown associates the star of King David with perfect union of male and female as Starbird's idea in her book *Women with the Alabaster Jar*, "[T]he archetypal symbol for female ∇ is actually the archaic symbol for the chalice that is the "vessel" or womb" of life. The male archetypal symbol is \triangle The amalgamation of these two in to a symbol for wholeness" (qtd. in Calvert-Koyzis). The same details are copied in the novel, "The blade \triangle represents all that is masculine ... is the chalice ∇ which represents the feminine" and combining them "The blade and chalice Fused as one \star " (579-80). This becomes "The Star of David ... the perfect union of male and female (581). Brown, in this case, explicitly depends upon Picknett, Prince and Starbird's texts overtly. Kristeva states, "In its structures,

writing reads another writing, reads itself and constructs itself through a process of destructive genesis” (77). Here Brown does the same that he reads other texts and constructs itself to refuse orthodoxy of Christ’s bachelorhood.

The novel comprises inferred intertextuality as well in which Brown makes the comparison of Christianity with Paganism, Greek, Egyptian mythology, Judaism and Hinduism so as to pronounce Christianity is a hybrid religion. This also implies that Brown is advocating for multiculturalism. In the novel:

Egyptian sun disks became the halos of Catholic saints. Pictograms of Isis nursing her miraculously conceived son Horus became ... modern images of the Virgin Mary nursing Baby Jesus... 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... December 25 is also the birthday of Osiris, Adonis and Dionysus. The new-born Krishna was presented with gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Even Christianity’s weekly holy day was stolen from the pagans. (311)

Brown’s insertion of inferred intertextuality invokes the subversion of metaphysics of Christianity which is unique, single and true religion in the world. Brown adapts, appropriates and transforms textual resources of others as Hutcheon’s concept of “Copies, intertexts... which have challenged humanist notions of originality and universality” (*A Poetics of Postmodernism* 192). Thus, Brown’s adoption of intertextuality suggests no single reality.

Brown also uses the quotation from Da Vinci’s diary just to make an assertion that he was one of the member of the Priory and well aware of Christian doctrine. In the novel Sophie reads, “Many have made a trade of delusions and false miracles, deceiving the stupid multitude” and second quote, “Blinding ignorance does mislead

us. O! Wretched mortals, open your eyes!" (309). Hutcheon avers, "Postmodernist parody [intertextuality] is a value-problematizing, de-naturalizing form of acknowledging the history of representation" (*The Politics of Postmodernism* 90).

Without reservation, Brown problematizes and reworks on acknowledged history and value of Christ's divinity in the style of "intersectional of textual surfaces rather than a point (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writing" (Kristeva 65).

Through insertion from Vinci's diary, Brown's idea is to explicate that the Church has deceived the mass by indoctrinating false doctrine about Christ's deity and humanity. Thus, Brown mission of divesting Christ's divine status in to mortal humanity is rewriting the past in a new postmodern context.

Wrapping up the ideas, Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* is the typical literary piece of writing based on contemporary spirit of postmodern age. The novel fiercely demystifies Christ's halo by relativizing the truth claims of Christianity. Since the novel plainly questions on canon of the Bible, divinity of Christ, authenticity of the Church, historical facts and adopts revisiting and intertextuality techniques which are the quintessential features and theme of today's postmodern arts and literature. The novel presents descriptions against the metanarrative of biblical inerrancy and authority that the Bible is a product of man and is collated by the Constantine. Similarly, Brown's alter agenda is re-visioning Christ's divinity that is Christ is no more divine and Jesus's establishment of divinity was upgraded by the Council of Nicaea. Likewise, unveiling Jesus's marital status is another relativizing truth claimed in the novel on the contrary to Christianity Jesus's celibacy. Brown asserts that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene, bore his children and their dynasty are still in France. Further, *The Da Vinci Code* revisits the historical facts and knowledge of mainstream history. They are real people, organizations and historical artifacts. They

are: *The Last Supper* painting, Council of Nicaea and the Priory of Sion. So, Brown's deviance of historical facts and knowledge connotes loophole and discontinuities in history.

Besides, portraying the Church as powerful institution with distrust is predominant sensibilities of the time unmasked by *The Da Vinci Code*. Bishop Aringarosa's representation as a man motivated by money and monk Silas is depicted as murderer of many are clear distrust towards the Church as per the spirit of age. Furthermore, Brown's mission of relativizing the truth claims of Christianity in the perspective of the present is indeed that history is a battlefield. In addition, Brown's adoption of the technique of revisiting and intertextuality destabilize the western metaphysics of God, the Bible and high art. *The Da Vinci Code* is referential with several texts, such as the Bible, texts, documents, artworks. Thus, novel's adoption of re-visioning and intertextuality suggest multiple truths, subverts metaphysics of Christ's divinity and blurs the boundaries between the high and low art.

The key findings of this paper is to bring out Brown's intention of relativizing truth claims of Christianity is: providing critical view on formation of each religion and its doctrinal rigidity, giving awareness by highlighting religious oppressive fanatic ideology and call to check their foundation of belief, advocating hybrid realities and multiculturalism as per current spirit of time. So, this research work pinpoints *The Da Vinci Code* is the quintessential literary piece of writing based on contemporary thoughts and spirit of our age.

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