**The Question of Mary Magdalene and the Holy Grail in Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* between Historical Facts and Artistic Fiction.**

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of Master in Literature and Civilization

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**2018/2019**

**Dedication**

*To my first literature teacher, the world really needs teachers like you ...*

*To my first English teacher in the middle school, who believed that I will be a good English teacher someday...*

*To my first academic writing teacher who believed that we will never have the ability to write a single paragraph in English ...*

# Acknowledgement

I would first like to thank my thesis advisor Miss. Bouhelais Samira. The door to her office was always open whenever I ran into a trouble spot or had a question about my research. She consistently allowed this paper to be my own work, but steered me in the right direction whenever she thought I needed it. I have had an immense pleasure to have such a teacher as a supervisor.

I would also like to thank all the English Department teachers, Thank you for all the amazing five years. special thanks to the members of the committee.

Finally, I must express my very profound gratitude to my parents and to my sister and Brothers for providing me with unfailing support and continuous encouragement throughout my years of study and through the process of researching and writing this dissertation. My deepest regards to all my friends and all those who had faith in me. This accomplishment would not have been possible without them, Thank you.

**Abstract**

Literature is the mirror of human being actual life and what is called reality, and history is the recording of the events of this life and its reality. The dichotomy literature /History in one text is what postmodernism treated as "Faction" and "metafiction". *The Da Vinci Code* (2003) is a novel written by Dan Brown. The novel is about a journey of deciphering the codes and the hidden messages in one of Da Vinci's eternal masterpieces "The Last Supper". Many issues are brought by this novel, but the dangerous secret of Mary Magdalene and the quest of the Holy Grail were, and for quite a while, under the spot light of controversialist couple (truth/fiction). All things considered, the mystery of Holy Grail is simple discussing the biography of Mary Magdalene as Jesus' companion. Further, in light of this novel, Mary Magdalene is a lady whose womb conveys Jesus' bloodline. This portrayal of Mary Magdalene is altogether different to what the Roman Catholic Church has delineated. For the Roman Catholic Church, Mary Magdalene is one of Jesus' followers. She is a lady who came at the Jesus' crucifixion and an observer of Jesus' resurrection. This investigation is centred around those various representations of Mary Magdalene and the Holy Grail. The distinctions are seen through the viewpoint of New Historicism, where both artistic fiction texts and historical ones are taken in an equivalent position. In addition, how interpreters translate the data will pick up the distinctive portrayal of Mary Magdalene. Through the process of choosing and contextualizing, the interpreters have taken a specific rambling development dependent on their own experience and their own aim. In this manner, in light of New Historicism viewpoint, there is nothing but fact in these representations, the only thing is interpretation.

**Key words**: fact, Historical fact, Artistic fiction, New Historicism, Mary Magdalene, The Holy Grail.

# Résumé

La littérature reflète l'existence humaine, notre vie actuelle et ce qu'on appelle la réalité, l'histoire est l'ensemble des évènements vécus au cours de cette vie et cette réalité. L'association littérature/histoire est ce que le postmodernisme considère comme de la « Fiction » et de la « Métafiction ». *Le Da Vinci Code* (2003) est un roman écrit par Dan Brown. Il parle d'un parcours pendant lequel il doit déchiffrer des codes et découvrir des messages cachés dans l'un des chef-d'œuvres éternel de 'Da Vinci' "Le dernier Souper". Nombre de questions sont traité par ce roman, mais le secret dangereux de Marie Madelène ainsi que le quête du Grâle sacré ont été pendant un moment sous les projecteurs de l'association controversiste (réalité/ fiction) . Tout compte fait , le mystère du Grâle Sacré ne fait que débattre de la biographie de Marie Madelène comme étant la compagne de Jesus. Plus loin, à la lumière de ce roman, Marie Madelène est une femme dont le ventre porte la lignée de Jésus. Cette représentation de Marie Madelène est tout à fait différente de ce que l'église Catholique Romaine avait décrit. Pour l'église Catholique Romaine, Marie Madelène est l'une des disciples de Jésus. C'est la femme qui a assisté à la crucifixion de Jésus et une observatrice de la résurrection de ce dernier. Cette enquête est centrée autour de ces diverses représentations de Marie Madelène et du Grâle Sacré.Les distinction s peuvent être observées d'un point de vue du Nouveau historisme, où des textes de fiction artistique et aussi historique sont pris dans une position équivalente. Par ailleurs, la manière dont les interprètes ont traduit les données va recueillir la représentation distinctive de Marie Madelène. Les traducteurs ont entrepris un développement décousu à travers le processus de choix et de contextualisation en prenant en considération leurs propres expériences et buts. De cette façon, et d'un point de vue du Nouveau Historisme, il n'y a rien que des faits dans cette représentation, la seule chose qui compte est la traduction.

**Les mots clés :** Histoire réel, Fiction artistique,Nouveau historisme, Marie Madelène, Grâle sacré, Realité

# الملخص

الأدب هو مرآة للإنسان والحياة الحقيقية وما يسمى الواقع، والتاريخ هو تسجيل لأحداث هذه الحياة وواقعها. الثنائيتان أدب / التاريخ في نص واحد هو ما يعرف في ما بعد الحداثة باسم "الفصيل" و"القص ما ورائ" .شيفرة دافنشي (2003) هي رواية كتبها دان براون، تدور الرواية حول رحلة لفك الرموز والرسائل المخفية في واحدة من روائع دا فينشي الأبدية "العشاء الأخير". تثير هذه الرواية العديد من القضايا، لكن السر الخطير لمريم المجدلية وسعي الكأس المقدسة كانا، ولوقت طويل، تحت ضوء بقعة الثنائيتين المثيرة للجدل (الحقيقة / الخيال). كل الأشياء التي تم أخذها بعين الاعتبار، فإن سر الكأس المقدس بسيط في مناقشة سيرة مريم المجدلية كمرافقة ليسوع. علاوة على ذلك، في ضوء هذه الرواية، مريم المجدلية هي سيدة ينقل رحمها سلالة يسوع. تختلف صورة مريم المجدلية هذه تمامًا عما حددته الكنيسة الكاثوليكية الرومانية. بالنسبة للكنيسة الكاثوليكية الرومانية، تعد مريم المجدلية من أتباع يسوع، هي سيدة جاءت في صلب يسوع و شاهدة لقيامة يسوع. تتمحور هذه الدراسة حول تلك لتصوّرات المختلفة لمريم المجدلية والكأس المقدسة. من خلال وجهة نظر تاريخية جديدة، تعالج النصوص الخيالية الفنية والنصوص التاريخية بصفة مماثلة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، فإن كيفية ترجمة المترجمين للبيانات سوف تلتقط الصورة المميزة لمريم المجدلية. من خلال عملية الاختيار ووضع السياق، إنساق المترجمون نحو تطور محددً يعتمد على تجربتهم وأهدافهم الخاصة. بهذه الطريقة، في ضوء وجهة النظر التاريخية الجديدة، لا يوجد شيء إسمه حقيقة مطلقة، في هذه التصوّرات ، الشيء الوحيد الموجود هو التفسير

**المصطلحات الأساسية:** حقيقة، حقيقة تاريخية، خيال فني ، تاريخية جديدة ، مريم المجدلية، الكأس المقدسة.

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**Introduction**

There are a number of novels, which are based on history. Most of them are recording the life story of memorable event or person that happened in the past, for example, Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain*, Amy Tan's *The Bonesetter's Daughter*, or even Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*. The conflict comes into surface, then, the accuracy of the so-called history that is represented in these historical fictions is often disbelieved since these books are classified as pieces of literary fiction. For example, when Arthur Golden represents the life story of a geisha in the early years of World War II, people tend to keep a question in their minds, "Does the novel tell the true history of geisha that happened in that period?" Because the life story of geisha, which is represented in the novel, is merely a form of fiction.

The dichotomy history/literature in the examples above is well shaped as a form of faction or metafiction. These two major characteristics of the postmodern literature are mainly what keep literature and history go in the same corridor, one mirrors the other. This traditional way on reading an account of history and interpreting literature as two-separated matter, which cannot be analysed in a similar way, for New Historicists, is rejected. They have recognized that history, like a fiction, is a form of fictive invention. By and large, this invention changes wider to be a factual truth when the fictive aspects can be naturalized and accepted as normal things. In other hand, literature, which is supposed to every fictional thing, is often used to articulate a certain ideology and shape another version of truth about the world (M. Budiman 6). Consequently, there is nothing fact in this world, because the so-called fact is obviously a matter of interpretation (Tyson 279).

At this point, *The Da Vinci Code* (2003), a controversial novel by Dan Brown, exposes the complexity of interpreting things as explained above. It illustrates how a certain fact is interpreted through a very different way and finally engendered different interpretations. *The Da Vinci Code* becomes the most wanted novel for months due to its daring interpretation of

authentic materials from Christian history that is represented in the main theme. It is about the history of the relationship between 'Jesus' and 'Mary Magdalene', the denial to the authenticity of scripture and the betrayal of Catholic Church in covering up their relationship.

Most of the Christians who believe in the Roman Catholic teaching figure Mary Magdalene as one of Jesus' female followers. In addition, some of them define the figure of Magdalene as a prostitute. This image was known when Gregory I[1] announced that Magdalene is a similar to unnamed sinner that was identified as a prostitute. Also, this dominant image still works up to now even when the Roman Catholic Church repealed this label in 1961. The controversial version of the image of Magdalene makes this novel more interesting Later, through Brown's version of Mary Magdalene, this novel is more fascinating to be interpreted. Particularly, Brown represents Mary Magdalene as Sacred Feminine; her role is as the 'Holy Grail'. The official history of Catholic states that Holy Grail is a cup from which Jesus drank in the Last Supper. However, Brown says that Holy Grail is more than such a cup. It is the symbol for 'Mary Magdalene's' role as Jesus' spouse, in whom Jesus keeps his bloodline. Through this representation, Brown depicts the most important figure of Christian, 'Jesus' as a mortal man.

These interpretations are obviously different to Christian teaching, especially to the Roman Catholic Church. As Carl Olson and Sandra Miesel point out in their book, *The Da Vinci Hoax*, "Any historian, whether Christian or not, knows that the early Christian most definitely believed that Jesus from Nazareth was somehow divine" (L. Skier 48). Therefore, the idea of the marriage of Jesus is just a silly hoax, a definitely wrong interpretation. Moreover, they argue that Brown has applied inaccurate materials in interpreting Christian history (Olson and Miesel 47).

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[1] Saint Gregory the Great, the Pope Founder of the medieval PAPACY (590 to 604).

Another example how Brown interprets the so-called facts differently is shown into the representation of Opus Dei. Opus Dei is a congregation founded in 1928 by the Spanish priest Josemaria Escriva promoted to return to conservative Catholic values and encourage its members to make sweeping sacrifices in their own lives to do the Work of God, as Opus Dei literally means God's work. *The Da Vinci Code* states that Opus Dei teaches their disciples with their bizarre teaching. They have to wear an edict, a leather strap, studded with sharp metal barbs that cut into the flesh as a perpetual reminder of Christ's suffering. They have a sacred mantra "Pain is good". Moreover, Opus Dei is called as a brainwashing cult. However, over these issues, *The Da Vinci Code* cites that this organization enjoys the full endorsement and blessing of the Vatican. Nevertheless, this representation gets many contras from the members of Opus Dei nowadays because they regard this novel as a novel that contains political intention to distort the establishment of Opus Dei. According to Opus Dei, this organization does not teach their followers as Brown's illustration. Their teaching is simply based on traditional Christian teaching[2].

This novel is interesting because it gains a wave of disapproval since it was launched for the first time in 2003. By stating that all description of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate, *The Da Vinci Code* formulates many pro-contras People, who take position as contras, mistrust to its historical facts, since *The Da Vinci Code* is fiction John Skirtich, as one of the contras, says that this book was pure fiction (L. Sheler 46). Moreover, in late April 2006, a high-ranking Vatican official urged Catholic communications directors to boycott the film. The reaction is followed by Cardinal Francis Arinze, head of the Vatican's congregation for Divine of the Sacraments and the U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishop (L. Slider 46-47). Over those reactions, Brown still believes that fact is simply a form of interpretation. As he says that history is written by the winner

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[2] DAN Brown official website

(chap 60, historyversusthedavincicode.com), Brown gives an alternative way in reading the so-called history of Christian into this fiction, *The Da Vinci code*.

Dan Brown is the writer of four thrillers, *Digital Fortress* (1998), *Deception Points* (2001), and his previous serial thriller of Robert Langdon, *Angel and Demons* and *The Da Vinci Code*, *Inferno*, and his last *The Origin*. He graduated from Amherst College and Phillips Exeter Academy, where he spent time as an English teacher before turning his efforts fully to writing. He is the son of a Presidential Award winning math professor and of a professional sacred musician; he grew up surrounded by the paradoxical philosophies of science and religion. He is a Christian with his different point of view about his religious life. Through his official website, he says, "consider myself as a student of many religions. The more I learn, the more questions I have. For me, the spiritual quest will be a life-long work in progress." The idea of *The Da Vinci Code* is inspired from his wife, Blythe (an art historian and painter fascinated to Leonardo Da Vinci's paintings), that collaborates on his research and accompanies him on his frequent research trips for searching the data of *The Da Vinci Code* (Brown, 10:03:2006).

Over all, it cannot be denied that what thrills many readers is its courage in revealing the different facts by overturning and challenging the official history; Based on background of the study above, this study will analyze these follows: How does the official history represent Mary Magdalene and The Holy Grail? How does *The Da Vinci Code* construct another alternative representation of Mary Magdalene and The Holy Grail differently? How are the different representations of Mary Magdalene seen from New Historicism perspective? According to the statement of the problems mentioned above, this study is aimed to illustrate how the historical text represents Mary Magdalene and The Holy Grail. To portray the representation of Mary Magdalene in *The Da Vinci Code*, to attain a deeper explanation will

these two versions of texts represent Mary Magdalene differently seen from the perspective of New Historicism.

This study is purposed to give an essential significance in developing new historicism perspective, since life at present as well as in the future is certainly influenced by past. By reading through new historicism viewpoint, especially through analyzing Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*, this study is aimed to contribute a valuable input about the representation of "Mary Magdalene" and the Holy Grail for the reader of *The Da Vinci Code* so it can be another alternative reading for them.

The study would take more discussions on the different representation of Mary Magdalene including her history, which is portrayed in Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*. In this case, the representation is compared to the official historical account.

The method that will be used is the library research and the main source that used is the novel itself, *The Da Vinci Code*. The study will use the procedures of the technique of data collections on this novel, which are by having close reading to the novel, making data classification, and determining the data based on the criteria. In addition, the criteria used to determine the data analysis is the data that contain the representation of Mary Magdalene and The Holy Grail. Moreover, information is also got from any particular books dealing with literary theories, approaches, and other books containing the history of Mary Magdalene and The Holy Grail. The data are also collected from official sites of the author, Dan Brown and some site sources from Internet.

In analyzing the data, this study applies the descriptive research method as well. This method is preferred to be applied in order to gain a descriptive explanation of the problem through the events and the action of the story. Next, the analysis is done through juxtaposing both historical and artistic fiction texts, what is meant by historical fiction text is the Brown

novel, *The Da Vinci Code*; and historical texts are the texts, which are taken as an official

account of history and religious facts, the canonical version of history books and sources.

**Chapter one**

***The Da Vinci Code* within Postmodernism and New historicism**

*"Postmodernity is said to be a culture of fragmentary sensations,*

*eclectic nostalgia, disposable simulacra, and promiscuous*

*superficiality, in which the traditionally valued qualities of depth,*

*coherence, meaning, originality, and authenticity are evacuated or*

*dissolved amid the random swirl of empty signals."*

— Jean Baudrillard

Postmodernism is a muddled arrangement of thoughts, has just risen as a zone of scholarly examination since the mid-1980s. Postmodernism isn't easy to diagram, because of it appears in an exceptionally expansive selection of orders or study zones, including writing, human science, engineering, craftsmanship, film, music, design, and correspondence. The birth or the start of postmodernism isn't evident that is the reason it's difficult to find it transiently or generally. The most effortless approach to begin characterizing postmodernism is by considering innovation, the development from which postmodernism appears to develop or rise. The "post" in Postmodernism does not just signify "after" in time as period prefixes frequently do. Not really "Postmodern." The "post" in this term, says Lyotard, one of the main definers of the development, expects the Greek relational word *"ana"*, which as a prefix can signify "back once more," as in anamnesis, re-accumulation. Memory isn't minor review, yet compelling re-allotment of memory. Lyotard goes further: "The postmodern would need to be comprehended by the oddity of things to come (post) front (modo)" (BRANN 5). He implies that in a postmodern work, all the past all inclusive standards are not placed in thought or completely overlooked.

## 1.1. Postmodernism

The "post" in Postmodernism communicates the forswearing of any extreme standards presence, and it is inadequate in good faith of there being a normal for the purported "present day" mind by disclosing everything to everyone, theory, religion and science. "The conundrum of the postmodern position is that, in setting all standards under the examination of its incredulity, it must accept that even its own standards are not past addressing" (Rites, Modernism and Postmodernism).

Postmodernism is famously hard to characterize and delimit. There are two shafts when managing postmodernism. One could either guarantee that class isn't there.

Postmodernism is only a part of innovation. Or on the other hand one may sort every new content as postmodern. Every new content are not postmodern. They might be elegant or new, anyway that's it in a nutshell.

Postmodern attributes are additionally found in more seasoned writings. In any case, if another content comes up short on the attributes of postmodernism, it's not viewed as a postmodern work. The principle highlights of this kind are the accompanying:

### 1.1.1. Elements of Postmodernism

**a. Intertextuality**:

A term coined by a Bulgarian/French scholar Julia Kristeva, communicates an association between the writings through different gadgets and systems. It isn't, in any case, a solitary mechanical association, yet rather an inventive change of the alluded messages in various phonetic and social settings. Citations, references and suggestions, intended to make evident that each content retains and changes another content somewhere ("Postmodernism Positioning and Pushback").

**b.Metafiction:**

Postmodern abstract work regularly questions its own anecdotal status in this manner getting to be metafictional. Making the phony of composing evident to the peruser, purposeful techniques to prevent a similar old suspension of skepticism, drawing regard for the shows of writing. William Gas is an American author who had first began the term of "Metafiction".

**c. Historiographic Metafiction**:

Historiogragraphic metafiction is fictionalising actual events and figures from history. Or the concept of rejecting the projection of present beliefs and standards onto the past and asserts the specificity and particularity of the individual past event. It also suggests a distinction between events and facts that is one shared by many historians (Oyrehagen "Elements of Postmodernism In John Irving's The World According to Garp and A Prayer for Owen Meany".37).

**d. Pastiche (Mixing Genres)**:

Pastiche originates from the Italian word pasticcio which signifies "A mixture of different fixings: a hotchpotch, a farrago, and muddle. This infers closeness with a postmodern scholarly work comprising of various styles, classifications, account voices and gadgets every one of which has its significant job in the piece of the book. As partner degree yielding to or a farce of past abstract structures (Ekaterina,"Pastiche and Analysis").

**e. Distrust:**

A postmodern literary work is denoted by a distrust of theories and ideologies of absolute truth. Lyotard's enemy of tyrant perspective is quintessential postmodernism. He investigates the presumption of all inclusive learning by making the contention that learning is presently the world's most noteworthy product (significant commodity). The

individuals who control information, apply political power ( Francois Lyotard ,"The postmodern condition" 1979).

**f. Technoculture and Hyper-reality:**

Hyper-reality refers to a simulated reality. According to Jean Baudrillard, Objective reality has long vanished and been replaced by this stimulated existence, which because it is pure imagination, serves to convince us that objective reality exists. For instance, "Disneyland" is pure imagination, but it serves to convince us that there is a real world that functions normally (Kasket Meshach Kiplagat "Postmodernism and hyper reality and the Media" p 4).

**g. Maximalism and Minimalism:**

Maximalism is Sprawling canvas and fragmented narrative looking disorganised and filled with playful language for its own sake. However, Minimalism is short 'slice-of-life' stories where readers have to use their own imaginations to create the story. Unexceptional characters, economy with words, spare style, lacking adjectives, adverbs and meaningless details are what characterises the minimalism style ("Postmodernism Positioning and Pushback").

**h. Magic Realism:**

Unreal themes and subjects, with a dream-like quality, mixing the real with the fantastic, surreal and bizarre, Time shifts, dreams, myths and fairy stories as part of the narrative, arcane erudition, inexplicable events, elements of surprise or abrupt shock ("Postmodernism Positioning and Pushback").

**i.Faction:**

Mixing truth and fiction, particularly historical novels those victimization real living personalities, for example: World politicians or celebrities.

**j. Irony, Absurdity, Playfulness & Black Humour:**

A full reflection of the modern chaotic world, in a way, that treats the serious subjects and problems as a joke ("Postmodernism Positioning and Pushback").

**k. Temporal Distortion:**

Events will overlap, repeat, or multiple events will occur simultaneously, often to achieve irony ("Postmodernism Positioning and Pushback").

**1.1.2. Postmodern Fiction**

*"I don't think the ideas were "in the air" . . . rather, all of us found our-selves at the same stoplights in different cities at the same time When the lights changed, we all crossed the streets"* (Steve Katz, qtd. in LeClair and McCaffery, Anything Can Happen, 1983).

Nothing about Postmodemism is unproblematic; nothing about it is totally acceptable. It isn't clear who merits the credit or the fault for instituting it in any case: Arnold Toynbee? Charles Olson? Randall Jarrell? There are a lot of competitors. Be that as it may, whoever is capable, the person has a ton to respond in due order regarding.

No one enjoys the term. "Post," grouses Richard Kostelanetz, is an unimportant prefix, both today and truly, for significant developments is characterized in their very own terms, instead of by their connection to something different. No genuine avant-garde artist would want to be "post" anything. John Barth finds the term clumsy and faintly epigonic, suggestive to a lesser extent an enthusiastic or notwithstanding intriguing new heading with regards to the old specialty of narrating than of something hostile to climactic, weakly after an extremely hard act to pursue (Brian Mchale ,Postmodernist Fiction, p 3-5).

**a- Postmodern Historical Fiction**

Postmodernist historical fiction is simply another type of self-reflexiveness or metafiction. The foremost salient feature of genre historical fiction, particularly its expressed falsification of history, is considered a strategy for exposure the

fictional construction of the past. In alternative words, the blatant transgressions of historical facts are recuperated as a tool for creating a metafictional statement (cf.Waugh 104-108).

Marxist scholars and critics of liberal-humanist bent have been provoked by the supposed negativity of postmodernism into severe criticism. Both teams of critics take into account genre to be homologous to or perhaps mirthfully affirmative of current consumer society (Bidet and Konvelakis 132).

The use of historical materials in postmodernist writing is regarded as a merely nostalgic, glibly decorative use of the past, or as an apolitical reduction of history to aesthetic history.

The only ideology that purportedly informs genre writing, one argues, is that of linguistic philosophical doctrine. It looks to Pine Tree State that the caricaturing of genre reaches a climax within the following passage:

It [postmodernism] is fiercely dedicated to the integrity of autonomous

> verbal expression, and stands four square against the extra-literary pressures
>
> that have always surrounded fiction as a genre. It recognizes that its basic
>
> resources are irreparably, and without apology, literary. Above all, this
>
> writing is concerned with language, if not as the creator of reality, then as
>
> the ultimate shaper of consciousness.
>
> (Newman 172)

Postmodernism is notoriously difficult to define and delimit. There are two poles when dealing with postmodernism. One could either claim that genre isn't there.

**b- Historiographic Metafiction**

Postmodern novels openly like Flaubert's Parrot, *Famous Last Words*, and *A Maggot* assert that "there are only plural truths and never one Truth; and there is rarely falseness per se, just others' truths" (Hutcheon 109). For instance, suggests that to re-write and to present the past in fiction and in history is to open it up to the present, to prevent it from being conclusive. There are two historical reconstructions and two translations of Lucienne's ending in the famous movie 'Flyboys' a 2006 war Drama set during World War 1.This ending was called an 'alternate ending'. However, the revising history is additionally problematic; to require the film regarding Chekhov's Journey as example, the actor begins to alter the dates of verifiable historical events, moving the Tunguska explosion from 1888 to 1908. Then, the film became a projection of "a choas of unhistory" (Linda Hutcheon 110). History and fiction don't seem to be a similar despite the fact that they share social, cultural, philosophical contexts, still as formal techniques.

**c- Postmodern Views of History and Fiction**

Postmodern theory and art, and later basic readings of both history and fiction focus on what the two methods of composing share than on how they contrast. They [fiction and historiography] have both been believed to get their power more from verisimilitude than from any aimed truth. They are both distinguished as semantic develops, profoundly conventionalized in their story shapes, and not in any way straightforward either as far as language or structure. They seem, by all accounts, to be similarly intertexual, conveying the writings of the past inside their very own complex textuality.

The partition of the two controls occurred in the nineteenth century, set apart, for example, by the ascent of "logical fiction" or the ascent of college. Before then writing and history were viewed as parts of a similar tree of learning, a tree for translating knowledge, to guide and raising man (105). In the last century, historical writing and historical novel writing

influenced each other mutually (106). Today, the new skepticism of suspicion about the writing history challenges historiography in novels. For example: *Shame, The Public Burning, or A Maggot* (106).

These novels question their common use of conventions of narrative, of reference, of the inscribing of subjectivity, and their identity as textuality and their implication in ideology.

After all the contrast ideas between history and fiction , many questions arose about to what extent can we trust facts That's the question dealt with by the school of thought known as the new historicism.

## 1.2. Newhistoricism

*Some of these alternative objects of attention are literary works regarded as too*

*minor to deserve sustained interest and hence marginalized or excluded entirely*

*from the canon. Others are texts that have been regarded as altogether non-*

*literary…. There has been in effect a social rebellion in the study of culture, so*

*that figures hitherto kept outside the proper circles of interest…have now forced*

*their way in, or rather have been invited in by our generation of critics.*

STEPHEN GREENBLATT

In essence, the new historicist mistrusts history at least as most readers today know it. And their mistrust stems primarily from the view that society today has been "conditioned" to believe certain things were so in particular time periods: "New historicists remind us that it is treacherous to reconstruct the past as it really was rather than as we have been conditioned by our own place and time to believe that it was" ( Bedford's st ,Martin's definition of the new historisism). The Newhistoricism professes to be able to reconstruct a more accurate past that includes whatever or whomever was being repressed in the histories on the books today.

### 1.2.1. Foucault and the New Historicism

While Foucault's influences and personal choices were unfortunate, the primary influence on the new historicism is not much better. The new historicism owes a great deal to Marxist thought. Marxism is a system of political thought concerned primarily with economics and class relations. When implemented, it leads to socialism and eventually, by Karl Marx's own admission, to communism. While Marxist ideas have failed time and again when put into practice, the school of Marxist literary theory lives on in English departments across the United States. In reading literature and history, Marxist theory focuses on economics and social class, and how those elements affect the balance of power in a text. Like Marxist theory, the new historicism also focuses on the exercise of power. However, new historicist critics prefer to examine social issues, marginalized groups, and institutions that wielded power for example the church in the time period (Bidet and Konvelakis, chap 34).

This is where Foucault's ideas come into play. In his book *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault argues that, contrary to what many people think, the replacement of torture and public execution with modern prisons is anything but positive. Dr. Coffey sums it up this way: The modern prison, Foucault suggested, does not simply work on people's bodies; it attempts to control their minds. Prisoners are categorised by experts, placed under surveillance, scrutinised and manipulated. Furthermore, he argued, the prison is a microcosm of modern society; we are all under surveillance, labelled and pigeon-holed by bureaucracies, and locked away if we are found to be deviant or abnormal (Golden, " New Historicism: The influence of Postmodernism").

Foucault was especially critical of a building design known as the Panopticon. Jeremy Bentham in the 18th century created the Panopticon as a way of keeping order in schools, prisons, and other institutions. Bentham designed a prison for the English government based on the Panopticon whereby a guard could watch all the prisoners being held there without the

prisoners knowing whether they were being watched at that moment or not. He was, however, unsuccessful in completing the project.

The prison, had it ever been built, would have been circular. All the cells were to face into the circle, toward each other, with a window at the other end of each cell, allowing light in so prisoners would be easier to see. A watchtower was placed in the center of the cylinder, and a guard was hidden inside the tower, unseen by the prisoners even in his coming and going. Bentham believed that in theory the prisoners could be entirely unwatched at times, because they would never know if a guard was present or not. They would be forced to act or "perform," as many postmodernists prefer to say as though they were being watched at all times.

This, for Foucault, symbolized a type of mistreatment that could be seen in different parts of society: "Foucault professed to expose the all-inclusive standard as simply a device of persecution being used by the ground-breaking"(Stanford Encyclopaedia of theory, "Michael Foucault). The new historicists, holding onto this thought, analyze history searching for types of abuse whereby individuals are supposedly compelled to showcase a philosophy whether they concur with it, in light of the fact that the forces that be are continually viewing. Everything for new historicists comes down to power.

**1.2.2. Who's the Authority?**

For the new historicist, expert is vital. Be that as it may, it isn't generally expert in the manner we would anticipate. To delineate, envision that you got a letter from a companion. How about we pose a few inquiries: Who composed the letter? Your companion did, making him the "expert" over the letter. OK believe that the substance of that letter is precise? In all probability, except if you had convincing motivations to accept something else. Okay quest for concealed implications in the letter? Most likely not. As a rule, the importance of the letter would be clear; you would not require a researcher to disentangle it for you. In some cases

there are special cases to that standard. We realize that there are times when individuals need to convey in code in letters, due to government forces or different reasons. Presently suppose that your companion composed the letter from a jail, where all the mail is perused by gatekeepers and edited before it leaves the structure. Once more, who composed the letter? Your companion did. However, he was composing it realizing that he couldn't impart certain data to you. He was being watched and needed to "play out" the piece of a detainee well. Realizing that, okay trust that all the data in the letter was precise? Presumably not. OK scan for shrouded implications in the content? More likely than not. On the off chance that another historicist were perusing this, he would state that the "expert" over the letter was not your companion, however the organization of the jail, since they had authority over what he conveyed.

In the last precedent, another historicist perusing is helpful to understanding the letter. In any case, this is an uncommon special case in the new historicism, in light of the fact that the new historicist will peruse basically any content for example a play or a book and contend that there is an importance or history that has gotten away humankind as of recently. He would state that the conditions under which the content was composed made a circumstance where the specialist was not the creator but rather some establishment with power. Also, much of the time, the new historicist is headed to do this by his own feelings toward specific gatherings of individuals, instead of by any sensible proof that the creator's words are not by any means dependable. D.G. Myers, a literary historian and associate professor of literature at the Melton Center for Jewish Studies at The Ohio State University, summarizes the real motivation of the new historicism:

The compassion is treated as a reality of equivalent significance and practically identical ontological status with the structure. No exertion is made to discover whether the structure truly is inconsistent with anything; it is just treated as data of understanding that it must be.

The commentator knows on account of the manner in which he feels. Basically, the new historicist is driven by sentiments, which isn't, as Myers accurately calls attention to, helpful for equitably surveying history.

### 1.2.3. New Historicism and Biblical Hermeneutics

In connection to scriptural translation, some Bible researchers and Christian pioneers, regardless of whether they understand it, have grasped a perspective on history like that of the new historicists. One pattern certainty each adherent needs to acknowledge is that the Bible is inerrant in its unique original copies (and what we have today is staggeringly precise), so no measure of reinterpreting history can change the significance or power of the reasonable expressions of Scripture.

In one evident case of one's close to home convictions driving elucidation, John Shelby Spong, a resigned minister of the Episcopal Church and a to some degree productive writer, endeavors to rehash the history introduced in the Pauline epistles dependent on his own help for same-sex connections. His objective in his investigation is by all accounts to demonstrate that the religious foundation in power at the time (i.e., the recorders, who were specialists in the law, and a portion of the Pharisees who were a piece of the decision expert) was abusing gay people. Besides, Spong makes the case that Paul himself was gay however subduing his wants; in this manner, Paul was compelled to stand up contrary to gay conduct:

> Yes, I am convinced that Paul of Tarsus was a gay man, deeply repressed, self-loathing, rigid in denial, bound by the law that he hoped could keep this thing, that he judged to be so unacceptable, totally under control, a control so profound that even Paul did not have to face this fact about himself. But repression kills. It kills the repressed one and sometimes the defensive anger found in the repressed one also kills those who challenge, threaten or live out the thing that this repressed person so deeply fears. (Harper Collin 140)

Spong has embraced, accidentally or not, a Foucauldian perspective on Scripture: the Apostle Paul stood up mightily against gay conduct; gay conduct was denounced by the law, which was regulated by the Pharisees and copyists; accordingly, Paul was in all respects likely gay himself however was finished "playing out" the piece of the hetero in light of the fact that he was being "viewed" by the religious specialists.

There is no printed proof for Spong's case that the Apostle Paul was gay or that Paul had any compassion toward those taking an interest in gay conduct. Actually, there is even some sign that Paul was hitched at one time. However, similarly as Myers fleshed out above, Spong "knows" on account of the way he "feels" about rehearsing gay people today. Also, Spong concedes he doesn't trust the Bible is the Words of God: "I don't see the Bible as the Word of God:" I see the Word of God as that which I hear through the words of the Bible. There's a very big difference" (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, p. 42). Spong's feelings-driven interpretation of the Bible makes the words of Paul untrustworthy, apparently to favor an allegedly "marginalized" group today practicing homosexuals.

A last example that additionally exhibits an extraordinary comparability to another historicist perusing is the development to demonstrate that the creation account in Genesis is just the result of Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) cosmology. While a comprehension of the history and encompassing society of the antiquated Israelites is without a doubt accommodating to any peruse of Scripture, the ANE strategy for elucidation is frequently conveyed excessively far.

For example, John Walton, teacher of Old Testament at Wheaton College, takes a gander at Isaiah 53, an oft-referenced prescience of Christ, from the ANE viewpoint. Richard Averbeck, teacher of Old Testament and Semitic dialects at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, outlines Walton's case as pursues.

Christian interpreter John Walton, regardless, has starting late fought that the Babylonian establishment for Isaiah 53 and its application to Jesus can be drawn from explicit subjects found in the substitute ruler custom. As shown by this Babylonian practice, when a ruler got a terrible sign that spot him in risk, another person would acknowledge the imperial position as a substitute until the sign was settled. As demonstrated by Walton, Jesus is a substitute who suffers for the mankind advantage according to a couple of segments of the precedent found in the substitute ruler custom. Incredibly, the parallels pulled in these sorts of understandings are as often as possible flawed, most ideal situation to the extent basic technique and substance. The complexities are dismissed for the examinations. In an intemperate number of cases, the applications are obliged and stretched out to the point of being unrecognizable (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press 35).

In Walton's view, what God uncovered in Genesis 1 was as far as anyone knows directed by the general population's capacity to get it. Walton's attestation makes Genesis 1 conniving. Also, Walton's reason that perusers need to comprehend Genesis similarly the old Israelites did separates him as one of only a handful couple of edified enough to coax out a type of shrouded significance in Genesis that was obscure to anybody preceding maybe Darwin's day. On the off chance that he can exhibit that the antiquated Israelites did not comprehend Genesis to be strict, he can undoubtedly fit developmental thoughts into Scripture. As he pushes his reclassified history of Genesis, he states, "If Genesis 1 does not require a youthful earth and on the off chance that heavenly fiat does not block a long procedure, at that point Genesis 1 offers no issues with natural evolution"(138).

In aggregate, in view of Walton's compassion toward the old Near Eastern comprehension of Scripture and for transformative thoughts, he contends that God is basically obliged by the comprehension of a people at a given time, expecting the old Israelites were not equipped for understanding logical thoughts, which is a typical misrepresentation among numerous

scholastics. In this way, for Walton, God couldn't have expected to uncover an immortal history of creation. Rather, in spite of all appearances despite what might be expected, Genesis does not mean what it says it isn't strict history, yet contains an implying that can apparently just be found by those with transformative convictions today.

A last inquiry to pose, in light of the objectives of the new historicism, is what gathering stands to profit by Walton's perusing of Genesis? For Spong in the above model, it was gay people. For Walton, it is most clearly the individuals who wish to blend developmental thoughts with Scripture, or the individuals who prevent the specialist from claiming Scripture on creation. They are surely underestimated by houses of worship that acknowledge Scripture's power in each zone. Tragically, Walton's compassion toward developmental thoughts propels him to search for intelligence in the cosmologies of civic establishments that pursued different divine beings, as he contends hard for a perusing of Genesis that basically does not discover support.

### 1.3. *The Da Vinci Code*

*"Learn how to see. realize that everything connects to everything else."*

-Leonardo Da Vinci

*"*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?*"*

-Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code*

### 1.3.1. The Last Supper and Leonardo Da Vinci

The Last Supper of Leonardo Da Vinci (Cenacolo Vinciano) is a standout amongst the most renowned artistic creations on the planet. This craftsmanship was painted somewhere in

the range of 1494 and 1498 under the legislature of Ludovico il Moro and speaks to the last "supper" among Jesus and his devotees.

So as to make this novel work, Leonardo did a thorough research making an interminability of preliminary portrayals. Leonardo surrenders the customary strategy for fresco painting, painting the scene "dry" on the mass of the refectory. Hints of gold and silver foils have been discovered which touch for the artist's eagerness to make the figures in a substantially more sensible way, including valuable subtleties. After consummation, his procedure and ecological factor had added to the possible weakening of the fresco, which had experienced various rebuilding efforts.

The latest rebuilding was finished in 1999 where a few logical techniques were utilized to re-establish the first hues as close as could be expected under the circumstances, and to wipe out hints of paint connected in past endeavours to re-establish the fresco.

Leonardo's Last Supper is situated in its unique spot, on the mass of the lounge area of the previous Dominican religious community of Santa Maria delle Grazie, precisely in the refectory of the cloister and is a standout amongst the most celebrated and surely understood art on the planet.

Leonardo Da Vinci's "Last Supper", a colossal painting of 4.60 meters high and 8.80 meters wide was made with gum based paint and oil on a gypsum arrangement rather than the method usually utilized in the fresco time frame[3]. A few measures have now been actualized to shield the paint from crumbling. To guarantee that the fresco is kept up at room temperature, since the last reclamation, visitors' entrance has been confined to a gathering of 25 individuals at regular intervals.

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[3] Annex 1 p 60

The depiction has put under a spot light in the well known abstract work of Dan Brown *The Da Vinci Code*, in which the creator attempted to translate the Code of Da Vinci on "the Last Supper".

### 1.3.2. Synopsis of *The Da Vinci Code*

*"The Da Vinci Code is simply an entertaining story that promotes spiritual discussion and debate and suggests that the Book may be used to "as a positive catalyst for introspection and exploration of our faith".*

-Dan Brown.

*The Da Vinci Code* is the 2003 novel by Dan Brown. It pursues Harvard educator and symbologist Robert Langdon and the talented French cryptologist Sophie Neveu as they explore a homicide in Paris' Louver Museum. They are staggered to find peculiar questions that lead them to a trail of pieces of information covered up underway of Leonardo da Vinci, apparently left by the historical center's late keeper, Jacques Saunière minutes before his passing. Their race to find the firmly watched mystery held by Saunière reveals a fight between the Priory of Sion and Opus Dei over the likelihood of Jesus having been hitched to Mary Magdalene.

### 1.3.3. Historical Background of the Novel

The title of the novel alludes to, in addition to other things, the way that Saunière is found in the Grand Gallery of the Louver, stripped and presented like Leonardo da Vinci's popular illustration, the 'Vitruvian Man'[4], with a secretive message composed close to his body and a pentacle drawn on his chest in his very own blood.

The epic investigates the hypothesis that the Merovingian rulers of France were plummeted from the bloodline of Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene. The book has extraordinarily incited a well known enthusiasm for theory concerning the Holy Grail legend

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[4] Annex 2 p 60

and Magdalene's job ever of. Commentators regularly point to the way that these thoughts are gotten from Clive Prince's *The Templar Revelation* (1997) and books by Margaret Starbird. The book likewise alludes to *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail* (1982). However, Dan Brown has expressed that it was not utilized as research material.

*Da Vinci Code* history depends on an amazing trick kept up by a mystery European culture known as the Priory of Sion. "The Priory of Sion - a European secret society founded in 1099 - is a real organization. In 1975, Paris's Bibliotheque Nationale discovered parchments known as Les Dossiers Secrets identifying numerous members of the Priory of Sion, including Sir Isaac Newton, Botticelli, Victor Hugo, and Leonardo da Vinci".

The title of the novel insinuates, not withstanding different things, the manner in which that Saunière is found in the Grand Gallery of the Louver, stripped and displayed like Leonardo da Vinci's famous outline, the Vitruvian Man, with a cryptic message formed near his body and a pentacle drawn on his chest in his own special blood.

The epic examines the speculation that the Merovingian leaders of France were dove from the bloodline of Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene. The book has exceptionally prompted an outstanding eagerness for hypothesis concerning the Holy Grail legend and Magdalene's activity ever of reporters routinely point to how these considerations are gotten from Clive Prince's *The Templar Revelation* (1997) and books by Margaret Starbird. The book in like manner suggests *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail* (1982) anyway Dan Brown has communicated that it was not used as research material.

*Da Vinci Code* history relies upon an astonishing trap kept up by a puzzle European culture known as the Priory of Sion.

### 3.2.2 Dan Brown and Christianity

Dan Brown is the writer of various top of the line books, including *The Da Vinci Code,* which has turned out to be a standout amongst the top of the line books ever just as the subject

of scholarly discussion among perusers and researchers. Darker's books are distributed in 56 dialects around the globe with more than 200 million duplicates in print.

In 2005, Brown was named one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World by TIME Magazine, whose editors acknowledged him for:

> keeping the distributing business above water; recharged enthusiasm for Leonardo da Vinci and early Christian history; spiking the travel industry to Paris and Rome; a developing participation in mystery social orders; the wrath of Cardinals in Rome; eight books preventing the cases from securing the novel and seven advisers for read alongside it; a surge of chronicled spine chillers; and a noteworthy film establishment.

The child of an arithmetic instructor and a congregation organist, Brown was raised on a private academy grounds where he built up an interest with the confusing interchange among science and religion. These subjects inevitably framed the background for his books. He is an alum of Amherst College and Phillips Exeter Academy, where he later came back to encourage English before concentrating full time to composing. He lives in New England with his better half.

Brown's most recent novel, *Origin*, investigates two of the central inquiries of mankind: Where do we originate from? Where are we going? Brown is passionate and notably attracted to symbolism and historical myths and treasures. In *The Da Vinci Code* he tried to decipher the secret of both The Holy Grail and Mary Magdalene.

## Chapter two

*« By its very nature, History is always a one sided account »*

-Dan Brown

The serial thriller of Robert Langdon has been a controversy since its first sequence, *Angels and Demons* was launched. *The Da Vinci Code*, the second serial of Robert Langdon, also attains countless attentions because of the daring interpretation related to some issues, such as conspiracy, symbolism, feminism, and theology. Here, the analysis is focused primarily on the representation of Mary Magdalene and the Holy Grail that represented in *The Da Vinci code*. The discussion goes even further on the different representation of Mary Magdalene in the novel and in the official history of Christianity. At this point, the differences are seen through New Historicism Perspective, where the meaning of things depends on the interpreter's understanding.

## 2.1. The Representation of Mary Magdalene Versus the Representation of the Holy Grail in the History of Christianity

*"Without the imaginative insight which goes with creative literature, history cannot be*

*intelligibly written."*

-C.V Wedgwood

The main controversial points in *The Da vinci code* are the conceptions of the different common facts in religion and history. The different representations of Mary Magdalene and The Holy Grail brought in this novel were and still are a subject of ambiguity and questioning.

## 2. 1.1. The Characterization of Mary Magdalene

The Gospels of New Testament have illustrated a number of women named Mary. Therefore, a question, "who is the true Mary Magdalene?" is still becoming a discussion among the historians. Her standard image is captured by her last name and referred to the bible as 'Mary Magdalene or simply 'the Magdalene'. Meanwhile, Magdalene itself is referred

to the name of town, as broadly conventional interpretation explains that 'Magdalene' is taken from the town of Magdala or Magadan, now Medjdel (Berstein 14-15), a prosperous fishing village on the north-west bank of the lake of Galilee, four miles from Tiberias (Burstein, 30).

Mary Magdalene's image was distorted when early church leaders represented Magdalene as a patron saint of reformed prostitutes and sexual temptation (Miesel). It was due to the statement of Pope Gregory I, who identified three names of Mary: Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, and the unnamed sinner who anoints Jesus in Luke' Gospel as the same women. Mary's identification as a prostitutes was stemmed from Pope Gregory l's Homily 33, delivered in 591 C. E. in which he declared: "She whom Luke calls the sinful woman, whom John calls Mary, we believe to be Mary from whom seven devil were ejected according to Mark. And what did these seven devils signify, if not all the vices ? ...  it is clear, … that the women previously used the unguent to perfume her flesh in forbidden acts" (Burstein 14). Thus, Mary Magdalene and Mary of Bethany were identified as the sinful women of Luke.

However, it was not until 1969 that the Catholic Church officially repealed Gregory's labelling of Mary as a prostitute and restored three women named Marys as three separated individuals. In addition, the 'true' Mary Magdalene is as one of Jesus' female followers as how the New Testament figures her out. In 1988, Pope John Paul II called Mary Magdalene as "apostle to the apostles" in an official church document and noted that to Christians' "most arduous test of faith and loyalty" the crucifixion, "the woman proved utensil than the apostle" (Darman 50).

## 2.1.2. The Relationship between Mary Magdalene and Jesus

The gospels of New Testament rarely inform the story of Mary Magdalene.  Her name is only given thirteen times (Darman, 44). Based on the HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism, Mary Magdalene first appeared in the Gospel of Luke as one of several

apparently wealthy women in whom Jesus cured of possession. From whom Jesus cast seven demons (8: 2). Mark (16.9) also said that Jesus cleansed her of seven demons.

Next, according to the HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism, Mark told that Mary Magdalene was among the women when Jesus was in Galilee who followed him and ministered unto him (15:4041) and provided funds for his itinerant ministry out of her own funds, along with other women, some of them left unnamed. This statement was similar to the representation of her in Gospel of Matthew (27: 55).

According to the HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism, her name appeared in Gospel of Matthew (27: 56), Gospel of Mark (IS: 40), and Gospel of John (zo. 14- 1 8 ) as one of the women who presented at crucifixion. John 19 25-26 further noted that she stood by the cross, near the Virgin Mary and the other unidentified apostles. Having seen where Jesus was buried (Mark 15: 47) and she was among the women came to Jesus' tomb on Easter morning (Matt. 28: I, Mark 16. I. John: 20: 1). Finding the tomb was empty; she ran to the disciples Jesus then appeared to her and according to John 20: 17 Jesus instructed her to tell the apostles that he was ascending to God. Moreover, she was one of the witnesses of Jesus Resurrection (Matt 28 10 and John 20. 14-18). Briefly, New Testament clearly illustrates that Mary Magdalene as one of Jesus' female followers.

## 2.1.3. The Representation of The Holy Grail in History

The Holy Grail is generally thought to be the glass that Jesus Christ drank from at the Last Supper and that Joseph of Arimathea used to gather Jesus' blood at his torturous killing. From old legends to contemporary films, the Holy Grail has been an object of riddle and interest for a considerable length of time. Scores of individuals have chased for this looked for after Christian relic. 'Be that as it may', what makes the Holy Grail so noteworthy and appealing (Baigent et al.385).

**a- Characterization of The Holy Grail**

"Grail" most likely originates from the Latin word *Gradale*, which alludes to a profound platter that nourishments were served on at medieval meals. Consistently, the Grail has been portrayed as a dish, a ciborium, a vessel, a platter, a cup and even a stone. Numerous abstract works have depicted the Grail as having wonderful recuperating powers. Students of history trust that the roots of the Holy Grail can be followed back to pre-Christian Celtic folklore just as Christian legend. The mission for the Holy Grail previously advanced into composed content in 'Chrétien de Troye' Old French incomplete sentiment, the Conte del Graal 'Story of the Grail', or Perceval, which was composed around 1180. Robert de Boron further indicated its Christian noteworthiness around 1200 in his sonnet Joseph d'Arimathie, referring to the Holy Grail's starting points at the Last Supper and Christ's crucifixion ( the Quest of the Holy Grail : Britain library).

**b- Recent Discovery of The Holy Grail**

In March 2014, two Spanish history specialists guaranteed they found the Holy Grail at a congregation in León in northern Spain. They said the cup had been there since the eleventh century. Logical dating affirmed that the container was made between 200 B.C. what's more, 100 A.D. The history specialists additionally introduced information that included three years of research on the whereabouts of the Grail ( "The real History of The Holy Grail: Catholic Culture"). In spite of these persuading certainties, there's no real way to know without a doubt that what the pair found is really the genuine container that Jesus drank from. Adding to the discussion is the way that there are about 200 asserted Grail glasses in different areas around the globe, and numerous researchers question whether the Holy Grail at any point existed at all or is simply a legend.

As of late, the Holy Grail has showed up in numerous prominent books and films. A portion of these movies incorporate Monty Python and the Holy Grail (1975), Excalibur (1981), Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade (1989), and The Fisher King (1991).

In Dan Brown's well known novel, *The Da Vinci Code*, the Holy Grail isn't depicted as an item yet rather as Mary Magdalene's belly. The book suggested that Mary brought forth Jesus' tyke, which began a bloodline of Christ.

In spite of the fact that researchers may never know whether the Holy Grail was a genuine physical item or basically a legendary dream, the baffling relic keeps on captivating millions even right up 'til today.

**2.2. The Representation of Mary Magdalene and The Holy Grail in *The Da Vinci Code***

*"It takes a great deal of history to produce a little literature."*

-Henry James

In representing Mary Magdalene, Brown employs the narrators whom are the main characters in this novel. They are Robert Landon, Sophie Neveu and Sir Leigh Teabing. Robert Langdon is a Harvard Professor of Iconography and Religious Art. Sophie Neveu is a cryptologist and a granddaughter of Jacques Sauniére (the curator of louvre Museum who was murdered in the night when he was keeping a secret related to Mary Magdalene). While Sir Leigh Teabing is Langdon's friend, an English Historian addicted to the story of the Holy Grail.

Magdalene does not appear as one of the character in the novel. She is a key figure that is issued among the characters. In depicting the representation of Mary Magdalene in *The Da Vinci Code,* Brown illustrates some alternative versions which are different to the Roman Catholic version. He tries to give more personal perspective towards the representation of Mary Magdalene through the characters.

## 2. 2.1. The Characterization of Mary Magdalene

Mary Magdalene is well-known from her character as an immoral woman, a prostitute. Her image as a prostitute is similar to what Sophie first considers about over a question being asked to her "Who is Mary Masalalene?". In addition, she thinks that Mary Magdalene is a prostitute. However, Teabing and Langdon do not believe to that perception since they have realized that the image of Magdalene as a prostitute is simply a smear campaign launched by the early Church to defame Magdalene in order to cover up her dangerous secret. Consequently. Mary Magdalene is less known by people (Brown 264).

According to Teabing, Mary Magdalene is secretly known through some pseudonyms. First she is known from pseudonym of Holy Grail, Largely conventional interpretation represents Holy Grail as a cup in which Joseph of Arimathea Jesus' uncle, later catches Jesus' blood in the crucifixion (176). While for Sophie, Holy Grail as the cup of Christ in which Jesus drinks a wine and shares it with his disciple (175). However, for Teabing and Langdon, Holy Grail is not as simple as that idea.

Teabing opens the representation of the pseudonyms of the Holy Grail by drawing the interconnection between Holy Grail, Bible and Leonardo Da Vinci. He represents Leonardo Da Vinci as one of the Grand Master of Priory of Sion, the brotherhood that keeps the secret of the Holy Grail. As one of the Grand Masters, Leonardo's feeling about bible related directly to Holy Grail (230). In representing this feeling, he represents the Holy Grail in his famous fresco, "the Last Supper", Da Vinci's legendary painting from the wall of Santa Maria DeIle Grazie, a church in Milan (255). This pawing is made by Da Vinci as the depiction of what John says in the Gospel of John (13. 21-30) about the religious meal done by Jesus and his disciples, Last Supper. The painting is representing thirteen men sitting behind a table. Jesus in the middle, while in his right and left side are sitting each six apostles. This painting portrays a moment when Jesus is having dinner with his disciples at the night before he is

captured. It is also a moment when he is announcing that one of his disciples would betray him (256). Then, after the dinner, Jesus takes a cup of wine, shares it with his disciples. The cup, in which Jesus drinks the wine, has been well known as the Holy Grail, the cup of Christ (256).

However, Langdon and Teabing read it differently. For them, the painting of Last Supper is not simply the representation of the last supper between Jesus and his disciples a night before he is captured. This painting is illustrating more about the representation of The Holy Grail, intrinsically (262). This painting celebrates the moment of the definitive arrival of the Holy Grail. The Last Supper does not represent the thirteen men but just twelve. The apostle who is sitting in the right hand of Jesus is not John of Arimathea, as what people might think that the apostle sitting in Jesus' right hand is John of Arimathea. In the other hand, she is a woman illustrated as "... young and pious looking, with a demure face, beautiful red hair, and hand folded quietly..." (268).There is no single cup used by Jesus to drink wine and to share it with his disciples. But, there are thirteen cups painted there. Thus, each disciple has their own cup. This representation of The last Supper in Da Vinci's painting is different to the ceremony in Last Supper as what bible cited that there was only a single cup that was used by Jesus and shared it with his disciples. Those anomalies, for Langdon and Teabing send the interpretation of Holy Grail into a different view.

People nowadays recognize that the Grail legend speaks about the chalice that holds the blood of Christ (269). In other hand, Teabing and Langdon explain that the Holy Grail is more than such a cup as what Sophie thought. Holy Gail is a metaphor for such a powerful thing (176). "… the grail's description as a chalice is actually an allegory to protect the true nature of Holy Grail That is to say, the legend uses the chalice as a metaphor for something far more important" (258). Holy Grail is not simply a physical chalice but it is a person. A woman who

is sitting in Jesus' right hand, as Da Vinci has painted in the Last Supper. She is Mary Magdalene (259).

Langdon points out that the Grail is literally the ancient symbol for womanhood and the Holy Grail represents the sacred feminine and the goddess, Afterwards, the shape of grail resembles the shape of woman's womb. This symbol communicates femininity, womanhood, and fertility (258). Those meanings of symbol are related to another Magdalene's pseudonym, the Rose, as what Langdon said.

The Rose has always been the premiere symbol of female snottily. In primitive goddess cults, the five petals represent the five stages of female life –birth, menstruation, motherhood menopause, and death. In modern times, the flowering rose resembles the female genital and womb from which all mankind enters world (275).

From the excerpt above, the pseudonym of Magdalene as the rose symbolizes the woman's nature, which is mentioned as female life. In explaining this pseudonym, Langdon wants to clarify about Mary Magdalene's nature, especially in the stage of motherhood. Magdalene is more than a woman with her womb, but she is a sacred feminine whose womb carries a sacred bloodline (This part of discussion is analyzed more in the next subsection).

In France, the legend of Holy Gail is also known as the legend of Sangreal. Here, the word Sangreal derives from San Greal. In the most ancient form, the word Sangreal was divided in a different spot, Sang Real. Sang Real literally means Royal Blood (271). Teabing in his further explanation says that the legend of Holy Grail is a legend of Royal Blood. Therefore, Mary Magdalene as the Holy Grail is eventually a legend about the royal descendant.

Mary Magdalene, genealogically, is of the Howe of Benjamin (269). The Tribe of Benjamin, according to biblical tradition is one of the twelve tribes that constituted the people of Israel, and of the two tribes (along with the Judah) that later became the Jewish people. (The New Encyclopaedia Britannia vol. 2). In the family tree of the tribe of Benjamin, Mary

Magdalene is pointed near the top of genealogy. Her predominant image as a poor whore, according to Teabing, is a smear promotion done by the Early Church to erase the evidence of her powerful family ties (Brown 269).

**2.2.2. The Relationship between Mary Magdalene and Jesus**

As explained above, the legend of Holy Grail is a matter of historical record which is represented by Da Vinci into his Last Supper (264). As Teabing says, Mary Magdalene is not just any person, but she is a woman who carries a powerful secret that, if it is revealed, it will threaten to devastate the very foundation of Christianity (259). This secret is represented in last Supper intrinsically. Teabing and Langdon illustrate that the Last Supper is the area of codes made by Da Vinci to represent the appearance of Mary Magdalene. In their further explanation, they illustrate that The Last Supper practically shouts the viewers that Mary Magdalene and Jesus are a couple. Da Vinci gives some codes to open the representation that both of them are a pair. Jesus and Mary Magdalene are clothed as mirror images of one another. Jesus wears a red robe and blue cloak. Mary Magdalene wears a blue robe and red cloak. Those, according to Teabing, indicate Yin and Yang[5]. The other code is the V shape which is formed from the sitting position of Jesus and Magdalene. As Teabing illustrates, Jesus and Mary Magdalene appear to be joined at the hip and are leaning away from one another as if to create this clearly delineated negative space between them, the indisputable V shape at the focal point of the painting (264).

The V shape, as Landon has drawn earlier, is the symbol for the Grail, the Chalice, and the female womb. As Langdon explained before that Magdalene is a rose, a sacred feminine whose womb carries a sacred lineage. The sacred lineage, here, is merely Jesus' bloodline. Another obvious shape seen by the viewer is a letter of the alphabet, letter M. which is clearly shown if the viewers view Jesus and Magdalene as compositional rather than as people (265).

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[5] Yin and Yang is a concept of dualism in ancient Chinese philosophy, describing how seemingly opposite or contrary forces may actually be complementary (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yin_and_yang)

Conspiracy theorists, according to Teabing, explain that the letter M stands for *Matrimonio* or

Mary Magdalene (265) Matrimonio means marriage. In short, the last Supper is simply a

representation of the relationship (marriage) between Mary Magdalene and Jesus.

Jesus as a married man, for Langdon, makes infinitely more sense than standard biblical

view of Jesus as a bachelor. Jesus is a Jew, and the social decorum during the life time of

Jesus, virtually forbid a Jewish man to be a bachelor. Moreover Langdon explains that in

Jewish custom, celibacy is condemned and there is an obligation for a Jewish father to find a

suitable wife for his son. Therefore, if Jesus were not married, at least one of the bible's

gospels would mention it and offer some explanation of his unnatural state of bachelorhood.

(265) ( see Annex 1).

There is none of gospels that illustrates about unmarried Jesus. Most of them do not

mention whether Jesus gets married or not. However, there are two gospels record about

romantic relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene. Supporting the idea of the

romantic relationship, which is more explained as the marriage. Teabing shows two gospels

that record the story of special relationship between Mary Magdalene and Jesus. Firstly, he

shows the illustration of that marriage in 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. 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?"(266).

He explains that the word 'companion' in Aramaic word literally means spouse. Thus, the

companion of the Saviour' is explained as 'the spouse of the Saviour', that is Mary Magdalene.

By showing that Jesus used to kiss Mary Magdalene on her mouth, the illustration of Gospel

Philip clearly explains that Mary Magdalene is a special woman for Jesus, and Jesus loves her

more than he does to all disciples (266). Further, Teabing explains that kissing in the mouth at that period, can only be done by the married couple.

In the gospel of Mary Magdalene, it is illustrated that Peter is jealous to Mary Magdalene because she is a special woman for Jesus and Peter said, "Did the Saviour really speak with a woman without our knowledge? Are we turn about and all listen to her? Did he prefer her to us?" And Levi answered: "Peter. you have always been hot-tempered. Now I see you contending against the woman like an adversary. If the Saviour made her worthy, who are you indeed to reject her? Surely the Saviour knows her very well. That is why he loved her more than us "(268).

According to the HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism, Gospel of Mary Magdalene is a sowed century apocryphal account of Mary Magdalene comforting the other grieving disciples and her report of secret teachings she had received from Jesus including an account of the soul's journey past hostile powers. The male disciples challenge her words as being strange and deny that the Saviour would confide in a woman (831). Through this gospel, Teabing describes that Mary Magdalene has a special position for Jesus. That makes Peter gives his objection of why Jesus prefers her rather than the other disciples. Furthermore, Teabing explains That Peter is a sexist because he places Mary Magdalene, who is woman, into a lower level than a man. Therefore, levi calls Peter as a Jealous and hot-tempered man.

If the legend of Holy Grail or Sangreal is a legend about Royal blood, then, it will make a different sense here. Besides of her royal bloodline as one of Benjamin tribe, her representation as Holy Grail supports her position as a special woman for Jesus. As explained by Teabing above, that the legend of the Holy Grail is a legend about royal blood, when Grail legend speaks about the chalice that holds the blood of Christ, it speaks, in fact, about Mary Magdalene the female womb that carries Jesus royal bloodline (270). In other words, she is the Divine mother, the mother of the royal bloodline of Jesus Christ (273) known as the

Maovingian bloodline. This Christ's lineage still exists in the modem time, especially in France. The Merovingian is known from their family name, Plantard and Saint-Clair (278).

**2. 2.3. Mary Magdalene's Role**

The desorption of some representations above explains that Mary Magdalene has a significant position in Jesus' history. However, the notion of Mary Magdalene as the Holy Grail, the Sangreal, or even the Divine mother is widely become the matter of Mary Magdalene's position in Christian history. Peter's reaction, as stated in the gospel of Mary Magdalene above, in rejecting Mary Magdalene as a woman to whom Jesus love more than other disciples is not only because Jesus prefers her, but the stake is far greater than that such mere affection. At this point in the gospels, Jesus worries he will soon be captured and crucified. Therefore, he gives Mary Magdalene an instruction on how to carry on his Church after he is gone. Teabing explains that based on the unaltered gospels, Gospel of Mary Magdalene and Gospel of Philip, it is not Peter to whom Christ gave directions with which to establish the Christian Church, It is Mary Magdalene (268). Accordingly, Mary Magdalene's role as the first apostle, should be lied for the establishment of church, not Peter's role as what the church nowadays believe that the establishment of Church is given by Jesus to St Peter. This is a bit strange for some people because in that period man has a higher position than woman's position. Teabing says that Jesus is obviously a feminist, since he instructs Mary Magdalene to continue his role.

Mary's genealogy as one of House of Benjamin makes her position be more dangerous to the Church. Her marriage to Jesus can be seen as a threatening power to the Church because that marriage combines two bloodlines of Kings. Based on the book of Matthew, Jesus was of the House of David, a descendant of King Solomon (king of Jews). Then, as Teabing's explanation, by marrying into the powerful House of Benjamin, Jesus combines two royal

bloodlines, creating a potential political union with the potential of making a legitimate claim to the throne and restoring the line of kings as it was under Solomon (270).

In order to defend itself against Magdalene's power, the Church perpetuated Magdalene's image as a whore and buried evidence of Christ's marriage to her. Thereby, defusing any potential claims that Christ had an existing lineage and was a mortal prophet (268) and giving the role of Church to St. Peter.

Nevertheless, the Jews in France still regard Magdalene as a sacred royal family and refer her as the progenitor of the royal lineage of kings. Countless, scholars of that era chronicled Mary Magdalene's days in France (276).

Later on, *The Da Vinci Code* explains that the quest of Holy Grail nowadays, is simply about finding the secret of Mary Magdalene that is chronicled into some documents. The documents are buried within a sarcophagus on which Magdalene's dead body is laid.

## Chapter 3

**Foucauldian Reading of the Different Representations of Mary Magdalene and the Holy Grail from New Historicism Perspective**

*"The imaginary is not formed in opposition to reality as its denial or compensation; it grows among signs, from book to book, in the interstice of repetitions and commentaries; it is born and takes shape in the interval between books. It is the phenomena of the library."*

-Michel Foucault

The new historicist perspective focuses on giving both literary and non literary texts an equal position. The way Michel Foucault sees the couple History/Literature is a bit different than what Greenbalt believes. Generally from New historicism perspective, what is called the absolute truth is just a conception or it doesn't exist.

"The anti-establishment" ethos of New Historicism was profoundly influenced by Foucault's theories of Power/Knowledge and Discourse. Foucault observed that the discourse of an era brings into being concepts, oppositions and hierarchies, which are products and propagators of power, and these, determine what are "knowledge", "truth" and "normal" at a given time. Drawing on Jeremy Bentham's notion of the panoptic surveillant State, that exerts its power through discursive practices, circulating ideology through the body-politic, Foucault highlighted the subtle, indirect oppression and the "capillary" modes of power that controls individuals and their knowledge. His primary concern has been with power's relationship to the discursive formations in society that make "knowledge" (Nasrullah MAMBROL).

Foucault comprehended power as persistently verbalized learning and the other way around; that information dependably underwrites the situation of the ground-breaking and that information is made by power structures. Foucault put together his methodology both with respect to his hypothesis of the points of confinement of group social learning and on his system of analyzing an expansive cluster of reports so as to comprehend the episteme of a

specific time. Along these lines, following the Foucauldian method of examination, New Historicists try to discover instances of intensity and appearance of digressive practices, how they are scattered inside the content, and how they add to setting up the "enormity" or 'disappointment' of a content at a given purpose of time.

This part of discussion tries to answer several points including why the representation of Mary Magdalene in the official history is different to the representation of Mary Magdalene in *The Da Vinci Code* seen from the perspective of New Historicism.

Mary Magdalene, in both the historical perception and the novel, is described as a follower of Jesus and playing a role around the time of resurrection. Moreover, those both descriptions are believed to place Mary Magdalene as a woman playing an essential role in Jesus' life. However, there are some differences in detail of the interpretation of her role and her characterization.

Mary Magdalene, in the official history, is represented through the New Testament. Here, her character is captured from her last name Magdalene, which explains where she comes from. Her representation is seen from her role as Jesus' follower. She firstly, appears as a woman from whom Jesus casts the seven devils. Next, she accompanies Jesus with the other disciples to the Galilee, then, she comes in the time of Jesus' crucifixion, and she is a witness of Jesus' resurrection.

While in the novel, her character is illustrated through Da Vinci's The Last Supper, in which Mary Magdalene is illustrated as the Holy Grail. Here, Holy Grail is a symbol for her role as Jesus' follower is different to the official history version. In the novel, she is more than such a follower; she is on whom Jesus lays the role of church, she is the first apostle.

The different representation in the novel goes even further on the representation of Mary Magdalene as the woman who is marginalized from the history. It can be seen through Brown's description in *The Da Vinci Code* when he illustrates how the altered history of Mary

Magdalene is eliminated by the early church in order to strengthen the foundation of Christianity. The father of the early church did not recognize Magdalene's role as Jesus' spouse. However, they provoked Magdalene as a whore. This labelling was delivered in the early church through the statement of Pope Gregory 1, the Great. Although the Roman Catholic Church restored her name in 1969, it did not make a significant change to the altered history of Mary Magdalene since her role, as Jesus' spouse, still was not republished to the mass. For Brown, this labelling is an effort of the Roman Catholic Church to defame Mary Magdalene and eliminate her role from the Christianity. The Church needs to convince the world that the mortal prophet Jesus is a divine being. As what Teabing says in this following statement: "Magdalene was no such thing -the prostitute-. That unfortunate misconception is the legacy of a smear campaign launched by the early church. The church needed to defame Mary Magdalene in eider to cover up her dangerous secret 'her role as the Holy Gail" (264).

Jesus as Messiah, had an obvious influence and important figure for their follow. After he was gone, the early church needed to upgrade his status in order to acquire the majesty of Jesus. The church needed to defame the representation of Mary Magdalene as Jesus' spouse, since it was seen as a distortion in reconstructing a new status of Jesus as a divine man (254). Because of that reason, they announced Magdalene as a whore. Their effort in constructing the standard image of Magdalene has been done for more than 1400 years and it still works up to now, even when the Vatican has restored her name. As David Tresemer and Laura Lea Cannon via Lynn Picknett say that:

> Only in 1969 did the Catholic Church officially repeal Gregory's labelling
> of Mary as a whore. thereby admitting their error -though the image of Mary
> Magdalene as the penitent whore has remained in the public teachings of all
> Christian denominations Like a small erratum buried in the back pages of a

newspaper, the Church's correction goes unmerited, while the initial and

incorrect article continues to influence readers. (Burstein 14)

Although the Roman Catholic Church repealed her representation as a prostitute, that labelling still becomes her predominant image up to now. We have to recognize that her predominant image as a prostitute has been spreading for more than 1400 years. Consequently, it is difficult to turn around people's mind set about her into some one new, that she is not a prostitute but one of Jesus' patrons. Therefore, the predominant image as a whore is still renowned among the Christian today.

By this understanding, it can be seen that reality including history is not something taken for granted to it is simply a construction What people believe that Mary Magdalene is a whore or simply as one of Jesus' follower (by eliminating ha role as Jesus' spouse or the first apostle) is just a matter of definition which is intentionally created. They do not realize that she is represented like that way because such notion has been constructed by people or even by the Institution with their own agenda. Further, this construction can only be undertaken by certain people or institution, which has a ruling power and purposes to maintain such power. As Foucault says in *The Order of Discourse* (Budianta 48-49) that institution wields the power through a process of definition and exclusion. In this case, the institution which has a ruling power is the Roman Catholic Church. They have the authority to define what is possible to say toward the representation of Mary Magdalene. They attempt to regulate the knowledge about Mary Magdalene, what image of her can be written, thought and acted upon in a certain viewpoint. Through this notion, the Roman Catholic Church has taken a certain position as Foucault says as 'discursive formation', by governing certain idea and denying other perspectives to maintain such power to construct the image of Mary Magdalene.

Brown's idea in representing Mary Magdalene is similar to what Haskins explains in *Mary Magdalene the Model of Women in the Church*, that Mary Magdalene has been a model for

Christians, male and female since she has been represented as the sinner redeemed since the sixth century. Her closeness to Jesus has been a topic of fascination since early Christianity. She represents the fallible female redeemed, as well as her role as intercessor with Jesus. She, as first apostles and disciple, is the model for women in church (26). David Van Biema says in *Time Magazine* "Gregory prompted Mary Magdalene as a whore in order to provide missing back-story for a figure of obvious importance" (Burstein 11). Jane Schaberg, a professor of religious and women's studies, in her book entitled *The Resurrection of Mary Magdalene* writes "the pattern done by the early church to eliminate Magdalene is a common one, the powerful woman disempowered, remembered as a whore or whorish" (12). As Brown says in his official website:

> As soon as people understand that the few Gospels included in the Bible are not the only version of the Christ story, they begin to sense contradictions. Magdalene was obvious. .. Her role was deliberately distorted, a smear campaign by the early church fathers. as one of my novel characters declares, 'the greatest cover-up in human story. [6]

Nevertheless, for Roman Catholic Church, the statement of Pope Gregory I in representing Mary Magdalene as a whore is simply a misconception. There are some reasons, for Gregory, in claiming Magdalene as the what. His remarkable assertion was based on the idea that Mary was the unnamed sinful woman who anoints Jesus' feet in the seventh chapter of Luke, as well as that of Mary of Bethany ( Darman 48). His assumption was also based on the last name of Mary, which indicated her hometown Magdalene. In that period, Magdalene was a poor town having a bad morality (E Olson and Miesel 78)   Haskins says that Gregory's misinterpretation is simply an effort to work out who all the Gospel characters were; there are several Marys in the New Testament which led to confusion (Burstein 24) Jansen explains that through his

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[6] HARDtalk Dan Brown, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uEtOWFQYDO4

statement in 591 C. E, Gregory I tried to answer definitively all the questions that his Christian community had been asking about the relation of one Mary to another. In her further explanation, she says that Gregory reconfigured Magdalene to become a great saint through her sacrament. At this point, Magdalene provided a hope for ordinary sinners that they could be redeemed too (Burman 50) or she became an example or an idol for every Christian.

This misconception for New Historicist is considered as a social language created by a particular condition at a particular time and place, and it expresses a particular way of undemanding things. In this case, the dominant image of Magdalene as a prostitute is shaped by a particular condition on which Gregory should define three names of Mary in the bible, created by the Roman Catholic Church as the ruling power in a particular time and place. Additionally, this dominant image still works up to now.

Another example is the different interpretation toward the content of the gospel of Philip. The sentence "...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…"( Brown 266). creates a various interpretations from both official and non-official interpreters. Brown interprets the word 'companion' as' spouse' and the sentence 'used to kiss her often on her mouth' is a symbol of the physical relationship between Jesus and Magdalene, that Jesus loves Magdalene ( Brown 266). Meanwhile, according to Deirdre Good, a professor of the New Testament, Jesus kissed Magdalene s an indication of their special relationship in the capacity of spiritual insight, not as a symbol of sexual relationship between them ( Burstein 48). That is to say, an objective interpretation about the representation of Magdalene is difficult to produce, since this is only the matter of interpretation.

These different interpretations occur since each interpreter has her/his own knowledge background and purpose in doing so. Their intention and ideology influences the way they interpret something, including their interpretation about the representation of Mary

Magdalene. That is to say, for New Historicists, our perception of Magdalene and also of the Holy Grail is merely a matter of interpretation, not a fact. Even when the Roman Catholic Church and other traditional historians believe that they are representing the 'fact' about Magdalene, which are obviously based on their research and processed through some methods, the created story is influenced by their ideologies and interests in determining which facts or information are regarded important and which are left out and vice versa, Dan Brown, as another interpreter, has his own knowledge background and purpose in doing so. In opening page of the novel, entitled Fact, he writes, "…all description of artwork, architecture, documents and secret rituals are accurate" (Brown, Fact page), it cannot be accepted as the most accurate facts, inside historical accuracy is never a certainty. It just offers us another interpretation of 'fact'as Brown's intention. In addition, he writes in his official website that "…The Da Vinci Code was based part on a hope that this ancient mystery would be unveiled to  wider audience" [7] .From his excerpt, it can be known that Brown wants to create an opposite history of Magdalene within his novel "…Now I see you contending against the woman as an adversary. If the saviour made her worthy, who are you indeed to reject her? Surely the saviour knows her very well. That is why he loved her more than us" (268)

Through Teabing, Brown explains that at the point of the gospel of Magdalene, Jesus worries he will soon be captured and crucified. Therefore, he gives Mary Magdalene instructions on how to carry on his church after he is gone. According to that gospel, he explains that Peter is not to whom Jesus gives direction to establish the Christian Church, but it is Magdalene.

While for Roman Catholic Church, the first apostle is Peter and the role of church is laid on him. It is hosed on the canonical gospel and Matthew gospel. According to *The Harpercollins: Encyclopaedia of Catholicism "*… Peter is formally designed 'rock' of the new

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[7] Brown official website Danbrown.com/the-da-Vinci-code-young-adult-edition/

church. Given keys of authority to admit or exclude, and promised that his role in the group would survive death" (Neyrey 911 ).

In the process of producing the conception of knowledge related to the role of church, the Roman Catholic Church is the winner since it is more powerful than the other. It governs the conception of Peter's role and embodies the 'truth' about it. Consequently, the Roman Catholic Church construct Magdalene's role as the 'untrue' version since this notion does not suit to their perception. At this point, based on New Historicism perspective, the Roman Catholic Church has one tradition where Peter plays a role of tremendous significance and Magdalene is on the margins. While in another tradition, as Brown's belief, Magdalene is the significant figure and Peter is suspect. The different interpretations, here, engenders the different belief system. However, as Foucault argues that the winner writes history, Peter's version as the one that comes down to the Christian and conquers the belief system among them.

In representing Mary Magdalene, Brown uses the books like *Holy Blood Holy Grail* by Michael Baigent ,Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln, *The Templar Revelation* by Linn Picknett; *The Woman with the Alabaster Jar* by Margaret Starbird (273). He also determines the apocryphal gospels in shaping the figure of Magdalene; those accounts do not go along with the account of Roman Catholic Church. Brown wants to unveil another version of Magdalene which is not revealed by the canonical books. Brown prefers using non-canonical books in representing Magdalene than canonical books in order to create a counter history of Magdalene. He assumes that canonical books are one-sided account in representing Magdalene and the so-called legend of the Holy Grail. As stated in the novel, there are more than eighty gospels recorded the life of Jesus. Some of them describe the life story of Mary Magdalene in detail (251). But the early church just takes four gospels as the relevant ones. Those are the gospel of Luke, Matthew, Mark and John. Two gospels record about Mary Magdalene in detail, the gospel of Mary Magdalene and the gospel of Philip are not chosen as

the relevant ones, since those two gospels do not suit to the early church's point of view. Further, they categorize those gospels as the apocryphal gospels and the Christian cannot use these books as relevant account.

From the explanation above, it is understandable that the ruling power has their authority to categorize the so-called accurate, relevant or even fact by classifying the account. Moreover, it can be seen that the history of Mary Magdalene is being limited by many discriminations from the Roman Catholic Church. For example, the Roman Catholic Church discriminate the history of Magdalene by classifying the account, which text should be regarded as official account and which text should be eliminated and regarded as non-official account. This notion is accepted unconsciously by the Christian, especially the follower of Roman Catholic Church as the most accurate account to represent Mary Magdalene.

However, new historicists cannot accept this master narrative, the single cultural point of him that presumes to offer the only accurate version, as the most accurate one because they pay attention to the equal representation of historical narratives from all groups. The representations from other sources, such as those of Brown, should also he considered as a valuable input in interpreting the representation. This notion can he applied when we are viewing the follower of Magdalene's role. They spread quietly due to the dominant representation of Magdalene provided by the Roman Catholic Church, which is different to their faith. The prejudice of them, then, is that they are the follower of wrong cult. Their different faith is seen as a wrong interpretation since the official history, as the winner of history, provides the grand narrative. For New Historicist, the little narrative, such as Brown's novel, should be given an equal attention. Hence, should not only concentrate on the representation, which is given by the ruling power.

According to Lisa Rogak in her book, *The Man behind The Vinci Code: An Unauthorized Biography of Dan Brown* that Brown's background as the son of a Presidential Award

winning math professor and a professional sacred musician influence his curiosity to the symbols and codes. He says that he has grown up surrounded by the paradoxical philosophies of science and religion. His wife is an art historian whom fascinated to Da Vinci's works. Brown first learned of the mysteries hidden in Da Vinci's painting while he was studying art history at the University of Seveille in Spain. Years later, while researching *Angels and Demons* (his previous novel) and the Vatican Secret Archives, he encountered the Da Vinci enigma yet again. He arranged a trip to the Louvre Museum where he was fortunate enough to view the originals of some Da Vinci's most famous works as well as discuss them with an art historian, his own wife, who helped him better to understand the mystery behind their surprising anomalies (Brown 205).

Brown realizes that after those experiences, his religious perspective including the story of Magdalene turns into something new. Brown believes that the story of Holy Grail is obviously the story about a sacred woman, Mary Magdalene. He believes that the marriage of Jesus-Mary Magdalene is the matter of historical record. As what he has studied, Da Vinci is representing Magdalene's in his painting 'the Last Supper' that she is Jesus spouse whose womb carries Jesus' bloodline. Based on some non-biblical references, Brown believes that Mary Magdalene is the true role of church that has been eliminated from her right by the early church, because by marrying to Jesus, she creates a potent power to distort the power of church, and reconstructs the line of authority (Brown 270).

By constructing an opposite history of Mary Magdalene, Brown creates another version of history and produces such power through discourses involved in the novel. To be conscious or not, how Brown contextualizes the information is based on his knowledge background including the chosen material that he used in representing Magdalene, so that the reader can grasp the same idea of Magdalene through which he is viewing Magdalene's historical issue at hand. Though selecting process, Brown has already been influenced by a certain discursive

formation. He has his conceptual frameworks that allow some modes of thought of Magdalene and deny others in governing the idea. What Brown has studied in the University of Seveille influences his conceptual framework in selecting the history of Magdalene and giving his preference to idea of Magdalene as Jesus' spouse. He denies the provided idea of the Roman Catholic Clutch that Magdalene is just one of Jesus' followers. He uses the conceptual framework to interpret Da Vinci's The Last Supper, that this painting is representing the appearance of Mary Magdalene intrinsically. He eliminates the other idea that The Last Supper is a painting about sacred meal between Jesus and his twelve male disciples. He rejects the constructed interpretation related to the master narrative of Magdalene and contextualizes his version within this novel.

There are various narratives related to the story of Mary Magdalene beside of Brown's or Roman Catholic Church's. Another example is taken from Karen King in her article, *Letting Mary Magdalene Speak.* She is one of the founders of belief a multi-faith e-community, which is designed to help individuals meet their religious and spiritual needs. According to her:

> Mary is the apostolic guarantor of a theological position that lost out in the battle for belief. The gospel of Mary, for example, presents a radical interpretation of Jesus' teaching as a path to inner spiritual knowledge ... it presents the most straightforward and convincing argument in any early Christian writing for the legitimacy of women's leadership... and it asks us to rethink the basis for church authority. All written in the name of a woman. (Burstein 57)

Through her explanation. it can be grasped that the Gospel of Mary represents a woman in a very different level in the theological position. A woman has a same position as well as a man in the church. Therefore, in our own time, she writes that feminists are working to ensure

that the 'true' story of Mary Magdalene is heard by a broader range of the public. Mary

Magdalene is a symbol for the work of ideologically committed feminist scholarship (55). In

the eastern tradition, Magdalene is celebrated on Mary Magdalene's feast day, July 22.

Haskins explain that this tradition is also celebrated by the Magdeleines in France. (Burstein

36) here is another example how certain information is interpreted by the interpreter. King

interprets Mary Magdalene from the discourse of feminism. Thus, as new historicists regard,

no discourse is permanent and no discourse can represent the complexity of Magdalene

representation in a whole.

These various narratives show that it is difficult to produce a reliable representation of

Magdalene due to its complexity. From these examples, it can be known that the

interpretation of Magdalene history never produce a final moment of absolute truth. Instead,

the interpretations of her are always followed by other interpretations. In addition, the

plurality or narratives and equal representations from all groups have an equal significance in

interpreting history. Because the purpose of New Historicism is that to make our

interpretation toward history will never be controlled by the ruling power's perspective

anymore.

As we saw above, for new historicists, the representations of Magdalene are not viewed as

the facts to be documented but as texts to be read in order to help us to understand, from the

various accounts, how the interpreters interpret their experience and how we can interpret

those interpretations. Brown in his literary text *The Da Vinci Code* wants to open our mind

that there is no single truth in this world, since the so-called truth is a matter of interpretation.

Further, Foucault says that the so-called truth or fact is not the absolute sense but of discursive

formation sustaining the regime of power. As what Brown points out in the Washington Post,

"In the past. knowledge was something that was handed down by authority figures. but now we seek and discover it for ourselves. However, I think it's wonderful that people are discussing their spirituality on new levels " (Brown, Online).

So according to Brown and by the lenses of Foucault, both texts 'historical and literary' are two faces of the same coin. It is just a matter of perspective and interpretation, Dan Brown calls Christ a wonderful man (a prophet) while denying that he was anything more (divine). Brown's fictional Grail hunter for instance, says,

"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" (Brown 234). The different facts mentioned in this novel are a controversial subject of research from some historians' perspective, but to others is just a general truth. In Islam for instance, Jesus The Messiah is exactly what Brown's claimed 'a prophet' and not a divine creature:

> "(And mention) when the angels said, 'O Mary, indeed God gives you the good
> news of a word from Him, whose name will be the Messiah Jesus, the son of
> Mary, held in honor in this world and in the Hereafter, and of those who are
> near to God.' 'He will speak to the people in the cradle, and in old age, and he
> will be of the righteous.' She said, 'My Lord, how can I have a son when no
> man has touched me.'" (Quran,3:45-51)

Jesus is an indication of God's capacity, where God demonstrated individuals that He could make Jesus without a dad, as He made Adam with no guardians. Jesus is likewise a sign that God is well ready to revive all individuals after their demise, since the person who makes from nothing is very ready to breathe life into back. He is likewise an indication of the Day of Judgment, when he comes back to the earth and kills the Anti-Christ in the End Times.

"Indeed, Jesus is like Adam in front of God. He created him from dust, then said to him, 'Be,' and he was." (Quran, Yacine Surah 3:59).

Adam was made when God stated, "Be," and he to be without a dad or a mother. As was Jesus made by the Word of God. In the event that the surprising birth of Jesus makes him divine, at that point Adam merits a greater amount of that godlikeness on the grounds that Jesus at any rate had one parent, while Adam had none. As Adam isn't divine, so is Jesus not divine, however both are unassuming hirelings of God.

Fact and fiction in *The Da Vinci Code* about Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and the Holy Grail , are just different interpretations and interpretations of those interpretations as well, all based on the Background Knowledge and the ideologies of the interpreter.

## Conclusion

*The Da Vinci Code* narrates the life story of Mary Magdalene in a very different viewpoint to official historical account. Mary Magdalene is represented as the Holy Grail, a sacred vessel. In the ancient, the vessel symbolizes woman womb. At this point, Mary Magdalene is a woman whose womb has kept Jesus' bloodline. Mary Magdalene, in *The Da Vinci Code*, is illustrated as Jesus' spouse. Further, according to this novel, her role is as the first apostle in whom the authority of Church should be laid on. Here, Brown as the author confessed that what he has represented in his novel is mere based on his belief.

People nowadays know her as the prostitute. This notion had been declared by Pope Gregory I. However, in 1969, the Vatican restored her name, and represented her as one of Jesus' follower. According to Roman Catholic Church, her representation is as what the gospels of New Testament has illustrated about her. She is a woman whom presents at Jesus' crucifixion, and the witness of Jesus resurrection.

Based on the perspective of New Historicism, both fiction account and official history account can be analysed together and interrogated each other. For New Historicists, those different representations of Mary Magdalene and The Holy Gail are only a matter of interpretation, not a fact. Since it is only a matter of interpretation, both representations should be given an equal position. One cannot be regarded having more accuracy than the other.

For Brown, applying non-canonical gospels in representing Magdalene and engendering a different version of Mary Magdalene is an effort to create an opposite history from which the Roman Catholic Church has made. For the Roman Catholic Church, the accurate representation of Mary Magdalene is as what the biblical sources have illustrated. New Historicists argue that in creating a representation of things, the interpreters are influenced by the discourses around them. Both Brown and the Roman Catholic Church have passed the process of selecting and contextualizing the information related to Mary Magdalene. Both

Brown and the Roman Catholic Church have chosen their own discursive formation in representing the figure of Holy Grail and Mary Magdalene based on their own ideologies and interests. According to Brown, Mary Magdalene and The Holy Grail are the image of one individual. This conception is a dangerous secret that the Priory of Sion kept hiding and calling themselves the protectors of the Grail. The idea of the existence of Jesus' bloodline is considered as a huge offence to Christianity as a religion and as a civilization. Knowing that the basic teachings of Christianity are based on the 'fact' that Jesus Christ is a Divine and not only a prophet, this can explain the hard reaction of the Christian. However, according to The Roman Catholic Church, some books of the New Testament are representing Mary the Magdalene as a sinner, others as one of Jesus devotees. The Holy Grail is a tangible object (vase, cup,or a chalice) differs in shape and function from a text to another. For some scholars it's a cup in which Jesus drank wine in The Last Supper, for others is the cup that held Jesus blood during the crucifixion. Brown has a totally different representation of the Holy Grail, even though it is the same concept Jesus Christ Blood; Brown's interpretation of the so-called fact of The Holy Grail is considered as contras to Christian Teaching. Therefore, representing things can never be objective since the interpreters have their own background and tendency in doing so.

According to Foucault's view on history, we have to reveal how any given period discloses several pasts, several connexion forms, several level of importance, several networks of determinations for one and the same science, instead of presenting a monolithic version of a given period. So unveiling past events and past periods doesn't necessary gives one answer. To Foucault even History can have many versions. So, the representations of Mary Magdalene and the Holy Grail in The Roman Catholic Church are what stood still, only because the Church represented Power that era. And, History is written by the winner or as Napoleone Bonaparte said:"What is history, but a fable agreed upon?". Also, literature is the

mirror of the so-called truth seen by the author's own perspective and interpreted in his own way; both can be just the two faces of one coin that we call fact.

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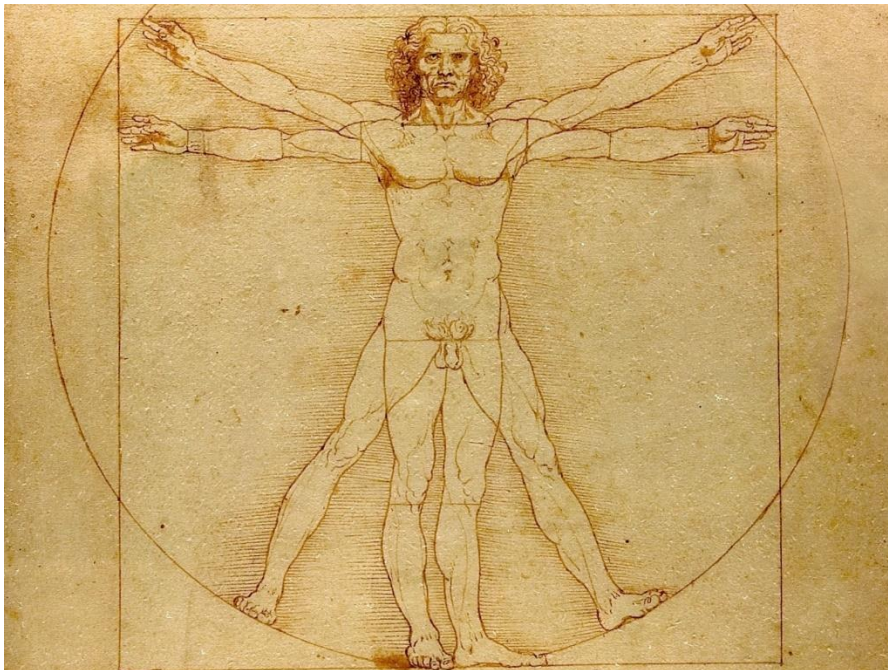
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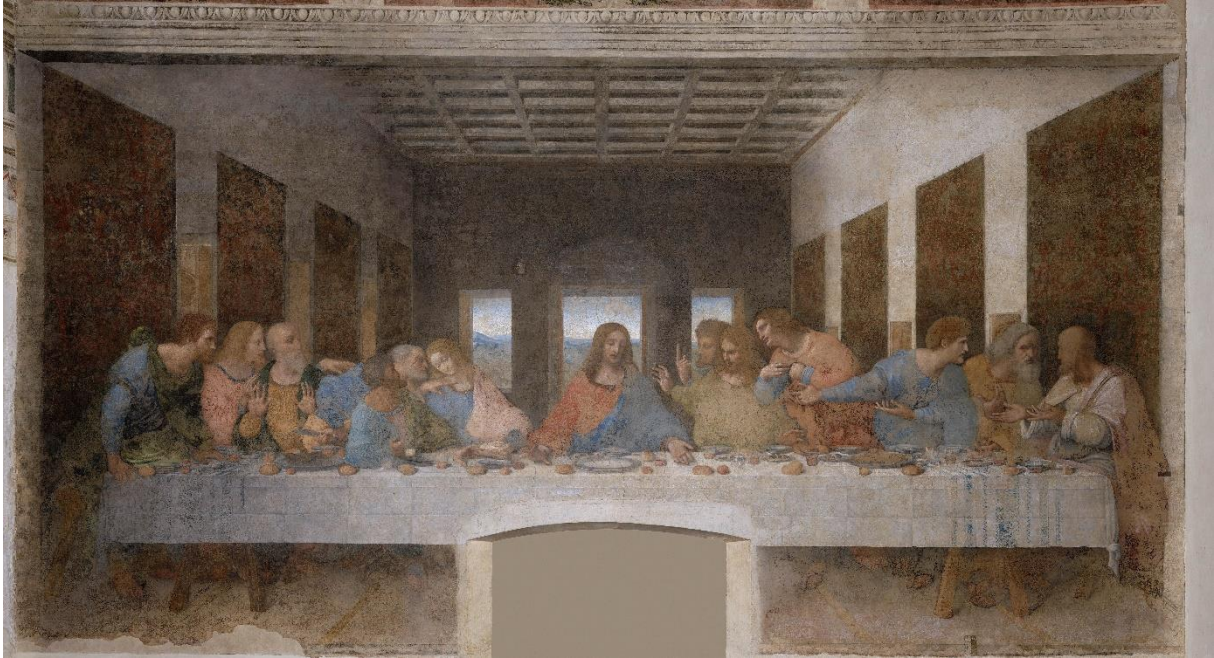


Annexe 1: The Last Supper ,Leonardo D vinci. Santa Maria delle Grazie Milano, ITALY



Annexe 2: The Vitruvian Man by Da Vinci. Gallery dell'Accademia, Venice,ITALY