Chapter Two

Foucault, Kristeva and Boundary Crossing Theories

Some students and critics also protest that literary theory 'gets in between the reader and the work'. The simple response to this is that without some kind of theory, however unreflective and implicit, we would not know what a 'literary work' was in the first place, or how we were to read it.

—Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* ii.

I. Power Control:

In *Keywords*, Raymond Williams asserts three distinct meanings of the "popular" [1] (199). Raymond Williams' definition of "popular" (199) can resonate with many discussions related to *The Da Vinci Code*. Judging from Raymond Williams' definition of popular culture, *The Da Vinci Code* can be regarded as "both structurally imposed and an oppositional expression," (Easthope 73). In other words, the book, as a popular detective novel, possesses conflicting elements. With these heterogeneous characteristic, *The Da Vinci Code* can hence be "valued and critically analyzed" (Barker 47) since it represents the experience and practices of average people in real life (McGuigan 4). By representing the real life experiences of the common people, the book becomes an arena "where cultural hegemony [2] is secured

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[1] For Raymond Williams, the first characteristic of a "popular" work is that it "courts the favor of the people by undue practices" (199). The second characteristic of popular culture is that it is an "inferior kind of work" (199). The third one, Raymond asserts, is that it "deliberately sets out to win favor" (199). Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*, satisfying all three characteristics of the popular work, will surely generate more discussion on this issue.

[2] Gramsci portrays hegemony as "a continuous process of formation and superseding of unstable equilibria . . . between the interests of the fundamental group and those of the subordinate groups . . .

and challenged" (Barker 48). Stuart Hall further underscores the crucial function of the popular literature.[3] Therefore, I will explore *The Da Vinci Code* as it relates to the challenge to social power that this immensely popular book represents.

In this chapter, I will first indicate how and why I employ Michel Foucault's theories to expose how power is built throughout history and how the individual internalizes power and suppresses himself. Meanwhile, I will also deal with feminine issues since they are also a core theme in *The Da Vinci Code*. I have attempted to supplement Foucault's power theories with Julia Kristeva's psychoanalysis so that I can analyze both the macro structure of power control and the micro development of feminine resistance. After a discussion of Foucauldian theories, I will employ Kristeva's theories to discuss how the maternal drive is oppressed as a revolutionary resistance against symbolic control. Using Kristeva's psychoanalytical theories, I can delineate how feminine subjects are demonized and how the individual sees femininity as a form of resistance.

Before employing Foucaudian theory, I will discuss why Foucault's theory can be applied to the literary text: *The Da Vinci Code*. Concerning the relationship between Foucauldian power analysis and detective fiction, William Spanos has discussed the relationship between the Foucauldian panoptic[4] theory and the literary text. He points out "what Foucault does not say but what his argument suggests is that the panoptic model is also applicable to literary texts" (205). D. A. Miller deems that Foucault's analysis of the discipline enables the literary critic to discover "the modes

equilibrium in which the interests of the dominate group prevails, but only up to a certain point" (Gramsci, 1968:182). In other words, the cultural hegemony is never formed as a static entity. For Gramsci, the hegemony is continuously remade and rewon, which renders the possibility of "a counter-hegemony bloc of subordinate groups and classes" (Barker 61).
[3] Hall stresses that the concept of popular literature disquiets not only the quality of the high and low culture but also the very act of cultural classification, which is made by and through power (Hall).
[4] See footnote 7.

of 'social control' . . ." (Hull 1). Miller highlights the validity of applying Foucauldian theory to the literary work. He claims that the Foucaulidan theory is crucial when analyzing detective fiction. Judging from the Foucauldian panoptic theory, critics can perceive the "most pragmatic embodiment in detective fiction" within its narrative techniques (Miller 28). For Seltzer, detective fiction has a very close relationship with the Foucauldian panoptic theory (34). Therefore, my application of Foucauldian theory is not only proper but also helpful for critics who wish to view the implicit political workings within the novel. In other words, with Foucauldian theory, I can analyze the workings of implicit political power in *The Da Vinci Code*. As a consequence, I will mainly use Foucault's ideas in *Discipline and Punishment* to highlight the use of power control throughout *The Da Vinci Code*.

In *Discipline and Punishment*, Foucault surveys how sovereign power was formed to control the individual in ancient times (Smith 162). Philips Smith categorizes four characteristics of the sovereign power. First, sovereign power designed punishment to be brutal, and included torture and corporal punishment in the eighteenth century (Smith 124). Barry Smart further claims that "the criminal under the pain of torture legitimated both the torture and the accusation through a confession of guilt" (Smart 81) Sovereign power makes punishment brutal for two reasons. On the one hand, brutal punishment is used to "extract confession of guilt" (Sheridan 140). On the other, brutal punishment is regarded as a legal method to obtain the truth (140). Foucault points out that brutal way will not be considered unjust if the prisoner is guilty, and brutal punishment can be "exculpation" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment* 40) if the prisoner is innocent. In other words, if the prisoner is guilty, he deserves brutal punishment. If he is innocent, brutal punishment will be a reasonable test to prove his innocence. From either point of view, the sovereign power can find a

way to legalize its brutal punishment. Only through this brutal punishment can the judgment of the sovereign power be justified. Therefore, the truth can only be valid when the suspect overcomes brutal punishment (Smart 81). This explains why Pope Clement has to torture and burn the knights "mercilessly" (Dan Brown 173). Only through this mercilessly punishment can Pope Clement both extract confessions of guilt, and make his punishment a legal way to obtain the truth.

Second, punishment will only be executed when the sovereign power is challenged (Smith 124). In practice, any deeds breaking the law will be interpreted as deeds threatening the sovereign power (Sheridan 141). Therefore, all crime becomes high treason against the sovereign power (Sheridan 141). The purpose of punishment is to assure the absolute domination of sovereign power. It exhibits the ruler's effort to assure their absolute domination. In *The Da Vinci Code*, thousands of the knights have to be executed only because they discover the secret threatening sovereign power of the Vatican (Dan Brown 173).

Moreover, punishment by sovereign power must be ritualized. Ritualized punishment is full of symbolic meanings (Smith 124). The tongues of the blasphemer are torn into pieces and the impure burnt (Sheridan 141). Ritualized punishment changes the meaning of punishment. The punishment is "linked to the old or trails—ordeals, judicial duels, judgment of God" (Foucault, *Disciplinary and Punishment* 40). Therefore, the violation of the law is not merely violating the control of the ruler, but also the law of God. The ruler's power is elevated to God's power. The ruler can always justify his brutal punishment because he is carrying out the will of God. In *The Da Vinci Code*, Pope Clement's judgment also becomes the judgment of God. The ritualized execution of the knights Templar becomes a demonstration for those who have "blasphemous behavior" against God (Brown 173). Through the

ritualized punishment, sovereign power associates its punishment to God instead of its own purpose of control.

In the end, punishment by sovereign power must be conducted publicly (Smith 124). The open manifestation of punishment is significant since the convict's presence in public "served as a sign to everyone of the consequence of crime" (Sheridan 146). Through open punishment, the public can not only witness power of the sovereign but also take part in condemning the crime (Sheridan 146). Open punishment creates not only collective support but also collective fear towards sovereign power. In *The Da Vinci Code*, the meaning of public punishment commanded by Pope Clement is to create a powerful warning to those who are against the Church. Hence open punishment has prepared an environment for the sovereign power to generate collective support and fear. Open punishment suggests the catastrophic outcome of committing the crime. As a result, open punishment seems to tell the audience that they can either embrace death or the control of the sovereign power. With these four characteristics, sovereign power can assure its dominating control in an effective and fearsome way.

In present times, disciplinary power replaces sovereign power to assure control in different ways (Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment* 209). Unlike brutal punishment by the sovereign power, disciplinary power aims to create a docile subject through bodily training. Disciplinary power is carried out in different ways. Alan Sheridan indicates that disciplinary power can be constructed through three methods: closed structure, bodily training, and panoptic surveillance. The closed structure (Sheridan 150) refers to the closed space where the individual is made "subject to discipline" (150). When the individuals are located in a closed structure, they will be easily guided, observed, and supervised by the authority (150). Eventually the

individuals will become the controlled, disciplined bodies (150). Therefore, disciplinary power can work only when the individual is put in a closed structure. In *The Da Vinci Code*, The Louvre museum controlled by the police can also be regarded as a closed structure. First, the museum has been designed as a closed structure where "containment security" (Brown 28) can always lock the visitors in the museum before the police arrive. Within the museum, visitors are guided, observed, and supervised by "video surveillance" (28). Moreover, when Langdon examines the clues with Captain Fache by his side, he can only investigate it under police guidance, observation, and supervision (52). He has been planted with a global positioning system transmitter (44). Wherever he goes, he can never escape the control of disciplinary power. Watched by the police, Langdon becomes "the subject of observation" (77) locked in the closed museum.

The second type of disciplinary power is bodily training.[5] Foucault exposes the way that bodily training initiates and internalizes disciplinary control of all activity. (Sheridan 151). Via bodily training, disciplinary power can be internalized within everyone. In the name of "an efficient gesture" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment* 152), disciplinary power is introduced between the object and performer's body. Disciplinary power will finally control the body whenever the body responds. Through bodily training, disciplinary power gradually regulates the individual. After a period of bodily training, the individual's bodily gestures must first be broken down into simple gestures based upon the discipline of efficiency. The discipline of efficiency is designed by disciplinary power to assure its control. According to discipline of efficiency, each bodily gesture must match one separate act of production.

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[5] When a solider serves in the army, he will be asked to do the gesture under the officer's command (Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment* 152). Foucault explains that this bodily training carries out two goals. The first is for all the soldiers to follow the command in the most efficient way. The second is that bodily training incorporates disciplinary power into the gesture of the individual. When the gesture is done, the effect of disciplinary power is immediately produced.

Hence through bodily training, disciplinary power is introduced to connect the meaning between body and object. Whenever the body carries out an action with a bodily gesture, the influence of disciplinary power is also embedded in the action. In *The Da Vinci Code*, through bodily training, Silas shows how disciplinary power influences him. In order to effectively purify himself, Silas has to first take off his clothes and inflict his body with "*The Discipline*" (Brown 15). Whenever Silas feels that he is not pure or that he is sinful, he has to use "*The Discipline*". The atonement for sin is designed by the Opus Dei. According to "corporal mortification" (15), the individual's bodily gestures must first be broken down into simple gestures. The performer has to take off his clothes, kneel on the floor, wear the barbed "*The Cilice*" belt (14) and use "*The Discipline*" (15). Therefore, to become a "faithful servant" (15), Silas has to "kneel on the floor and perform the scared practice" (15). Disciplinary power is power of the Catholic Church. Bodily training helps Silas not only suppress evil desires and feelings of guilt within his body but also motivates him to carry out his mission. The more Silas performs the sacred practice, the more the Catholic sovereign power influences him.

The third type is panoptic surveillance.[6] When studying disciplinary power in Foucault's *Discipline and Punishment*, Philip Smith also emphasizes that the panopticon is the "pivotal and emblematic icon in the discussion of disciplinary power" (125). It became the perfect disciplinary apparatus to control everything with a single glance (Sheridan 152). The technique of panoptic is designed to objectify the individual. For Foucault, panoptic control works when the victim "is seen, but does not see" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 200). The individual is "the object of information, never a subject in communication" (200). In *The Da Vinci Code,* there

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[6] See footnote 7.

are several examples of panoptic surveillance. In the museum, the video surveillance functions as a form of panoptic surveillance. It transforms visitors into objects of information who are seen, but do not see (Dan Brown 28).

Among these three conditions of disciplinary power, panoptic surveillance is the crucial function to make everyone a docile individual. On the one hand, panoptic surveillance "encourages" (Parry 19) people to obey disciplinary power. On the other, panoptic surveillance also punishes those who disobey disciplinary power (Sheridan 154). In the novel, both the social and religious powers encourage people who obey their laws by offering them higher social positions. For instance, Captain Fache is encouraged with greater social reputation, higher rank, and better payment when he obeys the disciplinary power of the police station to capture the murderer. Captain Fache becomes more desperate when his position is at risk.

> *Not surprisingly*, Collect thought. Fache *needs this arrest desperately*.
> Recently the Board of Ministers and the media had become more openly
> critical of Fache's aggressive tactics, his clashes with powerful foreign
> embassies and his gross overbudgeting on new technologies. Tonight, a
> high-tech, high-profile arrest of an American would go a long way to
> silence Fache's critics, helping him secure the job for a few more years
> until he could retire with a lucrative pension. (Brown 78)

Those encouragements are only possible when Fache captures the real murderer of Sauniere. Likewise, both Silas and Bishop Manuel Aringarosa are eager to find encouragement when their shared belief is at risk (33). For Silas, he believes that he can make Opus Dei powerful when securing the keystone (59). The keystone is a threat to the brotherhood of Opus Dei. Silas as well as Bishop Aringarosa believe that they will be encouraged with the greater power attributed to Opus Dei.

Panoptic surveillance also punishes the individual if he disobeys disciplinary power. In *The Da Vinci Code*, the video surveillance is built to warn the visitor. The security camera gives a clear warning to visitors: "*We see you. Do not touch anything*" (Brown 28). If anyone breaks the law, the "containment security" will seal exits around the gallery, and "the thief would find himself behind bars even before the police arrived" (28). In a similar vein, Langdon is designated by the police to admit his crime through panoptic surveillance. Sophie explains how panoptic surveillance punishes the individual if he disobeys disciplinary power:

> According to Sophie, Langdon had been called to the The Louvre tonight not as a symbologist but rather as a suspect and was currently the unwitting target of one of DCPJ's favorite interrogation methods—surveillance cache-- a deft deception in which the police calmly invited a suspect to a crime scene and interviewed him in hopes he would get nervous and mistakenly incriminate himself. (71)

Finally, according to normality,[7] panoptic disciplinary power will lead not only to self-monitoring and self-regulation but also to a final normalization of the individual (Smith 125). Panoptic surveillance will examine the deed of the individual with a "normalizing power" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment,* 304). Anyone who does not meet the standard of normality will have to be punished and normalized. For instance, when Sophie saw her grandfather performing the sex rite "Hieros Gamos" (Brown 334), she regards the sex rite as pagan and immoral sexual intercourse. Then following the use of normalizing power, Sophie has to leave her grandfather as a way of punishing him. Ultimately, everyone under panoptic surveillance will internalize

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[7] To establish normality, the judges will "judge, assess, diagnose, and recognize the normal and abnormal . . ." (Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment* 304). For Foucault, normality is later legalized as the principle of panoptic surveillance. Everyone has to adjust his deeds to be normal. Otherwise, he will be punished and normalized.

normality, and become "the judges of normality" (304). Only when people normalize themselves can they be regarded as normalized individuals. In *The Da Vinci Code*, only when Fache perfectly internalizes disciplinary power can he be captain. Only when the bishop follows the Christian rules strictly can he be a powerful religious leader. In brief, closed structure, bodily training, and panoptic surveillance together form an environment to create a disciplined body (Smith 125) in *The Da Vinci Code*.

Although Foucault's studies of power control can be helpful to unfold how power works throughout history, there are still other core issues in addition to power control. As readers may easily sense in the novel, *The Da Vinci Code* centers on femininity as a form of suppression and resistance. In order to allow more discussions related to femininity and individual resistance, I will employ Julia Kristeva's psychoanalysis theories in which subject formation is made between semiotic and symbolic (Oliver 100). Foucault's theory of power control might leave several points about the resistant nature of femininity untouched. First, Lois McNay as a feminist critic has underscored that Foucault's power analysis is often criticized as a gender neutral study (McNay 12). McNay claims that it will "lead to an oversimplified notion of gender as an imposed effect rather than as a dynamic process (12). Likewise, other feminist critics, like Braidotti, claim that Foucault never identifies women's body as the site of one of internal division and also as one of the most persistent forms of exclusion in our society (Braidotti 87). Braidotti asserts that women suffer more oppression than men throughout history. She also underscores the point that critics should pay more attention to the body of the women since it suffers more from power control. *The Da Vinci Code* is a novel that reveals how women's bodies suffer from power control. It shows that women and their bodies have indeed suffered more oppression than men in society. In the novel, the idea of sacred femininity has been

deemed as an unorthodox paganism and the body of the woman is taken as a source of evil. Second, Foucault never exclusively focuses on women's exclusion and oppression throughout history. Foucault's insufficient studies on gender become "the latest ruse of phallocentrism (Schor 109). Having criticized Foucault's insufficient studies on gender, Schor claims that critics have to specifically analyze how power has suppressed women. In *The Da Vinci Code*, we can discover that Foucauldian power studies are insufficient to discuss the oppression of women. As a consequence, I will employ Kristeva's psychoanalysis to show how femininity has been excluded and oppressed by patriarchal power, as well as how it has been shown to be unclean and unsacred.

Meanwhile, critics also criticize Foucault for not offering detailed studies about personal resistance. Foucault's notion of the body is "conceived essentially as a passive entity, upon which power stamps its own images" (McNay 12). In other words, from Foucault's theories of power analysis, the individual is only a passive entity, which is subject to power control. Though he does not provide detailed analysis of resistance, Foucault himself does claim that "where there is power, there is resistance" (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 95). *The Da Vinci Code* also suggests the possibility of resistance when power control appears. Throughout the novel, Langdon can always escape the control of the French police. The Holy Grail can always resist the control of the church.

Hence, examples in the novel do show that resistance still outwits the domination of power. Concerning theories of resistance, Michel de Certeau underscores the tactics of resistance in the individual. An individual's tactics in everyday life are characterized by a fluid resistance. In everyday life, the individual can always find tactics to resist power of the ruler. These tactics become the most unpredictable item

under the ruler's control (Certeau 37). In the *Da Vinci Code*, Sophie's personal tactics not only save Langdon from the control of the French police, but also help both of them escape the police panoptic surveillance (Brown 44). In Chapter 6, Langdon is under strict surveillance of the French police through the audio system:

> Not far away, inside Sauniere's office, Lieutenant Collect had returned to The Louvre and was huddled over an audio console set up . . . He adjusted his AKG head-phones and checked the input levels on the hard-disk recording system. All systems were go. The microphones functioning flawlessly, and the audio feed was crystal clear. (Brown 44)

By relying on the audio system, the French policed can obtain any message and sound Langdon makes in the museum. Whatever Langdon speaks, the police can immediately record his voice and turn it into evidence useful in court.

In the meantime, locked in the closed The Louvre museum, the movement of Langdon is also carefully monitored:

> Turning now to his laptop computer, Collect attended to the other half of his responsibility here tonight—the GPS tracking system. The image onscreen revealed a detailed floor plan of Denon Wing, a structural schematic uploaded from the The Louvre Security Office. Letting his eyes trace the maze of galleries and hallways, Collect found what he was looking for. Deep in the heart of the Grand Gallery blinked a tiny red dot. (Brown 53)

Being carefully watched by the French police force, Langdon can still escape when assisted by Sophie. By throwing soap on a truck outside The Louvre, Sophie can distract and destroy the police's eye of panoptic surveillance (Brown 92). In Chapter 18, when Sophie embeds the GPS tracking dot into the soap and throws it

into the trunk of the truck, she can completely transfer the police's panoptic surveillance from Langdon to a truck. With only a tactical trick, Sophie outwits and rescues Langdon from police control.

Along with individual tactics as method of resistance, Robert Linhart also stresses the existence of an uncontrollable resistance in the organic human body (Linhart 17). Linhart claims that the organic human body will not allow itself to be completely subject to external control even when the human body is assigned to do a mechanical job in an assembly line. Though the actions of the human body can be controlled, his thinking may not follow the orders. In *The Da Vinci Code*, lieutenant Collect still questions the judgment of Captain Fache when he is assigned to follow the order of his captain (Brown 293). Although he is a member of the French police, he still uncontrollably questions and challenges Fache's order. Although agent Collect has been trained to follow his captain's order, his own body will not be completely subject to the captain's order thinking (Brown 293). In other words, he still questions the captain's order demanding him to wait. Therefore, in order to analyze femininity and individual resistance at the same time, I will supplement Foucault's theories with Kristeva's psychoanalysis.

II: Resistance

In this part, I will respectively focus on the source, text, and subject of resistance to illustrate how the sources of maternal resistance have been repressed but kept within the subject. Via the interaction between the text and subject, maternal resistance is brought back to the subject of resistance. Eventually, Kristeva's theory of disrupting maternal resistance is the key not only to resisting power control, but also to decoding the secret of *The Da Vinci Code*.

i. Sources of Resistance: the Mother

There are two factors I need to indicate when discussing the source of resistance. The first is the mother's relationship with the child as a source of resistance. The second source is the maternal imaginary father. I will claim that the mother and maternal imaginary father are sources of resistance that have been deeply planted within the subject. By explaining the mother's relationship with the child, I will first illustrate why Mary is made abject[8] in order to make the child an autonomous subject. In Kristeva's psychoanalysis, she claims that the child can only be an autonomous body separated from its mother when "the mother is made abject" (Oliver 56). The time when a child separates from its mother is a significant stage that occurs before the child becomes an autonomous subject (57). Therefore, abjection for the child is crucial to repress the pre-oedipal influence of the mother (Brooker 1). The mother has to be repressed so that the Law of the Father[9] can enter the child's mind. In the novel, both Langdon and Teabing reveal that Mary Magdalene represents the power of the female and has "posed a threat to the rise of the predominantly male Church" (258). Hence, the Catholic Church must make Mary an abject, a whore, so that the Church can establish itself as the "sacred channel" (253). Langdon has further elaborated how womanhood is suppressed by man.

> "The Grail is literally the ancient symbol for womanhood, and the Holy
>
> Grail represents the sacred feminine and the goddess, which of course has

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[8] The abject is a concept Kristeva discusses in her book *Powers of Horror*. Peter Brooker gives further illustration of the abject. He claims that "The abject is what the subject seeks to expel in order to achieve an independent identity but this is impossible since the body can not cease both to take in and expel objects" (Brooker 1). Brooker further explains the relationship betweens Kristeva's terms of the abject, the semiotic and mother. He indicates that "The abject is also related to Kristeva's concept of the semiotic which is similarly associated with the domain of maternal, the pre-signifying and pre-oedipal" (Brooker 1).

[9] Oliver cites Jacques Lacan's definition and defines the mental process of the child's entry into society. Oliver claims that "The Law of the Father must be abided by so that the child can be initiated into society trough its entry into symbolic and ultimately language. The imaginary relation to the mother is against the law; it is unmediated, without mediation, substitution, exchange, there is no society. This is why the child must substitute the Law of the Father for the desire of the mother" (Oliver 22).

now been lost, virtually eliminated by the Church. Power of the female

and her ability to produce life was once very sacred, but it posed a threat

to the rise of the predominantly male Church, and so the sacred feminine

was demonized and called unclean. It was man, not God, who created the

concept of 'original sin,' whereby Eve tasted of the apple and caused the

downfall of the human race. Woman, once the sacred giver of life, was

now the enemy." (258)

In this case, we can observe how the Church becomes an autonomous body when it

separates itself from the mother. The mother must be made abject: demonized and

called unclean object, so that the predominantly male Church can become the only

rightful subject.

However, another reason why the mother must be made abject and repressed is

that the mother represents "the semiotic maternal chora" [10] (Oliver 48), which

prefigures symbolic order (57), "disturbs identity, system, order . . . what does not

respect borders, positions, rules . . . the in-between, the ambiguous, the composite"

(Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* 4). In other words, the mother, characterized by a

semiotic chora, exists before symbolic order, and thus representing disturbing power

with its "in-between, ambiguous, and composite" (Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* 4).

Hence in order to embrace symbolic order (the Law of the Father) and "to be an

autonomous being" (Oliver 68), the child must separate itself from the mother's

disturbing influence (68).

In *The Da Vinci Code*, the example of suppressing the ambiguous maternal can

be seen in Silas. Before he is helped by the church, Silas is an albino first hated by his

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[10] Kirsteva associates "the semiotic chora with a law before law, a distant space, maternal body, the feminine, and woman" (Oliver 48). The meaning and function of the semiotic chora always "shifts" (48). Hence the mother, representing the semiotic chora, will be characterized as "in-between, ambiguous, and composite" (Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* 4).

"drunken father" (Brown 60). One night when he finds his mother killed, Silas avenges his mother by stabbing his father to death (60). To some extent, Silas' sympathy for his mother and patricide can be symbolically viewed as a sign of breaking symbolic order. As a consequence, excluded by symbolic order, Silas is "forced to live alone in the basement of a dilapidated factory" (60). The basement of the dilapidated factory can be viewed as the semiotic maternal chora that "disturbs identity, system, order . . . that does not respect borders, positions, rules" (Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* 4) since the deserted place has no identity, system and order. Silas becomes "the in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" (4) when he calls himself a "weightless" "ghost" (Brown 61). Silas is regarded as neither a ghost nor a man by the public. He has no acknowledged identity. Without an accepted name or identity, Silas is called a "transparent" (61) demon in the prison. The prison house again resembles the semiotic maternal chora. Finally, when Silas finally flees and is accepted by Aringarosa, he is, embraced by his Aringarosa, "reborn" (79). Endeavoring to repress his sinful and unlawful past of "the in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" (Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* 4) with *The Cilice* and *The Discipline* (Brown 79), Silas strictly follows the Law of his Father (Aringarosa). Only by following the religious symbolic order can Silas be "purged" (Brown 34) of his ambiguous identity and become a weightless ghost.

In spite of the effort to suppress the disturbing influence of the mother, the child's "separation is a labored but necessary one" (Oliver 57). It is labored but necessary because abjection is "directed against a threat (the abject) that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside, ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable" (Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* 1). What Kristeva means is that abjection is directed against a threat (the abject). The abject comes from the scope

beyond the possible, the tolerable, and the thinkable. In other words, the abject appears when something is beyond the possible, the tolerable, and the thinkable. Therefore, for the child, it must fight against a threat "beyond the scope of the possible, tolerable and thinkable" (1) so that it can separate itself from the mother and become an autonomous subject. The child would always be in a state of abjection though it might believe it has already separated itself from maternal influence. Yet, the necessary abjection only proves the implicit existence of maternal influence.

In *The Da Vinci Code*, though Silas works hard to get rid of his past and ambiguous identity, he is always haunted by the memories:

> His broad back still ached from the corporal mortification he had endured earlier today, and yet the pain was inconsequential compared with the anguish of his life before Opus Dei had saved him. Still, the memories haunted his soul. . . . Looking up at the stone towers of Saint-Sulpice, Silas fought that familiar undertow . . . that force often dragged his mind back in time. . . . The memories of purgatory came as they always did, like a tempest to his sense. . . . (Brown 59)

Though the pain caused by the physical torment helps him remember his mission, Silas is still haunted by the familiar undertow of his memories. Triggered by the memories, Silas is brought back to the suppressed past.

Though Silas' employment of *The Cilice* and *The Discipline* are used against his sinful and chaotic past, suppression of his past merely becomes laborious but necessary. The memories always "emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside, ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable" (Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* 1). This explains why Silas has to practice his corporal mortification in order to fight back his disturbing past.

Having discussed the efforts of suppressing maternality, I would like to give further details explaining why the mother is silent throughout the novel. In spite of her ambiguous and disruptive influence, the mother is always silent in the face of suppression. I will claim that it is the mother's love to the child that makes her silent (Oliver 68). The mother's silence does not only protect the child but also renders her influence unpredictable. In practice, by relying on her close relationship with the child, the mother, such as Mary Magdalene, should have the power to resist suppression.

Yet, why does she choose to embrace silence and suppression? Oliver here again may offer possible explanations about the mother's silence. On the one hand, the mother, such as Mary, is silent because the cult of the virgin in the Catholic Church has replaced the sexed body of Mary with an "ear of understanding" (Oliver 51). The patriarchy of religion has turned her body into only "ear, milk, and tears" (Kristeva, 1976a 248-249). Likewise, in *The Da Vinci Code*, Mary Magdalene never talks. Throughout the novel, Mary, representing the maternal image, can only be the milk that nourishes her child quietly. For instance, the sacred feminine directly nourishes Sauniere's life and opaquely leads Sophie to the knowledge of her family.

On the other hand, the mother remains silent about what she "knows" because she "knows better" (Oliver 67). She knows that the child is the flesh of her flesh (67). Therefore, she can not, for the sake of the child, deny the existence of symbolic order even if symbolic order denies her existence. In the novel, Mary as a mother is silent about her secret because she knows that Sophie can be saved with her silence. She knows that Sophie is the flesh of her flesh.

Therefore, it is her love for her child that not only supports the child's move into symbolic order, but also makes her surrender herself to the repression of the symbolic order. Yet, her silence does not mean that she is completely repressed. Instead, her

silence only proves that Mary's maternal resistance does exist. Hence, in the novel, Mary is silent but her silence makes maternal resistance possible through a form of symbolic repression. It is Mary's silence that motivates everyone in the novel to search for the Holy Grail and resist the given answer of symbolic order.

ii. Sources of Resistance: the Maternal Imaginary Father

Another source of resistance is the maternal imaginary father. From Oliver's understanding of Kristeva, the child's relationship with his mother is replaced by an imaginary loving father. In effect, this loving father is a maternal imaginary father (Kristeva, *Tales of Love* 16-40). Kristeva underscores the significance of the loving father, "which goes beyond/behind the Lacanian mirror stage, castration, and Father of the Law" (Oliver 76). That is, though the mother is suppressed, she is changed into a maternal imaginary father. The maternal imaginary father is both a mother and a father. It is the imaginary father that guarantees not only the safe pass of the individual to the symbolic[11] world, but also the pass back into the mother's body. Due to the function of the imaginary father, it preserves the maternal and the semiotic and allows it to work under the suppression of the symbolic order.

Therefore, for the child, identification with the masculine characteristics of the imaginary father allows identification with "the Law of the Father" (Oliver 79). By recognizing the masculine characteristics of the imaginary father, the child can gain access to a symbolic world and stay away from the delirium of the semiotic.[12]

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[11] The symbolic refers to the establishment of unity, "sign and syntax, paternal function, grammatical and social constraints, symbolic law" (Kristeva, *Desire in Language* 7). For Kristeva, identification with the symbolic is also identification with the paternal father since "the symbolic is associated with the Law of the Father" (Eagleton, *Literary Theory* 188). "Ideologies of modern male-dominated class-society rely on such fixed signs for their power (God, father, state, order, property, and so on)" (Eagleton 189).
[12] In *Reading Kristeva: Unraveling the Double-bind*, Oliver indicates that one will live with "delirium or psychosis without symbolic order (Oliver 9).

In *The Da Vinci Code*, Sophie can only recognize Sauniere as her imaginary father since she lost her father when she was little. Having been raised by Sauniere, Sophie learns the knowledge required to enter the symbolic world:

> Sophie's passion and aptitude for cryptology were a product of growing up with Jacques Sauniere—a fantastic himself for codes, word games, and puzzles. . . . At the age of twelve, Sophie could finish the Le Monde crossword without any help, and her grandfather graduated her to crossword in English, mathematical puzzles, and substitution ciphers. Sophie devoured them all. Eventually she turned her passion into a profession by becoming a code-breaker for the Judicial Police. (83)

Without living with Sauniere, Sophie will not be able to turn her passion into a profession and become a code-breaker for the Judicial Police. Her grandfather's teaching helps her to enter the symbolic world and obtain a recognized position.

Therefore, Sophie is able to become a successful detective since her grandfather had been teaching her to decode riddles through a game of "treasure hunt" (119). In spite of the masculine characteristics taught by Sauniere, Sophie also learns knowledge related to the sacred feminine. Though Sophie never understands the meaning of it, she is guided to understand Sauniere's teaching later. For instance, although Sophie tells Langdon that she plays "Tarot" (98) with her grandfather, and that "the Rose means secrecy" (219), Sophie never understands that the real meaning of the Tarot and the secret of the rose all refer to pentacles, "giving the strong iconographic ties to womanhood" (220).

However, with its dual characteristics, the maternal father identifies not only with the Law of the Father and symbolic world, but also with the reunion of the formerly suppressed maternal influence. Having studied Kristeva's psychoanalysis,

Oliver holds that "the fantasy of the imaginary father as the conglomeration of mother and father can be read as a fantasy of reunion with the mother's body, which takes the place of real union that must be lost so that the child can enter language" (Oliver 79). Oliver stresses that Kristeva underscores two points related to the imaginary father. One is that the fantasy of the imaginary father is a fantasy of reunion with the mother's body. The other is that the child must abandon the place of real union so that it can enter realm of the symbolic world.

In *The Da Vinci Code*, for Sauniere as an imaginary father, his fantasy can be read as a fantasy of reunion with the mother's body. It explains why Sauniere needs to perform the sex ritual, "Hieros Gamos" (Brown 335) as practiced by the Priory of Sion. As the imaginary father, Sauniere sees Hieros Gamos as a spiritual act (fantasy) to achieve "gnosis—knowledge of the divine" (335). In effect, Sauniere's sex ritual can be read as his " fantasy of reunion with the mother's body" (Oliver 79) since the Hieros Gamos not only involves a "powerful female" (Brown 336), but also confirms the sacredness of a woman "to produce life from her womb" (335). By practicing the Hieros Gamos, Sauniere can find "spark of divinity that man can achieve through union with the sacred feminine" (337). Hence, when Sauniere performs Hieros Gamos, his followers call out: "I was with you in the beginning, in the dawn of all that is holy, I bore you from the womb before the start of day. . . . The woman whom you behold is love. . . . She has her dwelling in eternity!" (338). Hieros Gamos practiced by the Sion of Priory helps Sauniere to fantasize a reunion with the mother's body.

The dual characteristics of the imaginary father explain why Suniere always implies dual meanings in almost in everything he designs. As Langdon exposes in the novel, "Sauniere's passion for dualism" (350) and he always designs "everything in

pairs" (350). After decoding the first cryptex, Lnagdon still finds the second cryptex under the first:

> Sauniere's passion for dualism. Two cryptexes. Everything in pairs.
>
> *Double entendres. Male female. Black nested within white. Langdon felt the web of symbolism stretching onward. White gives birth to black. Every man sprang from woman.*
>
> *White—female.*
>
> *Black—male.* (350)

The same dualism also happens in Sauniere's poems when Langdon finds that his poem written in iambic pentameter, which implies male and female, as well as "Yin and yang" (Brown 329). In addition to the rhyming of the poem, the meaning of the poem is also built on dualism. For instance, when Sauniere's last poem is found, it suggests that the location of the Holy Grail lies not only in Roslin but also elsewhere:

> The Holy Grail 'neath ancient Roslin waits.
>
> The blade and chalice guarding o'er Her gates.
>
> Adorned in master's loving art, She lies.
>
> She rests at last beneath the starry skies. (Brown 482)

According to Sauniere's passion for dualism, the first answer of the poem is correct: Roslin. It is the Roslin since it is the place where "the blade and chalice" (481) appears. The final answer is left unknown. Though Langdon does find the second meaning of the poem: "master's loving art" (487), "the ancient Rose Line" (487) "La Pyramid Inversee" (488) as the chalice, and a "miniature pyramid" (488) as the blade, he only develops these ideas from his own deduction. It may not be real since the final line of the poem offers an indefinite answer: "She rests at last beneath the starry

skies" (482). In other words, Mary Magdalene could be resting somewhere beneath the starry skies when fitting the right criterion in the poem.

Along with the fantasy of reuniting with the mother's body, Kristeva also stresses the child's response to the imaginary father's fantasy. Kristeva indicates that "the fantasy of the imaginary father . . . with the mother's body, which takes the place of real union that must be lost so that the child can enter language" (Oliver 79). The child must reject the imaginary father's fantasy to reunite with the mother so that it can enter language, which is constructed by symbolic order. It explains why Sophie has to reject Sauniere's fantasy to achieve the reunion with the mother's body in the sex ritual when she first witnessed it. Having identified with the paternal part of the imaginary father, and having studied the "encryption method" (150) in graduate school, Sophie has entered language and symbolic order. Therefore, when she witnesses Hieros Gamos, she can feel nothing but "horror" and "nausea" (153):

> Even as she staggered back in horror, she felt the image searing itself into her memory forever. Overtaken by nausea, Sophie spun, clutching at the stone walls as she clambered back up the stairs. Pulling the door closed, she fled the deserted house, and drove in a tearful stupor back to Paris. That night with her life shattered by disillusionment and betrayal, she packed her belongings and left her home. (153)

Without appreciating the real meaning of Hieros Gamos, Sophie can only reject the behavior since it is demonized by the Church (336), which represents the Law of the Father and symbolic order.

Furthermore, following Kristeva's psychoanalysis, Oliver asserts that when the child can finally re-identify with the feminine characteristics of the imaginary father, it at the same time can "re-place itself back inside its mother and mother's womb"

(Oliver 79). This explains why Sophie can place herself back inside, thinking of her original mother, Mary, when she restores her relationship with her grandfather. In the novel, when Sophie understands the meaning of Hieros Gamos and forgives Sauniere, she no longer shuns him and sees "him in an entirely different light" (Brown 340). Having forgiven her grandfather, she can accept his guidance in all poems and eventually places herself back with her grandmother Marie Chauvel, the one that told her who she and her mother are. As a surrogate mother figure, Marie Chauvel tells Sophie who she really is so that Sophie can replace herself back inside Mary Magdalene. To some extent, Rosslyn at the end of Sauniere's poem is a place representing the mother's womb since it is the place where the Holy Grail exists "in spirit" (Brown 481). Therefore, Sauniere's last poems leads Sophie not only back to the knowledge of her mother, Mary Magdalene, but also to the womb of her mother, Rosslyn.

As I discuss above, the elaboration of the abject mother exposes how the resource of resistance is suppressed. The maternal imaginary father guarantees the subject not only successful access to symbolic world but also a return to the mother. By abjection of the mother and identification with the imaginary father, the child can enter the symbolic world and return to the mother's influence. Therefore, by exposing these two stages, I can show that maternal influence is never completely suppressed, and that there are always deep-planted sources of resistance within the subject. When the proper stimulus comes, the maternal aspect of the subject will change the subject into a subject of resistance.

iii. Texts of Resistance:

In addition to the sources of resistance suppressed within the subject, there are still texts of resistance. In effect, it is the text of resistant employed by Sauniere, the imaginary father, who brings the subject into the subject of resistance. In other words, the texts of resistance used by Sauniere reactivate the semiotic drive that "calls the signifying practice to its crisis" (Oliver 96). That is, different from average text, the texts of resistance disturb the fixed signification of the meaning reference and introduce drive into the subject. In texts of resistance, the signification is never fixed from one signifier to the other fixed signifier. Rather, the process of the signification is broken and the signifier may signify more than one signified. In *The Da Vincci Code*, the symbol of the pentacle is not only "related to the devil" (40), but also the "star of Venus" (219) and the combination of chalice and blade (480). In Sauniere's final poem, he writes: "In London lies a knight a Pope interred. . ." (382). Pope can both be read as a "the Catholic Pope" and "Alexander Pope" (422). If one reads the poem only in one way: Pope as the Catholic leader, he or she will never find the key to unlocking the cryptex.

The function of the "pulverizing texts is to produce these revolutionary subjects" (Oliver 100). For Oliver, Kristeva's revolutionary subject will be the subject of resistance since a revolutionary subject is one that subverts and resists capitalist control (Oliver 100). Oliver holds that the text changing symbolic order is called the revolutionary text. The revolutionary text suggests a maternal semiotic influence. Revolutionary texts are produced via the dialectical oscillation between the semiotic and symbolic (Oliver 100). The semiotic part of texts causes an upheaval of the symbolic system (Oliver 96) while the symbolic simulates the unity that taking a position required (98). In other words, the semiotic carries the disruptive power to negate all fixed transcendental signification of symbolic system. The semiotic element

brings fluid and plural change to the fixed signification. For Kirsteva, the semiotic process "relates the *chora*" (Kristvea, *Desire in Language* 6), and the "chora articulation is uncertain, undetermined and lacks thesis or position, unity, or identity" (6). Kristeva borrows Plato's description of the *chora*, which means "mother and 'receptacle' of all things" (Kristeva, *Desire in Language* 6). This "the semiotic *chora*" is what Kristeva calls "the space of the mother" (Oliver 46) as well as the place of maternal law. It exists before the Law of the Father and symbolic order. Terry Eagleton has also elaborated the meaning of the semiotic that "the semiotic is fluid and plural, a kind of pleasure creative excess over precise meaning," and that "it takes sadistic delight in destroying or negating . . . all fixed transcendental signification" (Eagleton 188).

Yet, in order to make the semiotic fluidity meaningful, the subject must resort to symbolic order. The function of the symbolic order is to impose constraints on the semiotic so that the subject does not merely lapse into delirium (Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* 82). Based upon Kristeva's psychoanalysis, Oliver claims that "words are made up of two heterogeneous levels" and that "while on a symbolic level they signify, on the semiotic level they act and reactivate" (Oliver 97). That is, words produce fixed meanings on the symbolic level while they produce new and different meanings on the semiotic level. Therefore, Oliver stresses Kristeva's idea and underscores that "it is the double movement: the dialectical oscillation between the symbolic and the semiotic level, that is revolutionary" (97). Kristeva has pointed out the significance of the dialectical oscillation for the revolutionary textual practice. She highlights that the revolutionary textual practice is an "acceptance of symbolic law together with a transgression of the law for the purpose of renovating the law" (Kristeva, *The Kristeva Reader* 29). Oliver explains that "the semiotic cannot be

revolutionary without symbolic and there can be no symbolic without semiotic, in spite of the symbolic's attempts at repressing it" (Oliver 101). With only the semiotic, the text will be a "psychotic babble at best" (101). The symbolic makes the text meaningful whereas the semiotic introduces the drive into the text to transgress symbolic law (101). In brief, texts are only revolutionary and resistant when they oscillate between the semiotic and symbolic.

In short, Kristeva's texts of revolution will become texts of resistance in my thesis since texts in *The Da Vinci Code* not only "prepare subject for social changes that shake the foundation of contemporary society" (101), but also resist control of power. In *The Da Vinci Code*, it is the texts of resistance, Sauniere's poems and clues that prepare Langdon and Sophie for social changes that shake the foundation of contemporary society. That is, all of Sauniere's clues and poems help both Langdon and Sophie shake the fundamental belief in the Catholic Church.

Based upon Kristeva's revolutionary texts, Oliver points out three different forms of texts, which are instinctual rhythm, music and poetic language (95). The instinctual rhythm is a sound that renders the text revolutionary. The seemingly meaningless sound will work to pass "through symbolic theses, and meaning, which is constituted but is then immediately exceeded by what seems outside of meaning" (Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* 100). In *The Da Vinci Code*, there is evidence of instinctual rhythm that works to pass "through symbolic theses, and meaning . . . " (Kristeva 96). For instance, Langdon has underscored the significant meaning of the instinctual rhythm in Sauniere's poetry (328-29). Langdon discovers that the meter of iambic pentameter is used by poets who put forth to make cultural criticism:

> *For centuries, iambic pentameter had been preferred poetic meter of*
>
> *outspoken literati across the globe, from the ancient Greek writer*

Archilochus to Shakespeare, Milton, Chaucer, and Voltaire—bold souls

who chose to write their social commentaries in a meter that many of the

day believed had mystical properties. The roots of iambic pentameter

were deeply pagan. Iambs. Two syllables with opposite emphasis.

Stressed and unstressed. Ying yang. . . . Five for the pentacle of Venus and

the scared feminine. (Brown 329)

As Langdon mentions that the sacred feminine is the suppressed and forbidden

meaning, Sauniere's use of iambic pentameter is actually used to pass through

symbolic suppression. The meaningless poem is written in iambic pentameter, but it is

then immediately exceeded by what seems outside of meaning. The meaning of the

poem is exceeded by the real meaning of iambic pentameter: the sacred feminine.

Moreover, music is also of great significance as one of the revolutionary texts

(Oliver 99). Music[13] is close to the maternal *chora* before the entrance of the

symbolic stage. The child is first exposed to sound before learning the meaning in the

sentence. Compared to verbal language, the semiotic modality of the signifying

process is more important in music. Since "music is a negation of verbal language, in

opposition to the verbal," music is "posited in the symbolic as castration, the female"

(Rolvsjord 8). In other words, music can be regarded as the castrated female. Randi

Rolvsjord stresses that "in music the semiotic is a more dominating aspect of the

signifying process" (5). Music can loosen "the linguistic constraints on the repressed

semiotic" (Oliver 99). Therefore, music can easily penetrate the regulation of the

symbolic signification. Meanwhile, through verbal descriptions of music, Rolvsjord

underscores the gendered meaning of music: "the masculine is related to the strong,

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[13] In her discussion of Music Therapy, Randi Rolvsjord claims that "the semiotic is more dominant . . .
in music" (Rolvsjord 8). Although she admits that the dialectic between symbolic and the semiotic
modalities exists in all signifying process, Rolvsjord still deems that the "music is more semiotic" than
verbal language (7).

the dominant, the normal, and heroic, whereas the feminine is used as a description of the romantic, the weak and the sensitive or gentle" (Rolvsjord 8). In *The Da Vinci Code*, Langdon has more than once pointed out how the history of the sacred feminine has been kept through the spread of music.

Finally the last revolutionary text for Kristeva is those of poetic language. Oliver stresses that poetic language "pulverizes" the signifying practice (Oliver 97). It employs innovative grammar that loosens the linguistic constraints on the repressed semiotic (100). For instance, after reading the first poem Sauniere leaves: "13-3-2-21-1-1-8-5 O, Draconian devil! Oh, lame saint!" (Brown 104), Langdon discovers that these lines are "anagrams" "written out of order" (105). He employs innovative grammar instead of the traditional variety. Langdon reconstructs the word sequence based upon the "scrambled Fibonacci sequence" (104). By following the scrambled Fibonacci sequence, Langdon transforms "O, Draconian devil! Oh, lame saint!" into the "perfect anagram of . . . Leonardo da Vinci! The Mona Lisa!" (105). "O, Draconian Devil and Oh, lame saint!" which can be read as not only "an accusation against his murderer" (48) but also against the Catholic Church because the Church usually derides rites and symbols related the sacred feminine as devil worship (50). When Langdon reads the poem with innovative grammar (scrambled Fibonacci sequence) and loosens the linguistic constraints on the repressed meaning, Langdon can make the secret of Leonardo da Vinci and the Mona Lisa explicit.

Throughout *The Da Vinci Code*, most of the main clues are found in poems. Only when detectives read the poetic language with innovative grammar can they find real clues to the next target. Although all three forms of revolutionary texts can undo the repression of the symbolic order, they can be truly revolutionary when they are meaningful. Hence the subject must return to symbolic order so that the meaning can

be revealed. Kristeva stresses that the text of revolutionary resistance is possible in the dialectical oscillation between the semiotic and the symbolic. The semiotic here refers to the suppressed meaning of the sacred feminine while the symbolic represents symbolic order, the Law of the Father and language. Only by oscillating between the semiotic and symbolic can the subject of resistance discover the texts of resistance.

iv. The Subject of Resistance:

Having followed the text of resistance (the clues left by Sauniere), the subject is transformed into the subject of resistance. For Langdon and Sophie, both are guided to know the real meaning of Sauniere's poems and the real meaning of the sacred feminine. Yet, having followed the instructions of these poems, Langdon and Sophie are transformed into subjects that resist the knowledge offered by the Catholic Church.

The subject of resistance can ultimately access the semiotic in language and produce a subjective post-Oedipal return of the maternal (Oliver 111). When decoding each poem, the detectives need to find access to the suppressed knowledge of the maternal semiotic in language so that they can produce a return to maternal meaning within the symbolic order (the knowledge of the sacred feminine and Mary Magdalene). Only through the symbolic order can the detectives understand the meaning of Sauniere's poems, which are related to the maternal semiotic.

I will presuppose that both Sophie and Langdon are subjects of resistance for different reasons. Based upon Kristeva's psychoanalysis, Oliver claims that the revolutionary poets are always men (Oliver 111) since men "experience the threat of castration that forces them away from any identification with their mother" (111). For instance, Langdon experiences the threat of castration that forces them away from any

identification with their mother. Throughout the story, he does experience the threat of castration that comes from the symbolic order. His studies of the sacred feminine are threatened by the conservative thinking of religious scholars (Brown 8). Langdon knows that the threat of castration will force him away from any identification with the mother. Langdon will only talk about the sacred feminine to those who are interested in the meaning of symbols.

Having understood the suppression of the symbolic order, men can access the "the semiotic in language and produce a post-Oedipal return of the maternal within the symbolic order" (Oliver111). Hence, in *The Da Vinci Code*, Langdon can access the semiotic aspect of language. Having understood how the Catholic Church suppresses the sacred feminine, Langdon can discover the suppressed maternal semiotic in language. He can read Sauniere's poems and symbols in a different way. Rather than following the given ideas in the Catholic Church, Langdon regards the pentacle as less "a demonic symbology" (Brown 41) than a sacred feminine (40). This point can be used to explain why Langdon can read the revolutionary text of resistance that Sauniere left, which he can do because he has already experienced the threat of symbolic castration. In the end, Langdon's reading of the revolutionary text can produce a post-Oedipal return of the maternal and bring Langdon back to the thinking of the sacred feminine.

When considering the relationship between the subject of resistance and women, Oliver claims that women are not revolutionary subjects since women have "never fully severed identification with their mothers" (111). Hence, Oliver stresses that women can never be like men who experience the threat of castration that severs any identification with their mothers. I will interpret Oliver's idea differently since Dan Brown has delineated a woman with revolutionary characteristics. Different from

Oliver's women, Sophie is a revolutionary subject. Like Kristeva's men of revolution, Sophie also severed her identification with her mother. In effect, she has no chance to identify with her mother since she was separated from her mother after the car accident. As a result, Sophie can only identify with her grandfather. Before meeting Langdon, she can hardly find the chance to identify with her mother. Therefore, when Sophie met Langdon, Sophie came to realize the threat of castration that forces her away from any identification with her mother.

Furthermore, Oliver also holds that women cannot be a revolutionary subject because they cannot "have complete access to language" and cannot "reinscribe/discover the semiotic" (Oliver 111). Nonetheless, in *The Da Vinci Code*, Sophie can still find access to the "the semiotic in language and produce a post-Oedipal return of maternal within symbolic order" (Oliver111). With Langdon's help and her talent in cryptology, Sophie can have complete access to language so that she can reinscribe/discover the semiotic. Via Langdon's instruction, Sophie has been taught the meaning of the maternal semiotic in language. Langdon is just the man to help her recover her talent. As a result, with Langdon's help, Sophie can certainly produce a post-Oedipal return of the maternal within the symbolic order. In the end of the novel, Sophie works with Langdon and finds her way back to her surrogate mother: Marie Chauvel (Brown 476).

Unlike Langdon and Sophie, Teabing has no access to the semiotic in language. Teabing in *The Da Vinci Code* is not the one to find the secret of the keystone in spite of the fact that he is a male scholar of the Holy Grail. I would like to start from Oliver's interpretation of Kristeva's idea, but modify Oliver's claim that the sexual difference decides the nature of the revolutionary subject. Instead, I will show that it is a different way of perceiving the text and the imaginary father that makes the

subject revolutionary. Teabing is not a revolutionary subject because he never identifies the thinking of the maternal imaginary father, Sauniere. As I mentioned earlier, the imaginary father is the conglomeration of father and mother. The identification with the imaginary father will help the child to replace itself with the mother. Therefore, when Teabing refuses to recognize Sauniere as an imaginary father, he does not recognize the idea Sauniere reveals in his poems. On the one hand, Teabing is "*The Teacher*" (Brown 462) who plans to kill Sauniere. On the other, Teabing tells Sophie that Sauniere "fails the Grail," "the Priory," and "the memory of all the generations" (438). Teabing claims that Sauniere is the "traitor to the Grail" (438). Teabing never really respects Sauniere as the one who will replace himself with the mother. Neither does Teabing regard Sauniere as an imaginary father.

In the novel, Teabing believes Sauniere as a traitor to the sacred feminine although he exposes how the Catholic Church represses the thinking of the sacred feminine (251). By denying Sauniere as the imaginary father, he does not recognize Sauniere as the representative of the mother. Neither can he decode secret codes in Sauniere's poetry. This shows why Teabing can not decode secret codes in Sauniere's poems and why he needs help from Sophie and Langdon. In Chapter 99, Teabing explains why he needs help from Langdon and Sophie: "However, when I saw the intricacy of Sauniere's codes, I decided to include you both in my quest a bit longer" (443). Furthermore, Teabing also admits that he does not know how to open the keystone (441). Sauniere in *The Da Vinci Code* is extremely significant since he is the one who not only designs the revolutionary text, but also guides the child to "re-place itself back inside its mother and mother's womb" (Oliver 79). Only by recognizing Sauniere as the imaginary father can detectives read his poems and become subjects of resistance. Therefore, even when Teabing has Sauniere's keystone, he can never

recognize the true meaning of the keystone. When Teabing rejects Sauniere's guidance as an imaginary father, he rejects all of the maternal semiotic clues Sauniere inserts into the poetry.

The successful detectives in *The Da Vinci Code* must not only be able to fluidly oscillate between the semiotic and the symbolic in language to discover the text of resistance but also recognize the imaginary father. Only in this way can detectives detect the maternal semiotic elements and make them meaningful at the same time. For instance, when decoding secret codes, Langdon usually manages to put himself between the symbolic language and maternal semiotic realm:

> Forcing his mind to this critical task, Langdon moved slowly toward the far windows . . . allowing his mind to fill with the numerous astronomical images on Newton's tomb . . . . Turning his back to the others, he walked toward the towering windows, searching for any inspiration in their stained-glass mosaics. There was none. . . . Lengend has always portrayed the Grail as a cruel mistress, dancing in the shadows just out of sight, whispering in your ear, luring you one more step and then evaporating into the mist. . . . The signs were everywhere. (451)

In the meantime, Langdon will also have to identify with Sauniere and assume Sauniere's thinking so that he can successfully obtain the answer to the keystone:

> *Place yourself in Sauniere's mind*, he urged, ... What would he believe is the orb that out to be on Newton's tomb? . . . Sauniere was not a man of science. He was a man of humanity, of art, of history. *The sacred feminine. . . the chalice . . . the Rose . . . the banished Mary Magdalene . . . the decline of the goddess . . . the Holy Grail*. (451)

In brief, detectives in the novel have to not only follow the text of resistance but also identify with the imaginary father, Sauniere, so as to become the subject of resistance.

After discussions of power and resistance in *The Da Vinci Code*, I would like to further explore the reason why the novel can attract readers' attention. I will show that it is Dan Brown's narrative technique of boundary crossing that makes the novel such a success. Boundary crossing from the real to the imaginary in the novel catches the reader's attention. This special writing skill enchants readers by indicating the unknown part in real life. Through this boundary crossing technique, Brown takes advantage of readers' curiosity and fascinates them with his book. Brown's boundary crossing technique mainly focuses on two categories: boundary crossing from real to fictional and traditional to nontraditional. I will discuss how Brown employs these two different boundary crossing techniques to attract his readers.

II. Boundary Crossing

Iser defines the fictionalizing act of literary writing as a crossing of the boundary between the real and the imaginary world (Iser 4):

> . . . the act of fictionalizing is of paramount importance: it cross the boundaries both of what it organizes (external reality) and of what it converts into a gestalt (the diffuseness of the imaginary). It leads real to the imaginary and the imaginary to real, and it thus conditions the extent to which a given world is to be transcoded, a nongiven world is to be conceived, and the reshuffled worlds are to be made accessible to the reader's experience. (Iser 4)

For Iser, the act of fictional writing crosses boundaries from real to the imaginary and from imaginary to the real. I will further develop Iser's idea of boundary crossing, and

claim that Dan Brown's writing is also a fictionalizing act of boundary crossing.

Brown's boundary crossing technique does not only allow *The Da Vinci Code* to

weave the story between real and the imaginary, but also attracts its readers by

pointing out the unknown part of reality. The boundary crossing writing technique

enormously increases curiosity and suspense[14] which are required in detective fiction

(Todorov, 47). Both curiosity and suspense are increased when Brown transforms our

firmly believed reality into an unknown mystery. By challenging the meaning of some

of the most widely accepted ideas in real life, Brown enormously increases readers'

curiosity and suspense.

i. From the Real to Fictional

Based upon ideas in real world, Brown inserts fictive ideas into reality "to

conceive a nongiven world" (Iser 4). The idea of the nongiven world throughout the

novel endows the reader with a strong sense of curiosity and suspense. In the

beginning of the novel, Brown makes a clear statement that "all description of artwork,

architecture, documents, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate" (Brown 1).

Brown offers his readers a basic idea that everything he delineates is supposed to be

accurate. Later, when Langdon discovers that the "headstone" (342) in Sauniere's

poem is referring to "Baphomet" (343), he challenges the meaning of the most widely

accepted idea: "The modern belief in a horned devil known as Satan" (343). Langdon

explains "Pope Clement convinced everyone that Baphomet's head was in fact that of

the devil" (343). When readers realize that the image of Satan actually suggests "a

pagan fertility god" (343), readers are given the idea that everything in our daily life

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[14] Tzventan Todorov underscores that two entirely different forms of interest exist in reading detective fiction. The first is called curiosity which "proceeds from effect to cause: starting from a certain effect (a corpse and certain clues) in which we must find its cause (the culprit and his motive)" (47). The second is suspense. The suspense occurs when the reader's knowledge is "sustained by the expectation of what will happen" (47).

may signify more than one meaning. Readers will start to feel more curious and suspicious when one of the most widely accepted ideas in real life is called into question. Hence, by crossing boundaries from real to the imagination, Brown can not only transform the widely accepted Satan image into the unknown knowledge of Baphomet, but also enormously increases readers' curiosity and suspense.

In a similar vein, Brown includes widely accepted knowledge from the religion of the real world in his book. By further fictionalizing ideas from the real world, Brown casts a dubious shadow on these widely accepted ideas. From the Christian religion, Brown develops his fictional story based upon the Biblical knowledge of Mary Magdalene, Jesus Christ, and the legendary concept of the Grail. When Brown changes these ideas into his own fictionalized version, he can still challenge widely accepted ideas from the real world. He suggests that "almost everything our fathers taught us about Christ is *false*" (Brown 255). By challenging ideas that the public regards as true, Brown arouses readers' curiosity to explore other unknown parts of accepted knowledge.

Brown also challenges the common opinion about many popular ideas, paintings and buildings from real world: the symbol of pentacle, Holy Grail, Rose, the paintings of Leonardo da Vinci, the Rosslyn Chapel, and The Louvre. He weaves the hidden and multiple significations of these ideas, paintings and buildings as clues in his story. For instance, by underscoring the history of The Louvre, the church, and every building, Brown decorates the space of his novel with a suspicious atmosphere. The effect of fictionalizing the meaning of these buildings establishes a curious atmosphere as readers travel with the detectives.

When Brown stresses that the novel's "descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals are accurate" (Brown 1), he has already made his

readers curious to know what lies behind reality. Brown's boundary crossing from real to the fictional eventually becomes one of the key factors to win many readers' attention.

ii. From the Traditional to Nontraditional:

Another key factor that renders Brown's novel a great success is boundary crossing from traditional boundary to nontraditional detective fiction. By adopting traditional and nontraditional traits of detective fiction, he renders the reader a great sense of suspense throughout the story. I will indicate what characteristics the novel inherits from the traditional novel and how the novel crosses from traditional to nontraditional.

Judging from the norms of traditional detective fiction, I will assert that *The Da Vinci Code* partially retains the characteristics of the traditional detective story, including its structure. In traditional detective fiction, detective work is usually characterized as an impersonal and intellectual profession (Moretti, *Signs Taken for Wonders* 249). The goal of the detective is to solve crimes and bring order to society (Swope 207). In Brown's novel, all detectives are characterized as impersonal and intellectual. Robert Langdon is a professor of religious symbology (Brown 7). Sophie Neveu is a professional cryptographer from the police force (55). Leigh Teabing is a former British Royal Historian (235). Fache is a French policeman born for "the delicate art of cajoler" (52). Their shared goal is to solve crimes and bring order to society.

Another norm of the traditional detective is that the detective's "logic and deduction is engaged in reasoning" (Slavoj Zizek, *Looking Away* 60). The detective will explain how the "impossible is possible (58). Likewise, all of the detectives'

deductions are based on reasoning. Langdon explains how the impossible meaning of "the pentacle" (39) is possible. Sophie explains why Langdon is guilty of killing Sauniere (74). Teabing explains why the painting of The Last Supper suggests the secret of the Holy Grail (264). Fache explains how Teabing formulates a plan to use others and "protect his innocence at every turn" (460). They elaborate how the seemingly impossible is possible.

In addition to the traditional role of the detective, the structure of Brown's novel also follows the traditional detective story structure. Pederson-Krag points out that the structure of the detective novel has to be built upon a series of observations of disconnected, inexplicable, and trifling clues (Geraldine Pederson-Krag 14). The structure of Brown's novel is built upon a series of observations of disconnected, inexplicable, and trifling clues from everyday life. Through observation, the detective, especially Langdon, always reminds readers of inexplicable and disconnected clues, such as the "the scrambled Fibonacci sequence" (104), which are hints about how to decipher the rest of the message in Sauniere's poems.

Brown crosses from traditional to nontraditional detective story. Due to these unconventional characteristics, the reader is always intrigued by the expectation of what will happen. The never-ending curiosity and suspense in the novel ultimately gives the reader "a jouissance to reading, even rereading"[15] (Nealon 129). By citing jouissance, Nealson refers to the Roalnd Barthes' idea. Barthe defines jouissance as the text of bliss which "imposes a state of loss, discomforts (perhaps to the point of boredom) unsettles the reader's historical, cultural, psychological assumption" (Barthes 14). For Barthes, the text of jouissance is to defamiliarize the reader. By

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[15] Having surveyed postmodern detective fictions, Nealson insists that it is the reader who has the "luxury of deciding whether or not it means something . . ." (119), because the detective story never has a definite answer for the reader. Hence, the reading and rereading process become a jouissance for the reader (127-129).

reading and rereading *The Da Vinci Code*, the reader can always find his or her own new interpretations in the novel. It is another factor to explain why *The Da Vinci Code* can make such a great success in the book market. Each reading experience for readers will always become a unique outcome of jouissance. I will point out the nontraditional characteristics of *The Da Vinci Code*.

As a nontraditional detective story, the male detectives in *The Da Vinci Code* never occupy a dominant position (Diemert 249). Unlike the professional detective representing the tradition of law, order and justice (Diemert 294), the detectives in *The Da Vinci Code* are no longer professional detectives determined to solve the crime. The detective's mission is not only to bring absolute order to society, but to pursue the real meaning of the Holy Grail. However, the meaning of the Holy Grail will indirectly disrupt the order the Catholic Church. In the novel, Langdon is never a professional detective determined to solve the crime. First, he joins Sophie to search for clues. Langdon escapes only because he is charged with killing Sauniere (Brown 75). Langdon is forced to prove his innocence by finding who has killed Sauniere. Hence, Langdon is not a detective representing the tradition of law, order, and justice. Second, although Langdon wants to find the real murderer to prove his innocence so as to bring order to society. Yet, his study of the sacred feminine has ironically brought disturbance to the social order. Instead of bringing order to society, Langdon's final mission is to become a "modern troubadour" of Mary Magdalene and "sing her song" (479).

Different from traditional detectives, the detectives in *The Da Vinci Code* focus on the pursuit of answering the question of being from a "modernist, 'epistemological dominant' [16] to a postmodernist 'ontological dominant'" [17] (McHale 146-147).

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[16] For Richard Swope, the dominant epistemological is "How am I to know my place in the world?"

Therefore, unlike traditional detectives who solve crimes in the end, the detectives of nontraditional fiction only find ontological uncertainty in the end (Swope 210).

In *The Da Vinci Code*, Langdon is presumably summoned to solve crimes, yet he focuses mostly on questioning the source of knowledge instead of solving the crime. He works hard to discover that Sauniere's death is the result of a greater conspiracy: the secret knowledge of the sacred feminine. Following clues in Sauniere's poems, Langdon's quest is an epistemological one. In his quest for secret clues, Langdon constantly explores how people should know their place in the world. For instance, when rereading the line, "So Dark the Con of Man" (Brown 133), Langdon suggests that the Church has a violent history of "reeducating the pagan and feminine worshipping religions" (134). In other words, people have been "reeducated" (134) by the Church to know their place in the world.

In the end of the story, Langdon's epistemological quest becomes an ontological quest. When Langdon discovers all the secret knowledge in Sauniere's poems (his epistemological quest), he shifts his attention from the epistemological to the ontological quest. He thinks about the nature of the world (Brown 369), and the nature of his own place in it (479). On the way to search for the Grail tomb, Sophie and Langdon discuss if they should unfold the secret of the Grail. Langdon suggests that the nature of the world is often built upon fabrication (369). When Langdon meets Marie Chauvel, he comes to realize the nature of his own place: to become a "modern trobadour" (479). In this way, Langdon can remind the public of "the danger of our history" (479).

In the meantime, the female detective is also a nontraditional character in *The Da Vinci Code* (Makinen, *Feminist Popular Fiction* 107). Sophie is a non-romantic

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(210).

[17] The ontological one, which is central to postmodernism, is: "What is the nature of this world? What is the nature of my place, or lack of place in this world?" (Swope 210).

character (108). She is not a weak woman waiting for the male detective's help. On the contrary, Sophie often offers timely help to others. For instance, due to her feminine characteristics, Sophie focuses more on domestic issues rather than public ones (108). She occasionally offers Langdon useful help in finding the right clues. In Chapter 47, Sophie told Langdon about the design of the cryptex so that Langdon would not unwisely break the cryptex and lose the clues hidden within the cryptex (Brown 218). Some crucial information related to the Sauniere's poems often comes from Sophie's domestic memory. Before entering the account number to the safe-deposit box, Sophie tells Langdon that the code should be "something that appeared random . . . but was *not*" (205). Her inspiration comes from her understanding of Sauniere. Another example that portrays Sophie as a non-romantic character is her identity as a well-trained police agent. Sophie is an independent female agent who is sometimes more vigilant than Langdon in perceiving danger (ch38, ch49, and ch65). Whenever Langdon is at gunpoint, Sophie is often the one to protect Langdon.

By crossing the boundary from real to fictional and traditional to nontraditional, Dan Brown leads his reader to a place where they can never have any definite answer in the end. Therefore, the suspense and curiosity always linger even after the reader finishes his reading. In the end of the novel, Brown does not give a definite answer to the Holy Grail. Neither does he give any definite meaning of the Holy Grail. As the main character, Langdon does not find the Grail in the end. He only finds a place "to pray at the feet of the outcast one" (489). Langdon only presumes that he is kneeling "before the bones of Mary Magdalene" (489). The Holy Grail is never really found in the novel. If Langdon does not find the Grail, the novel would imply that Langdon does not really break the other code in Sauniere's poem. Thus, as a reader of *The Da*

Vinci Code, the interest will be doubled each time he rereads it since the final answer

is left to the mind of the reader.