

Chapter Three

“The Bible is a production of man, my dear. Not of God. The Bible did not fall magically from the clouds. Man created it as a historical record of tumultuous times, and it has evolved through countless translations, additions, and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book.”

—Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code* 251

“What he means,” Langdon said, “is that we worship the gods of our fathers.”

“What I mean,” Teabing countered “is that almost everything our father taught us about Christ is false. As are the stories about the Holy Grail.”

—Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code* 255

In this chapter, I will demonstrate how we can understand more thoroughly *The Da Vinci Code* echoes the influence of the Foucauldian power control. *The Da Vinci Code* shows how sovereign power worked in ancient times and also how disciplinary power functions in modern times.

I: Power Control:

In *Discipline and Punishment*, Foucault demonstrates how different powers are formed in different historical background to control the individual (Smith 162). In fact, the system of power is built so effectively that hardly any individual can escape the influence.

i. Sovereign Power:

Sovereign power has three characteristics to assure its effectiveness at controlling others. The first characteristic is brutal punishment (Smith 124). Sovereign powers employ brutal punishment to force the victims to accept the accusation they have been charged with. Torture is regarded as a legal method of discovering the truth. In the novel, Pope Clement employs brutal punishment. He believes that he can unfold the Knight Templar's secret. Therefore, under the command of Pope Clement, many Knights are "captured, tortured mercilessly, and finally burned at the stake as heretics" (Brown 173). The objective of Pope Clement's brutal torture is to obtain the "Templars' potent treasure trove of documents" (174).

Another example of using brutal punishment to obtain the truth can also be found in Fache. For Fache, both the "crus gemmata" (27) on his necktie as well as his close relationship with bishop Aringarosa (381, 462) show that he is a pious follower of the Catholic Church, which is a symbol of ancient sovereign power. Hence, as a pious follower of Catholic disciplinary power, Fache tends to believe that the employment of brutal punishment is the way to obtain real truth (332). Therefore, when Fache traces Teabing to the airport, he uses his power to not only arrest the air traffic controller without sufficient reason, but also to torture the controller. Arresting the air traffic controller is a way of using torture to find the truth. Facing the threat of being arrested, the controller tells Fache that Teabing's plane has flown to Langdon. Although the process has been civilized, Fache's method of using sovereign power to obtain the truth has not changed.

In the meantime, another follower who practices brutal punishment in the name of sovereign power is Silas. As a follower determined to restore the traditions of the Catholic Church, Silas employs brutal punishment as a tool of power. Silas believes

what the three senechaux and the Grand Master have told him is true since he has tortured them to death (Brown 13). Because he employs brutal punishment, he believes that the information he obtains should be true. When the reliability of his information source is questioned, Silas responds with great confidence to the teacher: “the prospect of death is strong motivation” (13). Silas’ confident tone implies that the information he seizes can’t be wrong since the victims have been tortured and interrogated before they revealed the answer (Brown 286).

The second characteristic of sovereign power is that the punishment will be carried out as long as the source of power is being threatened (Smith 124). Therefore, anything that threatens the sovereign power must be punished. In the novel, when the Knights Templar holds the treasure document that threatens the religious power of the Catholic Church, Pope Clement “devises an ingenious planned sting operation to quash the Templars and seize their treasure” (Brown 173). In the novel, the Catholic Church has punished anything that poses a threat to its own power. In the fifth chapter of *The Da Vinci Code*, Silas’ action to fight against the “enemies of Christ” (34) illustrates the resolution of the Christian establishment to defend its faith:

And yet this was the message the enemies of Christ now threatened to destroy. Those who threaten God with force will be met with force.

Immoveable and steadfast. For two millennia, Christian soldiers had defended their faith against those who tried to replace it. Tonight, Silas had been called to battle. (34)

Like his predecessors, Silas must join them to defend his faith against the threatening message. Silas underscores that the force of God, representing the power of Catholic Church is immovable and steadfast, does not allow any challenge.

Moreover, when “Jesus intended for the future of His Church to be in the hands of Mary Magdalene (Brown 268), the control of sovereign power is shaken. Therefore, the Church must defame Mary and denigrate any relationship involving Mary as a form of punishment:

The Church, in order to defend itself against Magdalene’s power, perpetuated her image as a whore and buried the evidence of Christ’s marriage to her, thereby defusing any potential claims that Christ has a surviving bloodline and was a moral prophet. (274)

Only by defaming Mary as a whore and burying Christ’s marriage can the Catholic Church ensure the perpetuity of its sovereign power.

Finally, the idea of sexual intercourse also threatens the sovereign power of the Catholic Church.

“The Grail is literally the ancient symbol for womanhood, and the Holy Grail represents the sacred feminine and the goddess, which of course has 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. . . . Woman, once the sacred giver of life was now the enemy.” (258)

For male Church, the power of the female and her ability to produce life can be so sacred that it will challenge the power of the Church. Only when this idea demonized can the male Church maintain its domination. Hence, when any idea of reaching God by sexual intercourse appears, it will be regarded as a threat to the power of the Catholic Church:

“For the early Church,” Langdon explained in a soft voice, “mankind’s use of sex to commune directly with God posed a serious threat to the Catholic power base. It left the Church out of the loop, undermining their self-proclaimed status as the sole conduit to God. For obvious reasons, they worked hard to demonize sex and recast it as a disgusting and sinful act. Other major religions did the same.” (336)

Therefore, the sexual intercourse that threatens the power of the church will be punished by being “recast as a disgusting and sinful act” (336).

The last characteristic of sovereign power is that it must ritualize its punishment so as to make itself impersonal and divine. By ritualizing its punishment, sovereign power can always justify itself. Hence, whenever Silas murders others, he has to ritualize the punishment. On the one hand, he ritualizes punishment on himself. He uses spiked “*Cilice*” (14) and “*The Discipline*” (15) to atone for his crimes and to cleanse himself of his sins:

I must purge my soul of today’s sins. The sins committed today had been holy in purpose. Acts of war against the enemies of God had been committed for centuries. Forgiveness was assured Grasping the buckle, he cinched it one notch tighter, wincing as the barbs dug deeper into his flesh. Exhaling slowly, he savored the cleansing ritual of his pain. Pain is good, Silas whispered . . . *The Discipline*. The knots were caked with dried blood. Eager for the purifying effects of his own agony, Silas said a quick prayer (Brown 14-5)

Silas uses ritualized punishment as a method to purify himself. He whispers to himself that “pain is good” (14). For Silas, the pain caused by ritualized punishment gives him

power not only to atone for his sins but also to carry out the mission of sovereign power.

On the other hand, Silas ritualizes the explanation for the murders he commits. He tells himself that he is not killing innocent people. He is defending “the faith against those who tried to displace it (God)” (34). He offers the following comment on his brutal deeds: “Those who threaten God with force will be met with force. Immovable and steadfast” (34). Hence, when Silas ritualizes his deeds of murder and self-inflicted punishment, he can find motivation strong enough to help him carry out the mission to protect his faith.

Pope Clement also ritualizes the rationalization for brutal punishment before he punishes the Knights Templar in 1307. Instead of proclaiming that the Knights Templar’s power has threatened the Church’s authority, Pope Clement declares that the Knights Templar are punished because they are “heretics guilty of devil worship, homosexuality, defiling the cross, sodomy, and other blasphemous behavior” (173). Moreover, Pope Clement furthermore ritualizes his deeds by saying that he “had been asked by God to cleanse the earth by rounding up all the Knights and torturing them until they confessed their crimes against God” (173). By ritualizing the rationalization for brutal punishment he has provided sovereign power a neutral and legal way to realize its goal. As a consequence, by tracing the three characteristics of sovereign power, I can unravel how the control of sovereign power has been carried out throughout history.

Foucault exposes the way that sovereign power’s influence was only replaced by disciplinary power. In other words, power control never disappears. In *The Da Vinci Code*, power control is traced through its transformation from old sovereign power to its new form as disciplinary power. The first event that represents the new control of

modern disciplinary power occurs when Langdon flies to London with Teabing and Sophie. The view from the window that Langdon sees is crucial since it suggests the transference of the old symbols of royal power control to the eye of the millennium, the sign of the disciplinary panoptic:

In the distance, now, the skyline of Longdon began to materialize through the dawn drizzle. Once dominated by Big Ben and Tower Bridge, the horizon now bowed to the Millennium Eye—a colossal, ultramodern Ferris Wheel that climbed five hundred feet and afforded breathtaking views of the city. (368)

Big Ben and Tower Bridge here can be regarded as the symbols of old sovereign power while “the colossal, ultramodern Ferris Wheel” (368) can be taken as the new technology of panoptic surveillance. The “viewing capsule” on the Millennium Eye offers its passengers a great view to see everything in the city. In this way, the Millennium Eye has similar functions as Foucauldian disciplinary panoptic. When the old symbols of power control “now bowed to the Millennium Eye” (368), the description implies the transference of old sovereign power to the new disciplinary one.

In addition to the Millennium Eye, the new building of Opus Dei in the modern city of New York also shows us how the influence of the old religion still works in a different form:

. . . Opus Dei’s recent public success—the completion of their World Headquarters in New York City. *Architectural Digest* has called Opus Dei’s building “a shining beacon of Catholicism sublimely integrated with the modern landscape,” and lately the Vatican seemed to be drawn to anything and everything that included the word “modern.” (160-1)

From the paragraph above, the description of the building shows how the ancient Vatican Church works to merge into the modern world in order to maintain its power control in the modern era. Furthermore, the building also stands for the transference from old religious sovereign power to new religious disciplinary power as “the Vatican seemed to be drawn to anything” (161) so as to maintain its control on the world.

We can also find other hidden traces of the transformation of sovereign power to disciplinary power. For instance, the new entrance to The Louvre, a crystal pyramid, signifies not just the linking between the old and new, but also a transference from the old to the new. The new entrance designed by I.M. Pei that replaces the old entrance to The Louvre suggests the transformation of old to new power: “Progressive admirers, though, hailed Pei’s seventy-one-foot-tall transparent pyramid as a dazzling synergy of ancient structure and modern method—a symbolic link between the old and new – helping usher The Louvre into the next millennium” (19). The old Louvre stands for the glorious past and the great power of the noble French king. It also implies the old sovereign power of France since The Louvre was built through exploitation whereas the new transparent pyramid refers to the new ruling power of the French president. On the one hand, the construction of the new entrance is supported by the French president (19-20), representing the new French disciplinary power. On the other, the way that the new entrance replaces the old one is a crucial point to show how old sovereign power is replaced by new disciplinary power. As I indicate above, disciplinary power only represents a change in the form of power control; the attempt to control never disappears.

For Foucault, disciplinary power now is different from before regardless of the fact that both have power control as their final aim. Disciplinary power can be

enforced under three conditions, which are cellular structure, bodily training, and panoptic surveillance (Sheridan 150). These three conditions are set in order to establish an environment beneficial for the authority of disciplinary power. In the novel, there are several scenes that reveal the use of cellular structure. A cellular structure is created so that the authority of disciplinary power can observe, guide, and supervise the victim. By using containment security and video surveillance technology, The Louvre is designed to be built as a perfect structure. On the one hand, the barricade containment can lock any intruder within the museum:

Most large museums now used “containment security.” Forget keeping thieves out. Keep them in. Containment was activated after hours, and if an intruder removed a piece of artwork, compartmentalized exits would seal around that gallery, and the thief would find himself behind bars even before the police arrived. (28)

The containment security makes the museum an enclosed structure which nobody is allowed to enter or leave. Since nobody can leave, the disciplinary power can easily exercise its authority.

On the other hand, the video surveillance not only augments the cellular authority effect but also helps the disciplinary power observe, guide, and supervise the victim. We are shown how the video surveillance works when Langdon is led by Fache to the murder scene. Langdon senses the security cameras “mounted high on the walls” (28). He knows that they “sent a clear message to visitors: We see you Do not touch anything” (28). The security cameras let visitors know that they can never escape the watch of the video surveillance. The video surveillance informs the visitors that they are in an enclosed cellular structure. Video surveillance helps the disciplinary power to locate anyone it wants at any moment. The enclosed structure helps the authority of

disciplinary power to assert its control at all times since the victim can never escape its control.

In addition to cellular structure, disciplinary power uses bodily training to inscribe its influence on an individual's body. In the novel, Silas receives bodily training as a form of disciplinary power. Having been accepted by Bishop Aringarosa, Silas has been taught to perform the "sacred practice known as 'corporal mortification'" (15). Followers of Opus Dei use this ritualized practice to purge their souls of sin. Hence, whenever Silas feels that he is not clean enough to be a resolute Church follower, he has to resort to the bodily training:

One hour, he told himself, grateful that the Teacher had given him time to carry out the necessary penance before entering the house of God. I must purge my soul of today's sins. . . . Silas knew, absolution required sacrifice . . .

The pain caused by the device also helped counteract the desire of the flesh . . . Exhaling slowly, he savored the cleansing ritual of his pain . . .

(14)

Silas' employment of the spiked "*Cilice*" (14) belt represents his own bodily training. This bodily training helps Silas reaffirm the control of disciplinary power. Whenever Silas feels the pain in his thigh caused by the *Cilice*, this pain reminds him of the sinful desires of his flesh. In fact, the pain serves not only as a "reminder of Christ's suffering" (14), but also as a reassertion of disciplinary power. Whenever Silas practices the bodily training, it will inscribe the disciplinary power of the Opus Dei into his body.

Silas' bodily training also includes the employment of "*The Discipline*" (15). It is a "heavy knotted rope" (15) used to slap against one's back. Therefore, in addition to the pain in his thigh, the pain on his back caused by *The Discipline* represents a

religious responsibility and drives him to carry on his mission. Only by performing the sacred practice can Silas fight against his miserable past:

Over time, Silas learned to see himself in a new light. *I am pure. White. Beautiful. Like an angel.*

At the moment, though, in his room at the residence hall, it was his father's disappointed voice that whispered to him from the past.

Tue s un desastre. Un spectre (You are a disease. A spectre.)

Kneeling on the wooden floor, Silas prayed for forgiveness. Then, stripping off his robe, he reached again for *the Discipline*. (181)

By practicing the sacred performance on his body, Silas can embrace the Church's disciplinary power and become an angel rather than a disease.

The same bodily training that represents disciplinary power is also inflicted on Bishop Aringarosa. Like Silas, whenever Aringarosa feels uneasy or nervous about his own belief in Opus Dei, he will unconsciously touch his ring: "Feeling the texture of the mitrecrozier appliqué and the facets of the diamonds . . . reminded himself that this ring was a symbol of power far less than that which he would soon attain" (164). The touch of the ring is Aringarosa's own bodily training that inscribes disciplinary power into his mind.

The third form of disciplinary power is panoptic surveillance. Through the technology of panoptic surveillance, disciplinary power can always locate and control the individual "at a single gaze" (Sheridan 152). First of all, the panoptic technique 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). In *The Da Vinci Code*, the French police always know where the criminals will go:

The first hour was critical. Fugitives were predictable the first hour after escape. They always needed the same thing. Travel. Lodging. Cash. The Holy Trinity. Interpol has power to make all three disappear in the blink of an eye. By broadcast-faxing photos of Langdon and Sophie to Paris . . . Interpol would leave no options—no way to leave the city, no place to hide, and no way to withdraw cash without being recognized. Usually, fugitives panicked on the street and did something stupid. Stole a car. Robbed a store. Used a bank card in desperation. Whatever mistake they committed, they quickly made their whereabouts known to local authorities. (169)

By “broadcast-faxing photos” of the suspects to every corner of the city, the French police project their disciplinary power. Broadcast-faxing photos is designed to objectify the individual. By leaving no place for the criminal to hide and no money to spend, the police can immediately see where the suspects are whereas the suspects never know that they have been seen.

The electronic eavesdropping skill is also part of panoptic surveillance. With the most advanced eavesdropping system, Teabing can see and insert his control on everyone, including the police, Sion of Priory, and Opus Dei. The modern technique of electronic eavesdropping is also a form of panoptic control. It helps Teabing to infinitely expand his panoptic control while the victim will never realize that his information has been collected:

Now, a hard disk recorder could be affixed behind a lamp, for example, with its foil microphone molded into the contour of the base and dyed to match. As long as the microphone was positioned such that it received a

few hours of sunlight per day, the photo cells would keep recharging the system. Bugs like this one could listen indefinitely. (394)

Through electronic eavesdropping, Teabing manages to not only know where his targets are but also collect detailed information about them without been discovered. Teabing's secret technique of panoptic control even outwits the French police (460). Through the use of the advanced panoptic surveillance system, Fache admits that Teabing can insert his disciplinary power to "exploit" (460) other powerful authorities, such as the Vatican and Opus Dei (460).

In addition to this critical perspective of the Foucauldian power control, *The Da Vinci Code* can also be explored through the concept of feminine resistance. In order to show how feminine resistance exerts itself, I would like respectively focus on source, text and subject of resistance to elaborate on how the mother and maternal imaginary father have existed as the sources of resistance, how the texts of resistance assist the subject to resist symbolic power control, and how the individual becomes a subject of resistance.

II. Resistance

Besides power control, the individual, as I have demonstrated earlier, is also characterized by fluid resistance (Certeau 37). This uncontrollable resistance does exist in the organic human body (Linhart 17). Hence, in the following paragraph, I will explore how that uncontrollable resistance occurs to subvert power control.

i. Sources of Resistance: the Mother

For Kristeva, the child is born with maternal influence. The child is first exposed to the mother. Yet when the child needs to accept symbolic language, it has to repress

maternal influence. The child has to expel maternal influence since the mother's maternal influence "disturbs identity, system, order . . . does not respect borders, positions, rules . . . is the in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" (Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* 4). Hence in order to prepare to embrace symbolic order, the child must expel the mother's disturbing characteristics. In the novel, every character is more or less influenced by the abject mother. Silas, for example, has to expel maternal influence to become an accepted subject of the symbolic world. When Silas was born as an albino, he inherited in-between, ambiguous and composite maternal characteristics. Silas's unstable identity deteriorates even further after he kills his father.

Having defied the symbolic control of his father, Silas is further excluded as an outcast (Brown 60). Due to his indefinable albino appearance, he is mocked and excluded by a girl, policemen, sailors, and other prisoners (60-61). They can be regarded as representing criticism from society. A society based upon symbolic order will expel anything disturbing and indefinable. Due to his ambiguous identity, Silas does not have a name. He is only regarded as a "transparent," "weightless" "ghost" (61). Society cannot tolerate him, even in jail (61). This exclusion never ceases until Silas represses his in-between, ambiguous identity when he meets Aringarosa. Silas finally has an identity after he identifies Aringarosa as his father.

Aringarosa also has to repel all challenges to the Opus Dei. In order to protect the unity and integrity of the church, Aringarosa sacrifices everything to fight against any challenge that endangers the traditional principles of the Church. For him, the Grail is a disturbing threat to the Opus Dei since the Grail represents works like the semiotic. Terry Eagleton defines that the semiotic "'is fluid and plural, a kind of pleasurable creative excess over precise meaning' and 'takes sadistic delight in

destroying or negating . . . all fixed signification on which male-dominated class-societies rely” (188). Therefore, the Grail appears as a threat “infinitely more powerful than the media” (Brown 33).

After Teabing tells Aringarosa about the Grail, Aringarosa feels the urgent need to expel the threat of the Grail from the Catholic Church. Since the secret of the Holy Grail is always ambiguous, the Grail can never be regulated by the Church. The Grail is hence seen as a disturbing threat by the Opus Dei. Therefore, when facing the in-between and ambiguous threat from the secret of the Holy Grail, Aringarosa must cooperate with the “Teacher” (Teabing) (449). Only in this way can Aringarosa protect the power of the Catholic Church.

Furthermore, the same disturbing maternal influence also happens to the learned Harvard professor. In other words, Langdon is also under much influence of the disturbing abject mother. From the beginning of the story, we can notice that Langdon has worked hard to conquer his fear of claustrophobia (26). Langdon’s claustrophobia can be seen as an effort to expel the ambiguous maternal influence in his mind since closed spaces symbolize the mother’s womb. For Kristeva, the enclosed space resembles the semiotic chora,¹ where maternal space is. An ambiguous and in-between feeling always haunts Langdon whenever he is trapped in a closed space. Langdon has to fight with this disturbing maternal influence since it will destroy his autonomous, analytical thinking. Hence Langdon will always feel panic and chaos when he is trapped in a closed space. Langdon has to conquer his claustrophobia whenever he has to stay in confined spaces. Langdon’s endless feelings of

¹ 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. Terry Eagleton also highlights the fact that “the semiotic is fluid and plural, a kind of pleasurable creative excess over precise meaning,” and that “it takes sadistic delight in destroying or negating . . . all fixed transcendental signification,” on which male-dominated class-societies rely (Eagleton 188). Therefore, semiotic maternity for Langdon is a disturbing threat to his analytical thinking.

claustrophobia are further evidence of his disturbing maternal influence. The closed space stands for Kristeva's maternal chora (the space of mother) where an ambiguous maternal influence exists. In the beginning of the novel, readers can sense Langdon's claustrophobia when he is in the closed elevator with Fache:

As a boy, Langdon had fallen down an abandoned well shaft and almost died treading water in the narrow space for hours before being rescued. Since then, he'd suffered a haunting phobia of enclosed spaces—elevator, subways, squash courts. *The elevator is a perfectly safe machine, Langdon continually told himself, never believing it. It's a tiny metal box hanging in an enclosed shaft!* (26)

Before being rescued and returning to a world of meaning, Langdon spent his boyhood in the closed space of his mother, in other words, the womb. When Langdon is rescued, he is reborn into a meaningful world where language and symbolic order regulate everything. The memory of staying in the semiotic maternal womb, however, still haunts Langdon with its disturbing ambiguity. Therefore, only by expelling the ambiguous feeling of maternal space can Langdon be a unified and autonomous subject. Claustrophobia represents Langdon's fear of losing his identity. If the semiotic maternal womb takes control of his mind, Langdon will fail to follow the symbolic order and become delirious. As a result, claustrophobia is Langdon's coping mechanism which he uses to protect his identity and find the balance between symbolic and semiotic order. In Chapter 47, when Langdon is forced to stay in the confined cargo area of an armored truck, he rediscovers "the all too familiar anxiety that haunted him in confined spaces" (215). He starts to constantly tell himself: "Vernet said he would take us a safe distance out of the city. Where? How far?" (215). In fact, Langdon's incessant anxiety about enclosed spaces only proves the existence

of maternal influence. His repeated repression of his claustrophobia only underscores his repeated efforts to balance the semiotic maternal womb with symbolic order.

However, the disturbing quality of maternal influence never really disappears from the subject since the repeated attempts by the subjects to repress maternal influence only proves that maternal influence still exists. In the novel, Silas must continually wear *the Cilice* (14) to rid himself of the desire. Silas has to continuously repress this disturbing and unchecked desire by performing “the sacred practice known as ‘corporal mortification’” (Brown 15). Through the ritual of corporal mortification, he can “counteract the desires of the flesh” (14). This desire of his flesh represents the maternal influence. Although Silas’ thinking can be influenced by religion, his body always reminds him of his repressed maternal influence. The nameless desire of the flesh controls Silas’ body when Silas’ father kills his mother. Silas has recurring flashback to the memory of how he kills his father: “As if some kind of demon were controlling his body, the body walked to the kitchen and grasped a butcher knife. Hypnotically, he moved to the bedroom where his father lay on the bed in a drunken stupor . . .” (60). Hence Silas’ corporal desire can be regarded as the disturbing maternal drive. Nonetheless, throughout the story, Silas has never stopped his “corporal mortification” (15). He has to pray to repress this disturbing drive all the way until his death (459). The pain from “*The Discipline*” (15) and “*The Cilice*” (14) helps Silas counteract maternal desire and reminds him of Christ’s suffering (14). Therefore, the disturbing maternal influence must be repressed so that Silas can become a loyal servant of God. In Chapter 39, whenever Silas suffers from his past memories, it only reminds him of being a ghost: “Tue s un desastre. Un spectre” (You are a disease, a spectre) (181). He has to purify himself by using “*The Discipline*” (181). For him, *The Discipline* is a tool to expel the disturbing maternal drive, and to

protect his stable identity as God's servant in the symbolic world. Only when Silas practices suppression can he feel himself as a "pure, white and beautiful angel" (181). The disturbing shadow of maternal influence never has left Silas throughout his life.

Meanwhile, both Teabing and Langdon explain to Sophie that the Church has never stopped trying to repress the secret of the Holy Grail because "the Templars' potent treasure trove of documents, which apparently has been their source of power, was Clement's true objective, but it slipped through his fingers" (174). Therefore, for a thousand years, the Church must repeatedly repress the secret of the Holy Grail to "solidify its own power base" (Brown 225). Yet, the Church's efforts show that the secret of the Holy Grail never actually disappears. The secret of the Holy Grail is the secret of a maternal influence that stays hidden but influences the Church. Hence, the threat posed by maternal influence is never completely removed from the minds of the priests.

Though maternal influence is always within every individual, it never utters a single word throughout the novel. In Brown's detective novel, *Mary Magdelene*, representing maternal influence, is always silent. Yet, I will claim that Mary, representing maternal influence, is 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. Only in this way can the mother protect and inspire her flesh within the symbolic order.

In *The Da Vinci Code*, Sophie's grandmother knows that she has to be silent so that she can protect Sophie. Therefore, Marie Chauvel is silent about what she knows because she knows better. She told Langdon that she and Saunier have to "make a grave decision the instant" (Brown 477) they receive the phone call about the death of

Sophie's parents: "We knew we had to protect our grandchildren, and we did what we thought was best" (477). Marie Chauvel has to separate herself from Sophie so that her granddaughter as well as the bloodline of Jesus can be protected. The second instance of maternal silence is presented when Marie explains real meaning of the Grail to Langdon. Knowing the real intention of the Priory, Marie tells Langdon that the Priory of Sion has always been maintained to keep the Grail "unveiled" (479). Though the Priory always manages to make maternal Mary a silent mother, Mary's silence does not really exist silently. Instead, the secret of Mary Magdalene, the Holy Grail, becomes "a grand idea . . . a glorious unattainable treasure that somehow, even in today's world of chaos, inspires us" (Brown 479). When Langdon questions Marie Chauvel that the story of Mary Magdalene will be lost forever, Marie replies: "The pendulum is swinging. We are starting to sense the dangers of our history . . . and of destructive paths" (479). The mother remains silent about what she knows because only the silence can inspire the public.

ii. Sources of Resistance: Maternal Imaginary Father

As I have discussed above, maternal influence is both repressed and silenced in *The Da Vinci Code*. Therefore, maternal resistance always exists explicitly so that it can work to influence the subject. Yet, there is another explicit source of resistance: the maternal imaginary father. For Kristeva, the maternal imaginary father is a mixture of the father and mother, which has characteristics of both the masculine and feminine (Kristeva, *Tales of Love* 26-40).

In the novel, Sauniere is exactly the one who can represent the maternal imaginary father. He contains the mixed characteristics of the father and mother. On the one hand, there is evidence showing that Sauniere is the imaginary father. First of

all, as an imaginary father, Sauniere possesses strong masculine characteristics. For instance, having been a soldier of “*la Guerre d’Algerie*” (Brown 5), Sauniere has the masculine personality a soldier requires. This masculine personality helps Sauniere not only to face the fear of death but also to struggle to give clues for Langdon and Sophie to follow (37). Knowing that he will be dead in fifteen minutes, Sauniere is not afraid of his own death. On the contrary, Sauniere’s greatest fear is that he will fail to pass on the secret: “He was trapped, and the doors could not be reopened for at least twenty minutes. By the time anyone got to him, he would be dead. Even so, the fear that now gripped him was a fear far greater than that of his own death. *I must pass on the secret . . .*” (5). Sauniere’s masculine personality is proven when Fache tells Langdon that Sauniere is a man of great personal strength: “Mr. Sauniere suffered from a bullet wound to his stomach. He died very slowly. Perhaps over fifteen or twenty minutes. He was obviously a man of great personal strength.” (37).

On the other hand, Sauniere also inherits some feminine characteristics. Sauniere’s feminine characteristics make him more tolerant and accepting of multiple meanings. In the novel, Sauniere acts as both a mother and father to Sophie. She learns that Sauniere is tolerant of different religious ideas, especially to the idea that Jesus Christ may have married (267). Sauniere is even willing to consider the possibility that Jesus had a girlfriend. Sophie says that her grandfather loves “anything with multiple layers of meaning” and “codes within codes” (203). Sauniere’s secret identity as the Priory’s Grand Master also emphasizes his feminine characteristics. Members of the Priory believe that “the ability of a woman to produce life from her womb makes her sacred” (335).

In other words, the feminine is sacred because it is the maternal feminine. As one of the Grand Masters in the Priory, Sauniere will certainly identify with the maternal

feminine. He believes in the power of the sacred feminine. He is so faithful to the sacred feminine that he will die to protect the secret of the Holy Grail. Teabing has stressed the loyalty of the Priory brothers: “the brothers would never talk. They are sworn to secrecy. Even in the face of death,” says Tabing to Langdon and Sophie. By practicing the sacred marriage, Sauniere believes that the sacred feminine is a source to obtain the “knowledge of (the) divine” (335).

As a consequence, as a maternal father with both masculine and feminine thinking, Sauniere believes that woman is an equal partner to Jesus. As a maternal imaginary father, Sauniere told Sophie that it should not be bad if Jesus had a wife (Brown 267). Sauniere holds that women should share a position equal to man (267). By advocating the equality between sexes, Sauniere also teaches Sophie the value of independent thinking. “I said the Church should not be allowed tell us what notions we can and can’t entertain,” (267) says Sauniere to Sophie.

The identification with the imaginary father will lead to further identification with the paternal father as well as symbolic order (Oliver 79). Thus by recognizing the imaginary father, the child can gain access to the symbolic world. When Sophie recognizes Sauniere’s masculinity as a soldier, Sophie can handle any dangerous situations. In fact, on many occasions, it is Sophie who saves Langdon. In effect, Sophie has been helping and protecting Langdon. She is like a soldier who always holds the weapon, while Langdon never knows how to fight. For instance, when Langdon is arrested by a security guard in The Louvre, it is Sophie who knows the perfect way to save Langdon without harming the innocent guard (143). When Langdon and Sophie are taking the taxi to escape the French police, it is again Sophie’s masculinity that saves Langdon (179). Without Sophie’s protection, Langdon

can never have the chance to unfold the secret of the Holy Grail. Moreover, having been taught by Sauniere, Sophie also inherits Sauniere's ability in cryptography:

At the age of twelve, Sophie could finish the Le Monde crossword without any help, and her grandfather graduated her to crosswords in English, mathematical puzzles, and substitution ciphers. Sophie devoured them all. Eventually she turned her passion into a profession by becoming a codebreaker for the Judicial Police. (84)

Later Sophie's special ability in cryptography helps her gain access to the symbolic world of the French police in the Cryptography Department (55). With her new knowledge of cryptology, Sophie can enter the symbolic world and find a position of equal status there.

Individuals can also recognize the imaginary father in order reunite with their mother (Oliver 79). In the novel, when Sophie accepts Langdon's explanation of the sacred marriage (334), she does not only forgive her grandfather but also completely accepts the idea of the Sacred Feminine: "Langdon now recognized the emotion that had been growing in her eyes as they spoke. It was remorse. Distant and deep. Sophie Neveu had shunned her grandfather and was now seeing him in an entirely different light." (341). When Sophie forgives her grandfather, Sophie places herself back within the knowledge of the maternal feminine.

Langdon also reunites with the maternal feminine after identifying with Sauniere, the imaginary father. In the novel, after Langdon follows Sauniere's poetic instruction, he ultimately discovers the knowledge of the sacred feminine, the meaning of the Holy Grail:

Like the murmurs of spirits in the darkness, forgotten words echoed.

The quest for the Holy Grail is the quest to kneel before the bones of Mary Magdalene. A journey to pray at the feet of the outcast one.

With a sudden upwelling of reverence, Robert Langdon fell to his knees.

For a moment, he thought he heard a woman's voice . . . the wisdom of the ages . . . whispering up from the chasms of the earth. (489)

As Langdon recognizes Sauniere as a maternal imaginary father, he can discover the hidden meaning of Sauniere's poems, and put himself back in alignment with the influence of the abject mother. The spirit of the Holy Grail is the secret of Mary, the repressed secret of maternal influence.

Having recognized Sauniere as a maternal imaginary father, Sophie can replace herself back to Marie Chauvel, a surrogate mother. In practice, she can reunite with her grandmother, Mary Chauvel when Sophie restores her relationship with Sauniere and follows the clues in his poems. Each of Sauniere's poems reveals a secret about Sophie's family. The first poem suggests the possibility of keeping the family whole: "helps us keep her scatter'd family whole" (Brown 328). The second poem reveals what detectives can find out about the family: "It speaks of Rosy flesh and seeded womb" (364). The final poem reveals where all secrets lie: "The Holy Grail 'neath ancient Roslin waits" (482). Only when Sophie recover her relationship with Sauniere and follows the logic in Sauniere's poems can she reunite with her grandmother and rediscover the secret of her family.

Therefore, having proven the repression of the maternal influence and having shown that Sauniere is a maternal imaginary father, I can confirm that maternal influence exists both implicitly and explicitly in the novel. Hence, sources of resistance will work both ways to influence each individual.

iii. Texts of Resistance:

Though maternal influence has been repressed within the subject, the maternal imaginary father reveals that it has never been uprooted. In addition, when detectives follow Saunier's poems, they are guided to resist the meaning established by the Catholic Church. In other words, texts of resistance also contribute to create subjects of resistance. By reading the texts of resistance, the subject is brought back to recognize his/her maternal influence, and hence becomes the subject of resistance. The texts of resistance are instinctual rhythm, music and poetic language (Oliver 96). Instinctual rhythm is a seemingly meaningless sound. It works 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 other words, the instinctual rhythm in *The Da Vinci Code* always passes through symbolic regulation. In Chapter 58, Teabing stresses that the secret of the Grail is never quiet. Regarding the secret of the Holy Grail, Teabing points out that the secret has been shouted out for centuries:

"Heavens!" Teabing said. "It has been anything but quiet! The royal bloodline of Jesus Christ is the source of the most enduring legend of all time – the Holy Grail. Magdalene's story has been shouted from the rooftops for centuries in all kinds of metaphors and languages. Her story is everywhere once you open your eyes." (270)

Teabing points out that the secret meaning of the Holy Grail has always existed in the rhythm. The public cannot discover that because they don't understand the meaning of each rhythm:

"Quite literally," Teabing said. "The word *Sangreal* derives from San

Greal— or Holy Grail. But in its most ancient form, the word *Sangreal* was divided in a different spot.”

Teabing wrote on a piece of scrap paper and hand it to her.

She read what he had written.

Sang Real

Instantly, Sophie recognized the translation.

Sang Real literally meant *Royal Blood*. (271)

From “Sangreal . . . Sang Real . . .San Greal” to “Royal Blood . . . Holy Grail” (273), the instinctual rhythms of “San” and “Greal” (271) penetrate the symbolic meaning and exceed it by generating unexpected new meanings.

Moreover, there is another instinctual rhythm, the meter of Saunier’s poem: the “iambic pentameter” (328). Like the San Greal, the seemingly meaningless rhythm possesses a secret meaning that exceeds the symbolic meaning:

For centuries, iambic pentameter has been a preferred poetic meter of outspoken literati across the globe, from the ancient Greek writer Archilochus to Shakespeare . . . bold soul who chose to write their social commentaries in a meter that many of the day believed has mystical properties. The roots of iambic pentameter were deeply pagan.

Iamb. Two Syllables with opposite emphasis. Stressed and unstressed.

Yin Yang. A balanced pair. Arranged in strings of five. Pentameter. Five for the pentacle of Venus and the sacred feminine.” (329)

Those seemingly meaningless instinctual rhythms work to pass on symbolic meanings. When readers read them, the rhythms immediately generate new meanings. Iambic pentameter not only enables the writers to criticize patriarchal society but also reveals the meaning of maternal resistance against symbolic regulated meaning. The rhythms

of iambic pentameter suggest that “Yin Yang, Venus, and the sacred feminine” (329) can be heard in Saunier’s poems.

Finally, the seemingly meaningless rhythm of Rosslyn (467) also works to penetrate the symbolic meaning of the church. In chapter 104, Langdon tells Sophie that the “ancient spelling of Rosslyn derived from the Rose Line meridian on which the chapel sat; or, as Grail academic preferred to believe, from the ‘Line of Rose’--- the ancestral lineage of Mary Magdalene” (467). The meaning of Rosslyn does not only refer to what Langdon knows. It further suggests lines that construct “the blade and chalice” (480). The power of Rosslyn’s instinctual rhythm exceeds that of the symbolic meaning of the church. It signifies multiple meanings related to the secret of the rose, Mary, Jesus, and their bloodline (480).

Music is also of great significance, and is one of the revolutionary texts. The meaningless sound of music is related to the maternal *chora* before the child’s entrance onto the symbolic stage. The child is first exposed to sounds instead of meaningful sentences. Therefore, in music “the semiotic can become a more dominating aspect of the signifying process” (Rolvjord 5). It can easily avoid repression and also penetrate the regulation of symbolic signification. In the novel, when Langdon tells Sophie that “the Grail story is everywhere . . . hidden” (281), he brings up examples related to music. Langdon explains how the meaning of Mary’s maternal influence has been protected within music. He first emphasizes that “some of today’s most enduring art, literature, and music secretly tell the history of Mary Magdalene and Jesus” (281). Then Langdon proceeds to bring up Mozart’s *Magic Flute* (281) as texts of resistance. He explains how Mozart’s *Magic Flute* is filled with Masonic symbolism and Grail secrets. Through the spread of Mozart’s music, the

secret of Mary not escapes suppression by the Church but also travels freely every time the music is played.

Another example of music as a revolutionary text is when Langdon and Sophie go to the British library to search for clues to solve the last poem. Using the computer database to search for their Grail secret, both Sophie and Langdon find several different music composers, such as Mozart, Beethoven, and Richard Wagner (419). They all compose music about the “ties between the Masons and the Knights templar, the Priory of Sion, and the Holy Grail” (419). As I indicated earlier, this feminine kind of music is “used as a description of romantic, the weak and the sensitive or gentle” (Rolvjord 8). Therefore, everything that Langdon and Sophie find through their computer search is related to “the description of romantic, the weak and the sensitive or gentle” (8):

Grail Allegory in Medieval Literature: A Treatise on Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. “Allegory of the Green Knight,” he called back. “No good,” Gettum said. “Not many mythological green giants buried in London.” . . . “The operas of Wagner?” Sophie asked. . . . Along with Mozart, Bethoven, Shakespeare, Geshwin, Houdini, and Disney. Volumes had been written (Brown 418-9)

The computer search shows that music has already preserves the secret of Mary Magdalene.

The computer database searches point out how the secret of the Grail is spread through music. Langdon and Sophie discover documents about “*troubadaours*—France’s famous wandering minstrals” (420). This reminds Langdon that “the troubadours were the traveling servants or ‘ministers’ of the Church of Mary Magdalene, using music to disseminate the story of the sacred feminine among the

common folk” (420). Langdon knows that the result is not a coincidence since it is exactly the way that the secret of the Grail was spread in the past. He further stresses that even today, the troubadours still sing songs “extolling the virtues of ‘our lady’—a mysterious and beautiful woman to whom they pledged themselves forever” (420). From the above evidence, readers can begin to get a clear idea about how secrets of the Grail have escaped symbolic regulation and spread throughout the ages.

Kristeva’s final revolutionary text is poetic language. For Kristeva, poetic language “pulverizes” the signifying practice (Oliver 97). With semiotic tendency, the poetic language generates multiple meanings to loosen the linguistic constraints (100). As “the master of double-entendres” (Brown 203), Saunier creates everything “with multiple layers of meaning” (203). Saunier’s tendency of crating everything with multiple layers of meaning has similar effect as the semiotic does. His poems are usually made of “codes within codes” (203). Therefore, the multiple layers pulverize the single meaning of the symbolic signifying practice. In his poems, one signifier never refers to one signified and the signification process is never stable. Instead, the real answer is often hidden within multiple layers. The detective must seek to find the multiple layers and loose the constraints of the Catholic Church so that they can find the answer. Saunier’s creation of multiple layers in his poems also endows the answer with multiple meanings. The answer of Saunier’s first poem not only exposes the conspiracy of the Catholic Church but also leads detectives to unlock the scroll in order to move on to the next clue (Ch 43).

13-3-2-21-1-1-8-5

O, Draconian devil!

Oh, lame saint!

P.S. Find Robert Langdon (105)

The multiple layers in Sauniere's poem generate innovative grammar and dissolve the fixed signifying practice. Traditionally, the meaning of his poem should be read as the charge of crime. In the first poem, Langdon should be involved in the crime. Yet, when regarding words in the poem as "anagrams" (105), detectives must reorganize and seek to find other layers. Only by understanding the relationship between the pentacle, the sacred feminine, PHI, and the Fibonacci sequence can detectives rearrange words and dissolve the first meaning. Readers need to know that Sauniere's use of the Fibonacci sequence is actually to underscore the sacred feminine so that they can find the number meaningful to the whole poem. By employing the number of the sacred feminine, the Fibonacci sequence, Lagndon can rearrange the letters in each line and turn these lines into other meaningful lines:

O, Draconian devil!

Oh, lame saint!

was a perfect anagram of . . .

Leonardo da Vinci!

The Mona Lisa!" (105)

The multiple meanings of each line in the poem dissolve the signifying process. In the first layer, draconian devil and lame saint can be used to accuse the violence of the Catholic Church. In the second layer, they can also be used to indicate imperfect image of saint, Jesus Christ because of his marriage. In the third layer, these two lines can be read as Sauniere's effort to tell police that Silas is the murderer. Silas is a draconian devil who murdered Sauniere while Silas, having been reborn as the servant of God by Arigarosa (64), is lame due to "the spiked cilice belt clamped around his thigh" (14). In the fourth layer, draconian devil and lame saint are anagrams of Leonardo da Vinci and The Mona Lisa.

In Saunier's second poem, the same multiple layers again dissolve the symbolic signifying process:

an ancient word of wisdom frees the scroll.
helps us keep her scatter'd family whole.
a headstone praised by templars is the key.
and atbash will reveal the truth to thee. (328)

Saunier's second poem is full of multiple meanings that disturb the symbolic signifying process. In the first layer, by underscoring the significance of the headstone, Saunier can justify the ceremony that "honored the creative magic of sexual union" (343). In the second layer, the headstone also suggests the violence of the Catholic Church. In the third layer, the second line, "her scatter'd family," can refer to Sophie, Marie Chauvel (Sophie's grandmother), and Mary Magdalene. In the end, the scroll does keep Sophie, Mary Chauvel, and Mary Magdalene's family whole. In the fourth layer, "atbash" implies that the poem needs to be deciphered by "the Atbash Cipher" (343). The answer is hidden in multiple layers. First, detectives must discover multiple meanings among "Baphomet" (346), and atbash so that they can loose the symbolic constraints on the poem. Second, they have to substitute the word, "Baphomet," in Atbash order. Third, they must create their own "substitution scheme by rewriting the entire alphabet in reverse order opposite the original alphabet" (344). Only through multiple layers can detectives find the answer to "free the scroll" (328).

In Saunier's last poem, the last poem becomes the poem that looses all symbolic constraints. By loosing the symbolic constraints, the multiple layers of the poem suggest that the tomb of Mary Magdalene can be anywhere beneath the starry sky:

The Holy Grail 'neath ancient Roslin waits
The blade and chalice guarding o'er Her gates.

Adorned in masters' loving art, She lies.

She rests at last beneath the starry skies. (482)

In the first layer, the poem does show that the bloodline of the Holy Grail, Marie Chauvel, waits for Sophie near Rosslyn Chapel (464). Rosslyn Chapel does have "The blade and chalice guarding o'er Her gates" (481). Marie Chauvel does live in Rosslyn Chapel adorned by Saunier's loving art (468). Therefore, "she" in the poem can be Marie Chauvel instead of Mary Magdalene since Marie Chauvel told Langdon that "there are many ways to see simple things" (482).

In the second layer, the poem can be read as Langdon perceives at last (487). "Ancient Roslin" in the first line can be read as the rose line. "The blade and chalice" in the second line can be viewed as "The Louvre Pyramid" and "La Pyramid Inversee" (487). "Masters' loving art" can be Saunier's collection of "world's finest art" (487) in The Louvre. At last, the last line of the poem can be read as the indication showing that Mary rests in The Louvre.

Yet, in the third layer, if we read the poem from a different point of view, the first line of the poem will show that the Holy Grail can be anywhere since it can either lie near ancient Rosslyn Chapel or rose line. In the second line, we can find the blade and chalice everywhere on earth. In the third line, we can say that Saunier's loving art can be many since he likes art related to multiple meanings and sacred feminine.

Finally the fourth line seems to indefinitely multiply the possible location of Mary Magdalene's tomb since "She rests at last beneath the starry skies" (489). Hence, anywhere beneath the starry skies can be her resting place. As a result, Saunier's skill of doubling the meaning of his poem further multiply the possible answer and dissolves any definite signification.

iv. Subjects of Resistance:

By following the texts of resistance, I will prove that both Sophie and Langdon are turned into subjects of resistance. By recognizing Sauniere as the imaginary father, they are able to gain access to the semiotic in language and ultimately produce a symbolic post-Oedipal return of the maternal.

In *The Da Vinci Code*, Langdon can discover the secret of the Grail because Langdon is a subject of resistance. 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). In *The Da Vinci Code*, Langdon is a man who can experience the threat of castration that forces him away from any identification with the mother. When Langdon discovers Sauniere’s lines: “*So Dark the Con of Man*” (133), he recollects his memory of the Catholic Church’s brutal history (134). When he mentions *The Witches’ Hammer* (134), Langdon explains that it is a book that “indoctrinates the world to ‘the dangers of free thinking women’ and instructed the clergy how to locate, torture and destroy them” (134). In other words, Langdon has realized how the Catholic Church works hard to repress those who identify with the mother. Whoever identifies with the idea of “free thinking women” should be identified, tortured, and destroyed. As a follower of the Grail, Langdon is a man who experiences the threat of castration. He is forced away from identifying with the mother, Mary Magdalene. In other words, if Langdon wants to find the Grail and to identify with Mary Magdalene, Langdon could also be killed as Sauniere is.

Similar examples also indicate that Langdon is a qualified as subject of resistance when he meets Teabing. Langdon knows the threat of castration that prevents members of the public from identifying with their mother. Langdon and

Teabing underscore the reason the Catholic Church refuses to let the public to identify with the mother:

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

As Langdon point out, the Church forces the public away from any identification with the mother in order to consolidate the influence of the Catholic Church. Once anyone, including Langdon, identifies with anything related to the search of the sacred feminine, they will be associated with evil. Those who identify with the sacred feminine will also be demonized and called unclean.

Langdon also points out how the Church forces the public away from any identification with the sacred feminine:

“The Grail,” Langdon said, “is symbolic of the goddess. When Christianity came along, the old pagan religious did not die easily. Legends of chivalric quests to find the lost Grail were in fact stories of forbidden quests to find the lost sacred feminine. Knights who claimed to be ‘searching for the chalice’ were speaking in code as a way to protect themselves from a Church that had subjugated women, banished the

Goddess, burned nonbelievers, and forbidden the pagan reverence for the sacred feminine.” (259)

Hence, detecting the threat of castration from the Catholic Church, Langdon underscores the way that the Grail knights have to hide the purpose of their search.

Having experienced the threat of castration, Langdon can come to experience how symbolic order functions to repress the semiotic in language. In *The Da Vinci Code*, Langdon highlights the way that semiotic meanings of signs have been repressed by the Catholic Church. From the beginning of the story, Langdon intends to explain the real meaning of the pentacle to Fache. He tries to justify the negative meaning of the pentacle that it is the result of power struggle:

The five-pointed star was now a virtual cliché in Satanic serial killer movies, usually scrawled on the wall of some Satanist’s apartment along with other alleged demonic symbology. Langdon was always frustrated when he saw the symbol in this context; the pentacle’s true origins were actually quite godly. . . . the symbolism of the pentacle has been distorted over the millennia . . . through bloodshed. (41)

Langdon unfolds the fact that the meanings of symbols have always been erased and distorted by the “newly emerging power” (41).

Apart from the meaning of the pentacle, Langdon also stresses how the meaning of sex and orgasm has been repressed with negative meanings. When speaking of the sex rite of the Priory, Langdon comments that sexual “intercourse was the revered union of the two halves of the human spirit—male and female—through which the male could find spiritual wholeness and communion with God” (335). Sexual intercourse is in fact about spirituality. Yet, this use of sex and orgasm to directly commune with God “posed a serious threat to the Catholic power base” (336). Thus

the Catholic Church represses the meaning of sex as a “disgusting and sinful act” (336).

Furthermore, when Langdon discovers Baphomet is the key to unlock the cryptex, he justifies the meaning of Baphomet. Langdon studies the Baphomet and justifies its maternal meaning of fertility within the symbolic order. He knows that the real meaning of Baphomet is repressed by the symbolic order of the Catholic Church. For Langdon, the Baphomet is no longer an evil sign of Satan.

The modern belief in a *honored* devil known as Satan could be traced back to Baphomet and the Church’s attempts to recast the honored fertility god as a symbol of evil. The Church has obviously succeeded, although not entirely. Traditional American Thanksgiving tables still bore pagan, horned fertility symbols. The cornucopia or “horn of plenty” was a tribute to Baphomet’s fertility and dated back to Zeus being suckled by a goat whose horn broke off and magically filled with fruit. Baphomet also appeared in group photographs behind a friend’s head in the V-symbol of horns; certainly few of the pranksters realized their mocking gesture was in fact advertising their victim’s robust sperm count. (343)

Langdon understands that the Church must repress anything that is related to the maternal influence. Baphomet, representing maternal fertility through sex, must be demonized as a source of evil so that the Church can control the public through language.

Having understood the repression of the symbolic order and the threat of castration, Langdon can access the semiotic in language and produces a symbolic post-Oedipal return of the maternal (Oliver 111).

The example that proves Langdon is a subject of resistance is presented when Langdon unfolds the true meaning of the pentacle. By reinscribing the semiotic in language: masculine “blade” and feminine “chalice” (Brown 480), Langdon discovers the real meaning of Saunier’s semiotic code:

The blade and chalice.

Fused as one.

The Star of David . . . the perfect union of male and female . . .

Soloman’s Seal . . . marking the Holy of Holies, where the male and female deities—Yahweh and Shkinah—were thought to dwell. (481)

When Langdon can change the former symbolic meaning by reinserting the meaning of the maternal semiotic, he does not only find the real meaning of pentacle, but also proves himself a subject of resistance.

Langdon’s analysis produces a symbolic post-Oedipal return of the maternal. He transforms the pentacle from a demonic symbol (41) into a symbol of the perfect union of male and female.

Moreover, Langdon’s success in decoding the secret meanings in Saunier’s poems also shows us that he has the ability to produce the symbolic post-Oedipal return of the maternal. Threatened by Teabing, Langdon manages to place himself in Saunier’s mind so that he can find the answer to the poem. Yet, placing himself in Saunier’s mind brings Langdon back to the maternal goddess:

Saunier 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.*

Legend 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.

Gazing out at the rusting trees of College Garden, Langdon sensed her playful presence. The signs were everywhere. Like a taunting silhouette emerging from the fog, the branches of Britain's oldest apple tree burgeoned with five-petaled blossoms, all glistening like Venus. The goddess was in the garden now. She was dancing in the rain, signing songs of the ages, peeking out from behind the bud-filled branches as if to remind Langdon that the fruit of knowledge was growing just beyond his reach. (451-452)

Placing himself in Sauniere's mind, Langdon can produce a symbolic post-Oedipal return of the maternal. In that example above, Langdon presumes to put himself in Sauniere's position. And Sauniere's position is the position of the maternal father. Therefore, Langdon, by assuming Sauniere's place, can sense the maternal goddess trying to tell himself where the fruit of knowledge is. With the post-Oedipal return, Langdon discovers the key to opening the last cryptex: the apple (457). His discovery of the apple symbolizes his successful return to the mother.

At last, when Langdon meets Marie Chauvel, he has access to the semiotic in language and produces a symbolic post-Oedipal return of the maternal. Because of Langdon's ability to produce a post-Oedipal return of the maternal, Marie Chauvel asks Langdon to continue his study "about the symbols of the sacred feminine" (Brown 479). She is in fact asking Langdon to continually produce a symbolic post-Oedipal return of the maternal. Langdon's study and publication will give readers

access to the semiotic maternal in language. Marie vindicates Langdon's ability to produce maternal influence:

“Will it? Look around you. Her (Mary) story is being told in art, music, and books. More so every day. The pendulum is swinging. We are starting to sense the danger of our history . . . and of our destructive paths. We are beginning to sense the need to restore the sacred feminine. . . Mr. Langdon. Sing her song. The world needs modern troubadours,” says Marie to Langdon. (479)

For Marie, Langdon becomes the “modern troubadour,” singing about the maternal and helping his readers find their maternal side.

In the meantime, unlike Oliver's definition of the revolutionary poet, Sophie is also a subject of resistance. For Oliver (111), women are not a revolutionary subject since they cannot fully sever themselves from their mother nor can they experience the patriarchal “threat of castration” (111). However, Sophie is not like Oliver's women. She can, like man, sever herself from identification with her mother because she was raised by her grandfather and trained by police authorities. Therefore, Sophie can gain access to the symbolic world like Langdon. In the novel, Sophie is a woman who receives education from the French police station. By receiving symbolic education, Sophie can win a position as an agent in the French Cryptography Department (55). As an agent, Sophie can sever herself from their mother.

Sophie was raised by her grandfather, and she has no chance to identify with her mother. Hence, through Sauniere's teaching she can gain the access to the symbolic world, just like Kristeva's revolutionary male subject. Sauniere has been training Sophie to go on “a treasure hunt” (119). The game of finding cards and riddles helps Sophie to develop her talents in the French Cryptography Department. Therefore, as a

revolutionary subject who should have the access to symbolic world, Sophie can gain the access to symbolic world.

As a subject of resistance like Langdon, Sophie can also experience the patriarchal “threat of castration that forces her away from any identification” (111). Sophie can sense the same threat of castration as men do when Langdon reveals the history of patriarchal violence. After Langdon and Teabing unfold how the Catholic Church suppresses the secret of the pentacle (Brown 103), the real position of Mary (258), and the meaning of the Holy Grail (273), Sophie can understand the threat of patriarchal castration that forces her away from any identification with the maternal. She comes to realize why she never understands the meaning of the pentacle, the history of Mary, and the meaning of the Holy Grail from maternal point of view.

Having gained access to the symbolic order and understanding the threat of patriarchal castration, Sophie can then “reinscribe/discover” (Oliver 111) the semiotic in language and produce a symbolic post-Oedipal return of the maternal. For instance, by following the clues of the semiotic maternal poetry in language, Sophie finds a way to discover maternal secrets. Each time Sophie cooperates with Langdon and Teabing to unfold the secrets of the Holy Grail, she finds more maternal secrets repressed within the symbolic order. By discovering the meaning of “So Dark the Con of Man” (133), Sophie realizes how the patriarchal Church tortures and murders the followers of maternal religion (134). The secret of Templar’s headstone tells Sophie the sacred meaning of a woman’s ability to produce life in her womb (343). The tomb of London knight places Sophie back in the world and in congruence with the wisdom of the mother (457).

Finally, in the temple of Rosslyn, Sophie discovers that she has seen the semiotic code on the ceiling of Rosslyn (470). By re-inscribing the codes in her memory,

Sophie produces a symbolic post-Oedipal return of the maternal. She recollects her memory of her grandfather, and finally realizes that it was the place of her grandmother. By the time she returns to Rosslyn with Langdon, she is able to understand the meaning of the maternal semiotic code within the symbolic order (Brown 470-75).

As a consequence, both Langdon and Sophie become subjects of resistance. This explains why Saunier only asks Sophie to find Langdon. Saunier writes their names before his death because he believes that only Langdon and Sophie can read his poems and become a real subject of resistance (112). Meanwhile, Saunier puts them together also because he knows that the mission of discovering the Grail requires both Langdon and Sophie's knowledge so that the secret knowledge of the Holy Grail and Mary Magdalene can be unlocked and protected (368).

Unlike Langdon and Sophie, Teabing is not a revolutionary subject. Though he is a scholar of the Holy Grail and knows how patriarchal religion has repressed maternal religion throughout history, Teabing is never a real revolutionary subject who can produce a symbolic post-Oedipal return of the maternal. Neither can Teabing be the knight who unfolds the secret meaning of the Holy Grail.

I would choose to use Kristeva's idea of the revolutionary subject to elaborate on why Teabing is not a revolutionary subject. Judging from Langdon, Sophie, and Teabing's examples, I will claim that it is not the difference in gender that makes one a revolutionary subject. Instead, it is the belief in the maternal as well as the imaginary father that makes the revolutionary subject resist the control of the symbolic order.

Teabing is not a revolutionary subject because he never identifies with the thinking of the maternal imaginary father, Saunier, although he does experience the

threat of castration that forces him away from any identification with the mother. In the novel, he treats Saunier as a traitor to the sacred feminine. Exposing why he has plotted to kill Saunier, Teabing tells Sophie that Saunier and “his sénéchaux were traitors to the Grail” (438). He never agrees with Saunier to protect the secret of the Holy Grail (438). Rather, Teabing believes that the constant protection of the Grail makes Saunier a traitor of the Grail. Since Teabing never really agrees with Saunier’s belief, he can never recognize Saunier as a maternal imaginary father.

By denying Saunier as an imaginary father, he does not recognize Saunier as a representative of the maternal. Neither can Teabing use Saunier’s poetry as a clue to produce the post-Oedipal return within symbolic order. Saunier’s role as an imaginary father 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 assuming Saunier’s thinking can one unravel the secrets in Saunier’s poems. Therefore, when Teabing rejects Saunier as a maternal imaginary father, he not only denies the maternal secrets in Saunier’s revolutionary texts but also rejects Saunier’s advice to place himself back inside the mother. Therefore, even though Teabing has the chance to hold Saunier’s keystone, he cannot discover the true way to unlock the keystone. When he rejects Saunier’s guidance as an imaginary father, he rejects all the semiotic clues Saunier has implanted in the poetry. Hence, Teabing has the best contradictory comment on the revolutionary subject: “You do not find the Grail, the Grail finds you” (Brown 320, 444). Among Langdon, Teabing, and Sophie, the Grail does find real revolutionary subjects.

III. Boundary Crossing:

After discussion of Foucauldian and Kristevan theories applied to *The Da Vinci Code*, I will use evidence from the novel to demonstrate that Brown uses the narrative technique of boundary crossing, going from real to fictional ideas and from traditional to nontraditional. With this boundary crossing skill, 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 from traditional to nontraditional. I will claim that it is this writing technique that enchants many readers and has helped Brown's book to become a bestseller. I will next discuss how Brown employs these two different boundary crossing techniques to attract readers.

i. From Real to Fictional:

As a literary work of boundary crossing from the real to the fictional, Brown does not merely allow *The Da Vinci Code* to weave the real and the imaginary; it also attracts reader by revealing an unknown aspect of reality. By merging the real with the fictional, Brown creates a detective novel full of curiosity and suspense.

Based upon ideas from the real world, Brown inserts fictive ideas into reality "to conceive a nongiven world" (Iser 4). Thus he is able to create a world close to and yet distant from his readers. This fictionalized world enchants readers. Brown includes in his novel widely accepted knowledge about real world religion. By fictionalizing ideas from the real world, Brown casts a dubious shadow on these widely accepted ideas. Brown develops his fictional story on the Biblical knowledge of the Holy Grail and Mary Magdalene. Brown cites these two issues because they share one similarity: they both have an incomplete historical record.

By employing the most commonly known object in religion, the Holy Grail, Brown knows that he can take advantage of this ancient legend to develop his story. Sharan Newman has written about the meaning of the Grail:

It is a symbol, but the meaning of it is different for everyone. No two people have ever completely agreed on what the Grail looks like, never mind what it means. But in current usage today, the Holy Grail is everywhere It's the goal out of reach. (Newman 122)

Brown cleverly places this most indefinable of all targets at the center of his novel. Brown fictionalizes the meaning of the Grail to satisfy his own purposes since the source of the Grail has not yet been discovered. Brown makes the Grail the most wanted goal of his characters. Yet the Grail, beyond every character's reach, becomes the readers' desire. Therefore, as Newman claims in her work that the Grail serves everyone as "whatever we need it to be" (122), Brown's novel based upon the Holy Grail is whatever readers need it to be.

Mary Magdalene also has a central place in the novel. The meaning of Mary Magdalene resembles that of the Holy Grail. Again, Sharan Newman surveys the religious record of Mary Magdalene and comments that the search for the real Mary Magdalene is never easy:

Finding the real Mary Magdalene is a bit like finding the real king Arthur. There are so many layers of myth and legend covering the historical person, and so little first-handed information, that we may never know the truth. At least as far as I know, there was only one Arthur. In the official Testament there were many Marys. . . . (Newman 150)

By taking advantage of Mary's ambiguous identity, Brown is able to increase the mysterious level of his novel. In the meantime, the uncertain recorded history of Mary

Magdalene helps Brown to better fictionalize his novel. Though critics, like Bart D. Ehrman² and Dan Burstein, have claimed that none of the early Christian sources has any reference to Jesus' marriage or to his wife, Brown collects all the information about Mary to create his own fictional Mary Magdalene in *The Da Vinci Code*. For instance, Brown quotes Mary in the Apocrypha saying that Mary's close relationship with Jesus is one of the proofs of Jesus' marriage. In short, Brown always suggests in his book that "almost everything our fathers taught us about Christ is *false*" (Brown 255). By challenging ideas that the public holds as true, Brown arouses a strong curiosity and creates suspense in readers to know the truth behind the false truth. Hence, Brown's writing technique of boundary crossing from real to fictional attracts many readers who are curious about religion.

Brown also fictionalizes a number of widely accepted ideas about symbols and paintings. He creates fictional versions of the most popular symbols and prominent paintings from the real world. In the story, Brown writes that Sauniere and Sophie used to play Tarot for fun (Brown 98). Brown uses the mysterious background of the Tarot to serve as his core example of the sacred feminine. The truth is that the Tarot is indeed a kind of medieval Italian card game replete with hidden heretical symbolism (Newman 277). Yet, Brown redirects the heretical aspect to the fictionalized idea of "feminine divinity" (Brown 98).

This technique of fictionalizing history is not unique. It also appears in Umberto Eco's *Foucault's Pendulum* and Robert Anton Wilson's *The Widow's Son*. Umberto Eco's novel is also a detective story about a search for the center of an ancient, still-living conspiracy of men who seek not merely power over the earth but over the psychic power over the earth itself. The pendulum is a real instrument invented by

² In *Truth and Fiction in The Da Vinci Code*, Bart D. Ehrman has pointed out all the fictional parts of Dan Brown's fiction. As a historian, Ehrman asserts that "the Da Vinci Code is filled with numerous historical mistakes" (1).

Jean Bernard Leon Foucault to demonstrate the rotation of the earth (Sauer 3). Yet, Eco incorporate this real instrument into his book. He fictionalizes the meaning of the pendulum making his book mysteriously attractive to the reader. In Robert Anton Wilson's *The Widow's Son*, Wilson builds his novel upon the religious idea of the Crucifixion. Like Dan Brown, Wilson's novel fictionalizes the fact claiming that Jesus not only married Mary Magdelene but also had a son. The son later fled to France and became the progenitor of the Merovingians (Wilson "Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary" 5).

Another symbol Brown applies to his novel is the symbol of the rose. Brown mentions the idea of "sub rosa" (Brown 219). The real meaning of sub rosa is "something that is secret" (Newman 239). Yet, Brown uses the real meaning of "sub rosa" to support his core theme: the secret of Holy Grail. Though Brown leads his readers to understand the true meaning of sub rosa, he guides readers deeper into his well-designed maze: his fabricated idea of the Holy Grail.

In addition to symbols, Brown also inserts into his novel some of the world's most famous paintings. Brown employs paintings from the most intelligent painter in history, Leonardo da Vinci. The first painting is the well known *Mona Lisa*. Brown emphasizes the most intriguing and mysterious part of the painting: the smile of *Mona Lisa*. Sharan Newman emphasizes that we can never know the reason for her smile (Newman 150). The mysterious smile and historical background of *Mona Lisa* becomes Brown's best tool for strengthening the credibility of his novel.

Leonardo da Vinci finished *The Last Supper* in 1498. Yet the masterpiece "started disintegrating almost as soon as Leonardo finished it" (Newman 136). Thus the detailed original portrait of the characters in *The Last Supper* has been lost though people have tried to preserve and restore Leonardo da Vinci's painting. Newman also points out that Leonardo da Vinci's "notes for *The Last Supper* are minimal" (133).

Therefore, there is no certain evidence signifying the real meaning of *The Last Supper*. Both points reveal that there is only murky historical knowledge about Jesus' last meal with his followers. From the real painting of da Vinci to the fictional idea of Mary Magdalene, Brown is able to use the uncertain meaning of *The Last Supper* to support the fabricated idea of Holy Grail in his novel. Using information about the painting, Brown fills in missing historical details with "the Grail, the chalice, the female womb" (Brown 264), and "the marriage of Jesus and Mary Magdalene" (265).

Brown capitalizes on these uncertainties to fabricate his own fictional story. By underscoring the uncertainty of history, Brown can create hidden and multiple significations of these symbols and paintings as clues to weave into his story.

Furthermore, Brown also fictionalizes the meaning of several famous real-world buildings. For example, by presenting fictionalized version of The Louvre and the Rosslyn Chapel, Brown can endow his novel with more credibility.

The first building Brown discusses is the The Louvre (Brown 3). It is in this museum that Brown starts and ends his novel. On the one hand, the building is one of the most well-known pieces of architecture in the world. It not only stores the greatest works of art form throughout the world (Newman 144), but also records the violent history of ruling power (142). By including real buildings in his novel, Brown can easily make people believe in the truth of his novel. On the other hand, the special construction of the Pei Pyramid (Newman 144) as well as "La Pyramide Inversee" (Brown 488) below forms the perfect shape representing the idea of Brown's novel: "The Chalice above. The Blade below" (488). The Pei Pyramid is actually a real construction. Having fictionalized this construction, Brown indicates that the real building suggests the hidden meaning of the Holy Grail (489). By beginning and

ending his novel in The Louvre, Brown helps readers enjoy the trip between the real and fictional world.

Another fictionalized site in *The Da Vinci Code* is the Rosslyn Chapel (Brown 464). Brown includes the building into his novel for two reasons. The first is that the real Rosslyn does not have any historical documentation (Newman 248). Newman thus stresses that “a lack of documentation is a disaster for a historian, but great for novelists, who are then free to make up whatever they like” (248). Therefore, the lack of documentation leaves Brown a perfect space to insert his ideas. Secondly, he incorporates Rosslyn into his novel because in the real Rosslyn Chapel, “the effect of the myriad of carvings is stunning and whimsical, rather like meeting someone who has decided to wear all her jewelry at once” (Newman 248). By using a richness of effect and capitalizing on the lack of documentation, Brown can transform a fictionalized story into an enchanting reality. Therefore, the effect of fictionalizing the real meaning of the building establishes an authentic atmosphere as readers travel with the detectives.

Brown purposely starts his novel using real elements from the real world, and his novel arouses readers’ curiosity to know what lies behind reality. Brown’s boundary crossing technique from the real to the fictional becomes one of the key factors to winning many readers’ attention.

ii. From Traditional to Nontraditional:

Another key factor that renders Brown’s novel a great success is the technique of boundary crossing from traditional to nontraditional detective fiction. By adopting traditional and nontraditional norms of detective fiction, he gives readers 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 the traditional to the nontraditional.

Judging from the norms of traditional detective fiction, I will assert that *The Da Vinci Code* partially retains the characteristics and structure of traditional detective fiction. In traditional detective fiction, the detective usually has an impersonal and intellectual profession (Moretti, *Clues* 249). The goal of the detective is to solve crimes and bring order to society (Richard 207). In Brown's novel, all three detectives have impersonal and intellectual professions.

Robert Langdon is a professor of religious symbology (Brown 7). Like a traditional detective, he has an impersonal and intellectual profession. Langdon has published several books, such as "*The Symbology of Secret Sects, The Art of the Illuminati, and The Lost Language of Ideograms*" (Brown 9). He is also writing a "book on Religious Iconology" (9). His work with religious symbols is impersonal, shown by the way that Langdon explains to his editor Jonas Faukman that his professional study of the Grail is impersonal:

Langdon grinned. "As you can see, Jonas, this is not only my theory. It's been around for a long time. I'm simply building on it. No book has yet explored the legend of the Holy Grail from a symbologic angle. The iconographic evidence I'm finding to support the theory is, well, staggeringly persuasive." (177)

Having been suspected of killing Sauniere (74), Langdon aims to find out who is behind the conspiracy so that he can prove himself innocent (368).

As another detective, Sophie represents the norms of a traditional detective. Sophie Neveu has been trained to be a professional cryptographer (55). She has been

practicing the impersonal and intellectual profession of cryptography daily since she was a child:

Sophie's passion and aptitude for cryptography were a product of growing up with Jacques Sauniere—a fanatic himself for codes, word games, and puzzles At the age of twelve, Sophie could finish crosswords in English, mathematical puzzles, and substitution ciphers Eventually she turned her passion into a profession by becoming a code-breaker for the Judicial Police. (84)

Eager to discover the murderer of her grandfather, Sophie is determined to find the murderer with her impersonal profession. Meanwhile, as an agent of the Judicial Police, she also feels responsible to bring order and justice to society.

Like Langdon and Sophie, Leigh Teabing has characteristics of the traditional detective. Being a former British Royal Historian (235), Teabing is also a detective with an intellectual profession. "Learning the truth has become my life's love . . . and the Sangreal is my favorite mistress," says Teabing to Sophie and Langdon. His remark shows that he is a detective with a great intellectual profession. By unfolding the secret of the Grail, Teabing believes that he can solve crimes of the Church and bring new order to the world:

. . . Something had to be done. Shall the world be ignorant forever? Shall the Church be allowed to cement its lies into our history books for all eternity? Shall the Church be permitted to influence indefinitely with murder and extortion? No, something needed to be done! And now we are poised to carry out Sauniere's legacy and right a terrible wrong. (440)

Teabing believes that to expose the secret of the Grail is to vindicate the “souls of all the knights burned at the stake to protect the secret” (442). His intellectual profession will help him to reach his goal to right a terrible wrong.

Another norm of the traditional detective is that their “logic and deduction is engaged in reasoning” (Zizek 60). The detective will explain how the “impossible is possible” (58). Likewise, all three detectives are continually engaged in reasoning. Langdon, Sophie, and Teabing all elaborate on how the seemingly impossible is possible.

Langdon has been making deductions based upon reasoning. When he is invited by Fache to study the meaning of the symbols, he tries to explain those symbols based upon logical deduction. Langdon attempts to elaborate on the positive meaning of the pentacle (39). He explains how the demonic pentacle could possibly be a sacred symbol:

that Venus and her pentacle became symbols of perfection, beauty, and cyclic qualities of sexual love The five-pointed star was now a virtual cliché in Satanic serial killer movies, usually scrawled on the wall of some of Satanist’s apartment along with other alleged demonic symbology. (40)

Fache takes the symbol of pentacle as an image related to devil-worship (40) only because a Hollywood movie suggests that the pentacle is a form of demonic symbology. His conclusion is not reached based on reasoning.

Sophie is engaged in deductive reasoning when examining clues. She elaborates on how the sign is possible to Langdon and Teabing when both men cannot understand the meaning of the language on the rosewood box:

She lifted the rosewood box up to a canister light on the wall and began examining the underside of the lid. Her grandfather couldn't actually write in reverse, so he always cheated by writing normally Sophie's guess was that he had wood-burned normal text into a block of wood . . . until the wood was paper thin and the wood-burning could be seen through the wood. Then he'd simply flipped the piece over, and laid it in. (326-27)

Having engaged in deductive reasoning, Sophie can explain how the impossible can be possible and outwit Teabing and Langdon.

The same reasoning process of the traditional detective is also employed by Teabing. His deductions are also made using reason. Having studied the history of the Catholic Church and the origin of the Bible, he believes that the reasoning process can help the public to find the truth:

The Bible is a product of *man*, my dear. Not of God. The Bible did not fall magically from the clouds. Man created it as a historical record of tumultuous times, and it has evolved through countless translations, additions, and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book. (251)

Teabing elaborates how the seemingly impossible source of the Bible is possible as a result of "countless translations, additions, and revisions" (251). For Teabing, the Bible is not a sacred book which can not be questioned. He believes that Bible is merely a human product full of "countless translations, additions, and revisions" (251).

In addition to including traditional detective roles, 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 (Pederson-Krag Pederson-Krag 14). The structure of Brown's novel is built upon the detectives' observations of disconnected, inexplicable, and trifling clues in the everyday life. The novel is built upon Langdon, Fache and Collect's observation of trifling and disconnected clues. For instance, the answer to Saunier's first poem is related to the basic concept of the "PHI" (Brown 99). By observing trifling and disconnected clues, such as the "Divine Proportion," "PHI," and "Fibonacci sequences" (99), Langdon can find clues to decode Saunier's poem.

As a policeman, Fache also observes things like a detective (461). His detailed observation helps him understand Teabing's conspiracy. On the one hand, Teabing exploits both the Vatican and Opus Dei to carry out his plan. On the other, Teabing commits every crime carefully to protect his innocence:

Teabing had displayed ingenious precision in formulating a plan that protected his innocence at every turn. He had exploited both the Vatican and Opus Dei, two groups that turned out to be completely innocent. His dirty work had been carried out unknowingly by a fanatical monk and desperate bishop. More clever still, Teabing had situated his electronic listening post (460)

By putting seemingly trifling, inexplicable, and disconnected clues together Fache can form a picture of Teabing's evil intention and expose the structure of his perfect plan.

For Lieutenant Jerome Collect, it is an observation at Teabing's house that helps him find Teabing's advanced surveillance listening post (393). The first inexplicable clue Collect obtains directs Collect to dig deeper into Teabing's secret listening post. When Collect discovers that Teabing's listening post has been used to "eavesdrop"

(400) on the victims, such as Jacques Sauniere, he knows that Teabing and Remy must be involved in the murder case.

Most of all, when Collect discovers Remy Legaludec's personal file and history of peanut allergies (392), he knows that Remy is not a very smart person:

“Prints belong to Remy Legaludec. Wanted for petty crime. Nothing serious. Looks like he got kicked out of university for rewiring phone jacks to get free service . . . later did some petty theft. Breaking and entering. Skipped out on a hospital bill once for an emergency tracheotomy.” He glanced up, chuckling. “Peanut allergy.” (392)

All the clues regarding the listening post and peanut allergy may seem trifling, inexplicable, and disconnected. However, when Remy is killed, every clue in the listening post becomes meaningful. Surveillance objects left at the listening post point to the killer. The one who knows Remy's secret history should be the one who is closest to Remy. Each clue may seem disconnected at first, but when they are all put together, they reveal Teabing's perfect conspiracy. Thus, without Collect's effort, the police will never have the chance to uncover Teabing's plan.

The observation of trifling and disconnected clues plays a significant part in *The Da Vinci Code*. Without observation of trifling clues, the secret and the crime could never be detected. Because the book contains traditional detective fiction characteristics, readers find it easier to enter the world of the detectives and enjoy the adventure.

Brown introduces nontraditional characteristics into his detective story as well. Due to these unconventional characteristics, the reader is always sustained by the expectation of what will happen next. The endless suspense in the novel gives the

reader “a jouissance³ to reading, even rereading”⁴ (Nealon 129). It is another factor that can explain why *The Da Vinci Code* has been so successful. Each reading experience for readers will always produce a unique jouissance. I will point out what nontraditional characteristics *The Da Vinci Code* contains in the following paragraphs.

Different from traditional detective characters, Brown’s male detectives never occupy a dominant position (Diemert 249). Unlike the professional detective representing the tradition of law, order and justice (294), detectives in *The Da Vinci Code* are not professional detectives who solve crimes.

In the novel, Langdon is never a professional detective solving a crime. He is merely a learned Harvard scholar. Unlike a traditional detective, he is not a well-trained agent armed with a powerful weapon. Neither is Langdon good at uncovering who the criminal is. Furthermore, different from the mission of the traditional detective, Langdon’s mission, to some extent, is not to bring patriarchal order back to the world. Rather, his mission of finding the Holy Grail secret will bring disturbance to the absolute control of the Church.

Teabing is not a professional detective, either. On the one hand, he is merely a handicapped historian. Though he is intelligent, he is not trained to be a professional detective. On the other, Teabing’s identity is ambiguous. He does not really represent the tradition of law, order and justice (Diemert 294). On the contrary, he is both a detective and a criminal. Although he understands law, order, and justice, he uses law, order and justice only to protect his innocence (Brown 460). Teabing is a detective

³ By citing jouissance, Nealon refers to the Roland Barthes’ idea. Barthes defines jouissance as the text of bliss which “imposes a state of loss, discomfort (perhaps to the point of boredom) unsettles the reader’s historical, cultural, psychological assumption” (Barthes 14). For Barthes, a jouissance text should defamiliarize the reader. By reading and rereading *The Da Vinci Code*, the reader can always find his or her own interpretations of the novel.

⁴ Having surveyed postmodern detective fiction, Nealon 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 becomes a jouissance for the reader (127-129).

working only for his own evil purposes (441). Therefore, his own final purpose is to bring total disorder to the patriarchal Church.

As for Sophie, she is also not a completely traditional detective. In spite of the fact that Sophie is a police agent specializing in cryptography, she does not have the perfect profession to unfold the secret code in Saunier's poems. Moreover, among all three detectives, agent Sophie is the only female detective with the physical ability to fight the criminal (301). Though Sophie needs Teabing and Langdon's help in discovering the secret of the Holy Grail, she can also offer them her help (325). As a female detective, she is not a weak woman only waiting for help from men. Instead, she can also help men. Sophie's goal is not only to bring order to society but also to bring disorder to the Church. Sophie is eager to discover her grandfather's murderer, and she will bring order to society by arresting Saunier's murderer. On the other hand, when she eventually discovers that her bloodline traces back to Mary Magdalene, she proves that Jesus is married and thus she becomes a threat to the domination of the Church.

The different goal of the detectives in *The Da Vinci Code* is another nontraditional characteristic. The detectives in *The Da Vinci Code* focus on answering questions of being rather than of knowing, from a "modernist, 'epistemological dominant'⁵ to a postmodernist 'ontological dominant'"⁶ (McHale 146-147). Therefore, unlike traditional detectives who solve the crime in the end, the detectives of *The Da Vinci Code* find only ontological uncertainty in the end (Swope 210).

Langdon is summoned to help crimes, yet he focuses only on questioning the source of knowledge instead of solving the crime. He works hard to find that

⁵ For Richard Swope, the dominant epistemological question is: "how am I to know my place in the world?" (210).

⁶ 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?" (210).

Saunier's death is the result of a greater conspiracy: the repressed knowledge of the sacred feminine. Gradually Langdon's quest for knowledge becomes an ontological quest. It is not only the question of knowing, but also the question of being. When Langdon discovers all of the alternative knowledge encompassed within the sacred feminine, he starts his 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 talk about 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 troubadour" (479). In this way, Langdon can remind the public of "the danger of our history . . . and of our destructive paths" (479). However, Langdon's search for the Holy Grail in the end enables him to realize ontological uncertainty. At the end of *The Da Vinci Code*, Langdon's knowledge can neither help him discover the secret of the Grail nor the tomb of Mary Magdalene. What he can really find is the ontological uncertainty of himself. Hence, he can only "kneel before the bones of Mary Magdalene" (489): "Like the murmurs of spirits in the darkness forgotten words echoed. The quest for the Holy Grail is the quest to kneel before the bones of Mary Magdalene. A journey to pray at the feet of the outcast one." (489). Although Langdon indirectly solves the crime, he never accomplishes the most significant goal. In the last scene, he is still uncertain about his goal (483).

As for Teabing, he is not only trying to find his place in the world, but also his lack of place in the world. At the beginning of his meeting with Langdon and Sophie, Teabing claims that learning the truth is his "life's love," (262) and that "the Sangreal is his favorite mistress" (262). For Teabing, his place in the world in the beginning is to learn the truth of the Holy Grail (Sangreal). Yet, in the end, his search for the Holy

Grail only brings him to find his lack of place in the world. In other words, what Teabing learns is that it is impossible to find the Holy Grail (457-8).

Sophie's search shifts from "how I am to know my place in the world" to "what the nature of my place is" (Swope 210). When Sophie starts her detective work with Langdon, she is given the opportunity to learn her place in the world. Langdon constantly tells Sophie how she, as a woman, has been treated in the world. She gradually comes to understand the meaning of her place in the world. Later, when Sophie is led back to Rosslyn, she realizes the nature of her place. For Sophie, the nature of her place is to continue the bloodline of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. By continuing the bloodline, she can protect the secret of the Holy Grail (Brown 477).

In the meantime, the female detective is also a nontraditional character in *The Da Vinci Code* (Makinen 107). Sophie is a non-romantic character (108). She is not a weak woman waiting for a male detective's help. On the contrary, Sophie often offers timely help to other clumsy detectives. Moreover, due to her feminine characteristics, Sophie focuses more on domestic issues rather than public ones (108). Therefore, she can always help Langdon to find the correct direction. In Chapter 47, Sophie tells Langdon about the design of the cryptex so that Langdon will not unwisely break the cryptex and lose the clues hidden within the cryptex. All the information about the skill needed to unlock the cryptex comes from Sophie's domestic memory of her time with her grandfather (Brown 216). Another example that shows Sophie is a non-romantic character is her identity as a well-trained police agent. Sophie is an independent female agent who is better than Langdon at perceiving potential danger. In chapter 30, when Langdon is arrested by the The Louvre security warden, it is Sophie who saves Langdon (143). When Sophie and Langdon take a taxi to escape from the police, it is Sophie who detects the taxi driver's intention to inform the

police (178). In chapter 65, Langdon is once again saved by Sophie when he is knocked unconscious by Silas (300-1). Whenever Langdon is at gunpoint, Sophie is always the one to protect him. Hence, Sophie is also a female detective who can outwit both Langdon and Teabing in some fields. Langdon and Teabing are good in the study of the sacred feminine and Grail history whereas Sophie has been well trained in decoding and fighting.

By crossing the boundary from real to fictional and traditional to nontraditional, Dan Brown takes readers to a place where they can never have any definite answer. Therefore, suspense and curiosity linger even after the reader finishes reading. Hence, as a reader of *The Da Vinci Code*, the interest will be doubled with each reading since the novel will forever resist the fixed meanings of traditional detective fiction.