

Overview of da vinci code

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An Essay on Dan Brown's The Da Vinci Code

When one begins to read the novel *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown, a riveting mystery is expected. The title and genre of the book prepare the reader to encounter some history of Renaissance artists and an original construction of an enigma based around a code. What is surprising about the novel is that it also contains a very loud social statement regarding feminine oppression. In the novel, Dan Brown makes a point about the more surreptitious side of misogyny by creating a thought-inducing mystery, making allusions to the ancient and all-so-important bible, and making use of situational irony to show how the female form and essence has been more repressed than is generally believed.

The Da Vinci Code is without a doubt a mystery novel, however, the mystery serves not only to entertain and amuse, but to give rise to profound questions about the social issue of the discrimination of women and femininity. In the novel, more than ten people die looking to protect a secret, thousands of dollars are invested, and the effort and time of intellectuals is used to create codes and covers in order for a mystery to be kept, and in the end, the secret all along was the fact that Mary Magdalene and Jesus Christ were in fact together and had children. The mystery in the novel sparks many questions in the reader: “ Why is the catholic church so intent on getting a hold on the secret scroll?” “ What does this scroll contain?” “ Why is there an organization of some of history's finest intellectuals working to protect the content of the scroll, and why is it called the Priory of Sion?”

When these questions are answered by the uncovering of the fact that Mary

Magdalene was part of Jesus' life and that he could love her as a woman, the reader starts to consider other questions like " why is it so terrible for Jesus to have taken a wife?" This question is answered throughout the book in an analysis of feminine anti-divinization. The novel goes into the depth of the evolution of societies from the worshipping of both the feminine and the masculine as divine to the monotheism and masculinization of deity that exists nowadays. In this way, through mystery, Dan Brown builds on the discrimination towards femininity that has been present in Western thought throughout history.

Dan Brown makes his argument stronger by basing a large part of his mystery on the Bible and christian (more specifically catholic) thought. Misogyny in the Bible is a subject that has been criticized and questioned innumerable times by diverse sources for containing statements such as " Women are spoils of war" (Judges 5: 30) and " Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent." (Timothy 1: 2), however, stating that the catholic church has been actively withholding realities about the life of their messiah Jesus Christ in order to repress feminine action and leadership within the church is somewhat an original idea of Brown's. The fact that Dan Brown decided to take the religious aim at the problem of misogyny throughout history is not only what got his novel banned, but what made his thesis stronger. In the novel, it is stated that " It was not Peter to whom Christ gave directions with which to establish the Christian Church. It was Mary Magdalene... That was the plan. Jesus was the original feminist. He intended for the future of His Church to be in the hands of Mary Magdalene."

By including the biblical portion of the novel, Dan Brown expresses his point about how females are not only repressed in society, but in the deepest basis of our ideals, in our religion and history.

Now, not only the mystery and allusions in the novel serve to make a point about misogyny, in the plot and characters of the novel misogyny is present in its most evident form when one of the main characters, Sophie Neveu, is ironically underestimated and sublimated by her male counterparts. These male counterparts are no other than Robert Langdon and Leigh Teabing, intellectuals, self proclaimed “feminists” and defenders of the importance of the female identity in history. These characters, although they claim to be respectful of females, repeatedly exclude Sophie Neveu, a recognized cryptologist from the French Judicial Police, from their intellectual activities because they don’t believe in her abilities. With this conflict, Dan Brown makes a point about people “talking the talk and not walking the walk” when it comes to gender equality. Langdon and Teabing recognize each other as equals, but are incapable to do the same with Sophie because she is a feminine being, proving to be hypocritical and blinded by the inherent misogyny that comes with western society. Brown demonstrates how it is not only in important texts where misogyny can be seen, but in the daily lives of men and women.

Dan Brown’s statements about gender inequality consist on more of a revelation than an actual critique. Brown shows how misogyny that should be apparent and obvious is questionable and mysterious for people because it is so rapidly accepted. He demonstrates how gender inequality has been

present in the foundations of our society by using the example of the Bible, and enraging many in the process of enlightening many more on a social issue. And finally, Brown shows how modern society has not overcome the oppression of femininity that it has seen for centuries. The novel *The Da Vinci Code* is more than a brilliant mystery, it is a brilliant take on gender equality throughout history and in modern times.