FAITH AND REASON IN DAN BROWN'S *THE DA VINCI CODE* NOVEL*:*

A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

RESEARCH PAPER

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

      The Da Vinci Code novel was written by Dan Brown. This novel was first published in March 18, 2003 by Doubleday. The novel consists of 105 chapters and 454 pages. The genre of *The Da Vinci Code* novel is fiction and thriller. Dan Brown is a well known American novelist. He was born June 22 1964. He was from an area in the New Hampshire US, to be exact, Phillips Exeter Academy. The other novels are: *Digital Fortress* (1998), *Angels and Demons* (2000), and *Deception Point* (2001).

      The story of *The Da Vinci Code* novel starts in Paris, where curator Jacques Suniere of the Louvre Museum wants to meet Robert Langdon, Professor of Religious Symbology at Harvard University. Robert Langdon lectures about pagan symbolism hidden in the stones of Chartres Cathedral in The American University of Paris. Jacques Sauniere is accidentally killed at the night and the corpse is found with series of symbols and codes, like a pentagram and a Fibonacci number sequence. Langdon is helped by a good-looking police cryptolographer, Sophie Neveu. In fact, Jacques Suniere is Sophie's grandfather. Police detective Bezu Fache is beginning to chase Langdon, who escapes after receiving a warning about the captain's real intentions.

Sophie has with her a kind of key, which opens her and Langdon a big complex investigation that involves a supposedly heretic theory: Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene were married and they had children. A millenarian sect called The Priory of Sion has kept for centuries the secret of that matter. A masochist and albino monk, Silas, an Opus Dei member, chase Langdon and Sophie as well, in order to impede that they solve the mystery of Christ and Mary Magdalene, and also the real meaning and location of the Holy Grail.

A passionate British researcher, Sir Leigh Teabing will help Langdon in his quest, revealing to them several symbolisms in Da Vinci's master work The Last Supper, traveling to mythical places in the United Kingdom, such as The Church Temple, where it is believed that a group of Templars Knights are buried, and Sir Isaac Newton's tomb at Westminster Abbey, where are located some of the main keys to solve the Holy Grail's mystery.

Some people give positive responses for this novel. First opinion come from Henk van Klaveren, he said that he enjoyed reading the book, despite some flaws in the writing style. However, the book is a very good stimulus for people to go deeper behind the meaning of religion but it should not be taken for a true account of religious events. Second opinion comes from Roddy Fraser, he said that he enjoyed reading the novel as a work of fiction based around some historical fact and ideas. Third opinion comes from Nicole Gaskin, she said that she really enjoyed the book mainly because of the connection between one of the greatest painter and the Holy Bible (http://www.envoymagazine.com/planetenvoy/Review-DaVinci-Part1.htm)

A different opinion was given by *Chris Knight, he said that The Da Vinci Code* is such a rip-off of Holy Blood, Holy Grail that it is beyond his understanding how this novel made it into print without first being flagged for plagiarism a hundred times over. While Ashley said that this novel is the most horrible and offensive novel she believes she has ever read of. Daniel Shepherd said that the book says that it is based on historical evidence and facts. These are not true by any means; both Christians and Catholics have tested these facts and most if not all have been shown to be lies (http://blogcritics.org/books/article/the-da-vinci-phenomenon/).

The Da Vinci Code was published in March 2003 and sold 6,000 copies on the first day. The book is now reported to have has sold more than 18 million copies worldwide, but this figure keeps on growing. The book is a worldwide bestseller that had sold 80 million copies as of 2009 and that has been translated into 44 languages. In November 2004 Random House published a Special Illustrated Edition with 160 illustrations. In 2006 a film adaptation was released by Sony's Columbia Pictures (Http://www.Dictum .no/Arkw/clemensdavinci.html).

The Da Vinci Code by Dan Brown won British Book Awards 2005 as Book of the Year because this novel selling more than 7.5 million hardcopy books, and the biggest selling hardcopy novel ever. Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* has topped the New York Times bestsellers list for more than a year and is still continuing to sell (http://news.bbc.co.uk /2/hi/ entertainment/ 4466933.stm).

The Da Vinci Code novel is one of interesting Dan Brown's work to view. There are the reasons that make the novel interesting, important, and challenge to view.

The first is the characters and characterization in *The Da Vinci Code*. Robert Langdon is one of the two protagonist characters. He is a professor of symbology at Harvard University. He finds himself entangled in a murder-mystery plot while on a visit to France. Sophie Neveu is other protagonist. She works for the Department of Cryptology in Paris. She is the granddaughter of the Grand Master of the Priory of Sion. Sophie embarks on a journey not only to find the Holy Grail but also the truth about her family. Bezu Fache is the hard-driving police captain, smart, thinking one step ahead and always aware of the political implications of what he's doing. Silas, believing everything he's doing is for God, is an albino Opus Dei monk who murders by instruction from The Teacher, an unknown man who directs the search for the Priory's secrets. Leigh Teabing is an affluent and eccentric Englishman obsessed with the quest for the Grail and disparaging of most things French (http://www.review sofbooks.com/da_vinci_code/review/).

The second are setting of time and place this novel. *The Da Vinci Code* uses present day for setting of time in which it can break the criptex riddle in quite short time. For setting of place this novel move from one place into another place, like Louvre Museum, Saint Sulpice Church, Castel Gandolfo, Bois de Boulogne, and Depository Bank of Zurich in Paris, France; The

Château Villette in Versailles, France; The Temple Church and Westminster Abbey in London, England; Rosslyn Chapel in Edinburgh, Scotland.

The third is plot of this novel, this novel is a thriller, much of the plot is revealed in flashbacks and may be confusing. This synopsis will recount the major plot events chronologically. Five months before the novel begins, Bishop Aringarosa is called to the Vatican and told that the Pope no longer wants the Catholic Church to be associated with Opus Dei. The Church has decided to give Opus Dei twenty-million euro, which the Church has earlier borrowed from Opus Dei. A few weeks later, Aringarosa receives a call from Lee Teabing, who disguises himself as a devout Frenchman and calls himself "the Teacher." Teabing tells Aringarosa that he knows how to find the Holy Grail. In the meantime Teabing has bugged the homes and offices of prominent Parisians whom he suspects are at the top of the Priory of Sion. When Teabing has enough information he tells Silas, the albino monk, to kill the Grand Master and his sénéchaux. Silas must first demand to know where the keystone is. When he kills the men, they each give him the same incorrect answer. Meanwhile, Harvard professor, Robert Langdon is in Paris to give a speech about his research. He is woken in the middle of the night by Lieutenant Collet because the Paris police needs his help solving the murder of Jacque Saunière (http://www.reviewsofbooks.com/da_vinc code / review/).

The fourth is Brown introduces a style of writing that supports the novel mysterious, suspenseful tone. The chapters are short and filled with action; they constantly switch back and forth between various subplots which

will converge. Brown frequently gives just enough information to keep the reader's attention, without revealing the whole story (http: //www. Review sofbooks.com/da_vinci_code/review/)

The fifth is the subject matter from this novel, Robert Langdon and Sophie Neveu attempt to interpret the message left behind by Jacques Saunière and find the hidden secret of the Priory of Sion. Climax from this novel is Leigh Teabing reveals himself as the man behind the murders of the Priory of Sion, and Langdon and Sophie discover who killed Jacques Saunière.

The last is the issue of conflicting values of faith and reason. Dan Brown refuses to accept the idea that faith in God is rooted in ignorance of the truth. Many of the complaints are on the book speculations and alleged misrepresentations of core aspects of Christianity and the history of the Roman Catholic Church.

Seeing the background of *The Da Vinci Code* novel above, then there lays the interesting part of analyzing the Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* novel. The researcher is interested to analyze faith and and reason in *The Da Vinci Code* which are elaborated in problem statement.

Based on the background above, the writer propose to conduct a research entitle "Faith and Reason in Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code Novel: A Sociological Approach."*

B. Literature Review

There are some researchers who have conducted the research on *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown. The first research was done by Zumira Fitriani (2007) Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, entitled *"Against The Religious Mainstream in Dan Brown's The Da Vinci Code "*. She employed Marxist approach.

The second research was done Raras Dwi Kristianti (2009) Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, entitled *"The Anxiety of Sophie Neveu in Dan Brown's The Da Vinci Code"*. She employed Psychoanalytic approach.

The differences of this study and two previous studies are in the theme and perspective. This study focuses on the faith and reason in *The Da Vinci Code* novel by using sociological approach while the first previous study focuses on the against the religious mainstream and the literary approach using theory of Marxist and the second previous study focuses to explore the anxiety of Sophie Neveu and the literary approach using theory of psychoanalytic. So that it will give different view for researcher in doing this study by using sociological approach. The title is *"Faith and Reason in Dan Brown's The Da Vinci Code Novel: A Sociological Approach"*.

C. Problem Statement

Here, the meaning of faith is belief in God or in the doctrines or teachings of religion. And the meaning of reason is more resemble to meaning of mind, in which the meaning of mind is the aspect of intellect and

consciousness experienced as combinations of thought, perception, emotion, and imagination, including all unconsciousness cognitive processes. The term is often used to refer, by implication, to the thought processes of reason. Mind manifests itself subjectively as a stream of consciousness.

Faith requires, first of all, that faith itself be strengthened and nurtured; doubt and questioning are the antithesis of faith and the bitter enemies of the religious life. The relationship between faith and reason has seldom been tranquil or peaceful; rather, conflict and controversy appear at every turn. The combination of religious commitment to total devotion with a mental attitude that is rational, reflective, and open to alternatives is likely to create some inner tension.

Regarding to the research background, the writer would like to formulate the problem statement of this study is how the dialectic of faith and reason reflected in Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* novel.

D. Limitation of the Study

In order to focus the study, the researcher limit her study on faith and reason as reflected in Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* novel using sociological approach.

E. Objective of the Study

The objectives of study are as follows:

1. To describe the structural elements of the novel.

2. To analyze the novel based on the sociological approach to find the relation between the novel and the context of its creation.

F. Benefits of the Study

The study is expected to give benefits as follow:

1. Theoretical Benefit

   To provide contribution to the development of the large body of knowledge, especially the literary study on Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* novel by using sociological approach.

2. Practical Benefit

   To answer the researcher's curiosity about faith and reason in Dan Brown *The Da Vinci Code* novel by using sociological approach.

G. Research Method

1. Type of the Study

   In this research, the writer uses a qualitative research. It purposes to analyze the novel using sociological approach. The steps to conduct this research are (1) determining the type of the study, (2) determining the object of the study, (3) determining data and data source, (4) determining technique of data collection, and (5) determining technique of data analysis.

2. Object of the Study

   The object of the study is *The Da Vinci Code* novel by Dan Brown.

3. Type of Data and Data Source

   a. Type of Data

   Data in this research are from the text of this novel which consists of word, phrase, clause, sentence and dialogue in *The Da Vinci Code* novel

by Dan Brown.

    b. Data Sources

        (1) Primary Data Sources

Primary data in the research consist of data collected from the novel *The Da Vinci Code*. The data are taken from the dialogue, character's description, plot and all of the statement related to the problems.

        (2) Secondary Data Sources

Secondary data is collected from other literatures discussing the author and material about sociological.

4. Technique of the Data Collection

The technique of data collection is library research, the steps are:

a. Reading the novel

b. Determining the character that will be analyzed

c. Reading some related books to find out the theory, data, and information required

d. Taking notes of important in both primary and secondary data

e. Classifying the data into some categories

f. Arranging and developing the selected materials into a good unity with the topic of the study.

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, the writer employs descriptive qualitative analysis of content. The analysis starts from the structural analysis of the work and finally the sociological analysis of the literary works.

H. Research Paper Organization

The writer arranges the research into six chapters with the purpose of making easier to understand. They are : Chapter I is introduction, covering background of study, literary review, problem statement, limitation of the study, objective of the study, benefit of the study, research method and research paper organization; Chapter II shows the theory of Sociological approach. Chapter III includes the social historical background of America in early twentieth first century; Chapter IV covers the structural analysis of the novel; Chapter V discusses the sociological analysis of Dan Brown's The Social behavior in America as reflected in *The Da Vinci Code*; Chapter VI explains conclusion and suggestion of the research.