

## Da Vinci: Read Between the Lines

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If you're one of the forty million who are fascinated with *The Da Vinci Code* book or know someone who is, this article is for you! This piece will provide you with a reflection on Dan Brown's book which will help you "read between the lines" of *The Da Vinci Code* before the movie comes out on May 19th.

It is amazing that both practicing and non-practicing Catholics are pulled into the popularity of this book, and I have heard numerous Catholics say things like, "Wow, I *finally* understand what the Church has been up to all these years!" and "Now I know why the Church hates women" or any manner of strange reflection like that about our faith.

My purpose here is to present to you a clear understanding of why this book is dangerous to your soul and the souls of your loved ones. I want to show you that we cannot be neutral to its content. After presenting my main thesis about the book I will then describe the three main points supporting that thesis, and finally I will give you Dan Brown's own words so you don't think I am just making this stuff up! I hope you can keep an open mind about what I am going to say because the spiritual stakes are high. My purpose as a Catholic priest is to serve you and your spiritual welfare with a solid reflection on a powerful cultural phenomenon. I am also praying for all the people who will read this article or listen to the recording!

I want to emphasize before I proceed that I am not asking listeners to do anything that I have not done. In saying that we should not give anti-Catholic bigots like Dan Brown any money by buying his book or seeing his movie, I have followed my own advice. I got my copy of *The Da Vinci Code* at a used book store so that he does not profit off my critique. Nor do I plan to see the movie, but I may be standing out in front of a few movie theatres handing out this tape on May 19th!

Also, I wish to state what this article is not: it is not an attempt to analyze every historical claim in the book—other books have done that much better than I could do in a relatively short presentation. The sheer complexity of the images, claims and content of the book is part of the seduction of it. I propose to present select evidence from the book to back up my claim that this book repeats the pattern of the godless revolution that brought us the culture of decadence and death that we are now in. Dan Brown's own words are the best evidence against him.

### I. The Main Thesis

My main thesis is simple: *The Da Vinci Code* is a piece of clever propaganda that repeats the strategy used by the radical feminists in the sixties that imposed upon us the culture of death. Let me restate my thesis this way: this book (and hence the movie) is a piece of propaganda which follows the same pattern as the revolution that gave us abortion and the rest of our promiscuous culture. The fallout of that revolution has led to the deaths of millions of innocents, and I fear that the fallout from the *Da Vinci* onslaught could lead to the spiritual deaths of millions more.

Let me explain first what I mean by the feminist strategy to impose the culture of death in the sixties. The architects of the strategy were godless cultural elites who sought to subvert the basic Christian value structure of our country and create a totally secular state where God and basic Christian values would be supplanted or even outlawed. Their strategy had three parts: first, they had to undermine authentic religious faith because the objective moral principles of Christianity stood against their agenda; they did so by attacking the Catholic Church as outmoded, out of touch, unjust and its leaders as evil. Secondly, they then replaced the belief system of authentic religious faith with an imitation-faith—"another gospel" as St. Paul would say—made up of clever slogans and seductive ideas that people would readily believe in. And finally, paying lip service to women's concerns, they used women as the instruments of their agenda and ultimately left all women desolate and wounded by the side of the road when their agenda was accomplished. This was the successful three-pronged strategy of the culture of death: kill real faith, replace it with propaganda and use women to do it.

### II: *Da Vinci's* Three-Pronged Strategy

Friends *The Da Vinci Code* does this very thing. First, it wants to undermine the belief system of Catholics by attacking our Church with arguments that the average person just can't verify. Dan Brown peppers his book with anti-Catholic screed dressed up as pseudo historical research, and even most strong Catholics will find it hard to refute because the lies and distortions seem believable. Weak Catholics will take it as confirmation of their basic

prejudices against their own Church. Can you imagine Dan Brown doing a hatchet job on Islam and getting away with it?! Your average Muslim would not say, "Wow, now I finally understand why the Prophet Mohammed hid so much from his followers!" but Catholics seem to have no hesitation in saying this type of thing about the Truth of Christ!

Dan Brown mimics the second strategy of the anti-life revolutionaries by attempting to replace our transcendent belief in immutable truths with an alternative value system based on paganism. He even goes to great lengths to stigmatize the Catholic Church for unjustly "outlawing" and persecuting paganism, and painting pagan concepts and practices in the most favorable light. Further on I will describe for you a literal satanic sexual ritual that Dan Brown praises as holy and criticizes the Church for standing against it. He disingenuously claims that the Church's only reason for banning satanic rituals of this sort was because the nasty priests and bishops knew that Jesus was secretly married to Mary Magdalene and the Church wanted to cover it up so that they would not lose their all their political privileges through the ages. Hardly!

Finally, Brown follows the abortion revolutionaries in one of their most effective and destructive strategies: namely, getting women to do the dirty work of driving the nails into their own coffins. That is what the culture of death does after all. Women who sowed the seeds of the feminist revolution with its slogans of "reproductive freedom" and "women's choice" are now the ones who are reaping the whirlwind of destroyed bodies, children, marriages and lives. In addition to this, the men they set themselves up in competition against have allowed them to ruin their lives in these ways and have walked away from the battle without a scar. Never in the history of our country have men been allowed to be as irresponsible as they are today and get away with it. It is hard to think of a greater deception of women than the culture of death offers.

Brown's book, again, repeats the lie. He celebrates what he calls "the divine feminine," by which he means a New Age/pagan/satanic concept of female reproduction. First of all, this very concept does not divinize women because it reduces them to their sexual dimension alone. That's apparently how Dan Brown views women—frightening. Second of all, Brown uses this concept as a way of manipulating our emotions, just like the feminists do with their pro-choice propaganda. He makes us think that the Church historically degraded women and that it was a secret pagan cult that kept the true dignity of women alive for the past 2000 years while the Church persecuted women and tried to suppress knowledge of the divine feminine. What a stretch!

Finally, this book that claims to exalt women has only three female characters, one of whom is an empty-headed shell for the multiple haughty male characters who have to teach her everything she knows, another of whom is described as an overweight cultic prostitute and the third is a liberal nun who is brutally murdered in a church. Like the purveyors of the culture of death, Brown pays lip service to women's wellbeing while writing them into his script as dodos, prostitutes and fodder for male violence. So much for Dan Brown's commitment to the divine feminine, right?

In sum, the culture of death gained its power in our society by means of a three-pronged strategy; its proponents stigmatized the Church and religious belief; they replaced immutable truths with pagan-feminist propaganda; and they used and abused women to get what they wanted. Dan Brown's *Da Vinci Code* does all the same.

### **III: In Dan Brown's Own Words**

Now let me proceed to a deeper analysis of this three-pronged strategy using some select quotes from the book to help you understand the agenda of *the Da Vinci Code*.

#### **Strategy 1: Attack the Church**

Let's start with his attempt to undermine the Church and discredit the moral authority of its leaders and doctrine.

Dan Brown is obviously a world-class propagandist trained in the fine art of smear campaigns. In his desire to convince a largely Christian audience of things that are fundamentally anathema to their value systems, he must first deconstruct the bases upon which the value system rests and then proceed to replace the values with their militant opposites. That's hard to do, but Brown has 454 pages in which to make the effort. Let me describe the process of how this takes place and then give you the evidence of this in Brown's own words:

First, the propagandist must present his readers with the new ideas he wants to indoctrinate them with; then, if his ideas are to be accepted, he must misrepresent, stigmatize and ridicule the contrary teaching and set up a bogey man to attack and defame. He does this by sowing doubt in the reader's mind about the authority that represents

the contrary teaching always describing that authority in the most negative light and imagery to cause the reader to feel antipathy toward it. And then to fully penetrate the consciousness of his reader, he ceaselessly repeats the new ideas with increasing intensity as the story line develops, always presenting this new reality in the most positive light, making it seem "cool" and relevant and then connecting the reader with a sympathetic character in the book who will create empathy for the new ideas. Brown's book is a classic work of brainwashing for the unsuspecting reader.

What new theory are we being indoctrinated with in Brown's book? It's simply that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene. It is not a "new" idea because heretics for centuries have tried to convince people of this, but it may be a new idea to most of his readers. The re-packaging of heresies has happened continuously throughout the history of the Church, so the heretical idea will not be new to the Church. It is probably new to the 40 million people who bought his book however. The swaying of the masses is his purpose.

And why should this absurd idea be a threat to the Christian values of the reader? Mostly because the heresy is a vehicle by which Dan Brown does so much other damage to the core values of our faith. This theory of Jesus' marriage to the Magdalene allows him to undermine the apostolic tradition of the Church by claiming that the true authority of Christ was passed down through a blood line not through the Church guided by the Holy Spirit.

This theory gives him a stick with which to beat the Catholic Church for allegedly being anti-woman, anti-sex, anti-democratic, anti-pagan and anti-modern and for supposedly persecuting all the valiant heroes who tried to expose this secret to the world for the last 2000 years. It affords him endless opportunities to demonize, ridicule, mock and present the Church as a sinister and dark institution of evil men, all of which lends support to the new religion that Brown is preaching.

Finally, this theory allows him to create that whole new religion of pagan concepts which could look attractive as an alternative to what he has painted as an outmoded, misogynistic value system espoused by that hateful Catholic Church. It allows Brown to colonize our minds with seductive ideas like "the divine feminine," "sacred marriage" and an endless array of New Age and even satanic concepts.

A brief note on Brown's propaganda technique: the first 100 pages or so of the book are full generous amounts of superficially exciting narrative by which Brown attempts to bind the reader to the main characters and their persons. This classic propaganda strategy seeks to provoke an emotional response toward one or more characters in the book, in this case the main female character, so that the reader will empathize with her as she engages in the process of modifying her antiquated value system from her Christian upbringing. It is similar to the "role-playing" technique which is always part of values and behavior modification programs.

The opening section contains very few of the explicit anti-Christian ideas that Brown later uses because he does not want to alienate his reader at the beginning. Only after the first quarter of the book does Brown begin to explain in detail the more satanic concepts in order to sanitize them and make them acceptable to the reader. He usually indoctrinates his audience in a classroom setting of some type in the book where the mind-numbed students are willing to be re-oriented to the new ideas. Half-way through the book he shows the main character witnessing a satanic ritual but does not allow the reader to actually "see" it. The uncritical reader is thus hooked and hungers for more. Finally at about three-quarters of the way through the book he pulls out all the stops and gives the reader the full details of the ritual which by now, with the full force of his propaganda, the reader is "prepared" to witness. The reader has been "initiated" properly and now is not scandalized because he has obediently suspended his Christian belief system which would cause him to be shocked. The compliant reader has been reprogrammed to accept the satanic ritual as "natural" and even "holy." Such is the overall effect of the propaganda that Brown uses in *The Da Vinci Code*.

Now, let me give you some examples of the way in which Brown demonizes the Church to make the reader believe his nonsense about Jesus' marriage to Mary Magdalene and to warm the reader up to his replacement value system.

The main characters in Brown's book, Robert Langdon and Sophie Neveu, encounter a new age guru by the name of Leigh Teabing who serves as the prime indoctrinator of the characters we identify with. Teabing takes pot shot after pot shot at the Catholic Church and its leadership. In his main indoctrination session with Robert and Sophie we hear him say things like this:

"The woman they are speaking of," Teabing explained, "is Mary Magdalene. Peter is jealous of her."  
 "Because Jesus preferred Mary?"  
 "Not only that. The stakes were far greater than mere affection. At this point in the gospels, Jesus suspects He will soon be captured and crucified. So He gives Mary Magdalene instructions on how to carry on His Church after He is gone. As a result, Peter expresses his discontent over playing second fiddle to a woman. I daresay Peter was something of a sexist."  
 Sophie was trying to keep up [Note: see how Brown paints his female character as a total airhead? More on this below.] "This is Saint Peter. The rock on which Jesus built His Church."  
 "The same, except for one catch. According to these unaltered gospels, it was not Peter to whom Christ gave directions with which to establish the Christian Church. It was Mary Magdalene....Jesus was the original feminist."  
 "...And Peter had a problem with that," Langdon said, pointing to The Last Supper.  
 "Magdalene was recast as a whore in order to erase evidence of her powerful family ties."  
 (pp. 247-249)

Oh, please—how silly!

Here's another one which casts the Catholic Church as an evil demon standing against a secret society called the Priory of Sion as it was trying to convince the world that Mary Magdalene was the elusive Holy Grail and the wife of Jesus:

"This kind of infiltration could only have come from the Priory's oldest enemy."  
 Langdon glanced up. "The Church."  
 "Who else? Rome has been searching for the Grail for centuries."  
 Sophie was skeptical. "You think the Church killed my grandfather?"  
 Teabing replied, "It would not be the first time in history the Church has killed to protect itself. The documents that accompany the Holy Grail are explosive, and the Church has wanted to destroy them for years."

Don't you just hate this evil Catholic Church? If so, that is the intended objective of Brown's propaganda. The Church he presents to his readers is sinister, evil; its leaders are corrupt and deceitful or at the very least misguided fools. The characters of Teabing and Langdon do nothing but pile on all this type of hateful rhetoric with erroneous factual claims and lots of snide remarks and sniping comments which can sometimes be downright blasphemous. I will spare you the blasphemous comments which are many, but here I will just include a few of the snide remarks Teabing and others make about the Catholic Church or Christian faith in order to demonize it:

"The bible is product of man, my dear, not God."  
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"Virtually all the elements of the Catholic ritual...were taken from earlier pagan religions."  
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"It was all about power. The Church literally stole Jesus from his original followers."  
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"Of course the Vatican in keeping with its tradition of misinformation, tried very hard to suppress the release of these scrolls."  
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"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."

"Yes. That's one of the reasons why the Grail legend is so rich in France. Many of the Vatican's Grail quests here were in fact stealth missions to erase members of the royal bloodline. Have you heard of King Dagobert?"

Sophie vaguely recalled the name from a grisly tale in history class. "Dagobert was a Merovingian king, wasn't he? Stabbed in the eye while sleeping?"

"Exactly. Assassinated by the Vatican in collusion with Pepin d'Heristal."  
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Sophie shook her head. "The Church had no influence on my grandfather!"

Teabing laughed coldly. "My dear, the Church has two thousand years of experience pressuring those who threaten to unveil its lies....The Church may no longer employ crusaders to slaughter non-believers, but their influence is no less persuasive. No less insidious."

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Langdon glared at Fache's crucifix, uncertain how to phrase his next point. "The Church, sir. Symbols are very resilient, but the pentacle was altered by the early Roman Catholic Church. As part of the Vatican's campaign to eradicate pagan religions and convert the masses to Christianity, the Church launched a smear campaign against the pagan gods and goddesses, recasting their divine symbols as evil."

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Those deemed "witches" by the Church included all female scholars, priestesses, gypsies, mystics, nature lovers, herb gatherers, and any women "suspiciously attuned to the natural world." Midwives were also killed for their heretical practice of using medical knowledge to ease the pain of childbirth—a suffering, the Church claimed, that was God's rightful punishment for Eve's partaking of the Apple of Knowledge, th