

Unrevealing Symbols and Historical Portrayal of Dan Brown's *The Lost Symbol*

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Abstract

The experience bore a striking resemblance to Dan Brown's work, The Lost Symbol (2009) The aforementioned factors served to embellish and mould the narrative. Additionally, it is adorned with many symbolic representations from facts. The findings indicate that the elements of representament, interpretant, and object play a significant role in delineating the narrative structure of the story. Furthermore, with the analyses of four symbols within The Lost Symbol novel that conveys thematic implications. The hand serves as a metaphorical connecting Robert Langdon, Mal'akh, and their quest to uncover the forgotten symbol. Katherine Solomon represents the embodiment of destructive of false and saviour of truth, while water symbolises purity. Lastly, Mal'akh represents the manifestation of Icarus. With these symbols myth and narrative styles also discussed. The research shows Mal'akh as representation of Psychopath. Therefore, this marked the inception of Brown's rise to notoriety as the most contentious novelist of the 21st century.

Keywords: Symbolism, Narrative aspects, History, Myth

Introduction

The *Lost Symbol* (2009) is a novel that prominently explores the primary adversary's psychological aspects. The author of the novel is Dan Brown. The individual in question is an American novelist specialising in the thriller genre. Notable works by this author include "Digital Fortes," "Angels & Demons," "Deception Point," "The Da Vinci Code," "The Lost Symbol," and "Inferno." In addition to their symbolic elements, some of his novels explore recurring themes such as puzzles, codes, mythologies, sculptures, ornaments, cityscapes, history, mystery, psychopathy, and ancient organisations. Brown gained widespread recognition due to his notable contributions to literature, mainly through his acclaimed works, *The Da Vinci Code* and *Angels & Demons*. Robert Langdon's exploits in Dan Brown's novel, *The Da Vinci Code*, have captivated readers worldwide, as his narratives delve into the enigmatic realm of the ancient religious organisation known as the Priory of Sion, shedding light on its significance within the historical context of Christianity.

Similarly, in the novel *Angels & Demons* portrays a negative perception of the Christian community. This is evident as Brown explores the intricate connection between the enigmatic hidden society known as the Illuminati and the Vatican. Both novels generated significant controversy and challenged the religious beliefs of Christians. Therefore, this marked the inception of Brown's rise to notoriety as the most contentious novelist of the 21st century. Hence, inside the framework of an old institution, the symbols, myths, and enigmatic elements that envelop his literary works serve as a compelling allure for scholars who seek to engage in the study and analysis of *The Lost Symbol*. "The Lost Symbol," Dan Brown's third book, was released on September 15, 2009. The book sold one million copies on its first day of release in hardcover and e-book versions in the US, UK, and Canada. Thanks to this incredible success, it becomes the fastest-selling adult book ever. The protagonist, Robert Langdon, embarks on an exciting adventure in the novel *The Lost Symbol*, which centres on an ancient organisation and a historically significant building in Washington, DC.

An Overview

In addition to Robert Landon, Dan Brown's novel *The Lost Symbol* (2009) has several other prominent characters, including Peter Solomon, Zachary Solomon, Katherine Solomon, Inoue Sato, Trish Dunne, Warren Bellamy, Trent Anderson, and others. Robert Langdon is a notable symbologist affiliated with Harvard University. In Dan Brown's work, *The Lost Symbol*, the protagonist Robert Langdon is given an offer by Peter Solomon, his mentor and a famous person as a 33rd-degree Mason. The goal of this invitation is for Langdon to deliver a speech on symbols before the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C. Langdon gladly accepted the invitation without any hesitation. Upon Langdon's arrival in the United States Capitol, he discovered that the invitation he had received did not originate from Peter Solomon but rather from Mal'akh, is responsible for Peter's abduction. The act in question was orchestrated by Mal'akh to entice Langdon to embark on a quest to locate the Masonic symbol, which was believed by members of the Masonic fraternity to be concealed in an underground location within Washington DC. Mal'akh's motivation for seeking the pyramid stemmed from his conviction that it could unlock the enigmatic depths of an ancient power source. Communication was transmitted to Langdon by manipulating Peter Solomon's hand, strategically positioned within the Capitol Rotunda. The individual knew that Peter had previously presented a diminutive pyramid to Langdon and requested Langdon to assume responsibility for its safekeeping. The individual employed Langdon to achieve his desired outcome, utilising the pyramid as a strategic tool. Langdon is engaged in a race against time as he searches various historical structures. The urgency stems from the fact that failure to locate the object in question would result in the abductor, Mal'akh, executing Peter and subsequently divulging a secret that would greatly shock both the United States and the global community. Mal'akh trapped Langdon in order to find Mason's symbol, which is believed to be hidden in a secret place in Washington DC. Later, Langdon met Trent Anderson, the highly respected leader of the Capitol Police, and Inoue Sato, the prominent head of CIA security. During their encounter, Langdon serendipitously discovered another section of the pyramid, astutely hidden within the underground depths of Washington, DC. Upon finding the pyramid fragment, Langdon identified its whereabouts in the Washington DC Underground, where Inoue Sato and Trent Anderson were also present. This underground spot has a historical association with the Masons and their ceremonial activities. In ancient times, Peter's hand was seen as a symbol of invitation, leading people into the underground. On the contrary, Mal'akh encountered Kathrine, the daughter of Peter Solomon. When Mal'akh encountered Katherine, he assumed the role of Dr Abaddon, a psychiatrist associated with Peter. Mal'akh successfully extends an invitation to Katherine to visit his residence. The discussion at the location above pertains to the individual known as Peter Solomon. However, this can be

viewed as a strategic manoeuvre employed by Mal'akh to undermine and sabotage Katherine's research efforts. Robert Langdon, Kathrine, Trend Anderson, Inoue Sato, and Warren Bellamy find themselves trapped in Mal'akh's deceptive scheme, which is designed to unlock a gateway into the physical realm. Langdon and Katherine are rescued by Sato and taken to the Temple House, the location where Mal'akh had edited a video about the Mason Ritual. Mal'akh has adorned his body with symbolic tattoos that serve as tools for achieving his desired objectives. Furthermore, he has performed the ceremonial act of sacrificing Peter Solomon, a requirement for his journey towards a realm beyond the realm of ordinary individuals. Regrettably, the endeavour was unsuccessful due to Sato's utilisation of a helicopter to land atop the temple. Subsequently, Sato forcefully struck the ceiling panels of the temple, leading to the demise of Mal'akh. Peter Solomon was crucial in preserving Kathrine's research, as he made copies of it. The dissemination of Mason's secret was unsuccessful on a global scale. Ultimately, Langdon, who had previously harboured scepticism towards the existence of The Lost Symbol, has now come to embrace a newfound belief in these matters. The researcher is motivated to analyse this novel due to the numerous intriguing elements inside Brown's work. One of the literary masterpieces authored by Brown is titled "The Lost Symbol." The literary work in question is a work of fiction belonging to the thriller genre. The subject matter encompasses various intriguing elements, including adventure, instances of dread, acts of homicide, and similar themes. Therefore, the researcher aims to adhere to the guidelines set forth by the author and acquire additional insights from this study. This study uses a psychoanalytic method to analyse the psychopathology of Mal'akh in Dan Brown's novel The Lost Symbol.

The Symbols

Literary aspects have been employed in the construction of all texts in existence. The elements comprised both intrinsic and extrinsic components. The intrinsic qualities of a literary work encompass characters, plot, place, and tone. The extrinsic aspect encompassed moral values, symbols, and various other things. They played a significant role in moulding the narrative. The experience resembled the literary work The Lost Symbol, authored by Dan Brown. The factors above served to embellish and mould the narrative.

Additionally, it is adorned with various emblems. All the symbols directly correlated with the emblems associated with the Enlightenment era. In the beginning chapter Brown states about symbolism by explain the structure of the building

A tiered gallery of dark walnut seats three-foot-tall throne dominated the western wall, with a concealed pipe organ opposite it, The walls were Kaleidoscope of ancient symbols...Egyptian, Hebranic, Astronomical. Alchemical and others yet unknown (Brown 18).

The central focus of the narrative is around the concept of enlightenment, as evidenced by the revelations conveyed through the anecdotes and accounts included in the novel, which shed light on the various methods individuals employ in pursuing enlightenment. In light of this circumstance, the present study is centred on examining the symbols that constitute the novel's narrative.

Narrative Aspect and Symbolism

The symbol played a significant role in the literary composition.

Symbolist Movement from its origins in French literature to the literary conventions it created in the European literature of the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is offered as a succinct synthesis to serve as a guide to the study of symbolism from the point of view of comparative literature (Balakian,14)

The function of this particular form of communication lies in its ability to effectively convey the expression of various emotions, feelings, and ideas through the use of several methods. Here through the description of museum brown conveys many ideas regarding symbolism:

The World's largest and most technologically advanced museum is also one of the world's best-kept secrets. It houses more pieces than the hermitage, the Vatican museum and the New York Metropolitan combined. Yet despite its magnificent collection, few members of the public are ever invited inside its heavily guarded walls located at 4210 silver hill road (Brown, 43)

Symbolism can be elucidated by proposing a method for discerning the significance of various sentiments, emotions, and concepts. By providing the idea, the reader can ascertain the intended significance of the symbol. Furthermore, symbols can be characterised as recreating or reshaping the reader's emotions, sensations, and ideas to interpret symbols that are not explicable. "Symbolism is the emotional or spiritual heightening of an object, graphic form or ritual action that may be simple in it."(Prince, 14)

Using symbols to depict emotions and ideas plays a significant part in discerning the textual identity. By ascertaining the textual identity, one can elucidate the underlying idea of the story. By applying symbolism theory, the researcher aims to elucidate the significance of symbols intricately linked to the overarching subject of the narrative. The premise of the story revolves around the concept of enlightenment. According to Fulfort "unreliable narrator," as deployed by writers such as Vladimir Nabokov and Ford Madox Ford; this subject nestles beside postmodern academic theory, each of them commenting on the other"(Fulfort, 12)

The novel entitled "The Lost Symbol" features a cohesive narrative structure, characterised by a continuous plotline interspersed with occasional flashbacks, enhancing the story's overall strength. Given the subject above, a semiotic method is necessary to formulate the narrative structure. For instance Katherine's past story narrated often as flashback

A lifelong scholar of history, science and mysticism Peter had been the first to encourage Katherine to boost her university science education with an understanding of early Hermetic philosophy. She had been only nineteen years old when Peter sparked her interest in the link between modern science and ancient mysticism (Brown, 88)

The study will centre on applying a semiotic approach to signifying each storyline. This method has the potential to yield a curved unity plot. By constructing a narrative arc, one can discern the manifestation of enlightenment that underlies the development of the work. The researcher is expected to obtain the data by combining theories and notions.

Story Narration Method

The narrative is structured where significant events play a pivotal role in shaping the story. Subsequently, a conflict emerges, symbolically serving as the "gateway" to the protagonist's journey. "According to Greimas, narrative is a signifying whole because it can be grasped in terms of such a structure" (Prince, 2) This is followed by a flashback, delving into the antagonist's past experiences. In this particular instance, the character serving as the adversary assumes the position of the primary protagonist within the story. Subsequently, the struggle intensifies, reaching its pinnacle within the narrative, and ultimately concludes with a final circumstance or settlement. The narrative structure of the novel is divided into eight distinct plot sections. According to Walsh:

The general point here is that all narrative, fictional and nonfictional, is artifice. Narratives are constructs, and their meanings are internal to the system of narrative. For some theorists, this general quality of narrativity subsumes the concept of fictionality entirely: if all narratives derive their meaning from their relation to other narratives, rather than any direct purchase on reality, then it no longer makes sense to use this second-order kind of relation specifically to characterize fiction (Walsh 14)

Each segment provides a comprehensive account of the narrative, from its inception to its conclusion. The utilisation of the Peircian triadic semiotic enables the author to examine the story's

narrative structure. The author discerns the narrative structure of the story. The explanation of the graphs is presented below.

The first plot revolves around elucidating an initiation process conducted by the Masonic order. Requiring Mal'akh to publicly express his unwavering commitment in the presence of fellow Masonic members is a pivotal element in the narrative. The interpretant refers to the reception of the agreement by a Masonic member from Mal'akh. The narrative's central focus is the revelation that Mal'akh assumes the role of a recently inducted member within the most esteemed echelon of the Masonic fraternity. Peter Solomon wants to keep the secrets:

The idea of order from chaos was one of the great Masonic axioms. Even so the claim that a talisman could impart any power at all was absurd much less the power to bring order from chaos. This talisman, Solomon continued would be danger in the wrong hands and unfortunately I have reason to believe powerful people want to steal it from me (Brown, 152)

The second narrative, employing Peircean triadic semiotics, elucidates the summoning of Robert Langdon by Mal'akh to unveil the Lost Symbol. Based on the storyline description, it may be inferred that Robert Langdon assumes the role of the story's representative. In this particular instance, the individual referred to as the representative is Robert, who is apt to unveil the Lost Symbol in his portrayal of the character Robert Langdon. The interpretant, Mal'akh, possesses knowledge regarding Robert's ability to unveil the Lost Symbol, recognising Robert Langdon as the one individual globally equipped to decipher the enigma surrounding said symbol. The ultimate objective of the initial narrative arc in the novel pertains to the retrieval and discovery of the Lost Symbol. The Lost Symbol serves as the central focus of the narrative, as it represents the desired goal pursued by Mal'akh. The discovery of the forgotten sign is crucial for Mal'akh to realise his aspirations and killed Peter Solomon:

In one fluid motion, Mal'akh pulled a small device from his pocket and extended it outward, driving it hard into the man's chest. There was flash of blue light, the sharp sizzle of the stun-gun discharge, and a gasp of pain as one million volts of electricity coursed through Peter Solomon's body. His eyes went wide and he slumped motionless in his chair. Mal'akh stood up now towering over the man, salivating like lion about to consume injured prey (Brown, 179)

Robert Langdon endeavours to uncover the significance of the enigmatic hand. Based on the extensive description provided earlier, the hand enigma assumes the role of the representation. The emergence of the Mystery of the Hand in the story is attributed to Mal'akh's willingness to disclose the lost emblem. Through utilising the enigmatic hand symbol, Mal'akh intends to convey a symbolic message to Robert Langdon, signifying that Langdon possesses the unique capability to unravel the enigma surrounding the lost symbol. In his capacity as the interpreting, Robert Langdon comprehends that the enigma surrounding the hand holds significance in the form of an invitation. In alternative terms, it can be inferred that Robert Langdon possesses comprehension that the invitation is intended for his person. Moreover, the invitation serves as a mechanism to beckon Robert Langdon while unveiling the enigmatic lost symbol.

The purpose of the second sequence plot is the invitation. According to Robert Langdon's interpretation, the enigma of the hand holds significance in the form of an invitation. The hand of mystery, serving as the central object in the narrative, holds significance as a symbolic "bridge" for Robert Langdon in his quest to uncover the hidden symbol.

Regarding the topic at hand, Mal'akh harbours a strong desire to bring about the demise of Katherine Solomon. In the narrative, Mal'akh had formulated a strategy to perpetrate the act of terminating Katherine Solomon's life. The destruction of Solomon's research facility becomes one of the motivating factors behind Mal'akh's desire to eliminate Katherine Solomon. This scenario suggests the presence of a representative element. Another significant factor that signifies the

representation of the plot is the motif of revenge. A flashback is employed to provide insight into Solomon's previous encounters. The previous encounters that have occurred between Mal'akh and the family of Peter Solomon serve as a significant factor in Mal'akh's motivation to attempt the murder of Katherine Solomon. The interpretant refers to Katherine's comprehension of Mal'akh's actions.

The sixth storyline revolves around Robert Langdon and Warren Bellamy's endeavours to decode the cryptic pyramid device in order to reveal further hints that would ultimately unveil the hidden emblem. The pyramid chipper is an essential tool that assists Robert Langdon and Katherine Solomon in revealing the mysterious lost sign. The remark implies that the pinnacle of the pyramid serves as a symbolic or representative element. On the other hand, Robert Langdon and Warren Bellamy are actively trying to understand and examine the mysterious item called the pyramid's chipper. Robert Langdon and Warren Bellamy can be recognised as the interpretants in this particular situation. Through the interpretation of the hieroglyphics inscribed on the pyramid, experts can discover supplementary evidence that may ultimately unveil the hidden symbol. As a result, when the pyramid is dissected, it produces a set of sixteen jumbled letters. The subject of interpretation is denoted by Robert Langdon and Warren Bellamy.

Robert Langdon and Katherine Solomon attempt to rearrange sixteen jumbled letters into a comprehensible arrangement. The tale revolves around a collection of sixteen scrambled letters, which act as the symbolization. This sign requires interpretation by Robert Langdon and Katherine Solomon. On the other hand, the individuals responsible for interpreting the meaning provided by sixteen letters are Robert Langdon and Katherine Solomon, who are referred to as the interpretants. Furthermore, inside the storyline, Robert Langdon and Katherine Solomon unexpectedly see a sign that originated around 1514. Beebe defines literary symbolism as a centrifugal force that moves away from the physical item or event and into the intangible realm, where abstract conceptions are treated as tangible entities and floating ideas and archetypes hold a sacred and authoritative status (Beebe 47). The symbol was found inside a little container in possession of Robert Langdon. This is an alternative representation or symbol used to rearrange the set of sixteen letters. The insignia signifies the existence of a magic square within the painting entitled "Melencolia I" by the acclaimed artist Albrecht Dürer. Robert Langdon can utilise the magic square to arrange the sixteen letters that symbolise the concept of the One True God. The term signifies the objective of Robert and Katherine's quest.

Moreover, this implies the existence of a depiction, as Robert Langdon and Katherine Solomon are able to uncover another hint from the artefact. Robert Langdon and Katherine Solomon act as interpreters who examine and decode the significance of the icons, with the goal of revealing the elusive lost symbol. The result of their investigation relates to a particular location within Washington, D.C. This sequence is the focal point of the storyline. The attempt made by Mal'akh to reveal the remaining clue hidden within the capstone might be seen as the embodiment. The fundamental assumption of this scenario is that with the discovery of the remaining clues, Mal'akh can carry out a sacrificial ceremony. The pinnacle of the narrative is denoted in this series of events.

The pivotal moment in which the narrative reaches its peak occurs when Mal'akh reveals his true identity to Peter Solomon, thus signifying the progression of events. In addition, the realisation of Mal'akh's wish represents that the plot reaches its peak inside the narrative. The eighth plot element serves as an indicator of the story's resolution. The story's conclusion is characterised by the realisation of Mal'akh's aspiration to become the preeminent figure. Emmott states:

The human mind is a powerful and effective processor of written and spoken text. Although the mind does not have the memory and processing capacity of a computer, it nevertheless performs a task which artificial intelligence researchers are struggling to replicate. Readers of narrative

text, for example, manage to create a richly represented fictional world from mere strings of word (Emmott 8)

Additionally, it signifies the representation. The interpretant of the sacrificial ceremony conducted by Mal'akh is his vision on his own complacency. The ultimate resolution of Mal'akh's misinterpretation of the true significance of the lost symbol, leading to his demise, serves as the focal point of the narrative progression.

Symbols

Symbols are visual or abstract representations that carry meaning beyond their literal interpretation. They are used to Water is a fundamental natural element that plays a crucial part in the existence and sustenance of human life.

symbolism as a whole, not only as it affects the individual through his own personal waking dreams, but also as it appeals to his unconscious through myths, fairy-tales, religion, literature, art and cinema. The last years have seen a major breakthrough in the understanding of the value and meaning of symbolism — that there is only one symbolic language which is used by dreams, creative imagination and myths in expressing the unconscious, the imagination and the soul (Chetwynd 2)

The story explores the symbolic significance of water as a symbol of purification. In the novel, the character Mal'akh assumes the role of the primary adversary. In the narrative, Mal'akh serves as a symbolic representation of innate human aspirations. In this instance, Mal'akh manifests human desire since he exhibits a genuine aspiration or inclination towards achieving greatness, thereby undergoing a transformative process. The quotation serves as a representation of Mal'akh's desire.

Conclusion

Based on the comprehensive explanation provided, the plot of The Lost Symbol novel may be effectively described through the utilisation of Peircian triadic semiotics. According to the theory above, The Lost Symbol novel is constructed based on a specific “formula.” The novel is structured in chronological and flashback sequences, enhancing the narrative. The narrative structure of the novel is divided into eight distinct plot sections. Each segment provides a comprehensive account of the narrative, from its inception to its conclusion. The narrative is structured to prioritise significant events that shape the overall storyline. These events are subsequently followed by a conflict that serves as a pivotal turning point in the narrative, sometimes referred to as the “gateway to the journey” of the story. Subsequently, the narrative incorporates flashbacks that delve into the past experiences of the antagonist character. In the present scenario, the antagonist assumes the position of the primary character in the story.

Subsequently, the conflict escalates towards the pinnacle of the narrative, culminating in a final predicament or resolution. “Although etymologists are agreed that language is fossil poetry and that the creation of every word was originally a poem embodying a bold metaphor or a bright conception, it is quite unrealised how close and intimate a relation exists between symbolism and philology” (Bayled 30)The Lost Symbol novel incorporates four distinct symbols that convey its underlying subject. Within the narrative, an enigmatic symbol in the form of a hand carries significant connotations as an invitation. Additionally, this element is a pivotal link for Robert Langdon to unveil the enigmatic symbol that Mal'akh has invoked. The second character is the emblem Mal'akh, which symbolises human yearning. In the narrative, Mal'akh serves as a symbol or embodiment of boundless human ambitions. In other words, Mal'akh symbolises individuals who perpetually remain dissatisfied with their current circumstances. Water is commonly regarded as a symbol of purity. In this instance, Mal'akh employs water to clean himself from the odour of

ethanol. In addition to this, water also holds significance as a symbol of sin purification. The last is the icon Katherine Solomon figure, which is the representation of knowledge. In the current term, Katherine's proficiency and enthusiasm for noetic science indicate that she embodies the concept of knowledge that has the potential to revolutionise human understanding.

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