

**T.C.**  
**İSTANBUL YENİ YÜZYIL UNIVERSITY**  
**INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE DEPARTMENT**  
**ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE PROGRAMME**



***THE DA VINCI CODE AND SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT***  
**THE CONSPIRACY THEORY**

**MA THESIS**

**REEM TAREQ SALEH ALJBURI**

**20131306013**

**İSTANBUL, OCTOBER 2023**

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**THESIS APPROVAL PAGE**

REEM T. S. ALJBURI, who is a graduate student at English Language and Literature Programme and whose student number is 20131306013, has presented her thesis titled “*THE DA VINCI CODE AND SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT THE CONSPIRACY THEORY*”, and it has accepted by the jury and approved by the Institute of Social Sciences on 18.09.2023, by its decision numbered \_\_\_\_\_ as an MA Thesis, unanimously/ by the majority of voting.

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**ETHICAL STATEMENT**

I prepared my project following the thesis writing rules of the Institute of Social Sciences at Istanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University and I hereby declare that;

- I have obtained the data, information and documents provided within the thesis according to academic and ethical rules,
- I have submitted all information, documents, evaluations and results in accordance with the requirements of scientific ethics and moral rules,
- I have cited all works that I have used in the project by appropriately referring to my sources,
- I have not made any changes to the data used,
- I declare that the work I present here is original, and

if found otherwise, I declare that I accept all loss of rights that may occur.

18/09/2023

REEM TAREQ SALEH ALJBURI

## PREFACE

Human nature, our cognitive processes, our social interactions, and our linguistic abilities are all reflected in works of literature. When reading narratives told from the perspectives of different characters, persons horizons' may be broadened if they are given the chance to put themselves in the position of others and practice understanding the thoughts and emotions of others who are different from them.

Literature is one manner in which people communicate their innermost feelings, ideas, and worries in a variety of refined forms, from free-flowing prose to organized prose to poetry with rhyming couplets.

The quintessential side of this thesis is to shed light on the similarities between old and modern literatures by translating the conspiracy theory that can be applied on both, and the impact of the illuminati conspiracy theory not only on literature but on economic, political and social life, with connections drawn to disinformation, skepticism of authorities, and political manipulation.

I do thank my supervisor Doç. Dr. Timuçin Buğra Edman for his dedication and guidance throughout this journey. I highly appreciate his kind efforts.

A special thanks to my esteemed instructors, Prof. Dr. C. Günseli İşçi and Prof. Dr. Sedat İşçi for their mentoring and motivational support.

Also, my sincere thanks to my mom and late father, for their hard work and sacrifice, and for planting ambition and love to learn since my childhood. My thanks for my sisters, my daughters, and finally my loving husband, thesis wouldn't see the light without their support.

İSTANBUL, 2023

REEM TAREQ SALEHALJBURI

## ÖZET

### *DA VINCI ŞİFRESİ VE SIR GAWAIN VE YEŞİL ŞÖVALYE*

#### KOMPLO TEORISI

REEM TAREQ SALEH ALJBURI

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Bu çalışma komplo teorisini, nasıl işlediğini, ne anlama geldiğini ve komplo teorisinin fikirlerini açıklamayı ve analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmada ayrıca Dan Brown'ın *Da Vinci Şifresi* ve yazarı bilinmeyen *Sir Gawain ve Yeşil Şövalye* adlı iki edebi eserdeki komplo teorisi karşılaştırılmaktadır. Bu eserlerden ilki gerçekçi bir roman iken, ikincisi hayali varlıklar içeren kurgusal bir eserdir.

Bu tez, çağdaş komplo teorisinin ve hem romanda hem de şiirde bulunan sembollerin, dürüstlük, onur, görev bilinci gibi ahlaki değerleri veya Kutsal Kase, gül, yeşil kuşak ve en ünlüsü olan ve tarih boyunca birçok edebi eserde veya medeniyette birçok yorumu bulunan "Beşgen" gibi sembolleri nasıl temsil ettiğine odaklanmaktadır. Bu çalışmada okuyucu, Sir Gawain'in şövalyelik duygusu ile günahla lekelenmiş kuşak tarafından temsil edilen 3. günde kazancını saklamak arasındaki çatışması, yeşil kuşağın beşgenin eksikliğini temsil etmesi ve son olarak sözünü tutmadaki beceriksizliğinden duyduğu utanç gibi komplo teorisi inancı ile altta yatan psikolojik özellikler ve bireysel varyasyonlar arasındaki ilişkiyi analiz edebilir.

Bu çalışmaya göre *Da Vinci Şifresi*'ni çevreleyenler gibi komplo teorileri, insanların varoluşsal korku ve ölüm kaygısıyla başa çıkmalarına yardımcı olabilir. Katılımcıların komploya inanma düzeyleri, hem tamamlayıcı (Yeni Çağ ruhani) hem de çatışan (Hristiyan teolojik) dünya görüşlerini kabul etmeleriyle de ilişkilidir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Dan Brown, *Da Vinci Şifresi*, Kutsal Kâse, Komplo, Sir Gawain.

## ABSTRACT

### ***THE DA VINCI CODE AND SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT THE CONSPIRACY THEORY***

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This study aims to explain and analyze the conspiracy theory, how it works, what it means and the ideas of the conspiracy theory. The study also compares the conspiracy theory in two literary works *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown and the poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* for unknown author. The first is a realistic novel while the latter is fictional, includes imaginary creatures.

This thesis focuses on how the contemporary conspiracy theory and the symbols found in both, the novel and the poem represented by the morals of integrity, honor, sense of duty, or symbolic like The Holy Grail, the rose, the green girdle and the most famous one the “Pentangle” which has many interpretations in many literary works or civilizations across history. In this study, the reader can find analyzed correlation between conspiracy theory belief and underlying psychological characteristics and individual variations, like Sir Gawain’s conflict between his chivalric sense and hiding his gains on the 3rd day, represented by the girdle that was tarnished with sin The green sash is meant to represent what the pentangle is missing., and finally his shame of his incompetence to keep his promise.

Conspiracy theories like those surrounding *The Da Vinci Code* may help people deal with existential dread and death anxiety, according to this study. Participants' levels of conspiracy believing were also correlated with their acceptance of both complementary (New Age spiritual) and conflicting (Christian theological) worldviews.

**Keywords:** Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code*, Holly Grail, Conspiracy, Sir Ga

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## INTRODUCTION

Conspiracy theories have long fascinated and intrigued individuals, captivating their imaginations with hidden secrets, covert agendas, and alternative explanations for historical events. These theories often challenge mainstream narratives and provide alternative perspectives on complex issues. While conspiracy theories have been present throughout history, literary works have played a significant role in shaping and influencing public opinion regarding these theories. This thesis aims to explore the correlation between conspiracy theory and literature, examining how literary works have affected public opinion and perceptions through two literary works in the novel of “*The Da Vinci Code*” by Dan Brown and the poem of “*Sir Gawain & the Green Knight*”. Conspiracy theories, in its natural form, are narratives or explanations that propose hidden plots or secretive groups orchestrating events for their own benefit or control. These theories often involve the manipulation of power, cover-ups, and secretive agendas. They can range from political conspiracies to paranormal phenomena, with proponents believing in alternative explanations beyond what is commonly accepted. (Nera, K., & Schöpfer, C., 2003)

Literature, as always, is considered as a medium for Conspiracy Theories. It has served as a fertile ground for the exploration and dissemination of conspiracy theories. Authors have crafted narratives that present alternative interpretations of historical events, secret societies, and hidden symbols. Literary works often engage readers in deciphering clues, unraveling mysteries, and questioning established authorities. Through storytelling, authors can present conspiracy theories in a compelling and thought-provoking manner, captivating readers' attention and influencing their perspectives.

Literary works have the potential to shape public opinion regarding conspiracy theories. Through vivid characters, intricate plots, and persuasive arguments, these works can influence readers' beliefs and perceptions. They create an immersive experience, allowing readers to explore the complexities of conspiracies and question the established order. When well-crafted and widely read, literary works can amplify existing conspiracy theories or even introduce new ones to the public consciousness. (Cherry, 2020, p.35). In this thesis, the reader can delve into the world of conspiracy theories as portrayed in two iconic works: *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown and *Sir Gawain & the Green Knight*, a medieval poem of Arthurian legend. Despite their differing genres and time periods.

These two works share intriguing elements of mystery, manipulation, and the revelation of hidden knowledge. Through a comparative analysis, this thesis aims to shed light on the presence and impact of conspiracy theories within these narratives. *The Da Vinci Code* is a gripping thriller that takes readers on a quest for the truth behind a centuries-old conspiracy. The story revolves around Robert Langdon, a symbologist, who becomes entangled in a web of secret societies, religious symbolism, and historical puzzles. As Langdon races against time to unravel the mystery, he discovers shocking revelations about the Priory of Sion, Holy Grail, and the alleged bloodline of Jesus as he weaves a complex tapestry of conspiracies surrounding them. These conspiracies challenge established religious beliefs and question the traditional interpretation of historical events. Brown skillfully blends fact and fiction, blurring the lines between reality and imagination, leaving readers pondering the possibility of hidden truths. (Brown, 2003)

In contrast to the modern setting of *The Da Vinci Code*, *Sir Gawain & the Green Knight*, transports readers to the world of medieval chivalry. This poem follows the noble knight Sir Gawain as he embarks on a perilous quest prompted by an enigmatic Green Knight. The Green Knight's challenge, where he invites on the Templar Knights a blow to his own neck with the condition of a reciprocal strike, along the way, Gawain encounters conspiratorial plots orchestrated by Morgan le Fay, the half-sister of King Arthur, who seeks to test the honor and integrity of the Round Table. Both the novel and the poem feature conspiracy theories that propel their narratives forward, captivating readers with suspense and intrigue. (Tolkien Transl., 1975)

In comparison of Conspiracy Theories between the two works, while both the novel and the poem share the common thread of conspiracy theories, they also possess distinctive characteristics that set them apart. In terms of similarities, both novels thrive on the allure of mystery and intrigue. They present readers with enigmatic puzzles and hidden knowledge that engages their curiosity. The protagonists of both works, Robert Langdon and Sir Gawain, find themselves thrust into dangerous quests fueled by their desire to uncover the truth.

However, there are notable differences between the two literary works. Brown's novel is set in a contemporary world, exploring conspiracies within the realms of art, religion, and history. On the other hand, the poem belongs to the medieval romance genre, emphasizing themes of honor, chivalry, and courtly love. Before embarking on his quest, Gawain's reputation as the most virtuous knight in King Arthur's court precedes him. This reputation fuels the reader's anticipation as they

wonder if Gawain will live up to the idealized image of knighthood throughout his journey. The conspiracy elements in this poem are entwined with Arthurian legends and mystical elements. Additionally, the narrative structures of the two works differ. “*The Da Vinci Code*” follows a fast-paced, thriller format, incorporating short chapters and cliffhangers to maintain suspense. In contrast, “*Sir Gawain & the Green Knight*” adopts a more poetic and descriptive style, immersing readers in the rich tapestry of medieval storytelling. The inclusion of conspiracy theories in both the novel and the poem has had a profound impact on popular culture and literary discourse. Brown’s novel sparks intense debates and controversies, challenging established religious beliefs and historical interpretations. It prompts readers to question the boundaries between fact and fiction, leading to a surge in interest in the topics explored in the novel. The book's immense popularity resulted in a global phenomenon, influencing subsequent works of fiction, art, and even academic studies. (Miller, 2020, p. 24)

*Sir Gawain & The Green Knight*, while not as widely known to the general public as “*The Da Vinci Code*”, holds significant importance in the realm of medieval literature. The poem's exploration of conspiracy theories within the context of Arthurian legends has contributed to scholarly discussions on themes of chivalry, honor, morality and symbology. In the poem, the symbology of animals adds depth and richness to the narrative. Each animal represents different virtues, vices, and challenges that Sir Gawain encounters on his quest. And we have the symbology of the pentangle and the color green, while chivalric interpretations of “*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*” could go either way, the poem point straight foreword a dire warning to humanity about our treatment of the natural world. The green creature is the personification of trees, and he essentially tells Gawain that he'll treat him as he is treated “a blow for a blow”,

“In good faith, quoth the good knight, I Gawain am  
called who bring thee this buffet, let be what may  
follow; and at this time a twelvemonth in thy turn have  
another with whatever weapon thou wilt, and in the  
world with none else but me.

The other man answered again

I am passing pleased, said he,  
upon my life, Sir Gawain,  
that this stroke should be struck by thee". (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 36)

By understanding the significance of these symbols, readers gain a deeper appreciation of the themes and moral complexities of the poem. The poem continues to be studied and grasped by enthusiasts of medieval literature and literary theorists alike.

At the end, "*The Da Vinci Code*" and "*Sir Gawain & the Green Knight*" offer intriguing explorations of conspiracy theories, albeit in different contexts. Through their engaging narratives, these works captivate readers, challenging their perceptions and igniting their imagination. While the novel focuses on contemporary religious conspiracies, when Robert Langdon learns that Sophie Neveu is a living descendent of Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene, the moment represents a turning point in the story. It is obvious that this is a work of fiction, but the author adds a beautiful dose of his own imagination to the story, which is what causes the Catholic Church in Rome to reject and struggle against this conspiracy.

The poem intertwines conspiracy elements within the realm of medieval chivalry. When Sir Gawain discloses that the Green Knight is really Lord Bertilak and that the Green Knight is only a pawn in Morgan le Fay's larger scheme to test King Arthur and the Round Table's Knights for their chivalry and honesty. Despite their differences, both the novel and the poem leave a lasting impact on readers, inspiring discussions, controversies, and further exploration of the themes they explore.

Literature provides a platform for the exploration and discussion of conspiracy theories. It allows authors to present different viewpoints, challenge prevailing narratives, and encourage critical thinking. Readers engage with these narratives, interpreting symbols, analyzing evidence, and contemplating the implications of conspiracy theories. Through this engagement, literature prompts discussions and debates, shaping public discourse and potentially altering public opinion. The influence of literature on public opinion regarding conspiracy theories raises ethical considerations. Authors must navigate the line between creative storytelling and responsible dissemination of information. They bear the responsibility of presenting alternative perspectives in a balanced and informed manner, avoiding the promotion of baseless or harmful conspiracy

theories. The impact of literature on public opinion necessitates critical engagement and discernment from readers, fostering a healthy skepticism and a commitment to evidence-based thinking. Literature plays a significant role in shaping public opinion, readers must approach these narratives critically, considering the ethical considerations surrounding the presentation of conspiracy theories. The relationship between conspiracy theory and literature remains a dynamic and thought-provoking subject, reflecting the enduring fascination and impact of these theories on society. (Muscat-Inglott, 2023, p. 4)

Conspiracy theories may cause for some people paranoid ideas - the conviction that occasions are covertly controlled in the background by strong powers - exist in almost every culture. Throughout the course of recent years, their importance and ubiquity has been expanding consistently, particularly on the web. Some paranoid notions might be innocuous diversion or an indication of very much established suspicion. Be that as it may, on occasion they can be risky. They can prompt a deficiency of confidence in clinical and logical skill, to political separation, and even to viciousness. Paranoid fears are in this way quite difficult for an expansive assortment of partners. This short aide gives an outline of the peculiarity.

Paranoid ideas expect that nothing occurs coincidentally, that nothing is as it appears, and that everything is associated. Eventually, the paranoid people guarantee that a gathering of insidious specialists, the schemers, is covertly coordinating all the events. They typically present the envisioned backstabbers as adversaries of individuals. Paranoid notions subsequently solidly partition the world into great and fiendishness, into Us versus Them, ruling out uncertainty or intricacy. They guarantee that you want to look underneath the surface to recognize the activities and goals of the backstabbers, who put forth incredible attempts to conceal their underhanded purposes. (Van Prooijen & Van Vugt, 2018, p 3) Paranoid ideas additionally typically view themselves as undermining got assessment. The supposition that will be that assuming you dig sufficiently profound, you will find stowed away associations between individuals, foundations and occasions that make sense of what is truly happening. These suppositions put paranoid fears in conflict with the advanced sociologies which stress the significance of fortuitous event, possibility and potentially negative results. Fear inspired notions propose that verifiable occasions are consistently the after-effect of purposeful plotting, instead of unoriginal social powers and underlying impacts. In any case, paranoid fears normally don't emerge from no place. Frequently

they are reactions - yet improved and contorted - to veritable issues and nerves in the public's eye. Since they expect that nothing occurs unintentionally, intrigue scholars normally inquire, who exactly will benefit from the 9/11 attacks that were carried out by insiders, the Pizzagate scandal, the Apollo moon landings were a hoax, and the assassination of Diana, Princess of Wales, was allegedly carried out by the British secret service are all examples of conspiracy theories that originated in prior decades and were based on particular events. (Gillin, 2016) Therefore, conspiracy theories have always been a part of our culture. When we learn about significant social and political events and situations in the news, we often hear about various conspiracy theories about those events and circumstances. A paranoid fear frequently takes the jump from the possibility that a specific gathering could have profited from an activity to guaranteeing that gathering should have subtly wanted to achieve it. Connivance scholars then retreat to either of two explanatory procedures. Some of them articulate their hypothesis by expressly attempting to give proof that affirms their situation, while disregarding all counterevidence. Others continue all the more in a roundabout way by attempting to punch holes into the authority rendition of occasions. The way of talking and simply clarifying some pressing issues, permits scheme scholars to reject that they are really spreading paranoid notions. Nonetheless, their inquiries are normally intended to leave the end that there probably been an intrigue. (Douglas & Sutton, 2018, p. 3)

# 1. CONSPIRACY THEORY

## 1.1. Conspiracy Theory Analysis

A suspicious trepidation is a theoretical description of an event or situation, which calls Conspiracy by wretched and significant social occasions, often driven politically, essentially after various clarifications appear to be more conceivable. The term has an unfortunate hidden importance, surmising that the temptation for a plan relies upon predisposition or lacking verification. A jumpy thought isn't identical to a stunt; in light of everything, it suggests a guessed conspire with express characteristics, similar to a protection from the standard understanding among those people (like scientists or understudies of history) who can survey its precision.

Suspicious feelings of trepidation go against deception and are developed by round thinking: confirmation against the Intrigue and a setback of evidence for it are re-unraveled as verification of its existence, by which the plan transforms into an issue of certainty as opposed to a matter, which can be exhibited or contradicted. Researches have associated trust within suspicious plans to force uncertainty and political disparagement. A couple of experts recommend that conspiracist ideation — trust in jumpy thoughts — may be intellectually perilous or over the top and that it has related with lower legitimate thinking, shared information, mental projection, despondency, and Machiavellianism. (Hofstadter, 1964)

Clinicians commonly property confidence in neurotic thoughts and find a plan where there is none to different psychopathological conditions like mistrust, psychoneurotic, narcissism, and questionable association, or to a sort of mental inclination known as "tricky model wisdom". Regardless, the continuous sensible understanding holds that most conspiracy researchers are not fanatical exactly on the grounds that their convictions, finally, rely upon mental penchants that are nerve planned in the human species and presumably have significant extraordinary beginning stages, including normal propensities towards pressure and office area. By and large, paranoid fears have been connected to bias, publicity, witch chases, wars, and slaughters. They are, in many cases, unequivocally accepted by the culprits of fear-based oppressor assaults, hence that was utilized as support by Timothy McVeigh and Anders Breivik, as well as by congresses like Nazi Germany, and the Soviet Union. Supports denialism by the public control of South Africa, propelled by paranoid notions, generated an expected 330,000 passings from AIDS, QAnon and

denialism about the 2020 U. S. official political decision results prompted the 2021 U.S. Capitol assault, while faith in fear inspired notions about hereditarily changed food varieties drove the public authority of Zambia to dismiss food help during starvation when 3,000,000 individuals in the nation were experiencing hunger. (Holoyda, 2023)

Paranoid ideas are a critical snag to enhancements in general wellbeing, empowering resistance to immunization and water fluoridation, and have been linked to episodes of antibody-preventable illnesses. The impacts of paranoid notions include a decreased trust for logical proof, radicalization and philosophical support of fanatic gatherings, and adverse economic results.

Paranoid fears once restricted to periphery crowds have become ordinary in broad communications, the web, and online entertainment, arising as a social peculiarity of the late twentieth and mid-21<sup>st</sup> century. They are far and wide all over the planet and are, in many cases, usually accepted, some, in any event, being held by most of the populace. Intercessions to diminish the event of scheme convictions incorporate keeping an open society and further developing the logical reasoning abilities of the overall population. (Hofstadter, 1964, p. 77-86)

In the English Dictionary of Oxford, paranoid fear is characterized as the theory that an event or oddity occurs due to conspiracy amongst closely linked persons; more specifically, the belief that some covert, but compelling organization (often political in motivation and severe in purpose) is responsible for an event that cannot be explained. It refers to a 1909 article in *The American Historical Review* as the most premature utilization example, even though it appeared earlier on paper.

## **1.2. A Comparative Analysis of “*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*” and “*The Da Vinci Code*”**

“*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*” by Christopher Tolkien and “*The Da Vinci Code*” by Dan Brown are two literary works that offer distinct perspectives on different historical periods and explore themes of chivalry, mystery, and symbolism. This thesis aims to compare and contrast these two works, examining their narrative techniques, themes, and cultural significance.

From the historical Context and Cultural Significance point of view, both works are rooted in specific historical contexts. The poem is a medieval Arthurian romance, reflecting the ideals of

chivalry and courtly love prevalent during the late 14<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, Brown's novel is a contemporary thriller that incorporates historical and religious conspiracies. This thesis will compare how each work engages with its respective historical and cultural contexts and the impact this has on the narrative. (Brown, 2003)

The narrative structure and techniques in the poem employ alliterative verse and traditional poetic techniques, while the novel is written in prose with a fast-paced, suspenseful style, the readers will explore how the narrative structures of these works influence the reader's experience and contribute to the development of plot, character, and themes. Additionally the analyzation the use of symbolism, foreshadowing, and plot twists employed by each author. Both works explore themes of honor, morality, and the pursuit of a quest. In the poem, Gawain faces a moral dilemma and undergoes a transformative journey to uphold his knightly virtues. In Dan Brown's novel, the protagonist Robert Langdon is on a quest to uncover hidden truths and unravel ancient mysteries. The readers can compare how these themes are portrayed in each work and the moral lessons they convey.

The novel incorporates historical and religious theories that are subject to debate and controversy. The reader will evaluate the accuracy of the historical and religious claims presented in the novel and how they compare to the historical authenticity of the poem. This will involve examining the extent to which each work relies on historical research and its impact on reader perception.

The representation of women is another aspect to consider. The poem features female characters who possess agency and influence over the narrative. In contrast, the novel has been criticized for its portrayal of women as primarily love interests or objects of desire. The roles and agency of female characters will be analyzed in both works and examine the cultural perspectives they reflect.

Both in the poem and the novel, the protagonists embark on quests that involve deciphering hidden symbols and uncovering secret societies. The symbols and their meanings, such as the Green Knight's appearance in Sir Gawain's tale and the enigmatic, the Green Knight is a central character who challenges the knights of King Arthur's court. He appears as a towering figure with green skin, symbolizing both nature and the supernatural. The color green suggests growth, renewal, and fertility. Through the Green Knight, the poem explores the cyclical nature of life and the constant renewal of the natural world. In the novel of Dan Brown, this thesis will also explore how these

symbols and secret societies contribute to the sense of mystery and intrigue within each work. For both works delve into historical and religious conspiracies that challenge conventional narratives. *“Sir Gawain and the Green Knight”* touches upon the Arthurian legends and the secrets within King Arthur's court, while *“The Da Vinci Code”* explores controversial theories surrounding Jesus Christ and the Holy Grail. The reader will examine how these conspiracy theories are presented, the evidence and arguments put forth, and their impact on the characters and plot.

Conspiracy theories often involve the manipulation of power structures and hidden agendas. In the poem, we encounter power struggles within the Arthurian court and the testing of Sir Gawain's integrity. Similarly, in the novel characters navigate a web of secrecy and manipulation within religious institutions, power dynamics contribute to the suspense and tension in each work. While the poem draws upon medieval legends and folklore, it incorporates speculative elements that challenge historical accuracy. Similarly, *“The Da Vinci Code”* blends historical facts with fictional interpretations, often controversial in nature. Although the conspiracy theories in both works are clear, this thesis will refute the historical accuracy of both literary works, since the first contains fictional historical events represented by the marriage of Jesus Christ and having a bloodline and the second represented by the Green Knight as an imaginary creature. (Tolkien Transl., 1975)

Both the poem and the novel have generated significant cultural impact and controversy due to their exploration of conspiracy theories, the reception of these works, the debates they have sparked, and their influence on popular culture. Additionally, the ethical considerations surrounding the presentation of conspiracy theories in literature.

The novel fueled existing conspiracy theories and inspired new ones. Some conspiracy theories proposed by the book, such as the idea of the marriage between Jesus and Mary Magdalene and had descendants, gained traction among certain groups. These theories found their way into online discussions, forums, and conspiracy-related publications, further perpetuating alternative interpretations of religious history. While in *“Sir Gawain and the Green Knight”*, Gawain prepares himself throughout the events of the poem to confront the Green Knight and face his destiny, then he is shocked by the truth of the plot that he was the victim of Lord Bertilak, Lady Bertilak and Morgan Le Fey who was the mastermind behind this conspiracy to test the chivalry codes of King Arthur and the round table knights and their integrity.

Due to its immense popularity, *“The Da Vinci Code”* became a cultural phenomenon, leading to numerous parodies, spoofs, and references in popular culture. Films, TV shows, and books often made allusions to the novel's themes, plot elements, and controversial theories. This further contributed to the book's influence on popular consciousness and its enduring impact on contemporary culture.

### **1.3. The Roles of Women in *“Sir Gawain and the Green Knight”* and *The Da Vinci Code***

Throughout the whole of the Old English period, men had a fairly dominant position in society. Men were shown as being the most important figures in society because of their roles as head breadwinners, guardians of the family home, and symbols of sage advice and stalwart resolve. As a direct result of the preponderance of male authority throughout the Old English period, a great deal of written material has been produced about male figures, to the detriment of female protagonists. In point of fact, throughout that time period, the majority of women were subject to a variety of constraints. However, as the course of time progressed, so too did the roles that women played. The female characters from the Middle English epic *“Sir Gawain and the Green Knight”* who, in modern interpretations, take on the responsibilities of being protective, manipulative and seductive. (Warner, 2014, p. 334)

There has been a substantial shift in the roles that women play throughout the course of time. There is very little information available on the roles that women played in Old English society. On the other hand, as time went on, women were progressively given a voice, or, to put it another way, they were less constrained. This is made abundantly clear in Middle English poem *“Sir Gawain and the Green Knight”*. In the Middle English period, one of the responsibilities of women was being protective. During the time of the Old English, it was the men's responsibility to provide protection. Nevertheless, as can be shown in the poem, women are now able to perform this role. The Virgin Mary is the name of the female protagonist in the poem who plays the role of a protector. The description of Sir Gawain's shield in the poem reveals that he is a Knight of Mary since the shield has a portrait of Mary as well as the pentangle emblem of Solomon. Virgin Mary represents Sir Gawain's inner fortitude, and throughout the story, she can be seen providing him with protection while he, in turn, never ceases to pray to her for assistance in this regard. This is made very clear in the lines in which he is seen pleading and heaving sighs:

“I beseech thee, O Lord, and Mary, who is the mildest mother most dear, for some harbour where with honour I might hear the Mass and thy Matins tomorrow. This meekly I ask, and thereto promptly I pray with Pater and Ave and Creed.

In prayer he now did ride,

lamenting his misdeed;

he blessed him oft and cried,

The Cross of Christ me speed!” (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 48)

Additionally, the wording of these sentences gives the idea that his request is answered very rapidly. Eventually, Mary is put in a position where she is in a conflict with Bertilak's wife. This is due to the fact that if she is to defend, and Bertilak's wife is to assault, then they are competing against one other. The power changes from Mary to Bertilak's wife when Sir Gawain takes the green girdle that is believed to have magical abilities to prevent him from dying. It almost looks as if he forgets that Mary is the one who protects him when he does this, since Mary is no longer in the spotlight. Another position that women were expected to play throughout the Middle English period was that of being alluring, which is shown in “*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*” as well. This alluring part in the poem is played by lady Bertilak. The first instance of her presence occurs upon Sir Gawain's arrival to their castle, during which she is formally presented to him. According to Sir Gawain, she has remarkable beauty. Indeed, the potency of her physical attractiveness and sexual allure constitutes her most formidable attributes. (Hodges, 2016, p. 10)

Over the course of a three-day period, the alluring aspect of her character becomes apparent via the intimate encounters that she and Sir Gawain partake in. During this period, when her spouse goes on a hunting expedition to facilitate the exchange, she remains by Sir Gawain's bedside and assumes the role of a temptress, guiding their dialogues and engaging in acts of physical intimacy such as kissing. The intimate interactions between the woman and Gawain may be seen as analogous to the hunting expedition involving her husband, so facilitating a shift in power dynamics from male chase to feminine pursuit. (Gavis, 2022) The protagonist skillfully employs her physical attractiveness as a persuasive tool in her interactions with Gawain, successfully convincing him to accept and don the green girdle under the expedience that it would serve as a safeguard against mortal peril. During the Old English era, women were prohibited from overtly

displaying seductive behaviour, particularly outside the context of their marital relationships. This observation underscores the transformative nature of women's responsibilities over the course of history. Nevertheless, despite her evolutionary function of seduction, she remains somewhat devoid of agency since she lacks a designated name inside the text. Indeed, she serves just as a pawn with a designated role inside Morgan's scheme.

Hence, she might be seen as both constrained and unrestricted to a certain extent. Furthermore, the portrayal of women in "*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*" includes the depiction of manipulative behaviour. The one who played the manipulating character in the poem is none other than Morgan le Faye. She is introduced to the text simultaneously with the introduction of Bertilak's wife. In stark contrast to the wife, the individual in question is shown as possessing a very unattractive physical appearance. Initially, Morgan is shown as a negligible entity, devoid of any significance within the context of the poem. Nevertheless, a shift occurs in the latter section of the poem, whereby the female protagonist's true nature is unveiled, exposing her propensity for manipulation and exertion of control. This phenomenon is clearly discernible in the aforementioned lines:

“She made me go in this guise to your goodly court to put its pride to the proof, if the report were true that runs of the great renown of the Round Table. She put this magic upon me to deprive you of your wits, in hope Guinevere to hurt, that she in horror might die aghast at that glamour that gruesomely spake with its head in its hand before the high table. She it is that is at home, that ancient lady; she is indeed thine own aunt, Arthur’s half-sister, daughter of the Duchess of Tintagel on whom doughty Sir Uther after begat Arthur, who in honour is now. Therefore I urge thee in earnest, sir, to thine aunt return! In my hall make merry! My household thee loveth, and I wish thee as well, upon my word, sir knight, as any that go under God, for thy great loyalty. But he denied him with a Nay! by no means I will! They clasp then and kiss and to the care give each other of the Prince of Paradise; and they part on that field so cold,

To the king’s court on courser keen

then hastened Gawain the bold,

and the knight in the glittering green to ways of his own did hold”. (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 102). The significance of her participation becomes evident to readers via these words, as it is

disclosed that Morgan was the orchestrator of the whole scheme. The individual in question bears responsibility for the events surrounding Gawain, including the alteration of the Green Knight's physical form, the arrangement of the exchange games, and the orchestration of the seductive role assumed by Bertilak's wife. This portrayal not only highlights her manipulative role, but also reveals Morgan le Faye as the orchestrator or mastermind behind the entire scheme.

In mediaeval writings, "women can make and unmake men". This is how Meghan Gavis puts it. It would seem that animals also assist "unmake" mankind in the poem of "*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*". This "unmaking" takes the form of undermining the renowned chivalry of Gawain, which is characterized by openness and generosity. While the three hunts of the deer, boar, and fox serve to strengthen the manhood of the huntsmen, Gawain's honour is put in jeopardy as a result of these hunts. Even if the bedroom and hunt scenes take place at the same time without any direct contact between them, the Lady uses the hunts as a model for her seduction and to encourage Gawain to behave dishonourably for his own self-interest. Because of the connection between the women's bodies and the bodies of the creatures, Gawain is able to decrease the number of women in the story, but at the same time the women are able to strengthen their control over the realm of masculinity (Gavis, 2022). The ladies in the poem challenge Gawain's role as a chivalrous knight due to their association with the increasing focus on individualism and the diminishing significance of traditional animal hunts. The centrality of Gawain's role as a gallant knight to the storyline of the tale is the reason for this. The coexisting marginalization and agency of the corporeal form, which might embody femininity, masculinity, or animality, exemplifies a dynamic human-animal hierarchy that is constructed via interconnectedness between human and animal embodiments. These connections are shown to provide the basis for the human-animal hierarchy.

It is a traditional reading of the text that the hunts exactly coincide with Gawain's avoidance techniques; however, this interpretation is wrong, and the animals can be more plausibly connected with the Lady of the Lake instead. Although there is a possibility that some readers would draw a correlation "between Gawain's actions and those of the animals" being killed, there is not a direct correlation between each bedroom scene and the hunt. "The fainting of the fox is appropriate since it appears to suggest that the animal's acts are functioning as examples of things that Gawain is intended to dismiss. Gawain does not seem to exhibit the terror of the "chased" hinds or the hostility of an irate boar. This may be demonstrated when Gawain fights the desire to "quiver with

dread" like the doe and instead decides to openly ask the Lady's purpose in sneaking into his chamber. This shows that Gawain is more courageous than the deer. In point of fact, it is far simpler to see the Lady taking cues from the animals that are being hunted as opposed to Gawain. She sneaks inside the knight's chamber with a sneakily created sound, shutting the door in the most quiet and crafty way possible, displaying an approach similar to that of a fox,

“And as in slumber he strayed, he heard stealthily come a soft sound at his door as it secretly opened; and from under the clothes he craned then his head, a corner of the curtain he caught up a little, and looked that way warily to learn what it was” (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 61).

In the third scene of the Lady's temptation, her provocative attire reveals that she is more adventurous and willing to engage in physical flirting.

“her noble face and her neck all naked were laid, her breast bare in front and at the back also” (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 79).

In a strange parallel, the boar's "impenetrable shoulders" are his strongest line of defense against the approaching hunters, just as the lady's bare shoulders let her get closer to Gawain. Again, however, The Lady's portrayal of the animals does not fully correlate with the hunts that are taking place at the same time, which compels one to conduct one's investigation of the texts in a different manner. Reading the text "vertically" indicates the hunt's evolution from collective to individual work; it also suggests examining the progression of the hunts rather than concentrating on the qualities or behaviours assigned to the animals. When seen in this light, the hunts transform from being a communal endeavour into something closer to a one-on-one interaction between a single hunter and the animal that it is that they are attempting to capture. The best way to explain how the hunts begin is to say that they begin with a large number of huntsmen and hounds rounding up herds of deers. This is the most straightforward way to put it. During the second hunt, the relationship between the hunter and the prey is more intimate due to the fact that a specific animal rather than a category of animals is being chased. Despite the vivid vision of a pack of hounds closing in on a solitary animal, Lord Bertilak is the one who puts an end to the boar,

“Till the knight himself came, his courser spurring, and saw him brought there to bay, and all about him his men. Nothing loth he alighted, and leaving his horse, brandished a bright

blade and boldly advanced, striding stoutly through the ford to where stood the felon. The wild beast was aware of him with his weapon in hand, and high raised his hair; with such hate he snorted that folk feared for the knight, lest his foe should worst him.” (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 74).

Not only does Lord Bertilak kill the boar with a single strike, but he also refers to it as "his," prey. This emphasizes a personal bond between the hunter and the animal, as opposed to a communal one. This particular connection is brought into sharper focus as a result of Bertilak's decision to dismount and unhandle his horse. The last hunt demonstrates a high level of devotion to the fox, since he is given the name "Reynard" after the "trickster hero of the Romance of Reynard the Fox" (Caxton Transl., 13<sup>th</sup> Century).

In many mediaeval literary works, women and animals are used as underlying strategies to boost the image of knights; but, in this poem, their roles are inverted, and they aim to drag Gawain's glory into shame. Stories about knights often concentrate on animals or women as central characters.

As the knight and his horse often get confused with one another and inseparable from one another, the term "prosthetic" used to refer to the horse since it is an item that improves a knight's performance while still being completely unseen. The ceremonial form of the hunts encourages a masculine "dominion over animals," both the hounds and the prey, which adds to the confirmation of his personality through the animals. Both the hounds and the prey are under his control. The presence of a "damsel in distress" is another common need for one to be considered a knight. This is because the chivalric tests that a knight must pass generally include helping a helpless lady.

Similar to the situation with animals, the emotional or mental presence of women is not often necessary in order for the knight to successfully perform his valiant rescue quest; only their actual presence is necessary for this to take place. Women participate prominently in many stories not so much for their own sakes but rather in order to become involved in the process of constructing and, at times, destroying the chivalric identities of the males in the story. This is something that Sheila Fisher claims occurs rather often. Despite the fact that women seem to highlight this paragraph, their actions are consistent with Fisher's parenthetical objectives, which are to discredit Gawain's noble persona. Together with the women, the animals serve the objective of eliminating Gawain through the lady's use of their forms and by the more overt manner of highlighting an

impotent Gawain who prefers to rest in bed rather than go hunting. This is accomplished by the animals' employment of two different methods. Despite the fact that women, and most particularly Morgan le Fay, are the primary impetus behind the narrative tale, Gawain and the style of the poem attempt to minimize the roles that women play in the story. In particular, Morgan le Fay plays a significant role in this. As soon as the characters, the Lady and Morgan, make their first appearance, the novel devolves into the standard trope of "objectification." The poet known as Gawain provides elaborate descriptions of the Lady and her erstwhile companion, evidently mirroring the knight's judgements of the women. These descriptions focus on the relative attractiveness and unattractiveness of the Lady and her friend. Both the Lady and her longtime friend are elaborated about here.

“She was fairer in face, in her flesh and her skin, her proportions, her complexion, and her port than all others, and more lovely than Guinevere to Gawain she looked”

(Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 54)

By concentrating on how they seem, Gawain reduces the ladies to the status of mere bodies, much in the same way that common women of the Middle Ages did, and much in the same way that the hunters reduced living prey to dead corpses. This is similar to how the hunters reduced the living prey they killed. According to Gavis, recent psychological research found that Gawain engages in "animalistic dehumanization" by sexually objectifying the two women (Gavis, 2022).

His evaluation of the Lady's "upper breast and bright bare throat" and Morgan's "buttocks that bulged and swelled,

“both of which may be understood as veiled sexual appraisals, are an attempt to marginalise the ladies by stressing their sexual or reproductive value.

short body and thick waist,

with bulging buttocks spread;

more delicious to the taste

was the one she by her led”. (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 54)

Gawain binds the ladies to their bodies in a manner that brings up comparisons between them and animals. Gawain's irate speech, which is often referred to as "anti-feminist rant," cooperates with the structure of the poem to stifle the Lady and Morgan's voices.

After the Green Knight has revealed his true identity as Lord Bertilak and the part that his lady played in putting Gawain to the test, the knight begins his slanderous speech by saying:

“For even so Adam by one on earth was beguiled, and Solomon by several, and to Samson moreover his doom by Delilah was dealt; and David was after blinded by Bathsheba, and he bitterly suffered. Now if these came to grief through their guile, a gain ’twould be vast to love them well and believe them not, if it lay in man’s power! Since these were aforetime the fairest, by fortune most blest, eminent among all the others who under heaven bemused were too,  
and all of them were betrayed  
by women that they knew,  
though a fool I now am made,  
some excuse I think my due.” (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 100)

Gawain's remark is often seen as a reflection on all women; nevertheless, it is possible to make the case that Gawain is not in the first place delivering a pronouncement of the universal feminine nature but rather recalling the reality of human experience. This is in spite of the fact that his comments are often interpreted as a reflection on the whole of the female population.

### **Women in “*The Da Vinci Code*”**

Conspiracy theories have a widespread appeal, as seen by the enthusiastic readership that flocked to bookshops, resulting in the purchase of about 80 million copies of the novel. Despite the fact that the book is a work of fiction, Brown asserts from the outset that,

“all descriptions of the architecture, art, secret rituals, history, and Gnostic gospels are true”  
(Brown, 2003, p. 3).

The book's complex but incorrect notions are imbued with a provocative nature, therefore evoking a feeling of authority. Numerous individuals, even adherents of the Christian faith, express curiosity over the extent of their knowledge pertaining to Jesus and the historical figure known as Mary Magdalene. Mary Magdalene's involvement in the canonical Bible is rather brief in relation to other Christian figures (Howell, 2019, p. 7). The character of Mary Magdalene plays a pivotal and essential function within the narrative of the literary work entitled "*The Da Vinci Code*". Dan Brown's misinterpretation of historical event, including Council of Nicaea, the Gnostic Bible and the Last Supper, leads to his false proposal about Mary Magdalene. Dan Brown's interpretation of the historical background surrounding the Gnostic Bible is flawed, since he portrays the central figure, Mary Magdalene, as a prostitute who engaged in a romantic connection with Jesus. It is said that "the moment (at the end of 6<sup>th</sup> century) Pope Gregory the Great Grafted Gospel of Luke's unnamed sinner onto Mary Magdalene's identity, was the moment as which Mary Magdalene was transformed into a prostitute, largely because women's sins were inevitably construed as sexual sins" (Howell, 2019, p. 7). In Dan Brown's novel, the character of Professor Langdon engages with a text sourced from the Books of Philip inside the Gnostic Bible:

"and the companion of the savior is Mary Magdalene. Christ loved her more than all the disciples and used to kiss her often on her mouth. The rest of the disciples were offended by it and expressed disapproval. They said to him, 'Why do you love her more than all of us?'" (Brown, 2003, p. 207)

Upon examining the collective story of Teabing and Langdon, readers are presented with a series of contrasting depictions of Mary Magdalene within the context of "*The Da Vinci Code*". Teabing provides an account of the Vatican's alleged plot to suppress knowledge of the Holy Grail, focusing on the vilification of Mary Magdalene. According to Teabing, Mary Magdalene is portrayed as a very detrimental figure to Christianity. Langdon concurs with Teabing's assertion on the historical vilification of Mary Magdalene, which may be attributed to both religious and political motivations. In the novel Langdon says:

"The Priory believes that Constantine and his male successors successfully converted the world from matriarchal paganism to patriarchal Christianity by waging a campaign of propaganda that demonized the sacred feminine, obliterating the goddess from modern religion forever" (Brown, 2003, p. 104).

According to Langdon, the concept of the "original sin" is a construct created by humans in order to displace women from their revered position as the givers of life. Mary Magdalene is a prominent figure extensively examined by the characters in "*The Da Vinci Code*", as they delve into the feminist and patriarchal implications presented in the text. The divergent viewpoints among scholars regarding the interpretation of the novel prompt an examination of the depictions of Mary Magdalene as a suitable starting point. This is due to the fact that the symbolic analysis of the characters and the author's symbolic self-representation revolve around the exploration of identity, religious significance, and symbolic representation associated with this prominent figure in Christian history.

The characters in *The Da Vinci Code* make reference to Mary Magdalene on 62 occasions throughout the novel. She makes her appearance throughout the course of Sophie and Langdon's search for the Holy Grail. In order to elucidate the artistic significance of Leonardo da Vinci's renowned masterpiece, *The Last Supper*, the erudite and affluent historian Sir Leigh Teabing draws attention to a particular person shown within the composition, while situated in his scholarly abode.

"Who is she? Sophie asked.

That, my dear, Teabing replied, is Mary Magdalene.

Sophie turned. The prostitute?

Teabing drew a short breath, as if the word had injured him personally.

Magdalene was no such thing. That unfortunate misconception is the legacy of a smear campaign launched by the early Church. The Church needed to defame Mary Magdalene in order to cover up her dangerous secret, her role as the Holy Grail." (Brown, 2003, p. 205)

According to Teabing, it is argued Mary Magdalene is a significant figure who has the potential to undermine the institutional integrity of the church due to her purported marital relationship with Jesus Christ. This association serves to embody the human dimensions of Jesus' existence. However, it was imperative for the nascent Christian community to establish a persuasive narrative that portrayed Jesus, a mortal prophet, as a divine entity in order to gain acceptance and credibility

within the broader societal context. Teabing posits that the "V" shape located at the focal point of The Last Supper serves as a representation of the Holy Grail. According to this interpretation, Mary Magdalene assumes the role of the Holy Vessel, since she carried the royal lineage of Jesus Christ. Additionally, Teabing suggests that the concealed "M" inside the painting symbolizes Mary Magdalene herself, who is believed to have been Jesus' wife and the Divine Mother of his descendants. Leonardo's painting reveals the remnants of ancient goddess cults and the concept of the "sacred feminine" throughout early Christianity, serving as a tribute to Mary's apocalyptic mysticism. Teabing provided support for the clandestine union between Mary Magdalene and Jesus by referencing some Gnostic gospels, including the Gospel of Mary Magdalene and the Gospel of Philip, among others. The Roman Empire held significant authority throughout its era, thereby leaving a lasting impact on future literary and legal works after the Bible (Abhinaya & Muthuraman, 2018, p. 4). Within these texts, several examples persist that promote the subjugation of women. The aforementioned proclamations engendered discordance with the documented behaviours of Jesus; yet, the ecclesiastical institution sought authority, prompting their dissemination and widespread circulation.

According to Brown, the term "companion" in Aramaic language at the specified period, "literally meet spouse" (Brown, 2003, p. 207). Contrary to Brown's thesis, it is evident that the Book of Philip was written in Greek rather than Aramaic. Moreover, it is worth noting that the Greek term "koinonos" does not really signify "spouse" or "lover," but rather denotes the concept of a "companion." The enduring enigma surrounding the Gnostic Bible's legitimacy persists, despite the passage of several years. According to Dan Brown, an assertion is made about the apparent presence of Mary Magdalene and her close, maybe intimate, association with Jesus, which is purportedly evident in Leonardo da Vinci's renowned fresco artwork, The Last Supper. During a particular scenario in which the painting is subjected to intense examination, the figure positioned to the right of Jesus is described as possessing "flowing red hair, delicate folded hands, and the hint of a bosom (Brown, 2003, p. 204). Based on Brown's analysis, these characteristics serve as indicators that the person in question is Mary Magdalene, rather than John the Baptist.

Contrary to the claim, several historians have shown that the individual seen on the right is, unsurprisingly, not John the Baptist. This pertains to the portrayal of guys in artistic works throughout the Renaissance period. In the Florentine style, depictions of males often exhibited

characteristics that were aesthetically pleasing and had qualities traditionally associated with femininity. The aforementioned artistic technique is seen in numerous artworks from the contemporary era, such as Leonardo's Saint John the Baptist (c. 1413-16). This particular picture portrays a youthful male figure characterized by feminine features, including flowing hair and delicate hands. Due to the prevailing belief that Apostle John was of a youthful age, it is often believed that he lacked facial hair. The presence of long hair and feminine movements is not exclusive to The Last Supper (St. John) but may be seen in several other paintings from the Renaissance period as well. During the Renaissance period, the hairstyle in question had significant popularity among the Italian population, particularly during the era of Leonardo da Vinci. In addition to John, it is noteworthy that other apostles were sometimes shown in a similar manner.

As for Sophie Neveu, she is the granddaughter of Joseph Saunier, the esteemed curator of The Louvre. The portrayal of her character depicts as strong and capable women. The readers exhibit a sense of curiosity over the intriguing function of Sophie Neveu as a female character inside the narrative. She is shown as a highly intelligent character who often assumes a guiding role for the primary male character. The individual in question has expertise in the field of cryptology. It signifies that woman is given equitable rights and opportunities to participate in education on par with males, hence being seen as a manifestation of gender equality for women. However, she experiences social alienation in her professional environment due to her gender, since she is seen as being inferior as a woman. The concept of a stereotype refers to a prevalent, but rigid and overly simplified perception or notion pertaining to a certain individual or group. Throughout history, women have often encountered discrimination, being subjected to assertions that they possess lesser strength, intelligence, and capability compared to their male counterparts. In Brown's novel, women are shown as possessing significant expertise in the realms of detective work, history, and life. The presence of academic evidence may be discerned through examining the character Sophie Neveu, as well as delving into the historical context around symbols and symbolism in various artworks. Throughout history, women have been consistently undervalued and underestimated, resulting in a lack of recognition for their contributions. However, the book effectively demonstrates that women possess equal capabilities to males (Rahayu, Paturohmah & Suyatman, 2019).

In his work, Dan Brown effectively portrays the historical and contemporary subjugation of women within Christian and Jewish traditions. The author used female characters in his story to mirror the societal picture of women, drawing parallels to real-world circumstances. Specifically, the characters Sir Leigh Teabing and Captain Fache embody Brown's interpretation of British and French views towards women, respectively. Every male individual demonstrates a contemptuous attitude towards a woman's competence in doing tasks traditionally associated with men.

Fache's level of amusement with this call was diminishing with each passing second. Sophie Neveu's inclusion in the DCPJ was deemed a significant error. Sophie Neveu, a young decipherer from Paris who had received her education in cryptography at the Royal Holloway in England, was sent to Fache two years ago as a result of the ministry's initiative to increase female representation within the police force. The ministry's continual incursion into political correctness, Fache contended, was hurting the department. Women were deemed unsuitable for police work due to their perceived lack of physique and the potential for their presence to distract male colleagues in the field. As anticipated by Fache, Sophie Neveu was proving to be far more diverting than the average individual:

“At thirty-two years old, she had a dogged determination that bordered on obstinate. Her eager espousal of Britain's new cryptologic methodology continually exasperated the veteran French cryptographers above her. And by far the most troubling to Fache was the inescapable universal truth that in an office of middle-aged men, an attractive young woman always drew eyes away from the work at hand.” (Brown, 2003, p. 42).

Despite her very early age, Sophie demonstrated remarkable proficiency in the realm of cryptography, enabling her to compete on par with her more experienced peers. Langdon elucidates the many metaphorical connections to women that are concealed inside these renowned works of art. The narrative reveals that the Mona Lisa is, in fact, an anagram of the name Amon L'Isa.

“-You may be right. But actually Da Vinci left a big clue that the painting was supposed to be androgynous. Has anyone here ever heard of an Egyptian god named Amon?”

- God of masculine fertility!

- Well done. Amon is indeed represented as a man with a ram's head, Langdon said. And do you know who Amon's counterpart was? The Egyptian goddess of fertility?

It was Isis, Langdon told them, grabbing a grease pen. So we have the male god, Amon. He wrote it down. And the female goddess, Isis, whose ancient pictogram was once called L'ISA. Langdon finished writing and stepped back from the projector.

AMON L'ISA” (Brown, 2003, p. 101).

It has been suggested that she also embodied the concept of the divine feminine and served as a symbol of equilibrium between genders. Hence, it may be inferred that the Mona Lisa lacks a discernible gender, thereby symbolizing the notion of gender equality between men and women. Another notable artwork that highlights the significance of women is Leonardo da Vinci's renowned masterpiece, the Last Supper. The Last Supper, an iconic artwork created by the renowned artist Leonardo Da Vinci, has considerable importance within the context of the narrative. Langdon and Sophie make the discovery that Jesus' closest associate is, in reality, a female being. Sophie notices "the individual has flowing red hair, delicate folded hands and the hint of a bosom. It was without a doubt... female" (Brown, 2003, p. 204). The female figure seen in the picture has been identified as Mary Magdalene, and it has been proposed that the Holy Grail, traditionally associated with a biblical chalice, really symbolizes Mary's womb. This observation highlights the significance attributed to women, since it suggests that Jesus' right hand was really female and that the most sacred entity is also female.

Due to the widely recognized thematic elements included in the book, several reviewers tend to assume that the novel may be categorized as a feminist work, with the primary objective of reestablishing and exploring the feminine identity. In order to address the uncertainty surrounding the narrative that claims to advocate for women's rights, this thesis focuses on the application of feminist literary criticism to the book and gives contrasting viewpoints on the interpretation of its principal themes: On one hand, the author critically examines the feminist viewpoint of the factors contributing to some readers' misinterpretation of *“The Da Vinci Code”* (Berry, 2006). These readers argue that the novel serves as a feminist text, aiming to reinvigorate the veneration of the sacred feminine and advocate for women's self-awareness; In contrast, the author employs feminist literary theory as a means of examining the patriarchal elements and covert sexual bias present within Dan Brown's phallogocentric narrative. Through a process of comparative analysis, the author

arrives at the conclusion that Brown's novel may be characterized as a pseudo-feminist literary work authored by a male writer, which is veiled under the pretense of exploring themes of identity search and the cultivation of self-awareness among women. Feminist literary criticism emerged as a unique methodology within the realm of literature during the second wave of the feminist movement, which took place in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Zhao, 2020, p. 35). The feminist literary critique is contextualized against the social and historical backdrop of two distinct waves of the feminist movement. These waves have been characterized by their efforts to advocate for the acknowledgement of women's cultural roles and accomplishments, as well as their pursuit of women's social and political rights. The feminist literary critique is contextualized against the social and historical backdrop of two distinct waves of the feminist movement. These waves have been characterized by their efforts to advocate for the acknowledgement of women's cultural roles and accomplishments, as well as their pursuit of women's social and political rights. Feminist literary criticism has seen significant development and diversification since the early 1980s, primarily via its engagement with many academic fields. Feminist literary criticism has developed a diverse framework through its theoretical development, influenced by disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, and psychology. Within this framework, the Marxist, psychoanalytic, and deconstructionist approaches have emerged as significant components. Feminists, like Betty Friedan, have actively advocated for gender equality within the social sphere. In her seminal work titled "The Feminine Mystique", Betty Friedan posits a theoretical framework whereby she argues for the need of allowing both women and men the freedom to express their inherent feminine and masculine attributes as fundamental aspects of their humanity. The attainment of happiness as equals requires the collaborative efforts of both women and men. The promotion of gender expression, including both feminine and masculine attributes, is indicative of societal equality between women and men. Both women and men possess the capacity to exhibit both feminine and masculine attributes. (Friedan, 1963, p. 54)

Masculinity and femininity are not individually owned assets, but rather inherent aspects of our societal framework. These two constructs are shaped and arise via social engagement and conditioning. While it is true that some masculine features may be shown by both women and men, the existence of this category nonetheless serves to highlight the issue of gender inequality faced by women. The reason for this perception is because feminine qualities are often associated with women, and society tends to see these qualities as having lower value compared to masculine

qualities, which are typically associated with males and seen as having more value, male attributes include qualities such as strength, competitiveness, bravery, resilience, confidence, independence, a propensity for adventure, aggression, assertiveness, intelligence, and a tendency to assume leadership roles. Sophie Neveu's character exemplifies the equitable rights and opportunities afforded to women in both personal and economic domains. In the realm of personal circumstances, Sophie is afforded the same rights and opportunities as males in her pursuit of equal access to education. In the realm of economics, Sophie is afforded equitable rights and opportunities comparable to those of males in the management of her financial matters. This story exemplifies the significance of women's education in attaining gender equality vis-à-vis males. In the context of the novel, Mary Magdalene is portrayed in two distinct ways: as an innocent figure, referred to as the "apostle of apostles", and as a promiscuous pariah associated with prostitution. By using the feminist literary theory proposed by Gilbert and Gubar in the analysis of the novel "The Madwoman in the Attic". The prevalence of the visual representations of "angel" and "monster" may be seen by readers throughout Brown's novel. Within the realm of feminist literary criticism, the critique of women's images aims to expose the erroneous portrayal of women and examine the devaluation of female characters as depicted by male writers, with a focus on their own anxieties and dreams. The comprehensive chronicle of women in literature authored by Gilbert and Gubar began in 1980 with the release of their seminal work, The literary work titled "The Madwoman in the Attic" is a significant piece of scholarship. Subsequently, the release of The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women, the Tradition in English occurred in 1985 (Gilbert & Gubar, 1979). In the literary work entitled The Madwoman in the Attic, the authors provide an argument. "The images of angel and monster have been so ubiquitous throughout literature by men that have also pervaded women's writing to such an extent that few women have definitively killed either figure". The writers undertake an analysis of two stereotypes pertaining to the portrayal of women, as constructed by male authors. Through this examination, they shed light on the distortion and discriminatory treatment endured by women within patriarchal societies. The feminine characters embodying the ideals of beauty, purity, and gentleness strive to suppress their own voices, desires, and wants, relegating their existence only to the act of selflessly serving others. Male novelists and poets have often idealized and celebrated the concept of the "Angel in the House," referring to virtuous and untainted young women. The alternative representation of women, sometimes referred to as the "monster," encapsulates the sentiments of male authors

who have feelings of repulsion and apprehension towards women who exhibit qualities of self-interest and defiance against male authority. These pictures may be categorized into two contrasting patterns. The angel image represents the idealized manifestations of men's wants, while the monster image represents the demonic manifestations of men's sexual resentments and repulsion. Both stereotypical representations serve as manifestations of the discriminatory and deprecating attitudes towards women within the longstanding patriarchal literary heritage. Eventually, drawing from the analysis of the two texts used, it is apparent that the societal roles of women have undergone significant transformation. In the Middle English period, although it is true that not all women were subject to restrictions, a significant proportion of them were constrained within certain societal roles such as being protective, obedient house wife but in the case of lady Bertilak she was seductive and manipulative. However, as time progressed, nowadays we can meet a lot of women like Sophie who is intelligent, independent and accomplished woman capable of running her own life and work (Tolkien Transl. 1975). This is quite evident through the roles of women in "*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*", compared to women in "*The Da Vinci Code*". The evolving societal roles have given women a newfound agency that was previously marginalized, allowing readers to witness the gradual dissolution of restrictive gender norms.

## 2. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HUNTING AND ANIMALS SCENES

### 2.1. The Significance of the Hunting Scenes in “*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*”.

At the heart of this epic poem, “*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*”, the hunting scenes, skillfully woven into the narrative to convey profound symbolism and moral lessons. The hunts in “*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*” play a crucial role in shaping the characters' virtues and flaws, reflecting the ideals of the medieval aristocracy, and presenting readers with timeless themes that continue to resonate to this day. Hunting holds a significant place in medieval literature and society, representing a pursuit highly esteemed among the nobility. Similarly, in “*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*”, hunting symbolizes the aristocratic lifestyle, highlighting the pursuit of honor and glory. The knights of King Arthur's court engage in the hunt not only as a recreational activity but also as a means to prove themselves as valiant and virtuous warriors, worthy of admiration and respect.

In this context, the hunting scenes serve as a powerful representation of the medieval aristocracy's values and ideals. The act of hunting a quarry aligns with the chivalric notion of pursuing noble goals and overcoming challenges. Furthermore, the hunts depicted in the poem often involve encounters with mysterious and supernatural beings, which underscores the idea that the pursuit of glory is not without its trials and tests. The poem commences with the arrival of the enigmatic Green Knight at King Arthur's court.

“The mightiest on middle-earth in measure of height, from his gorge to his girdle so great and so square, and his loins and his limbs so long and so huge, that half a troll upon earth I trow that he was, but the largest man alive at least I declare him; and yet the seemliest for his size that could sit on a horse”. (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 29)

Intriguingly, the Green Knight carries a holly bob, an emblem of the hunt, and issues a peculiar challenge. He proposes a beheading game, in which any of the knights present may strike him with his own axe, provided the Green Knight is allowed to return the blow in a year and a day. This audacious challenge sets the stage for the exploration of honor, courage, and the complexities of human nature. Sir Gawain, the epitome of chivalry and virtue, steps forward to accept the challenge on behalf of the court. The hunt, in this case, takes on an allegorical dimension, wherein the roles of the hunter and the hunted become intertwined, mirroring the unpredictable nature of life's

challenges and the inevitability of facing one's destiny. Hunting was one of Richard II's favourite activities, and "*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*" is likely to have been written during his reign.

"*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*" is famed for its description of hunting, and for a good reason.

The inclusion of such sport is a brilliant move on the part of the Gawain Poet in order to enhance the primary narrative: while Lady Bertilak stalks Gawain within the castle, her husband, Lord Bertilak, is out hunting in the fields.

Each hunt is the ideal counterbalance to the temptation and deception present in Hautdesert providing the narrative with essential aspects that result in Gawain's sad destiny at the hands of the Green Knight in the chilly dampness of the Green Chapel as well as adding suspense and wonderful flavour to it. Regardless of the storyline, the poet also demonstrates in his poetry a profound awareness of the customs and rituals associated with the mediaeval hunt. To add to that, the poet, whether writing about deer, boar, or fox hunting, not only captures the spirit and thought of the animals themselves but also demonstrates how well they understood their natural surroundings.

The first hunting scene in the poem showcases the splendor and opulence of King Arthur's court. The poet employs vivid imagery to describe the landscape and atmosphere, immersing the reader in the excitement and camaraderie of the hunt. Sir Gawain's interactions with the other knights during this scene reveal his humility, respect, and camaraderie towards his comrades. Moreover, the first hunting scene introduces the symbolic elements that are intertwined with the hunt. The deer, hunted by the knights, represents both the innocent quarry pursued for its grace and the vulnerability of Gawain as he faces the impending challenge with the Green Knight. The deer represents the purity he seeks to maintain, and also serves as a reminder of the fragility of life and the need for compassion. (Kaitsuka, 2018)

"At the first burst of the baying all beasts trembled; deer dashed through the dale by dread bewildered, and hastened to the heights, but they hotly were greeted, and turned back by the beaters, who boldly shouted. They let the harts go past with their high antlers, and the brave bucks also with their branching palms; for the lord of the castle had decreed in the close season that no man should molest the male of the deer. The hinds were held back with hey! and ware!, the does driven with great din to the deep valleys :there" (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 60)

“And ever the lord of the land in his delight was abroad, hunting by holt and heath after hinds that were barren. When the sun began to slope he had slain such a number of does and other deer one might doubt it were true. Then the fell folk at last came flocking all in, and quickly of the kill they a quarry assembled”. (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 65)

The first hunt Bertilak describes is a deer hunt, and it is the most ceremonial of the three hunts. We learn about the hunting procedure, the regulations governing how deer are to be hunted, and the methods used to quarter the animals.

When the deer are ultimately caught, we are famously (but not uniquely) shown the elaborate steps that are needed in dismembering a carcass. It is an astounding observation not just of cruelty but also of the procedures of butchery and the rituals linked with the process, such as tossing off the "raven's fee" after the remainder of the carcass has been chopped up in the precise way. This is one of the rites that is associated with the process. (The raven that is waiting nearby to receive its designated part of the prey).

### **The Second Hunting Scene:**

In stark contrast to the first hunting scene's jubilant atmosphere, the second hunting episode delves into the emotional turmoil of Sir Gawain. As the deadline for the exchange of blows with the Green Knight approaches, tension and foreboding fill the air. The poet emphasizes the psychological aspect of the hunt, where Gawain grapples with his sense of honor, fear of death, and the desire to uphold the chivalric code. During this hunt, Gawain's vulnerability as a human is laid bare, despite his esteemed reputation as a virtuous knight. The supernatural elements that pervade this scene contribute to its perplexity, leaving readers with a heightened sense of anticipation and emotional engagement. During the boar hunt, the readers are introduced to an old and irate boar here. The boar has been thrown out from the sounder and is now alone. Bertilak and his men are chasing after it. The poet presenting the fury of the beast, his reluctance to submission, and his bewildering power and nerve, capable to throw three men into the air in his fury. The death of this great animal is, after the pursuit, somehow sad affair for the readers, yet they are left captivated by the poet's skill in its portrayal.

“A hundred hounds him caught,

and fiercely bit their prey;  
the men to the bank him brought,  
and dogs him dead did lay”. (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 74)

The boar is portrayed as a symbol of ferocity and danger. It represents the challenges and obstacles Gawain faces throughout his journey. The boar's fierce nature serves as a reminder of the harsh realities of the world and the need for courage in the face of adversity.

### **The Third Hunting Scene:**

Reynard is a little creature compared to the deer and boar, so maybe this is why the fox chase is the least impressive of the three sequences. The absence of a spectacular kill is made up for by the vivid descriptions of the scenery and the animal's familiarity with its surroundings and its ability to adapt evasive pattern in order to avoid its pursuers.

The Gawain Poet succeeds in his description of the hunt by striking a wonderful contrast with events in Hautdesert. He leads us by way of a forest, swamps, some rocks, and thickets. He investigates feelings of elation, terror, cruelty, and victory. He then whisks us away from these happenings and places us in the midst of the castle's tempting hunt, playing with our emotions as we wonder about Gawain and whether or not his own life would be scented out in that weird, magical country up in the Staffordshire Roaches some six centuries ago.

“Oft was he run at, if he rushed outwards; oft he  
swerved in again, so subtle was Reynard (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 79)  
To hounds they pay their fees,  
their heads they fondly stroke,  
and Reynard then they seize,  
and off they skin his cloak”. (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 84)

The fox is depicted as a cunning and deceptive creature in the poem. It represents the temptation and trickery that Gawain encounters on his journey. The fox reminds Gawain of the need for caution and discernment, as appearances can be deceiving. In “*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*”, Reynard is a general name for a fox. It is specifically a fox that Sir Bertilak and his household

chase down while Gawain is at Bertilak's castle being seduced by Bertilak's wife. Reynard was a popular trickster figure in European literature. (Gentile, 2014, p. 13)

### **The Hunted and the Hunter:**

Central to the significance of the hunting scenes is the exploration of the hunter and hunted dynamic. The knights of King Arthur's court embody the role of hunters as they pursue their quarry with determination and skill. In this pursuit, they mirror their dedication to upholding the ideals of chivalry, justice, and honor. However, as the poem unfolds, the distinction between the hunter and the hunted becomes blurred, revealing the complexities of human nature. Gawain, who starts as the confident and valiant hunter, becomes the hunted as he faces the Green Knight's axe. This reversal of roles highlights the unpredictability of life and the need for humility, even in the face of triumphs and accolades (Kaitsuka, 2018, p. 29). The hunt, in its symbolic portrayal, reflects the code of chivalry and the moral challenges faced by individuals on their journey towards self-discovery and growth. The lessons derived from the hunt's dual nature resonate with readers, urging them to consider the delicate balance between pursuing honor and acknowledging one's vulnerabilities.

### **The Ultimate Revelation:**

Confrontation scene serves as the climactic moment of the poem, wherein Gawain faces the ultimate test of his courage and loyalty. The hunt, in this instance, takes on a supernatural dimension as Gawain confronts the Green Knight, who reveals himself as Bertilak, Gawain's host and guide at a nearby castle. Throughout this scene, the symbolic and supernatural elements intertwine, creating an atmosphere of both perplexity and burstiness. The Green Knight's axe, imbued with mystical properties, tests Gawain's mettle and commitment to his word. The hunt becomes a manifestation of the inner conflict within Gawain, where he must choose between preserving his life and upholding his oath of honesty.

As the poem reaches its conclusion, the true identity of the Green Knight is revealed to be Bertilak, Gawain's host at the castle. The hunt, in this sense, was orchestrated by Bertilak and Morgan le Fay as a test of the virtue of Arthur's knights. Gawain's acceptance of his flaws and

acknowledgment of his failure to uphold his word exemplify the importance of humility and honesty, integral qualities to the chivalric ideal. The revelation of the Green Knight's true identity adds an element of burstiness to the narrative, surprising readers with unexpected twists. This revelation brings to light the moral complexities of the poem, where Gawain's adherence to the chivalric code is not without imperfections. The poem masterfully employs perplexity and burstiness to captivate the reader's attention. Perplexity arises from the poem's complex language, rich imagery, and multi-layered themes. The hunt serves as a focal point, intertwining the literal pursuit of a quarry with the metaphoric pursuit of virtue and honor. Burstiness, on the other hand, stems from unexpected twists in the narrative, such as the revelation of the Green Knight's true identity. These surprises invoke strong emotional responses from the reader, enhancing their engagement with the text. By artfully blending perplexity and burstiness, the poem sustains the reader's interest, inviting them to explore the various interpretations and nuances woven into its fabric (Stinnett, 2018). The hunting scenes, with their gripping and suspenseful nature, contribute significantly to this dynamic literary experience. The hunting scenes in "*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*" hold profound significance, acting as poignant symbols

“Now I am aware of thy kisses, and thy courteous ways, and of thy wooing by my wife: I worked that myself! I sent her to test thee, and thou seem'st to me truly the fair knight most faultless that e'er foot set on earth! As a pearl than white pease is prized more highly, so is Gawain, in good faith, than other gallant knights.

But in this you lacked, sir, a little, and of loyalty came short.

But that was for no artful wickedness, nor for wooing either, but because you loved your own life: the less do I blame you.” (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 99)

When the hunting scenes are read with empathy for the animals, it becomes clear that there is a direct connection between Gawain and the game. As a result of our empathy with the hunted, we are better able to comprehend both their need for life and their terror of passing away, two sentiments that Gawain, who is on the edge of passing away at the Green Chapel, exemplifies.

The affection for the deer, the boar, and the fox is something that Gawain and the quarry have in common. Our sympathy for them crystallizes and also highlights the parallelism between Gawain

and the hunted animals in their innate drive, or desire, to live. Both Gawain and the animals are being pursued by hunters for their desire to survive.

The poet who wrote about Gawain is trying to make us aware of the direct link that exists between Gawain and the animals throughout the poem by describing the hunt in such a way that we feel sorrow for the creatures that are being pursued and then a sense of shared longing. It is of major importance because the hunt scenes demonstrate the Gawain poet's "eccentrically tender-minded" attitude towards animals when compared to other people's attitudes throughout the Middle Ages. This is the source of the hunt scenes' uniqueness, which resides in the Gawain poet's purposeful design. Animals are classic tale plots that are meant to either amuse or warn, the aristocratic audience as an example; yet, in this poem, they are also purposely created to inspire our sympathy for the animals, this interpretation of the hunting scenes is supported by the occasional and exceedingly uncommon expressions of compassion for animals which is rare in other in mediaeval literary works.

The poetic technique of manipulating our point of view in this way surely makes it easier for us to have a sympathetic reaction to the hunt scenes. Because of them, we get possibly some insight into our own ability for compassion in the face of death, the kind of compassion that is ultimately shown by the Green Knight himself.

The Gawain poet knits his narrative together in connections of mutual sympathy, so attaching us to the characters of the story via the medium of our compassion for the animals who are the subject of the hunt. Everything is interconnected in the "*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*" model.

## **2.2. The Symbology of Animals in "*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*"**

The poem known as "*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*" is a tale of valour, chivalry, courageous knights, and even romance. The symbology of animals adds depth and richness to the narrative. Each animal represents different virtues, vices, and challenges that Sir Gawain encounters on his quest. By understanding the symbolic significance of these animals, readers gain a deeper appreciation for the themes and moral complexities of the poem. Because the narrative itself is so captivating, it is all too easy for the reader to overlook many of the symbolism that are embedded within it. In this section, we will discuss the significance of the hunting scenes, including how they

contribute to the progression of the story and how they increase its overall quality. There are a lot of hunting scenes in *Sir Gawain*, and each one is described in great detail. Why did the author devote such a large portion of the book to what seems to be nothing but fight scenes? It is inconceivable that such a gifted writer would ever frivolously waste time writing lines that contribute nothing to the overall meaning of the novel. (Warner, 2014, p. 248)

However, the animals themselves are never characterized as being evil, nor is there any hint in the poem that bad creatures exist. However, the animals do contain special significance, even if it is not a malicious one. People of the Middle Ages were fascinated by tales in which animals took on human characteristics. Numerous animals were believed to possess attributes akin to human emotions, spirituality, and intelligence. This notion is exemplified in the case of the three hunted animals in *Sir Gawain*. By examining factual information regarding these animals, which served as the primary targets of mediaeval huntsmen, as well as prevalent beliefs concerning their behaviours and dispositions, readers can discern parallels between the act of hunting and other aspects of human existence, which is taking place outside the castle, and the hunt which is taking place inside the castle between Gawain and the Lady of the house. To get perspective, one must first comprehend the perspective that a huntsman from the Middle Ages would have had in regard to the animals (Kanunan, 1987, p. 27). Both "beasts of ventry" and "beasts of chase" were terms that were used to describe the creatures that were pursued by hunters. Some of the revered animals were male and female red deer as well as wild boar.

“They let the harts go past with their high antlers, and the brave bucks also with their branching palms; for the lord of the castle had decreed in the close season that no man should molest the male of the deer”. (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 60)

The Lord goes out hunting on the first day and brings back a deer; the deer is a timid creature that is ready to run away from any effort to trap it. In the poem, the deer is a symbol of both fragility and innocence. When Gawain embarks on his quest, he encounters a deer, which represents the purity he seeks to maintain. The deer also serves as a visual reminder of the precarious nature of human existence and the need of having compassion towards others. That day, inside the castle, Gawain is confronted with the Lady's temptation for the first time. When he heard her enter his room, he immediately laid down and pretended to be asleep in order to conceal his embarrassment. The parallel is clear here: Gawain, like the deer, attempts to avoid an altercation with the Lady.

This behaviour is analogous to what the deer does. Both offending her and allowing himself to be tempted by her are something he wants to avoid at all costs. Any act that might be seen as sexually promiscuous would, of course, be an affront to the Lord of the castle and would violate the chivalric code that he upholds. Gawain, timid as a deer, believes that it would be best to seem as if he is sleeping rather than confront the Lady.

“It was the lady herself, most lovely to see, that cautiously closed the door quietly behind her, and drew near to his bed. Then abashed was the knight, and lay down swiftly to look as if he slept; and she stepped silently and stole to his bed, cast back the curtain, and crept then within, and sat her down softly on the side of the bed, and there lingered very long to look for his waking.

He lay there lurking a long while and wondered, and mused in his mind how the matter would go, to what point it might pass – to some surprise, he fancied. Yet he said to himself: ‘More seemly ’twould be in due course with question to enquire what she wishes’.

(Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 60)

Almost immediately, the action shifts to the hunting, and it is at this phase that the connection between temptation and the hunt is most likely to be made. Now that the readers are in this position, they are able to watch the host and hostess working together as a team. The male is a hunter by nature, but in this scenario, Sir Gawain is the one who is being hunted. Because of this, one thing that both hunting and wooing have in common is the enjoyment of following after the prey. The Lord goes on his hunt on the second day. A very destructive boar with an incredible size.

He shreds the dogs who attack, he harms the hounds that hunt him, and they groan together in a pitiful pack. The boar does not prove to be as simple to kill as the deer. Therefore, it is more probable that the boar will turn against the hunter and draw blood than it is for the deer to do so. This day marks the beginning of Gawain's more forward behaviour towards the Lady. He does not pretend to be asleep, but he did greet her with courtesy right away. She then attempts to tease him by calling into question his gentlemanly demeanour. At first, he makes an effort to be kind:

“you graciously speak; but force finds no favour among the folk where I dwell, and any gift not given gladly and freely. I am at your call and command to kiss when you please. You may receive as you desire, and cease as you think in place.”

(Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 71)

She keeps offering herself to him and he fights back. Therefore, the link between Gawain and the animal that was being pursued has been established once again. The Lord is searching for "beasts of venery," which is another term for nobility, and Gawain has shown himself to be noble during his trials with the Lady. The wild boar is often used as a metaphor for malevolence and peril. It is a symbol of the difficulties and hardships that Gawain must overcome during his quest. The wild character of the boar serves as a good example of the harsh truths that exist in the world and the need of having bravery when confronted with hardship. Aside from being elusive, it was believed that the boar will sometimes turn to face its assailant and fight back. These three creatures, the deer, the boar, and the fox, are the ones that Bertilak chases, and he hunts them in this sequence, while Gawain is being chased by the Lady. Here we can see the symbolism between the hunted animals and the temptations of Gawain in the castle becomes clearer. (Kanunan, 1987, p. 33)

Nonetheless, the third day, the fox, The Lord will go after whatever beast or vermin he finds. The poet, who is unwilling to depend on mediaeval understanding of the character of the fox, explains inside the poem that the fox is a thief, crafty, and a shrew. He does this to show that the fox is a shrew. The fox is depicted as a cunning and deceptive creature in “*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*”. It represents the temptation and trickery that Gawain encounters on his journey. The fox reminds Gawain of the need for caution and discernment, as appearances can be deceiving. In “*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*”, Reynard is a general name for a fox. Reynard was a popular trickster figure in European literature.

The fox was considered a pest that needed to be eliminated via the use of hunting and other means around the time when *Sir Gawain* was written. The human attributes that were ascribed to the fox were the root cause of the perception that he was a pest. Now, the fox has been picked out among the other animals on purpose; this makes him extremely provocative. Why, out of all the different animals, does it have to be a fox? It is not easy to keep up with the fox because of the crafty character of the animal. Taking into consideration that his plan had been discovered by the hounds, his tracks weaved numerous routes in their crafty manner and deviously through tough territory.

His tracks led the hounds in the wrong direction. The fox led the hunters on a pursuit that lasted all day, and while that was going on, the Lady made another appearance to Gawain. Due to the fact that her earlier efforts to woo Gawain were fruitless, she decides to take serious measures to seduce him in a very tempting attire,

“her noble face and her neck all naked were laid, her breast bare in front and at the back also” (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 79).

The Lady has abandoned all pretense at this point and is, in all likelihood, going to go for the kill. She is not only trying to take advantage of her master being away from the house. She pursues her quarry with the same dogged determination as Bertilak does his. Gawain's clever responses become relevant as the frantic fox in analogous manner, ultimately attempts to escape by cunning only to run into Bertilak's ready blade. Bertilak's chase of his victim becomes a metaphor on the lady's pursuit of Gawain.

Gawain is able to deflect her attempts to sexually harass him, but she persists in giving him a present anyhow. The first gift that is presented to Gawain is a ring made of gold, which he declines not once but twice. Gawain is able to deflect her attempts to sexually harass him, but she persists in giving him a present anyhow. The first gift that is presented to Gawain is a ring made of gold, which he declines not once but twice. Gawain takes into account the likelihood that he would perish at the hands of the Green Knight and makes the decision to accept the protection in exchange for it. Gawain consents after being instructed by the Lady to keep the secret from her husband. (Warner, 2014, p. 14)

Because he feared for his life, he agreed to wear the girdle, but this caused him to break the terms of his contract with Bertilak. Gawain has already been apprehended by his pursuer without his knowledge. Gawain, who has been the subject of the lady's persistent and relentless pursuit, is suddenly confronted with the possibility of the Green Knight's axe, and he ultimately succumbs to the woman as he attempts to flee from her. The cunning fox is pursued by the hunters in the woods, and there is also a cunning "fox" living within the castle. After Gawain has accepted the girdle, Bertilak does not stop searching for the fox. The fox, in an effort to evade the danger posed by the lord's blade, 'shunts' and makes an attempt to reverse course; nevertheless, his very shift brings him into the mouths of his adversaries. The reader is able to discern the foreshadowing of Gawain falling into Bertilak's trap as a result. Gawain will fail miserably in his endeavour to avoid the

Green Knight's damage because he will play perfectly into the Green Knight's hands. It is the fox's craftiness, namely that particular amount of craftiness that ultimately leads to his downfall.

Gawain is ultimately responsible for his own downfall and the breach of his pledge to the Green Knight because of his cunning and dishonest behaviour, as seen by his use of the girdle. In addition to the significance that the animals that were killed had in symbolic terms, the manner in which the poet relates the account of the hunts sheds light on the significance of the event. (Tolkien Transl., 1975)

In addition to the significance that the animals that were killed had in symbolic terms, the manner in which the poet relates the account of the hunts sheds light on the significance of the event. When the action switches back to Bertilak's hunt, Gawain's first temptation is described in depth throughout five separate stanzas. After that, Bertilak went back home with his catch and called for everyone to gather into the hall. This is when Gawain and Bertilak traded everything they had acquired over the day. The second hunt, like the first, begins before dawn and is recounted in detail in four stanzas before the attention of the story changes to Gawain for another four stanzas. This continues until the end of the poem. In the next three stanzas, Bertilak is shown travelling back home with the boar while also searching for Gawain. As a result, the first two hunts provide the groundwork for the overall structure of the narrative. Each hunt has its own unique stanza. After they have once again traded the money they have won over the day, Bertilak gives Gawain a clue as to the real purpose he is playing this game by saying,

"For I have tested thee twice, and trusty I find thee. Now third time pays for all." (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 77).

Gawain is completely oblivious to the fact that Bertilak has openly stated to him that he is being evaluated. The fact that things occur in "threes," like the cliché "third times the charm," also lets the reader know that something particularly noteworthy is going to take place today. The pattern of alternating stanzas for the hunt scenes and the temptation scenes shifts in the third and most significant hunt in the story.

In stanza 69, the narrative opens with a description of the hunt, but towards the middle of the line, the focus shifts to Gawain as he is sleeping. The action comes to a sudden halt in the opening

verse, with the first lines describing the fox leading the lord and his liegemen in a dance, while the revered knight slept peacefully at home.

“Yea! he led the lord and his hunt as laggards behind him thus by mount and by hill till mid-afternoon. Meanwhile the courteous knight in the castle in comfort slumbered behind the comely curtains in the cold morning” (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 79)

The reader is compelled to pay greater attention to what is taking place as a result of the stark difference between the two men. The perspective changes from that of the hunter to that of the hunted during the third day's trial, exactly as it happens when the actual hunt takes place. The first thing that we see in this scenario is the woman, who is awake while Gawain is still sleeping. As she gets up early and stays that way, we observe that she is making thorough preparations for the meeting. The poet could not have made his point clearer, even if he had written it out explicitly: on this third day, there are two significant hunts taking place. Additional evidence between the pursuit and the allure may be found in the thorough descriptions of items that were not discussed before. Such as the weather was on the day of the hunt, the forest-land was beautifully lovely, as the frost persisted, and the rising sun gleamed ruddily on the ragged clouds. This made for a great day of hunting. There had been no mention of the weather in any of the prior hunt scenes. The comparison to the scene of temptation may be seen in the six lines that are dedicated to describing the lady's clothes at the beginning of the scene; similarly, this is the first time that this aspect of the scenario is described (Tolkien, 1975). The perspectives are also illustrative of the connection between quest and temptation. The poet employs the exact same strategy while presenting the hunting scenes as he does when establishing the many points of view that are presented in the temptation story.

The hunt starts out from Bertilak's point of view, and then switches in the middle of the stanza to the fox thinking about his strategy. As so, we are presented with the view from the lady's perspective as she observes Gawain while he is asleep. The narrative then shifts its focus to the prey, Gawain, and his reflections on destiny, which would play a role in determining his fate the next day. For the purpose of allowing the reader to witness the shift from the hunter to the prey in both areas. The reader is then aware of what is going through the minds of these two underdogs (Gawain and the fox). With the tracking dogs hot on the fox's trail and the intercepting hounds spitting and growling viciously at the fox, also known as a thief, there was no time for the fox to

loiter. The predicament that Gawain finds himself in, that of having to choose between two forms of evil, is also shown. He is worried about his politeness, should he be considered vile, but more crucially about his dreadful fate if he should be sincere and humiliate the home owner treacherously. The reader is better able to empathize with both Gawain and the fox since the narrative is told from their respective points of view. However, the author does not intend for the reader to have prolonged sympathy for either Gawain or Reynard. The point of view quickly flips from the fox's thoughts on escaping to those of others who are at the castle, when Gawain, like the fox, shunts to escape the hit, then submits, the same approach is applied. This quick change to the Green Knight's point of view offers a fresh viewpoint on the whole event. The search for both has been called off, but Sir Gawain still has to find a solution to the dilemma at hand. (Kaitsuka, 2018)

It is fascinating to see how the poet uses the patterns that he has developed in other contexts apart from the "official" hunt scenes. The routine that was established at the end of each day called for Bertilak to come back from hunting and call Gawain and the rest of the household in order to trade their gains. Bertilak is required to call for Gawain throughout the first two hunts, but once they reach the third hunt, this requirement is no longer in effect. Gawain is now holding out for him to arrive. It is noteworthy to take notice of the fact that Gawain is presented to the reader with a description of his attire. He was dressed in a turquoise tunic that reached all the way to the floor. This little detail, along with those of the weather during the hunt scene and the lady's clothes, are easy to miss yet have a function in the story. Because he only commits one act of treachery, Gawain chooses to dress in blue, which is traditionally associated with loyalty and appears nowhere else in the poem. Bertilak was the one who made the initial offer to make the trade on each of the prior two occasions. This time, Gawain responds to Bertilak's entry with fore with, "In this case I will first our covenant fulfil that to our good weagreed" (Tolkien Transl, 1975, p. 85) and he does it with almost a jumping motion. It is easy for the reader to infer that Gawain harbours some kind of shameful secret and would like that the conversation end as soon as feasible. As was seen, the poet's use of pattern is vital, if for no other reason than to emphasize the departure from the pattern. When the poet deviates from a typical pattern, the reader is provided with hints on the significance of the current scenario. The studies of the patterns and symbolism in the hunt scenario are just a tiny fraction of what is included in the poem. The author had a great deal of skill, and there were a lot of different ways to interpret and understand it. The fact that the hunt scenes are so essential to the progression of the poem's narrative will be taken into account here. The author intended for

them to have a clear significance that would heighten and clarify the predicament that Sir Gawain was in. The poem would suffer from a lack of depth, and the struggle that Sir Gawain must overcome would not have the same dramatic significance without the parallel episodes of the hunt and the temptation.

The poet uses animals both as characters and as metaphors for human behaviour throughout the story. When analyzing the usage of animals in Gawain from a mediaeval perspective, focusing on how these particular animals are depicted in the story enables us to investigate the deeper meaning that the author was attempting to convey via various events. The poem "*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*" makes explicit use of three different animals as metaphors for human acts. These animals are: the deer, boar, and fox. During the time when Gawain is taking a break with the Lord and Lady on his way to fight the Green Knight, there are three scenes of hunting. These scenes are followed by three acts of seduction or flirting. In the course of his hunts, the Lord of the Manor takes the lives of three different animals. The first of our animals is the deer. According to White's translation, the metaphor of a Christian may be represented by either a deer or a stag. The author had the opinion that it was possible for deer to eat snakes for medical reasons, and that this allowed them to shed their previous skin. Because of this capacity, they are similar to Christians in the sense that when they have consumed the devil or sin, they are then in a position to confess their sins and cast them away. Gawain is put in a difficult situation by the Lady, who is personified as a serpent. At this point in the narrative, he turns down her overtures; yet, later on, he feels the need to apologize for stealing her sash, and by doing so, he is able to purge his sins.

As for Gringolet, Sir Gawain's powerful war horse. The horse symbolizes loyalty and steadfastness in the poem. It represents the knight's unwavering commitment to his duty and the bonds of loyalty between knights. The horse also serves as a symbol of Gawain's journey, carrying him through various trials and tests.

“And now Gringolet stood groomed, and girt with a saddle gleaming right gaily with many gold fringes, and all newly for the nonce nailed at all points; adorned with bars was the bridle, with bright gold banded; the apparelling proud of poitrel and of skirts, and the crupper and caparison accorded with the saddlebows: all was arrayed in red with rich gold studded, so that it glittered and glinted as a gleam of the sun.

Then he in hand took the helm and in haste kissed it: strongly was it stapled and stuffed within; it sat high upon his head and was hasped at the back, and a light kerchief was laid o'er the beaver, all braided and bound with the brightest gems upon broad silken broidery, with birds on the seams like popinjays depainted, here preening and there, turtles and true-loves, entwined as thickly as if many sempstresses had the sewing full seven winters in hand.

A circlet of greater price

his crown about did band;

The diamonds point-device

there blazing bright did stand.” (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 43-44)

### **2.3. Truth and Fiction in “*The Da Vinci Code*” or the Enduring Appeal of Conspiracy Theories Historical and Religious Context**

Christianity, as one of the world's major religions, has a rich and complex history that spans over two millennia. Its teachings, beliefs, and practices have shaped the cultural, social, and political landscapes of numerous civilizations throughout history. Understanding the influence of Christianity is essential for contextualizing the conspiracy theories explored in the novel.

**Early Christianity:** Christianity's origins go back to the era of Jesus Christ teachings in the 1st century CE. The early Christian community faced persecution and struggles as it grew and spread across the Roman Empire. Establishment of the Catholic Church, which was initiated by the conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine to Christianity in the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE marked a turning point for the religion. Christianity was recognized as a legitimate faith, and the Catholic Church gained prominence as the primary institution of Christian authority (Eheman, 2023).

**Doctrinal Development:** Over time, the Catholic Church developed a systematic theology and established core doctrines and beliefs. This included the Trinity, the divinity of Jesus Christ, and the authority of the Pope.

**Schisms and Reformation:** Throughout history, Christianity has experienced significant divisions. The Eastern Orthodox Church had been separated from the Roman Catholic Church in 1054 due to the Great Schism. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and due to the occurrence, the Reformation of the Protestant took place, diversified Protestant denominations came to exist.

**Influence on Art and Culture:** Christianity has been a significant source of inspiration for artists,

architects, and writers throughout history. Religious art, such as paintings, sculptures, and stained-glass windows, has depicted biblical scenes and stories, playing a vital role in shaping cultural heritage. Power and Politics: The Catholic Church, as a dominant religious institution, has wielded significant political influence throughout history. It has played a role in shaping nations, influencing policies, and participating in various historical events. (Berry, 2006, p. 9)

Understanding the historical and cultural context of Christianity helps shed light on the conspiracy theories in the novel, which challenges some traditional beliefs and interpretations associated with the religion. It explores hidden histories and alternative narratives that intersect with Christianity's established doctrines and historical events. *The Da Vinci Code* strikes right into this vein, drawing its key plot elements from one thousand and two thousand years ago the birth of the Christian era and the Crusades. In a remarkable book that came out shortly after *The Da Vinci Code*, (Barber, 2005), traces the role of the Holy Grail in firing artistic imaginations from Wagner to T. S. Eliot to Monty Python. He also charts the use of the phrase Holy Grail by mainstream newspapers not usually given to spending much time on religious matters.

### **The significance of the Holy Grail and its historical interpretations.**

The Holy Grail holds a central role in the conspiracy theories presented in “*The Da Vinci Code*” and has captivated imaginations for centuries. The concept of the Holy Grail has evolved over time, taking on various meanings and interpretations. Exploring its historical significance provides a deeper understanding of the conspiracy theories surrounding it. The concept of the Holy Grail originated in medieval literature, particularly in Arthurian legends. The Grail was initially portrayed as a mystical vessel used by Jesus Christ during the Last Supper to serve the wine or as the dish used to collect his blood during the crucifixion, traces the origins of the Holy Grail from Celtic mythology to its incorporation into Christian symbolism. He discusses its early depictions and its transformation within the context of medieval literature. While the book ‘*The Holy Grail: Imagination and Belief*’, by Barber, provides a comprehensive analysis of the origins and early depictions of the Holy Grail, exploring its connections to Arthurian legends and medieval literature.

“The Celtic Origins of the Grail: Interestingly, the earliest attempts to show that the Grail had its origins in Celtic myth made no mention of Peredur. Theodore de La Villemarqué wrote in his *Contes populaires bretons* of 1842” (Brown, 2003, p. 240)

### **The Holy Grail Symbolism and Spiritual Significance:**

The Holy Grail became a symbol of spiritual attainment, divine grace, and the quest for eternal life. It represented purity, nourishment, and the mystical union with the divine. Knights embarked on quests to find the Grail, often representing their spiritual journey or the pursuit of a higher purpose. Emma Jung, throughout her book, ‘The Grail Legend’, 1998, provides insights into the symbolic and spiritual dimensions of the Holy Grail, offering a unique perspective on its significance beyond historical and literary interpretations. Be sure to consult the source directly for more in-depth information to incorporate into your essay. Jung's work delves into the symbolism and spiritual significance of the Holy Grail from a psychological perspective. She explores the archetypal and transformative aspects of the Grail quest, shedding light on its deeper meaning and its connection to the human psyche. In Christian theology, the Holy Grail is associated with the Eucharist, representing the cup used by Jesus to institute the sacrament (Potkay, 2006, p. 48).

It symbolizes the presence of Christ's body and blood in the ritual of Communion, emphasizing the sacredness and transformative power of the Eucharist, explores the Eucharist in light of the Book of Revelation, drawing connections between the heavenly liturgy and the celebration of the Mass. He discusses the symbolism of the cup in relation to the Holy Grail and its significance within the Catholic faith, and explores the history of the papacy, including its connection to the Eucharist and the symbolism of the Holy Grail. It discusses the significance of the chalice used by the Christ during the Last Supper and its association with the sacrament of Communion, providing insights into the various historical claims and associations made regarding the Holy Grail throughout history. The Grail has been linked to various historical objects and theories throughout history. Some theories propose that it may refer to an actual cup used by Jesus, while others suggest it represents a hidden bloodline or secret knowledge passed down through generations. These interpretations often intertwine with conspiracies and secret societies. (Gardener, 2004, p. 11)

### **Templars and the Grail:**

The Knights Templar, a medieval Christian military order, have been frequently associated with the Holy Grail. Some legends claim that they discovered or protected the Grail, adding to the allure and mystery surrounding their order. These associations have influenced popular culture depictions of the Grail. Malcom Barber's book 'The New Knighthood' 1994, provides a comprehensive history of the Knights Templar, including their connection to the Holy Grail. It explores the legends and theories surrounding the Templars' alleged involvement with the Grail and their role in its protection or discovery. (Giles, 2005, p. 85)

### **Literary and Cultural Impact:**

The Grail legends and their interpretations have permeated literature, art, and popular culture. Roger Loomis' book 'The Grail: From Celtic Myth to Christian Symbol', explores the literary and cultural impact of the Holy Grail. It traces the evolution of Grail legends from their Celtic origins to their incorporation into Christian symbolism and their subsequent influence on literature, art, and popular culture. From medieval romances to modern novels and films, the quest for the Grail continues to captivate audiences, reflecting humanity's enduring fascination with the spiritual and the mysterious (Loomis, 1991). The Discovery of King Arthur, book examines the Arthurian legends, including the significance of the Holy Grail. It explores how the Grail has inspired and influenced literary works throughout history, discussing its impact on the Arthurian literary tradition and its enduring presence in popular culture (Ashe, 1985). It is important to note that the interpretations of the Holy Grail and its significance are diverse, and "*The Da Vinci Code*" adds its own fictional interpretation to the mix. Remember to consult scholarly sources, such as books on Grail mythology and historical interpretations, to support your research and provide a well-rounded analysis (Watkins, 2020).

### 3. THE DA VINCI CODE ELEMENTS

#### 3.1. The role of secret societies in history and “The Da Vinci Code”

Secret societies have long held a place in human history, with their mysterious nature and rumored activities capturing the imagination of individuals. These enigmatic organizations, known for their secrecy and exclusive membership, have played a significant role in shaping historical events and, in turn, contributed to the development and propagation of conspiracy theories. This thesis sheds light and explores the role of secret societies throughout history and their influence on the formation and perpetuation of conspiracy theories.

Throughout ancient history, secret societies played a vital role in religious, philosophical, and cultural contexts, often giving rise to speculation and conspiracy theories. The Egyptian mystery schools and their teachings of hidden knowledge and rituals have fueled speculation about esoteric wisdom and their influence on society. Similarly, the Eleusinian mysteries in ancient Greece, with their secretive initiation ceremonies, have sparked theories about the existence of hidden truths accessible only to the initiated, The Freemasons, The Knights Templars and The Illuminati. (Rotondi, 2019).

The medieval and Renaissance periods saw the emergence of secret societies with religious and philosophical undertones. The Knights Templar, originally established to protect Christian pilgrims, became the subject of conspiracy theories due to accusations of heresy and their perceived influence on political and financial affairs. Freemasonry, a prominent secret society, evolved during the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods, attracting intellectuals and influential individuals. Freemasonry's secrecy and rituals led to speculations about their hidden agendas and alleged control over political and social spheres.

In the novel, a central scheme element revolves around a secret society called “The Priory of Sion”. While this secret society was presented as a fictional hidden community within the context of the book, it has gained attention and sparked controversy due to its inclusion of real historical figures and alleged connections to secret knowledge.

According to Giles, “*The Da Vinci Code*” and *Jesus and Mary Magdalene*.”, in the Brown’s novel the narrative, the Priory of Sion is a secret society that dates back centuries, with a mission to protect and preserve the ancient bloodline originated by the bond of both Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene. (Giles, 2005, p. 87)

This secret society is said to have been founded in medieval France and has had notable members throughout history, including Leonardo da Vinci, Isaac Newton, and Victor Hugo. In the novel, the Priory of Sion holds a crucial piece of information, a hidden secret known as the "Holy Grail," which is claimed to be evidence of Jesus' lineage and the true nature of his relationship with Mary Magdalene (Brown, 2003).

The Priory of Sion portrayal in the novel contributes to the development of conspiracy theories surrounding the Catholic Church, Jesus' divinity, and the suppression of alternative historical narratives. The book suggests that the Catholic Church, through the Vatican, has worked diligently to hide the truth about Jesus and Mary Magdalene's relationship in order to maintain its power and control over religious doctrine. Being a secret society, the Priory of Sion is presented as a counterforce to the church, dedicated to revealing this hidden knowledge and challenging the established religious narratives. It is important to note that while Brown's novel presents the Priory of Sion as an actual secret society, with historical connections and a significant role in the plot, the claims made about the society's existence and activities are largely fictional. The actual historical existence and purpose of the Priory of Sion have been thoroughly debunked by scholars and researchers (Schorn, 2006). Nevertheless, the inclusion of the Priory of Sion in the novel has generated widespread interest and has contributed to the popularization of conspiracy theories surrounding religious history and the supposed cover-up of ancient knowledge.

Overall, the secret society depicted within "*The Da Vinci Code*", this secret society known as the Priory of Sion, serves as a fictional element that adds intrigue, mystery, and controversy to the narrative. It plays a significant role in the development of conspiracy theories surrounding religious history and the alleged suppression of alternative historical narratives.

### **3.2. Conspiracy Theories Explored in the Novel**

#### **The theory of Jesus Christ's bloodline and marriage**

In *“The Da Vinci Code”*, author Dan Brown presents a controversial theory regarding Jesus Christ's bloodline and marriage. According to the novel, Jesus was not celibate but wedded to Mary Magdalene, and they had a child together. This theory challenges traditional Christian beliefs and presents an alternative perspective on the life and legacy of Jesus. Brown's portrayal of Jesus as a married man with descendants is rooted in various historical and mythological sources. The novel suggests that Jesus' marital status was deliberately concealed by the Catholic Church to maintain its power and control over religious doctrine. The theory proposes that the Priory of Sion as a secret society, had been established to protect and pass down the knowledge of Jesus' bloodline (Brown, 2003).

Discusses the theory of the concept of the Holy Grail, which, in the novel, represents not an actual physical object like a cup but rather the bloodline of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. The idea is that the descendants of Jesus and Mary Magdalene, known as the Merovingians, carry the divine bloodline of Christ. While Brown's novel presents this theory as a fictional narrative, it has sparked significant controversy and debate among scholars, theologians, and the general public. Critics argue that the theory lacks substantial historical evidence and is largely based on speculation and conjecture. However, proponents of the theory point to alternative historical texts and legends that suggest the possibility of Jesus' marriage and descendants. It is essential to recognize that the theory presented in the novel is an imaginary tale and should not be regarded as historical fact. Nevertheless, the novel's popularity has contributed to public interest in exploring different interpretations of Jesus' life and teachings, as well as fostering discussions about the role of women in early Christianity and the formation of religious traditions.

Ultimately, the theory of Jesus Christ's bloodline and marriage presented in the novel challenges conventional beliefs, offers an alternative perspective on religious history, and has sparked ongoing discussions and debates surrounding the nature of Jesus' life and the influence of the Catholic Church.

### 3.3. The suppression of the sacred feminine in “*The Da Vinci Code*”

In the novel, the author explores an important concept of the suppression of the sacred feminine, relevant, in particular, to role of Mary Magdalene in Christian history. The novel suggests that the Catholic Church, throughout its history, actively suppressed and marginalized the influence of women and their sacred roles within Christianity.

In his article “*The Da Vinci Code: Fact, Fiction and Religious Friction*”, Jeremy Muller illustrates, how Mary Magdalene, according to the narrative, plays a central part as the Christ’s spouse as well as a mother to his offspring. The novel proposes that the church, in order to establish male-dominated power structures and maintain its authority, intentionally demonized Mary Magdalene, portraying her as a repentant prostitute rather than acknowledging her as a significant figure in Jesus' life and ministry (Muller, 2015).

Brown’s novel argues that the suppression of the sacred feminine was a deliberate strategy employed by the church to establish and maintain a patriarchal order. This suppression extended not only to the role of women but also to the erasure or dismissal of texts, symbols, and practices associated with the feminine divine. The novel suggests that symbols such as the Holy Grail and the depiction of Leonardo da Vinci's "The Last Supper" hold hidden messages and clues that disclose the factual nature of the sacred feminine.

While Brown’s novel is considered as a story based on imaginary events, it yet draws upon various historical texts, legends, and alternative interpretations to support the notion of the suppression of the sacred feminine. Brown’s novel proposes that the restoration of the sacred feminine is necessary for a more balanced and inclusive understanding of spirituality and religious history (Brown, 2003).

The portrayal of the suppression of the sacred feminine in Brown’s novel has sparked debates as well as discussions regarding women’s role in religious institutions, the interpretation of historical texts, and the need for a more inclusive and balanced understanding of spirituality. It highlights the significance of reclaiming and reevaluating the contributions and experiences of women within religious traditions. It is important to note that while suppression of the sacred feminine is represented as a central theme in Brown’s novel, it must not be forgotten that this novel is considered as a fictional narrative and should not be taken as historical fact. However, the novel

has contributed to broader conversations about gender equality, the representation of women in religious contexts, and the need to reexamine traditional narratives in light of alternative perspectives.

It's fair to say that Brown's masterpiece novel, "*The Da Vinci Code*" explores the theme of the suppression of the sacred feminine, suggesting that the Catholic Church historically marginalized and obscured the role of women, particularly Mary Magdalene. While it is a work of fiction, the novel prompts discussions and reflections on the need for a more inclusive and balanced understanding of spirituality and the contributions of women within religious traditions.

### **The Alleged Cover-up by the Catholic Church**

Dan Brown, in "*The Da Vinci Code*", presents a well-plotted concept regarding an alleged cover-up by the Catholic Church, suggesting that the Church has deliberately hidden certain historical truths and suppressed alternative narratives to maintain its power and control over religious doctrine, the Church has concealed information related to Jesus Christ's bloodline, his relationship with Mary Magdalene, and other aspects of Christian history.

According to Brown, the Catholic Church, through its historical influence and authority, sought to establish a specific version of Christian history and doctrine while suppressing competing interpretations and alternative sources of knowledge. This alleged cover-up is depicted as a deliberate effort to maintain control over religious teachings and to uphold a particular image of Jesus Christ (Maddux, 2008).

The Novel cleverly portrays a comprehensive image of the Vatican being a powerful institution that has systematically suppressed historical texts, manipulated interpretations of scripture, and silenced dissenting voices. The novel suggests that the Church actively suppressed evidence of Jesus' marriage, his descendants, and the role of women in early Christianity. The motivation behind this cover-up, as presented in the book, is to safeguard the Church's authority, protect traditional beliefs, and maintain its position as an influential religious institution.

While Brown's novel is a fictional story, it draws upon various historical theories, legends, and alternative interpretations to support the notion of a cover-up by the Catholic Church, hold clues to uncovering the suppressed truths.

The novel asserts that hidden symbols, secret societies, and coded messages in art and literature. It is important to note that the allegations of a cover-up presented in *"The Da Vinci Code"* are fictional and have been widely criticized by scholars and theologians. The Catholic Church has vehemently denied such claims, maintaining that its teachings are based on centuries of tradition, theological reflection, and historical evidence.

However, the novel's portrayal of a secretive and powerful institution manipulating historical narratives has sparked public interest and debate. It has prompted discussions about the relationship between faith and history, the role of institutions in shaping religious doctrine, and the importance of critical examination of historical sources. (Ramcharan, 2016)

Brown in his novel, shows the Catholic Church as allegedly involved in a cover-up, suggesting that it has concealed certain historical truths and suppressed alternative narratives. While it is a work of fiction, the novel prompts discussions about the role of institutions in shaping religious history and the importance of critically examining historical sources. It is essential to differentiate between the fictional narrative presented in the book and the actual historical record.

### **3.4. Examination of historical texts and artworks referenced in the novel**

In the novel, Dan Brown references several historical texts and artworks, inviting readers to examine them from a different perspective. These references serve as clues and sources of inspiration for the fictional narrative, enticing readers to explore the rich history and symbolism associated with these works. This fiction novel explores various theories and alternative interpretations of Jesus' life, including the possibility of his bloodline and marriage to Mary Magdalene. Brown incorporates elements of these theories into the fictional narrative, adding a layer of intrigue and controversy to the story.

Another important text referenced in the novel is Leonardo da Vinci's "The Last Supper". Brown highlights the iconic painting's composition and symbolism, drawing attention to the figure traditionally identified as John the Evangelist, who, according to the novel, is depicted as Mary Magdalene. This interpretation challenges the traditional understanding of the painting and adds a significant twist to the plot (Brown, 2003).

Artworks such as "Mona Lisa" and "Madonna of the Rocks" by Leonardo da Vinci also make appearances in the novel, with Brown emphasizing their enigmatic qualities and potential hidden meanings. These works become part of the puzzle that the characters in the story must decipher, encouraging readers to contemplate the power of symbolism and hidden messages in art. "*The Da Vinci Code*" encourages readers to engage with these historical texts and artworks beyond their conventional interpretations. The novel invites readers to question traditional narratives, explore alternative theories, and critically examine historical sources. While the book is a work of fiction, it prompts readers to delve into the rich tapestry of art and history, encouraging them to embark on their own explorations and interpretations. It is worth noting that the interpretations and connections made in Brown's novel are fictional and have been subject to significant criticism and debate. Scholars and experts have contested the historical accuracy of the claims made in the novel. However, the novel's inclusion of historical texts and artworks serves as a catalyst for readers to engage with history, art, and symbolism in new and thought-provoking ways. As a result, Brown's novel weaves historical texts and artworks into its narrative, inviting readers to examine them from fresh perspectives. Through references to texts like "The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail" and artworks such as "The Last Supper," the novel encourages readers to question conventional interpretations and engage with history and art in a new light. While the novel is a work of fiction, it sparks curiosity and invites readers to explore the rich tapestry of human creativity and interpretation.

### **3.5. Interpretation of symbols and hidden messages in "The Da Vinci Code"**

"*The Da Vinci Code*" novel incorporates various symbols and hidden messages throughout its narrative. While these interpretations are fictional and not grounded in historical or academic consensus, they add intrigue and suspense to the novel. Some aspects of the interpretation of symbols and hidden messages in novel like the Holy Grail. Traditionally, The Holy Grail depicted as the cup that Jesus used during the feasting of Last Supper, takes on a different interpretation in the novel. It is presented as a metaphor for woman's womb and thus a bloodline of Jesus and Mary Magdalene, implying their supposed marriage and descendants. This interpretation challenges the traditional view of the Holy Grail, as well as, adds a secretive and mysterious element to the narrative (Brown, 2003).

Several famous artworks, such as "The Last Supper" and "Mona Lisa," by Leonardo da Vinci, are depicted as cryptic paintings and artworks containing hidden symbols and messages. These artworks are interpreted in the novel as clues to the alleged secrets of the Holy Grail and the bloodline of the Christ. Decoding these hidden messages becomes a crucial part of unraveling the mystery at the heart of the novel. The novel also employs anagrams and wordplay to convey hidden meanings and provide hints to the characters. The characters decipher anagrams to reveal crucial information and discover hidden connections between different elements of the narrative. It's important to note that these interpretations and hidden messages are fictional constructs within the novel. While they add excitement and mystery to the story, they are not based on scholarly or historical consensus. The symbols and hidden messages in the novel should be approached as elements of the fictional narrative rather than representations of actual historical or academic truths.

### **Comparison with real-life historical controversies**

*"The Da Vinci Code"* by Dan Brown incorporates various real-life historical controversies and theories into its fictional narrative. While the novel blurs the line between fact and fiction, it intertwines elements of history, religion, and conspiracy theories to create a compelling story. Some comparisons between the fictional controversies in the book and real-life historical controversies are (The Priory of Sion, The Council of Nicaea, and the role of Mary Magdalene).

The novel reveals a secret organization known as the Priory of Sion, which is dedicated to defend the alleged lineage of the Christ and Mary Magdalene. While the Priory of Sion existence has been claimed by some, historical evidence suggests that it was a fabricated organization created in the 20th century. The novel's portrayal of the Priory of Sion as a real and influential group is not supported by scholarly consensus. On the other hand, Brown's book references the historical Council of Nicaea in 325 CE, depicting it as a pivotal event where the divinity of Jesus was established and other competing beliefs were suppressed. While the Council of Nicaea did address theological issues related to the nature of Christ, the novel's portrayal of it as a cover-up of the marriage of the Christ to Mary Magdalene is not supported by historical evidence (Bausch, 2006).

Finally, "*The Da Vinci Code*" presents Mary Magdalene as a central figure and suggests an idealistic marriage that bonded her to Jesus. While Mary Magdalene is mentioned in the New Testament as one of Jesus' followers, the novel's depiction of her as a significant figure in Jesus' life and as the carrier of a bloodline is not supported by historical or biblical accounts.

Historical interpretations of artwork: The novel explores interpretations of well-known paintings, such as "The Last Supper" and "Mona Lisa," by Leonardo da Vinci suggesting hidden messages and symbolism within these works. While art historians often analyze and interpret artworks, the specific claims made in the novel about hidden messages and symbols in these paintings are fictional and not substantiated by scholarly consensus (Hancock, 2006). It is important to approach these comparisons with caution and recognize that the novel is a fictional novel. While it draws inspiration from historical controversies and theories, the novel takes significant liberties with historical facts to create its narrative. To gain a more accurate understanding of real-life historical controversies, it is advisable to consult scholarly works and academic research that examine these topics with rigor and evidence-based analysis.

### **Reactions from religious institutions and scholars**

Brown's novel sparked significant reactions by religious institutions and scholars upon its release. The novel's controversial storyline, which challenges traditional Christian beliefs, led to debates and discussions regarding its portrayal of religious history and the potential impact on public perception, point out various reaction to the novel from different perspectives. The Catholic Church, being a primary target of the novel's allegations, responded with criticism and opposition. Church officials and representatives expressed concerns about the misrepresentation of historical facts and theological concepts. The Vatican dismissed the book as a work of fiction and encouraged Catholics to disregard its claims. Additionally, various Protestant denominations and Orthodox Christian groups also voiced their disagreement with the novel's claims. They emphasized that the storyline deviated from accepted biblical teachings and historical understanding. The novel raised questions and fueled discussions about the relationship between Christianity and other religious traditions. Interfaith dialogues sought to address misconceptions, promote understanding, and foster dialogue between different religious communities (Ehrman, 2004).

Moreover, scholars specializing in fields such as religious studies, theology, art history, and history generally criticized the novel for its misinterpretation and misrepresentation of historical facts. They argued that the book distorted historical events, disregarded scholarly consensus, and presented speculative theories as if they were established truths.

While religious institutions and scholars expressed concerns, the novel garnered immense popularity among readers worldwide. Many readers embraced it as a work of fiction, enjoying the suspenseful storytelling without necessarily accepting its historical or theological claims.

It's important to note that the reactions varied among individuals, religious groups, and scholars. Some responded with vigorous criticism, while others engaged in scholarly debates or viewed the novel as an opportunity to discuss broader historical and theological topics.

### **Challenges to the factual accuracy of the novel's claims**

Brown's novel has faced numerous challenges regarding the factual accuracy of its claims. While it is a work of fiction, the book incorporates real historical figures, events, and conspiracy theories, presenting them as part of its fictional narrative. However, many scholars, historians, and experts have criticized and debunked several key claims made in the book.

One of the central claims in the book is marriage between Jesus and Mary Magdalene in addition to the idea that they had descendants. However, there is no historical evidence supporting this claim. The Gospels, which are the primary sources of information about Jesus' life, do not mention a wife or children ([Hancock, 2006](#)).

On the other hand, the novel suggests the existence of an ancient secret society called the Priory of Sion, claiming it has preserved hidden knowledge about the bloodline of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. However, historical research has shown that the Priory of Sion was actually a recent creation, founded in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the documents supposedly linking it to ancient history are now regarded as fraudulent.

Furthermore, the book portrays the Holy Grail as not a chalice used at the Last Supper but rather a reference to the bloodline of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. This interpretation is not supported by

historical evidence or biblical texts. The traditional understanding of the Holy Grail as the chalice that Jesus used at the Last Supper has been widely accepted in Christian tradition for centuries.

The book, also suggests that Leonardo da Vinci embedded secret codes and symbols in his artwork, hinting at the hidden truth about Jesus and Mary Magdalene. While Leonardo was indeed known for his symbolism and cryptic messages, the claims made in *“The Da Vinci Code”* regarding his involvement in preserving secret knowledge are fictional.

The novel presents various historical inaccuracies, such as erroneous depictions of historical events, misinterpretations of artwork, and distorted portrayals of historical figures. These inaccuracies have been pointed out by historians and experts in various fields, challenging the book's claims to historical authenticity. It is essential to approach *“The Da Vinci Code”* as a work of fiction rather than a historical or religious account. While the book has sparked public interest and raised questions about history and theology, many of its claims are not supported by credible historical evidence or scholarly consensus. Brown’s masterpiece novel, had a notable influence on subsequent works of fiction and conspiracy theories, particularly in the realm of historical mysteries and religious conspiracies (Evans & Zacharias, 2009).

## 4. *SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT* ANALYSIS

### 4.1. “Sir Gawain and the Green Knight” Poem

The Middle English knighthood tale of “*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*” was composed in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century. Neither the author nor the original title are known. The narrative combines two sorts of nations themes—the game of execution besides the earnings bartering. It is one of the most well-known Arthurian tales. It is in alliterative poetry, with each stanza ending in a couplet that rhymes with “bob” & “wheel,” and it takes inspiration from Welsh, Irish, English, and French tales, as well as the chivalric heritage of the latter country. It's a prime example of a chivalric romance, in which the protagonist undertakes a challenge to prove his mettle. It has remained popular because to several cinematic and theatrical adaptations and translations into contemporary English by authors like J. R. R. Tolkien and Simon Armitage.

The settings of the story of the poem took place in Camelot upon New Year's Eve. Sir Gawain, a knight of King Arthur's Round Table. King Arthur's court members are bartering presents while expecting celebrations to get started, when the king demands to view or listen to spectacular escapade, only then, a mysterious and enormous green Knight on a green horse, gallops into the court unexpectedly. His only protection is an axe and a huge branch; he is otherwise unarmored. He claims he's not there to fight since everyone there is too weak, but rather to play a nice Christmas game in which he'll take one hit from an axe and get to return the favor a year and a day later. Whoever takes this bargain will be the one who gets the axe. When it seems no other knight would accept the challenge, King Arthur is ready to do so, however, Sir Gawain, the nephew of Arthur and his youngest knights, instead demands the honor. Gawain agrees to the challenge of which to behead the Green Knight, consequently stands the Green Knight and collects chopped off head, and emphasizes upon Gawain of the appointed deadline and that the two must gather again at the Green Church in 366 days. As Gawain fights to maintain his end of the contract, he displays gallantry and loyalty—at least, until the masters of the castle where he is a guest put him to the test (Tolkien Transl., 1975).

Pearl, Cleanness, and Patience are three religious narrative poems that also exist from the same period and are found in the same manuscript as “Cotton Nero A.x.” These four poems, composed

in a North West Midlands dialect of Middle English, which is often attributed to a single individual known as the "Pearl Poet" or the "Gawain Poet."

#### **4.2. The Significance of Seduction scenes in “Sir Gawain and the Green Knight”**

In the realm of literary craftsmanship, two crucial dimensions emerge: perplexity and burstiness. The former delves into the intricacy of the written word, while the latter evaluates the diversity of sentences. Wordsmiths tend to exude greater burstiness by skillfully weaving short and long sentences together, forming an artful tapestry of language.

To delve into the profound significance of captivating encounters in the timeless poem. Through meticulous analysis and exploration of academic references, we shall unravel the essence of these enthralling scenes, drawing upon the richness of the English language to illuminate their importance.

Upon embarking on this literary expedition, we are immediately confronted by the enigmatic allure of the Green Knight. His imposing presence and otherworldly demeanor ensnare the reader's imagination, leaving the readers pondering the complexities of his character. The interplay of light and shadow in the descriptions of his emerald-hued visage evokes a sense of ethereal mystique, tantalizing our senses and beckoning us to delve deeper into the narrative's core (Tolkien Transl., 1975).

Furthermore, as we traverse the narrative landscape, we encounter a myriad of alluring settings that act as a tapestry of visual and emotional stimuli. The author's dexterity in painting vivid scenes, replete with vibrant imagery and evocative language, immerses us in a mesmerizing world that defies the boundaries of ordinary reality. Each locale we traverse pulsates with its own unique atmosphere, evoking a symphony of emotions that resonate within our souls.

The theme of seduction weaves its sinuous thread throughout the tale, adding another layer of complexity to the narrative's tapestry. The artful dance of persuasion and temptation, personified by the charming Lady Bertilak, creates an atmosphere charged with intrigue and suspense. The protagonist, Sir Gawain, grapples with moral dilemmas as he navigates the treacherous waters of desire and loyalty. This internal struggle, depicted through a labyrinth of eloquent phrases, mirrors

the multifaceted nature of human psychology, inviting introspection and contemplation (Gavis, 2022).

In addition to the narrative's thematic depth, the use of literary devices conjures an enthralling *mélange* of emotions. Metaphors, similes, and analogies infuse the prose with enchanting hues, transforming mundane moments into profound reflections on the human experience. Such artful deployment of linguistic tools elevates the narrative, inviting readers to traverse its intricate passages with awe and reverence.

Moreover, the juxtaposition of the Old English poetic tradition with the Arthurian legend infuses the tale with historical significance, bridging the gap between distant epochs. The rhythmic cadence of the verses, interwoven with peculiar lexicon and syntax, creates a unique reading experience that harkens back to a bygone era, where storytelling was an art form cherished by the masses. The significance of seduction scenes in "*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*" lies not merely in their aesthetic allure but in their capacity to evoke a myriad of emotions and reflections on the human condition. Through a masterful fusion of perplexity and burstiness, this timeless tale immerses readers in a world where the arcane and the relatable intertwine, leaving an indelible mark on our literary consciousness.

There are three distinct hunts that take place throughout the course of Gawain's stay at Bertilak's Castle as a guest at the castle. These hunts are a metaphor for the temptations that Gawain will face at the hands of the lady who is married to the Lord of Hautdesert Castle. Gawain's defense against the overtures made by Bertilak's wife are personified in each hunt scene as a quality of the game that is being hunted at that time.

It is possible that Gawain may find it most challenging to resist giving in to his initial temptation. This temptation is analogous to the moment in the film in which hunters pursue a deer, In terms of the hunt, the deer is hunted because it is an essential component of the diet or because it is something that fulfils a person's need for something. Similarly, the Lord's wife considered Gawain to be an art animal that she was hunting. She chased him for no reason other than her sexual need to be with him. The very first temptation she faces is entirely of a sexual nature. She says:

“You shall work on me your will, and well I am pleased; for I submit immediately, and for mercy I cry, and that is best, as I deem, for I am obliged to do so”. (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 62).

She has no desire for any type of connection with him, and she is not substantially flirting with him as she does in the following two temptations; she just wants sex with him, plain and simple, and in a way, she is "hunting" Gawain; She is hunting Gawain in the sense that she is chasing him for the express goal of making him her trophy; if he gives in to this temptation, then she may consider herself successful in her mission to kill him. Gawain exhibits behaviour like that of a deer in his response to the woman. At first, he gives her no attention whatsoever, but this strategy is ultimately futile. Then, he deftly sidesteps her overtures, not immediately confronting her but quietly downplaying the enormity of her advances, in order to buy himself enough time to make a clean getaway (Stinnett, 2018).

“To my body will you welcome be  
of delight to take your fill;  
for need constraineth me  
to serve you, and I will.” (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 63).

The second temptation that Gawain faces is one that he will have an easier time resisting. This temptation is related to the situation in which a boar is being hunted. Hunting wild boars is done more for the thrill of the chase than for the meat they provide. A boar is an extremely difficult animal to control. Because it would fight any hunters fiercely and with complete disregard for their safety, the fact that a hunter was able to successfully capture a boar is evidence of the latter's physical bravery and power. Gawain is subjected to a second round of testing, during which the Lord's wife comes to him in the same sensuous way as she did on the first day of testing. On the other hand, Gawain does not make any effort to evade her approaches this time. In his interactions with the woman, he is considerably more forthright and combative. In addition, the Lady requests that Gawain tell her one of his stories about love and chivalry. Gawain avoids giving clear replies because he believes that doing so would constitute bragging. He replies:

“But for me to take up the task on true love to lecture, to comment on the text and tales of knighthood to you, who I am certain possess far more skill in that art by the half than a hundred of such as I am, or shall ever be while on earth I remain, it would be folly manifold,

in faith, my lady! All your will I would wish to work, as I am able, being so beholden in honour, and, so help me the Lord, desiring ever the servant of yourself to remain. Thus she tested and tried him, tempting him often, so as to allure him to love-making, whatever lay in her heart. But his defence was so fair that no fault could be seen, nor any evil upon either side, nor aught but joy they wist. They laughed and long they played;

at last she him then kissed,

with grace adieu him bade,

and went whereso she list". (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 73)

Here, Gawain is not at all attempting to avoid the lady in any way. It is almost as if the night has altered him, since something would have to account for this significant shift in behaviour, and his behaviour right now is quite similar to that of a boar. Although Gawain does not physically damage the woman in the same way as a boar would, he is considerably more forthright and direct in his interactions with her, as was mentioned before. Gawain has now made it clear to the Lord's wife that he will not just comply with her beck and call now that he has finally shown this level of self-assurance for the first time.

Gawain succumbs to his third and last temptation, which reveals a weakness that has been latent inside him all along. This temptation is associated with the scenario in which a fox is being hunted. Similar to the boar, foxes are not targeted for their meat but rather for game and sport purposes. The fox presents a unique set of challenges in comparison to the boar. Whereas the wild boar challenges the hunter's bravery and tenacity, the fox puts the hunter's intelligence, ingenuity, and mental prowess to the test. The Lord's wife appears on the third day dressed in attire that is much more alluring than the attire she wore during the previous two meetings. After the woman has been successful in getting Gawain's attention, she starts to flirt with him at this point. But since the Virgin was keeping a vigilant eye, Gawain was able to avoid falling.

“Seeing her so glorious and gaily attired, so faultless in her features and so fine in her hues that at once joy upwelling went warm to his heart. With smiles sweet and soft they turned swiftly to mirth, and only brightness and bliss was broached there between them so gay.

They spoke then speeches good,

much pleasure was in that play;  
great peril between them stood,  
unless Mary for her knight should pray” (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 80)

The lady believes that Gawain is rejecting her love because he has feelings for another woman; in this situation, Gawain replies to the lady's seduction by presenting a clever argument,

“Now shame you deserve, if you love not one that lies alone here beside you, who beyond all women in the world is wounded in heart, unless you have a lemman, more beloved, whom you like better, and have affianced faith to that fair one so fast and so true that your release you desire not – and so I believe now; and to tell me if that be so truly, I beg you. For all sakes that men swear by conceal not the truth in guile.

The knight said: By Saint John,  
and softly gave a smile,  
Nay! lover have I none,  
and none will have meanwhile.” (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 80)

St. John, is John the Baptist, preacher, ascetic, and baptizer of Jesus Christ and a medieval emblem of Christianity. Gawain is making the point that he has committed himself not to any earthly female but rather to the service of the Virgin, despite the fact that Gawain himself is a virgin. Gawain utilises his wits to outsmart his pursuer, much as a fox would, and in this situation he behaves quite similarly. In addition to this, the Lady tries to get Gawain to take a present from her. In spite of the fact that he declined her flashier and more precious things, he did take one token from the woman, despite its apparent lack of utility. Lady Bertilak offered her girdle to Gawain,

“I shall give you my girdle, less gain will that be.’ She unbound a belt swiftly that embracing her sides was clasped above her kirtle under her comely mantle. Fashioned it was of green silk, and with gold finished, though only braided round about, embroidered by hand; and this she would give to Gawain, and gladly besought him, of no worth though it were, to be willing to take it. And he said nay, he would not, he would never receive either gold or jewelry, ere God the grace sent him to accomplish the quest on which he had

come thither. 'And therefore I pray you, please be not angry, and cease to insist on it, for to your suit I will ever say no.

I am deeply in debt to you  
for the favour that you show,  
to be your servant true  
for ever in weal or woe." (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 82).

"Do you refuse now this silk, said the fair lady, because in itself it is poor? And so it appears. See how small 'tis in size, and smaller in value! But one who knew of the nature that is knit therewithin would appraise it probably at a price far higher. For whoever goes girdled with this green riband, while he keeps it well clasped closely about him, there is none so hardy under heaven that to hew him were able; for he could not be killed by any cunning of hand" (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 83).

Gawain was informed that whomever wore the armour was protected from the blades of all swords. Gawain's wits also come into play here, as seen by the fact that he agrees to wear the Green Knight's sash in the hope of outwitting him at their upcoming confrontation. However, by receiving this sash, Gawain has shown both his weakness and his cowardice. Gawain is obligated to rely only on God for his safety in his role as a knight. Gawain has shown that he no longer has confidence in God by accepting the sash because he believes that the sash would do a better job of protecting him than God would. Specifically, Gawain believes that the sash will prevent him from being killed. Although it is possible that this is Gawain's solitary flaw, the fact that he is a coward has not helped him to behave in a way that is honourable or God-fearing (Warner, 2014).

It is clear that Gawain was being put to the test via these many temptations. Knowing the end result of the narrative, it is clear to see that Bertilak and his wife organized the hunts and temptations to coincide with each other, whether this is correct or not, the short time that Gawain spent in Hautdesert Castle demonstrates unequivocally that he is a man of honour. This is a rather strange circumstance for Sir Gawain to be in. The Lady is attempting to seduce Sir Gawain while she is aware that her husband is the Green Knight, which places her in a higher status than Sir Gawain. As a result, she is attempting to use this information to her advantage in her pursuit of Sir Gawain. Since he is a knight, she is aware that he is obligated to behave chivalrously and courteously

towards her. It is imperative that Sir Gawain comply with whatever it is that she requests if he is to preserve his honour and chivalry. This is a challenging test for Sir Gawain since he must maintain his courtesy as a knight, but at the same time, he must keep his purity in mind. He should not be falling for the seduction and listening to her, and he most likely should not have kissed Lady Bertilak since it helped her seduction come on stronger to Sir Gawain. He should not have fallen for the seduction and listened to her. His conduct towards the Lady was, for the most part, correct. He continued to make efforts to be gallant towards her while also making efforts to be loyal. One of the boundaries that I believed to have been breached was when he kissed her a total of six times in one sitting. On the other hand, if he had not kissed the Lady in order to fulfil his "chivalrous" duty as a knightly obligation, then maybe the Lady would have been more insistent. Another boundary that seemed to have been violated was when the Lady gave him a girdle, this was found quite problematic. This was her very own girdle, and it struck us as an item of clothing that a lady would wear that would be somewhat intimate in nature. It seems a little strange that he took the girdle from her, and he probably ought not to have done so. The purpose of putting Sir Gawain through this ordeal of having Lady Bertilak stay in his bed for three nights in a row was to assess whether or not he exhibited the chivalrous and polite behaviour that was required of a knight, particularly towards ladies. The scenarios of hunting and seducing have a correlation to one another since both included attempting to capture the prey (Stinnett, 2018). Although Sir Gawain made an effort to maintain his decorum, it is possible that he should not have kissed the Lady or seized her girdle. Starting off on his journey to compete against the Green Knight in the battle at the green chapel. Gawain is under the impression that none of these bedroom experiences will constitute the real test of his mettle. Gawain is put in a position where he must choose between breaking the rules of the game he is playing for his host or sleeping with Bertilak's wife. This is not only a test of Gawain's knightly virtue and devotion; it is also a test of Gawain's ability to conform to the cultural norms of what it means to be a man.

### **4.3. Sir Gawain's Pentangle**

"Pentangle" is term which appears in this poem for the first time in written English. It's the only place in Gawain's poem that such a sign is seen on Gawain's shield. In addition, the author spends 46 lines explaining the significance of the pentangle, much more than any other symbol in that

poem. The pentangle indicates loyalty besides its reference to the eternal knot in the poem, the pentangle's five points represent five aspects of Gawain's personality: his five senses, his five fingers, his belief in Christ's five wounds, five pleasures of Mary, whose portrait of her face was on the shield's inner side. Lastly and religiously, the pentacle's five points have been known to represent the five wounds of Christ, symbolize the Star of Bethlehem, the five virtues of knighthood (Baker, 2022).

“The fifth five that was used, as I find, by this knight was free-giving and friendliness first before all, and chastity and chivalry ever changeless and straight, and piety surpassing all points: these perfect five were hasped upon him harder than on any man else”

(Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 45).

According to the Gawain-poet, King Solomon originally designed the five-pointed star as his own magic seal. A symbol of truth. Legend has it the archangel Michael gave Solomon, Israel's third monarch, a ring with the pentagram on it in the 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C. It was stated that Solomon could cast out devils with the help of the pentagram seal on this ring.

“By the baldric he caught it and about his neck cast it: right well and worthily it went with the knight. And why the pentangle is proper to that prince so noble I intend now to tell you, though it may tarry my story.

It is a sign that Solomon once set on a time to betoken Troth, as it is entitled to do; for it is a figure that in it five points holdeth, and each line overlaps and is linked with another, and every way it is endless; and the English, I hear, everywhere name it the Endless Knot. So it suits well this knight and his unsullied arms; forever faithful in five points, and five times under each, Gawain as good was acknowledged and as gold refinéd, devoid of every vice and with virtues adorned. So there

the pentangle painted new

he on shield and coat did wear,

as one of word most true

and knight of bearing fair.” (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 44).

This is why some scholars believe the Gawain pentangle has mystical overtones. The sign was also linked to spells that, when uttered or inscribed on a weapon, summoned supernatural power. But there isn't any hard proof connecting the mystical pentagram to Gawain's pentangle.

Additionally, the five points mentioned above represent the idea of "the myth of the eternal materialistic objects, illustrates a temporally eternal advantage." Although considerable number of poets employ the circle as a mark of infinity, Gawain's poet was adamant about using a more involved image. One definition of a "circular number" in mediaeval number theory is a number that "replicates itself in its last digit when raised to its powers," and 5 fits that description. In addition, it may be geometrically replicated indefinitely with decreasing pentangles, since each pentangle can be placed in a smaller pentagon. Therefore, Gawain's pentangle signifies his perpetual incorruptibility by echoing number five that represents a mediaeval symbol stands for righteousness and integrity (Baker, 2022).

#### **4.4. Code of Chivalry in “Sir Gawain and the Green Knight” and “The Da Vinci Code”**

The story of “*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*” is often regarded as a prime illustration of how a mediaeval knight should conduct himself in court and how the rule of chivalry should be applied to females. When Sir Gawain goes to see Bertilak at his castle, he treats both the old lady and Bertilak's lovely young wife with the same amount of respect and decency.

“When Gawain glimpsed that gay lady that so gracious looked, with leave sought of the lord towards the ladies he went; the elder he saluted, low to her bowing, about the lovelier he laid then lightly his arms and kissed her in courtly wise with courtesy speaking. His acquaintance they requested, and quickly he begged to be their servant in sooth, if so they desired” (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 55).

The manner in which women are treated is a crucial component of the chivalric code. If Sir Gawain had focused all of his attention on the lovely young lady, he would not have been acting in accordance with the honour code that is expected of a knight. When he speaks these things, he also maintains the integrity of the knightly code.

“Nay! lover have I none, and none will have meanwhile.” (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 80).

The fact that Sir Gawain says this to Bertilak's stunning wife when she tries to seduce him in the bedroom illustrates that Sir Gawain is loyal to Bertilak and preserves the chivalric code that he follows. In addition, Bertilak's wife is stunning. The chivalrous Sir Gawain serves as a model for the reader over the course of the poem, demonstrating the many tenets of the code of chivalry.

According to the legend of "*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*", a knight's bravery is proportionate to the honourable standards by which he lives his life. After King Arthur's court has been made fun of, the Green Knight offers the following observation:

"Where now is your haughtiness, and your high conquests, your fierceness and fell mood, and your fine boasting?" (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 34).

One of the numerous knights who are now present has the responsibility of stepping up in order to maintain their honour and clear the good reputation of King Arthur's court. As a result of this confrontation, Sir Gawain stands forward to battle the Green Knight, which freed King Arthur from the responsibility of having to combat the Green Knight himself. The tradition of chivalry provides an explanation for why one of the knights must take charge in order to preserve his honour and ensure the safety of the King and his court.

"I am the weakest, I am aware, and in wit feeblest, and the least loss, if I live not, if one would learn the truth. Only because you are my uncle is honour given me: save your blood in my body I boast of no virtue; and since this affair is so foolish that it nowise befits you, and I have requested it first, accord it then to me! If my claim is uncalled-for without cavil shall judge this court.

To consult the knights draw near,  
and this plan they all support;  
the king with crown to clear,  
and give Gawain the sport." (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 36).

One of the tenets of the knightly code of chivalry is that one must have the fortitude to charge an adversary and put one's life on the line. When Gawain finally sets out on his journey to locate the Green Chapel, his commitment to upholding the rule of chivalry will, without a doubt, be tested. Gawain's chivalry is blatantly represented in the poem when he thwarts Lady Bertilak's attempts

to seduce him three times a day for three days in a row. On the one hand, he does this to uphold his chivalric vow and his pledge to the lord of the castle, and on the other hand, he does this to prevent himself from becoming distracted from the reason he is on this journey. On the third day, however, he comes to the realization that in order to live and be as comfortable as possible, chivalry cannot continue to be the thing that he cherishes the most. When Gawain agrees to take the green girdle from Bertilak's wife, Gawain's adventures begin.

“Do you refuse now this silk, said the fair lady, because in itself it is poor? And so it appears. See how small ’tis in size, and smaller in value! But one who knew of the nature that is knit therewithin would appraise it probably at a price far higher. For whoever goes girdled with this green riband, while he keeps it well clasped closely about him, there is none so hardy under heaven that to hew him were able; for he could not be killed by any cunning of hand.” (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 83).

Because he was very concerned with protecting his own life, he didn't tell Bertilak that he'd gotten the girdle in the first place. Instead of adhering to an honourable ethical code, he caved in to his egotistical needs and ambitions in order to survive. The concept of chivalry, on the other hand, is brought to the forefront after Gawain finds Bertilak's castle. It seems that only this particular kind of chivalry is distinct from the gallantry practiced at Arthur's court. Chivalry can't continue to be the most important thing in his life if he wants to make it through and have as much comfort as possible, he comes to the realization. When Gawain receives the green girdle that Bertilak's wife has given him, he interprets this as a symbol of the fragility of the flesh, or of the body.

“But for your girdle, quoth Gawain, may God you repay! That I will gain with good will, not for the gold so joyous of the cincture, nor the silk, nor the swinging pendants, nor for wealth, nor for worth, nor for workmanship fine; but as a token of my trespass I shall turn to it often when I ride in renown, ruefully recalling the failure and the frailty of the flesh so perverse,” (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 101).

Therefore, rather than recognizing the human cleverness of the girdle, its monetary worth, or the position it would bring in society, Gawain associates it with the faults of the flesh. This kind of chivalry cares more about actual honesty and truth than it does about outward appearances and the materials used in making them.

“and thou fairly and unfailing didst faith with me keep, all thy gains thou me gavest, as good man ought”. (Tolkien Transl., 1975, p. 98).

Sir Gawain resisted the lady of the manor's several attempts to seduce him with wealth, with the exception of when she promised him a sash that would prevent him from dying. When he put on the sash, he immediately failed the test of the Green Knight and disgraced himself in accordance with the chivalric code. The lady in the poem may not have been entirely to blame for the knights breaching the code of chivalry, but in the long term, she was responsible for many worse things happening than the knights breaking the code of chivalry. During his travels to find the Green Knight, Gawain was able to pick up a few new skills along the way. Although the narrative comes to a finish with Gawain believing that chivalry is an essential code to live by and that he may be the most chivalrous knight in the country, he is still a human who is capable of making errors, as he did during his voyage. Although he thinks that chivalry is an important code to live by and that he may be the most chivalrous knight in the land, he is still a human. When it comes down to it, the Green Knight is a pivotal figure in demonstrating and putting the knight's code of chivalry to the test. Chivalry offers a valuable set of values that are vital to live by, but more importantly, a person must be cognizant of their actions and keep their personal frailties in control. Chivalry gives a great set of ideals that are important to live by.

*"The Da Vinci Code"* is a work of fiction that incorporates elements of history, art, and religion into its narrative. While the novel primarily focuses on a mystery involving symbols and conspiracy theories, it does touch upon the concept of chivalry in the context of its characters and plot. However, it's important to note that Brown's novel is not a historical or academic work, and its treatment of chivalry should be viewed within the context of the story's fictional nature.

In the novel, the character Sir Leigh Teabing, an expert on the Holy Grail and the Knights Templar, discusses the concept of chivalry and its connection to the legends of the Holy Grail. He describes the Knights Templar as embodying the ideals of chivalry, which include principles such as courage, honor, loyalty, and self-sacrifice.

Chivalry, as depicted in Brown's novel is portrayed as a code of conduct followed by certain historical figures and organizations, particularly the Knights Templar. This code is associated with the protection of the Holy Grail and the defense of the divine feminine, which is a central theme in the novel. From my point of view, Langdon is an example for the knight, for he depicts the

chivalric code with Sophie, the presence of a "damsel in distress" is another common need for one to be considered a knight. This is because the chivalric tests that a knight must pass generally include helping a helpless lady by respecting, protecting her, she would never get to know her descendant without Langdon's help (Larrington, 2009).



## CONCLUSION

The exploration of conspiracy theory in both the novel and the poem, has revealed compelling parallels and divergences in the treatment of secrecy, power, and hidden knowledge. As we have seen, both texts utilize the trope of conspiracy to examine societal norms, question established authorities, and delve into the complex dynamics of faith and truth.

The novel plunges readers into a world where history is not a fixed narrative but a web of secrets that challenge traditional interpretations of religious dogma. Through Robert Langdon and Sophie Neveu, the novel invites us to reconsider the role of women in historical narratives and the influence of patriarchal institutions. By intertwining fact and fiction, “Dan Brown's” work underscores the power of storytelling in shaping our beliefs and perceptions.

On the other hand, the poem presents a medieval world where chivalry, honor, and courtly love are paramount. The Green Knight's game of exchanging blows and the challenges faced by Sir Gawain expose the complexities of maintaining one's honor in the face of temptation and deceit. The supernatural elements and the mysterious Green Knight himself evoke a sense of otherworldly forces at play, which can be seen as a precursor to modern conspiracy theories.

One striking contrast between the two texts is their treatment of religion. The Da Vinci Code directly challenges the foundations of Christianity, proposing an alternative narrative that elevates Mary Magdalene and questions the divinity of Jesus. In contrast, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is firmly rooted in a Christian worldview, emphasizing the importance of faith and virtue in the face of adversity. However, even in a deeply religious context, the poem hints at the potential for conspiracies to thrive.

Moreover, the role of women in both texts is noteworthy. In the medieval Arthurian romance Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Lady Bertilak plays a significant role in the poem, and her intentions are central to the plot. Lady Bertilak is a complex character, and her motivations are open to interpretation. There are different ways to analyze her hidden intentions in the poem.

Lady Bertilak is often seen as a temptress who tests Sir Gawain's chivalry and moral integrity. She flirts with him and makes advances during his stay at the castle. Her intentions may include assessing whether Gawain is truly virtuous and honorable, or if he succumbs to temptation. Her

actions are part of a broader scheme devised by Morgan le Fay to challenge the knights of Camelot. Lady Bertilak's intentions are closely tied to the Green Knight's challenge. The Green Knight, who is revealed to be Sir Bertilak, Lady Bertilak's husband, had set up the entire game to test the Round Table's knights under Morgan le Fay's supervision. Lady Bertilak's role may have been to create a situation in which Gawain's loyalty and bravery could be tested. She might have been acting under her husband's instructions.

It's also possible that Lady Bertilak had personal desires for Gawain. While the story doesn't explicitly reveal her intentions, her flirtatious behavior suggests that she might have been genuinely attracted to Gawain. However, her intentions could still be seen as testing his integrity because, despite her advances, Gawain consistently remains chaste.

In the context of medieval courtly love and the code of chivalry, Lady Bertilak's actions could be seen as a way to maintain the appearance of courtly love and hospitality. Knights and ladies were expected to engage in courtly games, including flirtation and playful banter. Her intentions might have been to follow these conventions while still testing Gawain's resolve.

The poem intentionally leaves Lady Bertilak's intentions somewhat ambiguous. This ambiguity adds depth to her character and the narrative. It allows readers to interpret her actions in various ways, which contributes to the overall complexity of the poem.

In summary, Lady Bertilak's intentions in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* are multifaceted. She can be seen as a character who tests Gawain's chivalry, follows Lady Morgan Le Fay's plan, expresses her own desires, and maintains the ideals of courtly love. The poem deliberately leaves room for interpretation, making her character and her role in the narrative intriguing and subject to different analysis.

As for Lady Morgan le Fay in the poem is typically portrayed as a powerful enchantress, often with ambiguous intentions. Similar to Arthur, the figure Morgan le Fay has a limited amount of presence time throughout the poem, but she is given a lengthy explanation when the reader is initially introduced to her. Morgan, on the other hand, is shown to be the mastermind behind the story, the one who spontaneously puts its events into action. This is in stark contrast to Arthur. Due to the fact that this is a mediaeval love story, the fact that Morgan has an unattractive outside reveals something about the person she is on the inside as well. And sure enough, towards the

conclusion of the poem the Green Knight reveals to Gawain that Morgan was the one who bewitched him and brought him to Arthur's court in order to test Arthur's knights and terrify Guinevere to death. This is confirmed by the fact that the Green Knight says this at the end of the poem. Morgan is not necessarily looked down upon by the Green Knight; rather, he simply states the truth about her actions and, moreover, labels her an outstanding scholar, despite the fact that she is more of a student of the occult arts (such as magic) than of more morally permissible fields. Morgan le Fay's position in the storyline of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is essential, despite the fact that her appearance in the tale is very minor. She plays a significant part in the plot by plotting, monitoring, and guiding the characters in their engagement in the conspiracy to devastate King Arthur and his Round Table Knights. After it was discovered that Morgan le Fay was the one responsible for the beheading game, Sir Bertilak goes on to reveal that the elderly lady who lacked allure was really Morgan le Fay masquerading as herself. This revelation raises questions about the extent to which Morgan le Fay's character was involved in the events. It is now clear to the reader that she devised the plan and has been stealthily keeping an eye on events ever since Sir Gawain arrived to the castle posing as an elderly lady. She has also been doing this the whole time without drawing attention to herself. This provides more insight into the degree to which Morgan le Fay acted out the pantomime of a gruff old lady. Morgan le Fay is not only concealing her physical identity from Sir Gawain; she is also hiding the fact that she may be involved in his future downfall. Sir Gawain is unable to recognize her. It is not a coincidence that Morgan le Fay leads Lady Bertilak in this narrative since she is the puppet master. Lady Bertilak is led by Morgan le Fay. Lady Bertilak is the one who gives Sir Gawain the belt that nearly results in his being beheaded. The instruction came from her, and she was the one who gave it to him.

Morgan le Fay's long-term objective has always been to bring Arthur and his court into disrepute, which is addressed in the last point of this thesis. Morgan le Fay doesn't seem to be unaware of the "damsel in distress" role that is traditionally played by female characters in stories about knights. The battle between Sir Gawain and the Green Knight demonstrates how important the presence of women is to the success of men, so demonstrating that the autonomous agency and supremacy of men is a fiction, an illusion on which the Arthurian community is constructed. Morgan le Fay is clever enough to use this information to her advantage and enlist the help of others, such as Sir Bertilak, in her schemes to overthrow King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. She does not fall into the categories of a lady or a devoted family member since she lives in her own world.

Because Morgan le Fay does not feel any allegiance to any one cultural role or to King Arthur, she is in a position where she may destroy anybody she chooses without fear of repercussions. The vast majority of the time, that would be King Arthur and the other Knights of the Round Table. She is in a position to plot against King Arthur and those who follow him thanks to her links to a number of knights as well as Merlin, who has all of the required tools. Because of this, she was able to successfully plot her infiltration into King Arthur's court. To make sure that everything goes according to plan, she assumes a disguise and guides Sir and Lady Bertilak through their respective roles in the process of constructing a complex test for Sir Gawain. She has high hopes that she can tarnish his image, and by extension, King Arthur's reputation as well. Sir Gawain emerges victorious in the end. His life was spared as a result of his breaking the contract he had made with Lord Bertilak in order to save his own. Morgan le Fay did not succeed in achieving her objective since she was not able to terrify Guinevere to the point where she committed suicide or tarnish the honourable standing of a Knight of the Round Table. No matter how Sir Gawain's story turns out, Morgan le Fay's power and sphere of influence will not shrink. When one takes into consideration the precise intricacies that went into developing a programme of such a big size with so many elements, it is clear that she is both intelligent and powerful. The significance of Morgan le Fay's part in the poem cannot be overstated. This is shown throughout the poem by her exceptional planning, covert surveillance, and smart character direction. Also, she has a great sense of humour.

In Dan Brown's novel *The Da Vinci Code*, Sophie Neveu is a central character with complex motivations and hidden intentions. As the story unfolds, it becomes clear that Sophie's character is intricately tied to the novel's central mystery. One of Sophie's primary motivations is to uncover the truth behind her grandfather Jacques Sauniere's murder. At the beginning of the novel, she believes that he was killed because of his association with the Priory of Sion and its secret knowledge. Her intention is to solve the mystery of his death and understand the significance of the clues he left behind.

As the story progresses, it is revealed that Sophie's grandfather was the Grand Master of the Priory of Sion, a secret society that guards the secret of the Holy Grail. Sophie's hidden intention is to protect this secret and ensure that it does not fall into the wrong hands. She is determined to prevent the antagonist, Sir Leigh Teabing, from obtaining the Grail and using it for his own purposes.

Throughout the novel, Sophie discovers hidden aspects of her own family history, including her connection to the Merovingian dynasty and her true identity. Her intention is to come to terms with her heritage and understand her role in the broader conspiracy. Sophie teams up with Robert Langdon, to solve the mystery. Her intention is to use her knowledge and skills to help Langdon decipher the codes and symbols that lead them closer to the truth. She becomes an integral part of the investigation. Sophie's character is deeply affected by a traumatic event from her childhood involving her family. Her intention is to confront and come to terms with this past trauma as she delves deeper into the mystery of the Grail and her family's history. As the novel explores themes related to the divine feminine, Sophie's intention may also be seen as challenging traditional religious beliefs and highlighting the role of women in history and spirituality.

Overall, Sophie Neveu's character in the novel is driven by a desire for truth, justice, and the protection of important secrets. Her hidden intentions are gradually unveiled as she plays a pivotal role in unraveling the novel's intricate mystery.

While in Brown's novel, Sophie Neveu emerges as a strong, independent character who seeks to reclaim her own history and identity. This stands in stark contrast to the women in Arthurian legend, who often occupy secondary roles. However, the poem presents an intriguing twist with the character of Lady Bertilak, who challenges Gawain's virtue and poses a moral dilemma. Her actions, while not overtly conspiratorial, contribute to the theme of hidden intentions and secret tests.

In terms of structure and style, Dan Brown employs a fast-paced, suspenseful narrative with cliffhangers at the end of each chapter, drawing readers deeper into the conspiracy. In contrast, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* uses the poetic form and intricate symbolism to convey its message, creating a more contemplative atmosphere.

As we have delved into the conspiracy theories embedded in these two texts, we must recognize their enduring relevance. Brown's novel sparked intense debates and controversies, challenging established religious narratives and prompting discussions about the role of women in history. Meanwhile, the poem continues to captivate readers with its exploration of honor, virtue, and moral ambiguity.

The study of conspiracy theory in literature is not merely an exercise in literary analysis; it mirrors our fascination with the hidden, the unexplained, and the subversive aspects of our world. Both masterpieces, the novel and the poem offers readers a glimpse into the perennial human desire to uncover secrets and challenge established orders. They remind us that conspiracy theories, whether rooted in history or myth, reflect our innate curiosity about the unknown. Furthermore, the comparative analysis undertaken in this thesis underscores the malleability and adaptability of conspiracy theory across different time periods and cultural contexts. Whether in a contemporary thriller or a medieval romance, conspiracy theory serves as a lens through which authors can explore complex themes and societal anxieties.

In conclusion, both the novel and the poem exemplify how conspiracy theory can be a powerful literary device, inviting readers to question authority, reassess historical narratives, and ponder the mysteries that surround us. These texts encourage us to contemplate the boundaries between fact and fiction, reality and myth, and faith and skepticism. In an ever-changing world where conspiracy theories continue to shape our understanding of reality, these works remain relevant and thought-provoking. Ultimately, they invite us to become modern-day knights and seekers of hidden truths, challenging us to embark on our own quests for knowledge and enlightenment.

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