

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents background of research, statement of problem, objective of research, significance of research and definition of key terms.

### 1.1 Background

The substance of the work is delivered by many ways to the reader. It is arranged by the author in any kinds, one of them is symbols. There are symbols in anywhere and any place, whether it is clear or abstract, we realize or not. The word symbol derives from the Greek verb *symbollein*, to throw together and its noun *symbolon*, "mark," or "sign." It is an object, animate or inanimate, that stands for or points to a reality beyond itself (X.J. Kennedy, 1983: 147). Then, Wellek and Warren (1956: 186) states that symbols are images that have a meaning beyond themselves. So, symbol can be an object or picture that have a meaning or it points to something that has a meaning.

The Holy Grail is the Christian myth that mostly talked in the Europe. There are many novels and plays talking about the Holy Grail. The Holy Grail in the Bible, is the cup used by Jesus Christ at the Last Supper is little more than a prop, given no

particular prominence. But over the centuries, the fate of this now legendary vessel, the so-called Holy Grail, has come to haunt stories ranging from Arthurian legend to *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (Richard, 2014). So, nowadays the Holy Grail is become a legend. Miesel (2004) said that the myth of Holy Grail were supposedly brought into Europe by two waves of Scythian-derived barbarian invaders in Roman times: the Sarmatians who were sent to Britain in the second century and the Alans who settled in Brittany and Provence in the fifth century. Their old stories could have mingled with historical incidents such as the looting of precious church vessels, supposedly including plunder from the Jewish Temple, taken during the sack of Rome in 410. Littleton and Malcor see the latter event as the origin of the Grail procession.

The literary impact of Grail legends continued into the 20th century. "The Wasteland" by T. S. Eliot (1925) uses that Grail as a metaphor for the modern world. Charles Williams depicts a contemporary conflict between Good and Evil involving the Grail in his novel *War in Heaven* (1930), while his poetry cycles *Taliessin through Logres* (1938) and *The Region of the Summer Stars* (1944) are metaphysical retellings of Arthurian romance. *Nova* by Samuel R. Delany (1968) combines the Grail with Melville's white whale and makes it a science-fiction power source. The wasteland is Hollywood in *Lancelot* by Walker Percy (1978), but Las Vegas plays that role in *Last*

*Call* by Tim Powers (1992). Moles seek a Grail-like white stone in William Horwood's talking beast tale, *Duncton Wood* (1980) (Miesel, 2004).

In *The Da Vinci Code* novel, there are so many symbols. The novel is one of the most popular novels of Dan Brown besides *The Lost Symbol*, *Angels and Demons*, and *Digital Fortress*. *The Da Vinci Code* published in the year of 2003 and it gets very good response from the readers. In this novel, the characters, Langdon and Sophie, have to solve many codes and symbols, such as pentagram, Fibonacci, pentacle, Holy Grail, cryptex, Virtuvian Man, etc. One of the symbols that interesting the writer to be analyzed is Holy Grail, because that symbol is very vital in the novel itself. Although the other symbols in the novel have its own unique and important meaning to the story, the Holy Grail symbol is like unites these symbols.

In the novel, the Holy Grail is discussed by Langdon and Sophie, and there are many interpretations about it. The Holy Grail is mostly related to the picture of Jesus Christ's Last Supper. This symbol becomes the mystery and it is very important as it is the main symbol in the story. Many people think that the Holy Grail is the cup or vessel, but the further meaning is not like that, the Holy Grail further meaning can open the mind of Christians. It also giving the truth that has been kept and been hidden for a long time. The place of the real Holy Grail is located under the Inverted Pyramid at the Louvre Museum area. This symbol also related to other things and symbols, such as the story of Leonardo Da Vinci, rose symbol, Marie Magdalena, etc.

The same previous research about this study is reflected in other researcher such as *The Symbol of V in Larry and Andy Wachowsky' V for Vendetta* by HendraCandraGuptha (2012), that analyze the symbol of V in movie script *V for Vendetta*. This research objective is to know the denotation and connotation of each symbol V. In this research, the researcher found that symbol V for Vendetta means ambition for beating down leader's dictatorship, and other interpretation of V is about myth which appears in *V for Vendetta* is about Nazi. Other research, *Symbol of Evil in William Golding's Novel Lord of the Flies* by ShandiRakhmatGinanjari (2008), which analyze the category of the symbol of evil in the novel through a process that is constructed by the relevant theory. He found that the symbol of evil represents an evil side of order, democracy, authority, civilization. Then, as symbol of evil's character represents an evil side of human like anarchy, sadistic, and an evil-like physical condition. The third, the beast, as symbol evil's spirit represents the influencing evil spirit of terror, fear, panic, hysteria of human. And then, *An Analysis of Symbols in Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter: Study of Semiotics* by GhazaliGani (2005), which analyzes the symbol and its meaning that used in the novel and the relationship between Hawthorne and the symbols and among the symbols themselves. He found that Nathaniel Hawthorne uses symbol as many as with Robert's opinion. He uses letter, place, action, person, concepts, etc to explain the plot of story. Seeing

the previous studies above about symbol, thus this present research will explore the Holy Grail symbol in the novel.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

Based on background above, the writer found some problems to be analyzed. The main problem of this research is the meaning of Holy Grail symbol that has many interpretations in the *Da Vinci Code* novel. Therefore, the writer makes and proposes some research questions as follows:

1. How is the Holy Grail interpreted by Langdon and Sophie in Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*?
2. How does the Holy Grail symbol effect to the storyline of Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*?

## **1.3 Research Objective**

The objectives of this research are;

1. To find out how the Holy Grail's interpretation in the novel.
2. To find out how the Holy Grail symbol affect the storyline of this novel.

#### 1.4 Research Significance

Academically, this research is directed to students whose studies in English Literature Departement to be references about research in the same problem. Practically, this research is directed to the literary society and other people as a whole who want to understands and explore the novel's content and who are interested add knowledge about symbol on semiotics.

#### 1.5 Definition of Key Terms

- a. *Symbol* is something concrete that stands for something else. Symbol can be anything like person, picture, sound, that has a hidden meaning and it has to be explored more to know the meaning.
- b. *Holy Grail* can be seen in the painting of Jesus Christ's Last Supper. In Christian mythology, the Holy Grail is the dish, plate, cup or vessel that caught Jesus' blood during his crucifixion.
- c. *The Last Supper* is the moment of the Holy Grail's arrival. In this supper, Jesus Christ will announce that one of his disciples would betray him. This moment also is painted by Leonardo Da Vinci and become one of his famous arts.
- d. *Priory of Sion* is a secret society that installing a secret bloodline of the Merovingian dynasty.

e. *Fibonacci* is a series of whole numbers in which each number is the sum of the two preceding numbers. It begins with 0 and 1, the sequence of Fibonacci numbers would be 0,1,1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, etc. The Fibonacci numbers were originally defined by the Italian mathematician Fibonacci, also known as Leonardo da Pisa, in the 13th century to model the growth of rabbit populations.

