

**THE ANALYSIS OF SYMBOLIC DETAILS IN DAN BROWN'S
ANGELS AND DEMONS**

**DEN BRAUNNING "FARISHTALAR VA IBLISLAR" ASARIDA
RAMZIY DETALLARNING TAHLILI**

**АНАЛИЗ СИМВОЛИЧЕСКИХ ДЕТАЛЕЙ В РОМАНЕ ДЭНА
БРАУНА "АНГЕЛЫ И ДЕМОНЫ"**

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Abstract: *This research studies intertextual relation of symbols from Angels and Demons by American writer D. Brown. When examining the paradoxical conflicts between science and religious faith in the novel, the traditional four elements (water, earth, fire, air) and the segno symbols hold significant importance. These elements serve not only as symbolic tools reflecting the philosophical perspectives of the characters but also as historical markers used by the Illuminati to orchestrate ritual killings.*

Keywords: *postmodernism, intertextuality, paradox, symbol, ambigram*

Annotatsiya: *Ushbu tadqiqot amerika yozuvchisi D. Braun tomonidan yozilgan Farishtalar va Iblislar asaridagi ramzlarning intertekstual aloqasini o'rganadi. Romanda ilm-fan va diniy e'tiqod o'rtasidagi paradoksal ziddiyatlarni o'rganishda an'anaviy to'rt element (suv, yer, olov, havo) va segno ramzlari muhim o'rinni egallaydi. Bu elementlar nafaqat qahramonlarning falsafiy qarashlarini aks ettiruvchi ramziy vositalar sifatida, balki illuminatilar tomonidan ritual qotilliklarni tashkil qilishda ishlatilgan tarixiy belgilar sifatida ham xizmat qiladi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *postmodernizm, intertekstuallik, paradoks, ramz, ambigramma*

Аннотация: *В представленном исследовании анализируются интертекстуальные взаимосвязи символики в произведении Дэна Брауна "Ангелы и демоны". При исследовании парадоксальных противоречий между наукой и религиозной верой в романе традиционные четыре элемента (вода, земля, огонь, воздух) и символы segno занимают важное место. Эти элементы служат не*

только символическими инструментами, отражающими философские взгляды персонажей, но и историческими маркерами, используемыми иллюминатами для организации ритуальных убийств.

Ключевые слова: *Постмодернизм, интертекстуальность, парадокс, символ, амбиграмма*

Introduction

Postmodern writers include the French author Philippe Sollers (1936); the Italian representative of neorealism Italo Calvino (1923–1985); the writer and medievalist scholar Umberto Eco (1932); American postmodern writers such as John Simmons Barth (1930) and Donald Barthelme (1931); Thomas Pynchon (1937), a recipient of the Faulkner Award (1963); the Serbian poet and translator Milorad Pavić (1929); and the Czech author Milan Kundera (1929). In their work, we observe manifestations of syncretism. These include discussions and reflections on philosophical, psychological, and cultural issues; the use of clichéd expressions and formulaic phrases in a playful manner; the exposure of artistic techniques; the writer becoming a critic of their own text and its possible interpretations; the blurring of boundaries between literary and supposedly “intellectual” letters or epistles; and other similar elements—all of which are distinctive principles of the synthesis-based postmodernist style. Postmodern literature contains of intertextuality, magic realism, metafiction, symbolism features in terms of varying from modernism literature. As modernism rely on perfectness of shapes and figures in art it has this feature in literature as well. Intertextuality in postmodernism refers to the intricate web of references, symbols, and meanings that connect texts to one another, undermining the idea of a text as an isolated or self-contained entity. In this context, symbols are rarely fixed or singular in meaning; instead, they are constantly reinterpreted through their relationships with other texts and cultural codes. Postmodernism views every text as part of a broader “intertextual net,” where meaning is generated not in isolation but through the interplay with prior and contemporary works. Intertextuality in postmodernism is not limited to literature but extends to visual arts, film, music, and advertising, where symbols are recycled, parodied, or recontextualized. In postmodernism, the reader plays a crucial role in recognizing and interpreting intertextual symbols, as meaning is not dictated solely by the author but emerges from the reader's engagement with the network of references. Intertextuality is a significant concept in both theoretical and practical literary studies. Scholars like Genette, Barthes, Kristeva, Derrida, and others have explored its theoretical dimensions, while critics such as Bratosevich, Broich, and Johnson have applied it in practice. As a multi-dimensional textual category, intertextuality plays a key role in addressing current literary criticism challenges and enables a comprehensive understanding of an author’s unique style. Graham (2003, 81) argues that intertextuality undermines conventional views of meaning, rejecting the idea that meaning stems from either a fixed signifier-signified relationship or an author as an all-knowing creator. Although the fundamental concepts,

forms, and markers of intertextuality have been established in literary research, the need for further investigation into this phenomenon remains.

Literature review

Symbols in postmodern works are not static; their meanings shift depending on the context, the reader's recognition of references, and the cultural or historical moment in which they are encountered. According to Chambers (2004), "Symbol is a thing that speaks to or represents another, generally something concrete or material speaking to a thought or feeling, such as, the shading red speaking to risk." To put it another way, an image is something that symbolises a concept or feeling. According to Webster (2005: 1450), "Symbol is a composed or printed mark, letter, shortening, and so on representing an item, Wiralodra English Journal (WEJ) Vol 4 No 2 September 2020 quality, process, amount, and so forth., as in music, science, or science." One could say that an object, quality, procedure, or quantity is represented by a written symbol. According to Keller (2013) in *Sorts of Images in Writing*, a scholarly symbol in literature holds a deeper meaning beyond its literal sense in a story or poem. This symbolic meaning can be unique to the author or more broadly recognized, ranging from cultural significance to universal associations. For example, the whale in Herman Melville's novel *Moby Dick* is often seen as a symbol of evil, even though whales don't usually carry that meaning in other texts. On the other hand, a rose is widely accepted as a symbol of love across different cultures. Similarly, many other literary symbols carry broad and widely understood meanings.

Discussion

When examining the paradoxical conflicts between science and religious belief in *Angels and Demons*, the traditional four elements (water, earth, fire, air) and the segno symbols play a crucial role. Research demonstrates that these elements serve not only as symbolic tools reflecting the philosophical perspectives of the characters but also as historical markers used by the Illuminati to orchestrate ritualistic killings. Through ambigrams, historical references, and plot development, these elements become concrete expressions of humanity's eternal dilemma—the struggle between spiritual faith and empirical reason.

The novel deeply explores the complex relationship between the two opposing poles of human consciousness—divine belief and rational thought—through these symbols, forming one of the foundational elements of the book's central philosophical concept.

The first "Altar of Science" is located in the Chigi Chapel (Capella della Terra or "Chapel of Earth") in the Basilica of Santa Maria del Popolo, symbolizing the element of earth. It is here that the first cardinal (Cardinal Ebner) is found murdered — his mouth filled with soil and his airway blocked. The deceased cardinal is marked with the ambigram "**Earth.**" (Brown, 223.)

In Dan Brown's *Angels and Demons*, the final murder takes place near the Fountain of the Four Rivers in Piazza Navona, where Cardinal Vetra is drowned in water. **Water** is

used as a weapon of death precisely because it has historically been a symbol of life and spiritual purification. The ambigram of the word “water” reflects its dual nature—destructive yet life-giving. This event portrays water as both an instrument of vengeance and a source of renewal, highlighting how the Illuminati manipulate sacred symbols to undermine the Church's power.

Water embodies many deeply rooted concepts in human history. It represents the essential energy for growth, vitality, and survival. At the same time, it is associated with wisdom, enlightenment, and clarity, serving as a source of understanding and knowledge for humanity. **The air** symbol in Dan Brown’s *Angels and Demons* represents one of the four elemental signs used by the Illuminati in the ritualistic murders of Catholic cardinals. Emphasizing the novel’s themes of duality and hidden meanings, the air symbol is crafted as a beautiful ambigram — a word that reads the same even when flipped. The second cardinal, Lamasse, is murdered under the sign of “Air.” Langdon and the police find him on the brink of death in St. Peter’s Square. He dies from asphyxiation, and the ambigram of “Air” is marked on his chest.

In *Angels and Demons*, the Church of Santa Maria della Vittoria becomes the setting for the most dramatic and fiery scene. As part of their plan for vengeance against the Catholic Church, the Illuminati orchestrate four ritualistic murders. Here, the police and Robert Langdon discover one of the kidnapped preferiti (papal candidates) — Cardinal Guidera. They find him bound, with the ambigram for **Fire** — a word that reads the same even when reversed — branded onto his chest. In Christianity, fire represents the Holy Spirit (e.g., the tongues of fire at Pentecost). This dichotomy is inverted throughout the book, when fire is used as a weapon of violence (such as Cardinal Guidera's immolation in Santa Maria della Vittoria), contrasting human cruelty with divine purity. Biblical allusions such as the burning bush of Moses. (Sadikova,124) The author of the novel describes the Fire Emblem as a symbol of the eternal struggle between reason and darkness.

Conclusion

Brown uses this symbol to express the novel’s core theme—the philosophical idea that good and evil are neither absolute nor clearly divisible, instead eternally intertwined in human nature. The mark leaves a deep imprint not just on the characters’ bodies but also on their minds, ultimately shaping the course of events in a pivotal way. In Dan Brown’s novel *Angels and Demons*, the conflict between science and religion—the debate over the origins of the universe and humanity—is interpreted as a myth, which the author argues has become not only a misunderstanding of history but also a rhetorical tool used for political purposes. Throughout the novel, religious and architectural symbols—analyzed and explained by Harvard symbologist Robert Langdon—take center stage on the path of enlightenment. These symbols are of great importance for understanding the historical context and the epic struggle between science (knowledge) and religion (faith).

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