

## Semiotic Reading and the RSI: In Search of The Lost Symbol in the Penal Colony

Asst. Prof. Dr. Necat Kumral

National Police Academy, Faculty of Security Sciences,  
Department of Compulsory and Applied Courses, Turkey  
necatkumral@hotmail.com

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### Abstract

*This article offers a semiotic trip in search of The Lost Symbol in Washington DC, designed with the esoteric codes of the secret teachings of all ages scattered around. During his twelve-hour night journey the protagonist, a professor of symbolic codes and a highly experienced academic in the field of the esoteric codes, emerges illuminated as he assumes to have found the secret codes that could change disastrous human destiny right round into a more benevolent, promising one. By studying the intersemiotic nature of The Lost Symbol in terms of the secret teachings of all ages given in contrast to the religious doctrines this article explores in depth how effectively readers can develop cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). As the semiotic reading approach offers a critical reading strategy, readers will be able to follow the consecutive steps presented in line with the principles of the Reading Strategy Instruction (RSI).*

**Keywords:** critique, esoteric codes, reading strategy instruction, semiotic reading, sense, value

### 1. Introduction

This article focuses on how to use the semiotic reading strategy in congruence with the Reading Strategy Instruction (RSI) for promoting reading efficiency in higher education literacy programs. The assumption behind this study is based on the findings of the recent researches conducted in a wide range of academic settings. Bharuthram (2012) cites all these experimental studies that consistently back up the proposition that there is a direct correlation between reading proficiency and academic success, and language proficiency does not readily improve students reading performance. Reading strategy teaching programs are designed in such a way as to develop cognitive academic language proficiency, which helps enhance academic performance gradually. Teachers often have the misconception that poor academic performance is truly associated with inadequate language proficiency. Reading proficiency helps foster language proficiency, whereas language proficiency has not that much of significant role in the development of effective reading performance of university students and consequently in their academic success. She puts a high premium on academic reading strategy teaching programs, as they are designed to promote cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) through analysis, critique, evaluation and synthesis in order for university students to cope with basic course requirements and challenging college examinations. It is, therefore, necessary that they develop academic reading proficiency because basic interpersonal conversation skill (BICS) cannot solely guarantee academic success due to inadequate or no reading strategy training received previously (Bharuthram, 2012, p.209).

Teachers tend to believe that "poor reading skills are carried over into higher education institutions" and assume that reading strategy instruction does not help promote learner reading proficiency if students have not yet acquired effective language skills in their previous formal schooling (Bharuthram, 2009, p.207). The lack of teacher proficiency and students' poor reading skills add up to the "negative cycle of failed reading outcomes and academic underperformance" (Pretorius, 2002, p.189). Focusing on the underestimated teachers' role in the Reading Strategy Instruction (RSI), Klapwijk (2012) asserts that teachers often disregard the importance of comprehension-based reading strategy, and they do not teach these meaning-making strategies explicitly. Consequently they deprive their students of the strategy training practices, which results in poor academic performance on their part, as they do not know how to cope with the problem when academic texts they read to comprehend require academic reading skills (Klapwijk & Van der Walt, 2011, p.27). The RSI, as Klapwijk (2012, p.194) foregrounds its significance in academic reading throughout her article, centres on three main stages of reading: (1) establishing foundation for meaning making (pre-reading), (2) maintaining it through while reading activities (during reading) and (3) consolidating these prescribed reading activities by follow-up writing activities. They also need these critiquing skills to comprehend and evaluate what goes on in the whole world because

their schools are considered societal institutions of "modern regime of institutional power" (Woermann, 2012, p.112). Reading and writing are two intellectual activities requiring social practices, for they concurrently follow one another to incite social changes in the aftermath of the pedagogic activities concerned. Intersemiotic texture of the whole work foregrounds the very central idea that Brown maintains throughout the novel is that sort of dramatic social change from a medieval thought structure to a modern day hermetic philosophy. Multimodal discourse analysis explores all the semantic relations between language as a social semiotic resource and images as symbolic representations of iconic codes embedded in the work (Jewitt, 2009; Kress, 2010; Liu & O'Halloran 2009).

Semiotic approach proposes a higher-order reading strategy developed around an intellectual move from sense to value and consequently to the writing of a critique created as a challenge to the ingenuity of the author (Scholes, 1982). It follows all the necessary steps of the RSI—comprehension, interpretation, critique and evaluation of the work concerned—to create a well-grounded synthesis (Bharuthram, 2012, p.210). This comprehensive reading approach does not reject the order of comprehension-based reading strategies, because it comprises them all in a mellifluous blend.

## 2. Background Information for Reading within: Presentation

Dan Brown's new thriller can be compared and contrasted with Hawthorne's short story *Young Goodman Brown* (Kumral, 2011). While Hawthorne's protagonist returns to his village in the broad daylight as a proselyte with his rationalized blasphemy due to his initiation into the communion of devil worshippers the night before, Brown's protagonist, however, returns illuminated to the inner sanctum of the capital, the Capitol, where he finds what he has been looking for, the apotheosis of Washington, signifying spiritual exaltation of man (Haag, 2009, p.12). The irony is that what prepares Young Goodman Brown's tragic end as a pathetic figure in the 1830s is the very same spiritual experience and the secret teaching of the fraternity leading Langdon to "[man's] secret reality and true illumination" in the modern world of today (Adkinson, 2009, p.613). The Morgan affair and Salem witch-hunt trials revealed some mystery about the secret teachings of the fraternity at the time, though (Demos, 2009).

The secret reality is that man has the potential to become a supreme being if he can refrain from corrupt faith, which makes him enslaved and even crippled. Twelve-hour life-changing night journey of an intellectual in search of the lost symbol in the capital of the new world requires more than simple comprehension as it compels the reader to acquire enormous body of knowledge and master all the critical reading strategies. The whole experience is a modern day thriller, a tightly interwoven story written to offer a suggestion on how to overcome the conflicts over the concept of God. The protagonist appears absolutely capable of projecting his inward voyaging and outward looking experience on how to use the esoteric codes in man's own illumination.

For thorough illumination, the ecclesiastical order was to be challenged and a new system of thought with all the necessary man-made codes regulating all the domains of earthly living should have been designed and introduced to the world as an alternative way of life allowing more freedom and flexible, free-spirited approach for the sake of man's absolute happiness in their penal colony. Dante's 14<sup>th</sup> century magnum opus, *La Divina Comedia*, was written to promote "spiritual dignity and religious virtue of women" by symbolically exalting Beatrice, his platonic Florentine love, even above angels (Burge, 2010, pp. 13-14) in the local vernacular, which was "a deliberate revolt against the Roman ecclesiastical Latin" (Rinaldi, 2011, pp. 53-63). Dante's satirical lines concealed his inner feelings behind his crafty imagination and creative writing skill. *Da Vinci's* secret code as an iconic sign was secretly embedded in *The Last Supper*, which would reveal his rejection of the doctrinaire teachings of the ecclesiastical order. Mary Magdalene, as depicted in *The Last Supper*, became a powerful figure in the mission of the Priority of Templars because Mary, as one of the disciples, was claimed to have been conferred the authorization to preach his divine revelations (Brown, 2006, p. 353). Michelangelo's secret messages depicted as his codes in the Sistine Chapel frescoes in the heart of Vatican consistently revealed his secret rebellion that challenged the traditional doctrinaire teachings (Blech & Doliner, 2009). A new human order without any crass casualty or any other disastrous ironic coincidence could be in harmony with the subalterns, all the natural forces, in a world ruled by man (Adkinson, 2009, p. 686; Cooper, 2009, p.129). Man had the capacity to create a new worldly life "by throwing off the shackles of corrupted faith, by linking science with mysticism, by embracing the aims of founding fathers [...] and of noetic science" in order to reach a godlike omnipotent status (Haag, 2009, p.12). Then, what has been continuing since the primordial creation—if not at all rejected in accordance with founding fathers' liturgical philosophy and traditional ceremonies—will be realized in reverse order moving from materialism to humanism and from humanism to hermetic corpus. A new world could be created around secular values by changing this penal colony into a benevolent, human friendly world of peace. Brown firmly asserts his own judgement and never-ending passion for initiating such a human friendly, philanthropic world order.

### 3. In Search of the Lost Symbol: A Deconstructive Analysis for the Quest

The theme of the novel is that a new social order based on the interpretation of the esoteric codes should be developed and maintained for the benefit of the humankind. The Earth designed as the Penal Colony for man in the aftermath of great fall from Eden cannot be a penal setting any more if it is designed around purely humanistic values for people to pursue their own happiness after two thousand years of stony sleep as Yeats coined the phrase in *The Second Coming* (Abrams, 1993, p.1880). Too much puritanical emphasis on man's constant purpose of dwelling on earth as the tiny sufferer trying to reach an archetypal being free of all potential wickedness seems to have caused people to move from a world of absolute belief to a modern world of experimental judgments based solely on scientific research. They obtain the results of their scientific research to support their own theory that it is Mother Nature that creates all that exists and changes them regularly to propagate more by following a self renewing cycle for a constant chain of human existence. What makes them human with all virtues in place is decisively wiped out, causing global destruction due to intermittent ethnic cleansing assaults, racial discrimination, two world wars and numerous civil wars (Spilsbury, 2010).

Human kind appears unable to rise above its own nature in order not to be political tyrants taking advantage of those poverty-stricken masses living not just in the global south but also in any country without reservation. The modern world designed by purely scientific mind is a field of struggle based on incessant strife dangerously limiting man's liberty in all avenues of modern life. Modern societies as monolithic wholes are composed of similarities for the sake of presupposed absolute happiness, because it is differences that arouse hostility, wickedness and global chaos. They have been terribly frustrated, for too much hostility and abomination have seared, smeared hearts to create indifference for the grim satisfaction of the tyrants of the age.

What makes all of these esoteric codes state secrets is just what Brown aspires to through his journey, but he never dares to reveal what lies behind all these secrets. Brown invites his protagonist on a life-changing thrilling journey in Washington DC to pull back the veil and reveal all these secrets, as he becomes an insider to the body of the secret teachings of all ages based on historical experiences, images, symbols, rituals and allusions made to ancient human heritage (Burstein & De Keijzer, 2010). The interconnectedness of everything throughout the centuries is the point where we are invited to focus on whenever we see any of the symbols and images created and stored in human memory for a thorough understanding of human spiritual experience on the Earth, the penal colony. Hermetic precept "Ye know not ye are gods" foreground the philosophical fundamentals of the modern thought formulated in the oft-repeated motto 'as above so below'. They glorify human existence and rationalize manly struggle to possess everything. The argument they raise, as Keijzer (2010, pp. 23-24) put forward, is based on the premise that "Everything we are told to believe holy, sacred and ideal can also be interpreted as profane, secular, and real." The concept of god has been primitive despite the technological brilliance of men, and purely scientific approach has wiped out the significance of any belief in the existence of supernatural being.

This scientific standpoint requires a close insight into the novel and explores it deeply to express the inner thoughts of the author using all the scientific terms. The Holy Bible, as Brown argues (2010), makes such an imperceptible remark as "ye are gods," claiming that men can create a new universe by designing it in compliance with their wishes and thoughts. The Great Architects of the new world find the novel "respectful" in that Brown's treatment is very tender and his writing style creates a new identity of great architects with the sole aim of "renewing interest in deism, the faith of the Founding Fathers" (Keijzer, 2010, p.396). The secret rituals and the symbols form the visible external aspect of this system of manly revelations behind which is "an inner spiritual and mental aspect", cautiously revealed to the members and only accessible to the prospective great architects (Keijzer, 2010, p.396). The reality veiled behind the visible external aspect—rituals and symbols—is the spiritual enlightenment required by this sacramental system of the members as they are expected to reach their ultimate level of spiritual elevation to appreciate this particular reality (Jonglez & Zoffoli, 2010, p.142). Is this reality changeable and relatively true of any member of the fraternal order or rather one specific high level of spiritual elevation without denoting any material prosperity?

### 4. Deification Process of Man as an Archetypal Being: An Interpretation

The objective of the study of Corpus Hermeticum was to reveal an occult belief based on the philosophy of "deification of humanity through knowledge of God," enabling man to design and reproduce Heaven-like havens for the human kind (Jonglez & Zoffoli, 2010, p.174). In 1460 Cosimo de Medici of Florence brought back the hermetic corpus and had it translated into Latin, which had a profound impact on the enlightenment of Renaissance Europe by confining all the medieval values in the past (Cox, 2009, p.141). Brown assumes that Washington DC was particularly designed in line

with the ever-lasting philosophy of the Founding Fathers to demonstrate man's capability to create a city with all the symbols of the esoteric teachings scattered all around the corners of the city drawn with extreme precision; however, Haag (2008, p.275) claims that the architect was not fully aware of all those secret symbols. Brown's choice of the setting for the novel is absolutely logical because "Washington D.C., has everything that Rome, Paris, and London have in the way of great architecture—great power bases" (cited in Keijzer, 2010, p. 397). He arranges an intellectual trip for the reader to put on a slightly different lens to see the whole shadow world meticulously designed with pyramids, obelisks, underground tunnels that people cannot see at a glance, as this conscious effort of seeing and understanding the "Word" and thoroughly appreciate it (Keijzer, 2010, p. 397). All the codes found on the surface can really tell something about the life and the social worth of the inhabitants if they are all accurately interpreted. According to Walker (2009, p. 427) "buried substrata of a city can contain unresolved past and forgotten incidents that have shaped the present," and the public reaction to the buried substrata "serves as a map to the social worth of citizens," because "the treatment of the dead can be read as a code for modern race and class relations." During the European Renaissance all the norms of the past underwent a dramatic change, introducing new forms and values; "first hermeticism was replaced by humanism", which definitely caused the traditional society to complete its own period marking the beginning of "Baroque and pre-modernist society paving the way for the arrival of materialism and atheism that dominates the modern world" (Jonglez & Zoffoli, 2010, p.175).

If what matters is human divinity, then there is no need for all the efforts to find 'the lost sense of wonder' through such a challenging semiotic journey to reach divinity of man because "We need god to grasp the wonder of our existence" (Armstrong, 2010, p.180). The inward life-changing journey of Brown proves to be a futile attempt since there is no divinity existing in the universe that can be likened to man's power and his assumed divinity (Dawkins, 2010, p.180). All the strife and conflict stemming from cultural differences and religious dogmas have created chaotic and hectic nature of life on the Earth, and all the wickedness existing on the Earth lies in the roots of sky-god religions (Dawkins, 2006). A new world order is to be designed in line with the new system of spiritual enlightenment which allows no more chance for any crass casualty, any ironic coincidence preparing human destiny in a world ruled by chance.

A new social change from a god-centred universe to a man-centred universe is introduced where solely man-made values are considered to establish a new governing system. Hardy's vengeful God figure, depicted in *Hap* (Abrams, 1993, p.1694), is refined and shaped by incessant reformist human efforts to shape a benevolent Man. This ideal man reaches godlike status visualised as in the fresco of the Apotheosis of Washington on the dome of the Rotunda because Brown (2010, p.655) interprets it as "the great promise of man becoming god." Nevertheless, Kafka could never have been as sure as Brown was when he wrote his story *In the Penal Colony*. In Kafka's world, Man as a deified entity is not as ideal and benevolent as depicted on the ceiling of the Rotunda. The governing system based on the penal codes tortures the criminals (victims) no matter how diligently his extraordinary machine carves the codes in their flesh to illuminate them intensely (Kafka, 1976). All the law breakers, however, are executed in line with the requirements of the penal codes written, passed and enacted by men to establish a design that eventually causes the destruction of the designer, as "he turns the machine on himself" (Berloquin, 2008, p.229). The hidden codes of the secret teachings of all ages have been the common core of the grand designs renewed in an incessant fashion for centuries marking a transformation from a god-stricken malevolent world to a human-friendly, benevolent world created around purely humanistic values.

## 5. The Egyptian Amduat and the Night Walk of the Illuminated Souls: A Critique

Brown proposes the same man-centred global order that should be imposed upon the chaos existing everywhere in the world torn by wars. "The recurring theme in *The Lost Symbol*," says Haag (2009, p.156) "is that man is limited, even crippled and enslaved by religious doctrines," because, as Brown clearly argues, different cultures and religions are in a fierce strife over the concept of god and that this global, spiritual, secretly mystical organisation will bring them together without ever putting a label on the big good thing referred to as 'God'.

Brown's illumination through the secret esoteric teachings of all ages extremely rich in the symbols placed all around Washington DC can also be compared to the perennial story known in Ancient Egypt as the Amduat based on a twelve-hour journey of the soul travelling all night long to be reborn with the rising sun (Haag, 2009, p.16-17). Man's true illumination simply leads to human apotheosis, "the transformation of human mind into its true potentiality" in order for "human thought to control the world around it (Haag, 2009, p.30). Science and mystical power will help reawaken the inner divinity of man that acquires godlike potential with his latent power of mind to act as the Great Architect of the universe. 'Noetic science' is the sort of science that could bind science and mystical power to *reawaken inner divinity*.

There should be a line that can separate science from religious dogmas in order for man "to create hopeful vision for the future where God is the only symbol for limitless human potential" (Gleiser, 2010, p.177).

Brown seems to get lost between founding fathers symbolic hermetic codes and fighting fathers' rationalized beliefs and constantly renewed future goals. Mystical codes of their occult power cannot be revealed through scientific terms. Irrational behaviours of the mystic secret circles cannot be explained in scientific, rational terms. Noetic science philosophers impose an order upon the chaos, which signifies a present day "chaotic state of mind *guided by myths* while traditions create order" (Shepherd & Shepherd, 2002, p. 17) [italics added]. The great architects seem to have been seriously at work changing the world just the same way as the power of human mind bends the spoon. Their limitless creative potential, rational beliefs and spiritual illumination gained through the secret teachings of all ages helped design their schemes "for the purpose of rooting out all religious establishments and overturning all the existing governments of Europe" (Blackstock, 2009, p.232).

## 6. The Great Architects of the World: An Evaluation of the Story

The great architects have undertaken the assumed responsibility for such a challenging mission. Dawkins (2006, p.37) supports what Vidal says as they both find all the roots of wickedness in the roots of monotheistic religions asserting, "The great unmentionable evil at the centre of our culture is monotheism. From a barbaric Bronze Age text known as the Old Testament, three anti-human religions have evolved –Judaism, Christianity and Islam. These are sky-god religions". This perennial strife experienced worldwide paves the way for cultural clashes and doctrinaire religious ravings creating favourable atmosphere for political turmoils and social upheavals, which in turn require serious interventions, incessant surveillance and severe military/police persecution in order for the plotters, as Foucault puts it, "to insert power deeply into the social body" (Ritzer, 1988, p.467).

The chaos created in mind through ages due to scientifically backed up insistent disbelief in the existence of omniscient, omnipotent Almighty can never be attributed to any real consistent conflict over the concept of God, because all sky god religions trust in the same true Creator of the universe. The reassuring evidence comes from Vermes (2010, pp.213-238) whose meticulous doctoral dissertation on the Dead Sea Scrolls taken from eleven caves in Qumran revealed the truth that Jesus as the prophet was born into the Jewish community in Bethlehem and was the prophet successor to Moses and Aaron disseminating the same divine revelations as an itinerant preacher just the same way as his predecessors had done. "Nothing", asserts Blond (2008, p. 29), "Jesus is reported to have conflicted with the Jewish law he had come to fulfil not to destroy."

The concept of God in the religions introduced by Abraham and his descendants in the Middle East was always fundamentally the same. "Islam," says Dady (2010, p.10), "means 'submission to the will of God,'" and adds, "as the verses suggest Islam is not an entirely separate belief system from Judeo—Christian tradition". Taylor (2008, p. 41) makes a short list of differences regarding the accounts of the events narrated in both of the Holy Scripts, but the differences do not require one to believe that people should be in fierce conflict with the followers of the other religions over the religious concepts unless the attacks are directed to their identity as devout believers for political, social and economic reasons. One recent conflict aroused over the veil or headscarf, however, was interpreted as a challenge, a symbolic rejection of western ways of living in Europe. Caldwell (2010) cites what George Walden, the outspoken cabinet member of the British parliament, said about the conflict. Walden confessed all the truth behind the debates saying, "The last thing they can say is that we face a threat to which we can see no end because it is based on a fundamental clash of cultures. On the IRA we told the truth; on the Islamic problem we lie." Pseudo-symbolic veil of truculent Islam, as is often referred to, is the new mask growing to fit the new face of the world, because Caldwell (2010, p.188) has the notion that they violate fundamental principles of democracy by "wantonly stripping rights from all citizens, rather than targeting the problem it seeks to address."

By all these discussions, the common core of the whole conflict is not at all based on a long lasting hostility or deeply-seated enmity, but it is a mere indication of personal moral choice that can affect the private life of the citizens right round without developing a counter hostility towards the society they have been living in while sharing all the societal values other than their choice of religious beliefs. It is not that sense of hostility but rather humiliation and frustration they feel deep inside are mainly "cultural and socio economic in nature," resulting in alienation from the western modern world "because of the scars from not a distant colonial past" (Moisi, 2010, p.78). Gittins (2009, pp.96-97) puts a fine point on the recurring theme of the novel by firmly asserting that what Brown plots is the fictionalised history as his "cleverly woven web of pseudo-historical facts and fiction falls apart when subjected to any degree of rational analysis," no matter how consistently the novel was based on the symbolic codes of the secret teachings of all ages.



Intersemiotic reading of all these related works helps the reader to create such a vantage point to reinterpret the novel in the light of other texts, because, as is often said, "Reading and writing are social practices, and play different roles in different contexts, performing different social actions" (Bharuthram, 2012, pp.211-212). These social actions may turn out to be social changes triggered under political pressure and decisively plotted chaotic order. Literary texts provide appropriate venue for transforming such social practices into predetermined social and political act of changes likely to be witnessed in the process of time.

## 7. Kafka's Mouse as a Tiny Wanderer on Earth: A Vantage Point Synthesis

The fundamental principles of modernist precept was based on the philosophical persistent teaching practices through literary works of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century creating a politically shaped cultural misconception that traditional values only propagated unhappy souls in their penal colony. Men as the tiny wanderers on earth were deprived of any opportunity to change their destiny in such a brutal world to experience 'bliss' and to become happy in their pilgrimage, their own lives, where "'dicing time' casts pain and their hope lies slain" as Hardy summarized his view of the world in *Hap* (cited in Abrams, 1993, p. 1694). Kafka's mouse representing these tiny human wanderers on earth finds itself trapped in the Middle East because of the incessant destructive military, political, religious and cultural clashes. This modern world torn by all these large-scale conflicts becomes "smaller and narrower," says Grossman (2009a, p. 60) referring to Kafka's short story entitled *A Little Fable*, because the long-term devastating conflict has created a huge void between the tiny individual and the chaotic state, and "it quickly fills up with apathy, cynicism and above all despair—the despair that can fuel a distorted reality for many years and generations." If this is Grossman's (2009a, p. 118) "distorted reality," then what is the reality?

The reality, Grossman (2009a, p.118) argues openly, is whether people are aware of "the destructive fatal metaphor framed for them by other nations" while they fight battles to overcome the unbearable consequences so that they can "become a nation of flesh and blood" in a country whose borders internally recognized allowing them to feel a sense of 'security' with a life "not larger than a life" of their own. This is actually a feel for belongingness that is deeply rooted in their inner psyche for "solid existence" in a part of the world where it should not be too much for them to develop a "sense of security" just as the way they express when they say rosary for peace "knowing nothing of war." This is the whole spiritual and material reality that Grossman (2009a, p.18) clearly defines for his nation to forge so as to make this reality "full of life, creation, inspiration and humanity" in order for them "to create an enlightened, decent, democratic state that would conduct itself according to Jewish and universal values." The symbolic codes and the mighty hands of Swastika made it all possible for a creative power to conduct their own plot for their own interest (Cooper, 2009, pp.164-166).

Grossman (2009b, p.418), in fact, terribly feels that sort of "physical sensation of devastation" when particularly "people can be seen replaceable and disposable." World War II was also a part of the whole picture depicting visually what existed behind all that happened (Mazower, 2012). This persistent man-centred ideology of creating monolithic modern societies has been deeply rooted in the sheer indifference of the modern mind, which was unmasked by the impact of consecutive wars. Wiesel (2010) was shocked when he learned that St Louis and four other liners were denied entry to Cuba, the USA and Canada when they set sail for freedom in 1939, fleeing the tyrants of the age. In his renowned speech "The perils of indifference" he spoke of devastating effect of indifference as it created others of no significance when they were merely considered 'players' on the world stage, the puppets of war lords. Aydın (2013), however, develops a global remedy around the themes of 'peace, human love, and tolerance' and proposed it to wipe out the negative impact of enmity-induced aggression emanating from irredeemable wickedness, unmitigated hostility and sheer indifference. It is right at this point the multiplicity points of views intersect forming the semiotic vantage point for the reader to analyse the intersemiotic textuality of all these narratives, which helps understand, interpret, criticize and evaluate them with keenly critical eyes to reach a well-grounded conclusion in the light of the synthesis of all the points discussed.

## 8. Conclusion

This article is based on the semiotic reading of *The Lost Symbol*, Brown's third thriller, in line with the principles of the RSI to demonstrate how the semiotic reading approach and the reading strategy collaborate in a mellifluous blend in consecutive steps. The novel as a literary work requires academic reading proficiency as it is highly rich in terms of symbols signifying esoteric codes of secret teachings of all ages. The whole narrative is a story developed around the life

changing night journey of Prof. Langdon who returns illuminated with the rising sun while trying to find *the lost symbol* of the deified modern man, although the very same spiritual enlightenment prepares the tragic end of the protagonist, *Young Goodman Brown*, in Hawthorne's title story. Brown offers a resolution by foregrounding the idea that what human beings need lies within their heart as the symbol of human love and spiritual enlightenment, and mind as the symbol of creative power which has illuminated the world through the teachings of adepts of all nations and of all times without resorting to any divine revelations. The world torn by wars should not be a penal colony anymore, and man, once the tiny wanderer whining on earth though, can surely change disastrous human destiny right round into a more benevolent one for the benefit of the human kind. By writing another follow-up thriller Brown might stun literary circles with profound persuasive answers, and Florence could be a probable setting with all the esoteric symbols relevant to his intriguing homily.

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