

**THE INTERTEXTUAL STUDY OF THE SYMBOL ‘PENTACLE’ FROM  
DA VINCI CODE BY DAN BROWN**

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**Abstract:** This article is devoted to the intertextual study of the pentacle, one of the engrossed symbols used in the bestseller *Da Vinci Code*. The research shows that the symbol pentacle is one of the most wide spread and common object not only in modern literature but also in social life, it aimed to start with the study of its etymology from initial usage and up to date works in various references relating the meaning of the symbol pentacle.

**Key words:** Symbol, pentacle, pentagram, wicca.

"The *Da Vinci Code*" is a mystery thriller novel written by Dan Brown. It was first published in 2003 and quickly became a bestseller, eventually becoming one of the best-selling books of all time. The novel is part of a series featuring the character Robert Langdon, a Harvard symbologist. "The *Da Vinci Code*" achieved immense commercial success, selling millions of copies worldwide. Its popularity was further boosted by the controversy surrounding its content. The film also garnered significant attention, though it received mixed reviews from critics. Beyond its commercial success, "The *Da Vinci Code*" had a notable impact on popular culture. It sparked interest in art, symbolism, and historical mysteries. The book's success also influenced the publishing industry, leading to a surge in popularity for similar conspiracy-themed thrillers. "The *Da Vinci Code*" is a work of fiction, it intertwines historical elements, religious symbolism, and conspiracy theories to create a gripping and controversial narrative. One who reads the book might deeply involved in thinking what is the origination of the symbols used in the plot and to reveal the connection with other works of literature. Dan Brown's "The *Da Vinci Code*" uses a variety of codes and symbols to tell its story. Numerous of these symbols add to the mystery and intrigue of the plot and are essential to it. These are a few of the book's well-known symbols. One of them is pentacle or pentagram which is used to reveal the secret of Jacque Sauni'ene murdering.

Looking at the details and going on further investigation leads to discover of the etymology of the symbol and to find vital information related with literatures used the pentacles.

## **Discussion**

### **The origination of the symbol ‘pentacle’**

When it comes to etymology of the word it goes back to middle century around 15<sup>th</sup> that previously used in France. The word of the “*pentacle*” has meaning “*talisman*” in French. Following the Latinization of the word 'pentaculum' (using the Latin diminutive suffix *-culum*), the French word originates from the Italian word '*pentacolo*'.

In previous editions (2nd edition 1989), *the Oxford English Dictionary* continued by stating that "some would connect it" with the Middle French word "pentacol" (1328) or "pendacol"

(1418), which refers to a necklace or pendant (from pend- hang, à to, col or cou neck). The Theosophical Society uses the following derivation in its glossary.

It appears most likely to have originated from the root pend, which translates as "to hang" in Italian and French, and is thus comparable to a pendant or charm worn around the neck.

Despite the word's sound, pentacles were actually magical talismans engraved with any sign or character rather than having any connection to the number "five" as found in ancient magical books. They used star-shaped symbols more frequently as hexagrams than pentagrams. The ancient magical grimoires, like the Key of Solomon, contain pentacles with a wide range of shapes and motifs. These pentacles were used to "fore-know all future things, & command whole nature, have power over devils, and Angels, and do miracles." Agrippa says that Moses's proficiency with several pentacles contributed to his magical accomplishments. (Agrippa, 2006 ,29 avgust )

The 'pentacle' is a five-pointed star enclosed within a circle. It is a symbol that has been used in various cultures and traditions throughout history, with different meanings attributed to it. There are numerous pentacle variants: here are some key points about the symbol of the pentacle in the grimoire known as the *Key of Solomon*. Along with other magical implements, pentacles are employed in the neopagan magical religion known as Wicca. Pentacles represent the element earth in the *Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and Wicca*. Pentacles prominently use a pentagram in their design in the 1909 Rider-Waite-Smith tarot deck (the pentacles of which were designed by Arthur Edward Waite), as well as in later tarot decks that are based on it and in Wicca. This type of pentacle is shaped like a disk and can be placed on an altar or utilized as a standalone sacred area.

The grimoires from the 1500s, called the *Heptameron* by pseudo-Pietro d'Abano, and the *Key of Solomon* were the first written records that show pentacles. *The Key of Solomon* contains dozens of distinct pentacles, but the *Heptameron* contains just one. While the pentacles in the *Key of Solomon* have a wide range of designs, only two of which are pentagrammic, the pentacle in the *Heptameron* is a hexagram decorated with patee crosses and letters. In contrast, pentacles are said to be inherently pentagrammic in later common formulations from the 1900s.

The "First Pentacle of the Moon" from the *Key of Solomon*. It serves "to call forth and invoke the spirits of the moon, and further servant to open doors, in whatever way they may be fastened." It is to be drawn in silver or grey. (Pentacle, б.д., стр. 2) (appendix -1)

appendix -1



*Gerald Gardner*, frequently referred to as the "Father of Wicca," derived most of his idea for pentacles from the Rider-Waite-Smith tarot deck from 1909 in which the pentacles are disks covered with pentagram. Many contemporary Wiccans define "pentacle" in a specific way: Specifically, a 'pentacle' is a 'pentagram' that has a circle around it.

As strange as it may sound, pentacles had nothing to do with the number "five" found in old magical writings; instead, they were magical talismans etched with any symbol or character. More often than not, they employed star-shaped symbols as hexagrams instead of pentagrams. A great variety of shapes and designs can be seen on pentacles found in old magical grimoires such as the Key of Solomon. These pentacles were used to "fore-know all future things, & command whole nature, have power over devils, and Angels, and do miracles," according to Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa. Agrippa claims that Moses's success with magic was aided by his mastery of several pentacles.

Several archaic grimoires pertaining to magical evocation describe the pentacle as being worn around the neck, bestowing upon its wielder authority and protection. Just before forming the protective circle, Johannes Trithemius had the magician don the pentacle:

Next, take your pentacle and ring, and place the ring on your right little finger. Hang the pentacle around your neck (you can engrave the pentacle on a silver square plate or write it on a clean virgin parchment and hang it from your neck to your breast). (Trithemius, 1801)

The earliest use of A "*Great Pentacle*" that is drawn in a book and a number of other pentacles that are individually written in pen on parchment to use as amulets are both mentioned in one version of the *Key of Solomon*.

As it believed that you will be guaranteed, no spell or other danger will be able to harm you if you keep them hanging from your neck, however you see fit, on the day and hour of your birth. After that, you must remember to name the Name hanging from your neck ten times a day while facing east.

#### 1. **Wiccan and Neopagan Symbolism:**

In modern Wicca and other Neopagan traditions, the pentacle is often associated with the elements of earth, air, fire, water, and spirit. Each point of the star represents one of these elements, and the circle symbolizes the unity and interconnectedness of these elements.

#### 2. **Magical and Occult Significance:**

The pentacle is frequently used as a tool in magical and occult practices. It is often employed in rituals for protection, banishing, and invoking elemental forces.

#### 3. **Protection Symbol:**

In some belief systems, the pentacle is seen as a protective symbol, and it is sometimes worn as an amulet or used in talismans to ward off negative energy.

#### 4. **Historical Usage:**

The pentacle has ancient roots and has been used in various cultures throughout history. It can be found in ancient Greek, Roman, and Mesopotamian art. In medieval times, it was sometimes associated with Christian symbolism, representing the five wounds of Christ.

#### 5. **Misconceptions and Controversies:**

The pentacle has been a source of controversy, particularly in the context of modern Wicca and Neopaganism. Some misconceptions have led to negative associations, with

the symbol being mistakenly linked to Satanism. It's essential to understand that the pentacle has diverse meanings in different traditions and should not be automatically associated with malevolent practices.

#### 6. Variations:

In the book *Da Vinci Code* symbol of pentacle mentioned 18 times and the word 'five-point star' is used as a synonym of it. The further investigations show that the 'pentacle' has been a main object of many books which relate with paganism.

The procedure of the survey shows that the orientation of the pentacle can vary. A point-up pentacle is often associated with positive or divine forces, while a point-down pentacle may be associated with more occult or esoteric symbolism. In Eastern countries this symbol has various meanings: The pentacle, or more specifically the pentagram (a five-pointed star without the enclosing circle), has been used in various ways and contexts in Eastern cultures, each with its own set of meanings. It's important to note that interpretations of symbols can vary, and different cultures may ascribe different significance to the same symbol. Here are a few examples of how the pentacle or pentagram has been interpreted in the East:

##### A) Sufi Mysticism:

In Sufi mysticism, the pentagram is sometimes associated with symbolism related to the concept of the five senses and the five points of initiation. It may represent the stages of spiritual development, with each point corresponding to a particular aspect of the spiritual journey.

##### B) Chinese Taoism:

In Taoism, the five-pointed star (wu xing) is associated with the five elements—Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water. These elements are part of the Chinese cosmological system, and the pentagram is used to represent the dynamic and cyclical interplay between these elements. Each point may correspond to one of the elements, and the relationships between them are considered in various aspects of Chinese philosophy, medicine, and divination.

##### C) Hinduism:

In Hinduism, the pentagram is not as prevalent as in some other cultures, but variations of the five-pointed star can be found in certain Hindu iconography. Some interpretations associate it with the concept of the five elements (Pancha Bhoota), which are Earth (Prithvi), Water (Jala), Fire (Agni), Air (Vayu), and Ether or Space (Akasha).

## Results

The symbol of the pentacle has been featured in various forms of literature, including religious texts, occult literature, and modern fantasy works. Here are some examples of how the pentacle is used in other literatures:

### Occult and Magical Texts:



The pentacle is often discussed in occult literature and magical texts that explore ritual practices, ceremonial magic, and symbolism. Authors such as Aleister Crowley, Eliphas Levi, and Israel Regardie have written extensively on these topics, discussing the pentacle's use in magical traditions. The pentacle, as described in Aleister Crowley's instructions for the A.'.A.'. , is a disc that is eight inches in diameter and half an inch thick, made of wax, gold, silver-gilt, or Electrum Magicum. The Neophyte is to "by his understanding and ingenium devise a symbol to represent the Universe" and engrave this on the disc. (Agrippa, 2006 ,29 august )

Consequently, everything that is both movable and immobile throughout the entire heavens is encompassed by this pantacle, even if it is only "eight inches in diameter, and in thickness half an inch." Earth contains all elements, both in combination and in admixture; fire is nothing but a mixture of components; water is a combination of elements; and air is virtually entirely a mixture of elements. Likewise, this Pantacle, which represents the earth, must be. (Crowley, 1997)

#### **a) Wiccan and Neopagan Writings:**

In modern Wiccan and Neopagan literature, the pentacle is a common symbol and is often discussed in books related to these spiritual traditions. Authors like Scott Cunningham, Raymond Buckland, and Doreen Valiente have written about the pentacle's significance in Wicca and its use in rituals. In Wicca, a pentacle is sometimes used as a magical tool, usually to call in spirits or certain energies.

#### **b)Fantasy Literature:**

The pentacle is sometimes incorporated into fantasy literature, especially in works that draw inspiration from magical and occult themes. Authors like J.K. Rowling in the "Harry Potter" series and Terry Pratchett in the "Discworld" series use symbols like the pentacle to add a magical and mystical element to their fictional worlds.

#### **c)Hermetic and Esoteric Literature:**

The pentacle is often mentioned in hermetic and esoteric literature, which explores mystical and spiritual philosophies. Works by authors like Manly P. Hall and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn may include discussions on the pentacle's symbolic meaning. One of an Adept's four elemental "weapons" or tools is the Earth Pentacle, according to the Golden Dawn magical system. These instruments are "symbolical representations of the forces employed for the manifestation of the inner self, the elements required for the incarnation of the divine. (Regardie, 2003)

The Golden Dawn system also uses other pentacles for the evocation of spirits; these are painted with a circle and cross resembling a Celtic cross on their reverse side, and are engraved with the name and sigil of the spirit to be evoked inside three concentric rings.

*The Earth Pentacle from the Golden Dawn structure of magic, one of the elemental "weapons" or tools of an adept. (Pentacle, n.d.)(appendix -2)*

## Appendix -2

**d) Historical and Mythological Texts:**

References to symbols resembling the pentacle can be found in ancient texts, myths, and historical records. For example, the pentagram (a five-pointed star without the enclosing circle) has been associated with various ancient cultures, including Greece and Babylonia.

This passage is translated by *MacGregor Mathers, S. L* of “*The Key of Solomon*”

... If they then immediately appear, it is well; if not, let the master uncover the consecrated pentacles which he should have made to constrain and command the spirits, and which he should wear fastened round his neck, holding the medals (or pentacles) in his left hand, and the consecrated knife in his right; and encouraging his companions, he shall say with a loud voice:

Here be the symbols of secret things, the standards, the ensigns, and the banners, of God the conqueror; and the arms of the almighty One, to compel the aerial potencies. I command ye absolutely by their power and virtue that ye come near unto us, into our presence, from whatsoever part of the world ye may be in, and that ye delay not to obey us in all things wherein we shall command ye by the virtue of God the mighty One. Come ye promptly, and delay not to appear, and answer us with humility. If they appear at this time, show them the pentacles, and receive them with kindness, gentleness, and courtesy; reason and speak with them, question them, and ask from them all things which thou hast proposed to demand. But if, on the contrary, they do not yet make their appearance, holding the consecrated knife in the right hand, and the pentacles being uncovered by the removal of their consecrated covering, strike and beat the air with the knife as if wishing to commence a combat, comfort and exhort thy companions, and then in a loud and stern voice repeat the following conjuration (Translated by MacGregor Mathers)

**e) Modern Fiction and Popular Culture:**

The pentacle is sometimes used in modern fiction, particularly in genres like urban fantasy and paranormal romance. Authors may incorporate the symbol into their stories to evoke a sense of magic, mystery, or the supernatural. In status quo the symbol widely used in Tattoos who wants to represent the symbol, jewelry and modern art are not except for the representing the pentacle as a mystical symbol.

**Conclusion** :It's important to note that the interpretation of the pentacle can vary widely depending on the cultural, religious, or literary context in which it is used. As such, its meaning can be different in different works of literature and may be influenced by the author's intentions and the overall themes of the story.

As we can conclude from the research that the symbol pentacle can be referenced in Da Vinci Code from different sources. The early using and forming it dates back to 14 and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries in the book “Key of Solomon”. In most cases the pentacle is a major object of paganism which

symbolize the protection for belief 'Wicca'. Dan Brawn has both negative and positive meanings of pentacle for his book by two characters' (prof. Robert Langdon and captain Bazu Fache ) conversation. The author mentioned the symbol of pentacle as the divineness of woman and the equality of gender while in modern literature it is kindly adopted as a main element of paganism and talisman for protection from bad spirit.

The symbols and codes are woven into the narrative to create a sense of mystery and intrigue, guiding the characters and the reader through a complex web of historical and artistic clues. It's important to note that while the novel incorporates real historical and artistic elements, it is ultimately a work of fiction, and the interpretation of these symbols within the story is fictional and speculative.

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