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Candidate session number		

Candidate name	

School name	

Examination session (May or November)	May	Year	2015

Diploma Programme subject in which this extended essay is registered: English B (Group 2)

(For an extended essay in the area of languages, state the language and whether it is group 1 or group 2.)

Title of the extended essay: How does Dan Brown use gender stereotype to further his plot in the Da Vinci Code?

Candidate's declaration

This declaration must be signed by the candidate; otherwise a mark of zero will be issued.

The extended essay I am submitting is my own work (apart from guidance allowed by the International Baccalaureate).

I have acknowledged each use of the words, graphics or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual.

I am aware that the word limit for all extended essays is 4000 words and that examiners are not required to read beyond this limit.

This is the final version of my extended essay.

Candidate's signature: _____ Date: 17th February 2015

Supervisor's report and declaration

The supervisor must complete this report, sign the declaration and then give the final version of the extended essay, with this cover attached, to the Diploma Programme coordinator.

Name of supervisor (CAPITAL letters) _____

Please comment, as appropriate, on the candidate's performance, the context in which the candidate undertook the research for the extended essay, any difficulties encountered and how these were overcome (see page 13 of the extended essay guide). The concluding interview (viva voce) may provide useful information. These comments can help the examiner award a level for criterion K (holistic judgment). Do not comment on any adverse personal circumstances that may have affected the candidate. If the amount of time spent with the candidate was zero, you must explain this, in particular how it was then possible to authenticate the essay as the candidate's own work. You may attach an additional sheet if there is insufficient space here.

I was very impressed by   's approach to his Extended Essay. His original approach was too descriptive, and he also found organising his ideas quite challenging. However, he persevered, took on board the advice given and I believe he has produced a reasonably convincing analysis of the gender stereotyping in Brown's novel. He did a lot of reading around the subject to help him articulate the issues involved in gender stereo typing. In his *viva* he again demonstrated his enthusiasm for both the topic of the essay and the process of writing it. I believe he has learnt a lot about the demands of writing a research essay from the whole process.

This declaration must be signed by the supervisor; otherwise a mark of zero will be issued.

I have read the final version of the extended essay that will be submitted to the examiner.

To the best of my knowledge, the extended essay is the authentic work of the candidate.

As per the section entitled "Responsibilities of the Supervisor" in the EE guide, the recommended number of hours spent with candidates is between 3 and 5 hours. Schools will be contacted when the number of hours is left blank, or where O hours are stated and there lacks an explanation. Schools will also be contacted in the event that number of hours spent is significantly excessive compared to the recommendation.

I spent ⎕ 8 ⎕ hours with the candidate discussing the progress of the extended essay.

Supervisor's signature _____ Date: 15 February 2015

Assessment form (for examiner use only)

Candidate session number		

Achievement level

Criteria	Examiner 1	maximum	Examiner 2	maximum	Examiner 3
A research question	2	2		2	
B introduction	1	2		2	
C investigation	2	4		4	
D knowledge and understanding	2	4		4	
E reasoned argument	2	4		4	
F analysis and evaluation	2	4		4	
G use of subject language	2	4		4	
H conclusion	1	2		2	
I formal presentation →	2	4		4	
J abstract	2	2		2	
K holistic judgment	2	4		4	

Total out of 36	20		

Name of examiner 1: _____   Examiner number: __
(CAPITAL letters)

Name of examiner 2: _____   Examiner number: _____
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Name of examiner 3: _____   Examiner number: _____
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How does Dan Brown use gender stereotype to further his plot in the Da Vinci Code?

1

How does Dan Brown use gender stereotype to further his plot in the Da Vinci Code?

Word Count: 3117

Handed in: 22th October 2014

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Abstract:

The purpose of this essay is to investigate the research question of how Dan Brown used gender stereotypes to further his plot in the Da Vinci Code. Through a superficial skim of the novel it is possible to state that the author is for the empowerment of the female gender. However, through qualitative and quantitative research on numerous chapters and the analysis of the text, this essay will demonstrate the underlying context of the novel, and explain how Langdon used gender stereotypes to further his plot. The qualitative research conducted shows the division of speech for each character according to their gender, the results show the writer using more male characters for speech; this conforms to the gender inequality in his novel. Furthermore, it shows how tokenistic the actions of some characters were. The different sides to whether the author implemented gender stereotypes or not to further his novel are discussed in this essay.

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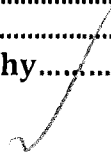
Acknowledgement:

I would like to show the greats gratitude to my great supervisor Mr.   who gave me useful tips and advice through out my extended essay process whilst giving me constructive criticism.

Without forgetting, I would like to express great appreciation from the recommendations and suggestions that my older peers in D2 (IB Diploma 2) for choosing this topic and aiding me whenever I got stuck and confused.

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Introduction:

The novel is based on the idea of the Holy Grail being the divinity of the female role in the society of humans. A superficial reading of the text might suggest that Dan Brown is a promoting the empowerment of women. On the face of it this novel gives authority to women through elevating the main protagonist to be a female character Sophie, which is not the norm in traditional adventurous novels. However, I would argue that this is a superficial development, the underlying values and actions of the characters shows how Dan Brown conformed to gender stereotype. This is revealed through the analysis of the plot and how the events were initiated and occur. It shows how Sophie and Langdon conform to gender stereotypes to further the gender stereotype, things that she does are tokenistic. The bulk of action and decision lies with the main male characters and the novel conforms to the traditional form of a male ruled or controlled novel. In addition, through conducting a qualitative research on different chapters of the novel, by comparing the different speech allocating on the characters by gender we can see if really Dan Brown tries to promote gender equality.

Body:

Early in the novel, Sophie Neveu was able to help Robert Langdon escape from Le Louvre. Initially her character is seen as daring, intelligent, and independent, she was able to make her decision when she saw that Langdon was flustered and didn't know what to do to get himself out of the predicament:" *Nonetheless, Sophie made her decision*"(p. 116. It is plausible to say that Brown gave Sophie the power and characteristics that would be expected from a male character Robert Langdon. In effect, she rescued him, inverting the role of the knight in shining armour who saves the helpless damsel, Langdon. This showed how confident Sophie was, hence it was her being dominant and not submissively waiting for Langdon to make the next moves and just follow him.

At the beginning of the first chapters based on the description of Sophie, it can be suggested that Brown is promoting gender equality through the way he describes the attitudes she has to overcome.. "*Sophie Neveu had been foisted on Fache two years ago as part of the ministry's attempt to incorporate more women into the police force.*" P.78. The thoughts of Fache on the role of female workers in the police department, in which he assumes that they all had physical deficiencies and disrupted the male workers, females are seen to be weak and dependent on man. "*Women not only lacked the physicality necessary for police work, but their mere presence posed a dangerous distraction to the men*"p.78 In Fache's view, men do the real police work and thus the female character already has to overcome the negative attitudes of her colleagues. That it is she who finds the escape route for both herself and Langdon suggests that Fache is mistaken, allowing Brown a way into challenging gender stereotypes.

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Thus, at the start of the novel, Sophie Neveu is depicted as a firm, confident and assertive person while the male protagonist Robert Langdon is seen as humble, calm and submissive to most of Sophie's ideas. An example is when Langdon had to agree to follow Sophie Neveu's direction after they first encountered in the Le Louvre at the crime scene. *"Filled with uncertainty. Langdon had decided to do exactly as Sophie advised"* p.97. The characteristic stereotypically more commonly given to females than males is for them to be the docile follower, so Sophie initially seems to be challenging many of the traditional gender stereotypes associated with a more traditional heroine.

Furthermore it is possible that the author, Dan Brown tried to give masculine features to the female protagonist and feminine features to the male protagonist to some how find balance in gender equality. The writer goes against the norm and empowers the female protagonist with intelligence and confidence, which gave her the ability to compete with men (e.g. Fache). Neveu also has physical capability of undertaking male role tasks, such as controlling firearms and helping to catch and disarm Silas at Teabing's chateaux Villet.

Even though it can be inferred that the author is fostering gender equality, the aspect of gender stereotype can be spotted in the context of the whole novel. Indeed, after the first few chapters, the author throughout the story used traditional gender stereotyping. This can be stated because the male protagonist makes most of the important pivotal discoveries within the plot and through his knowledge the two protagonists are able to solve the quest. After Sophie Neveu orchestrates Langdon's escape, the next steps are nearly entirely proposed or initiated by Robert Langdon. After escaping the museum as the two protagonists discuss the code information, Langdon discovers what it is which is the Mona Lisa. From his discovery they went to the painting.

It could be argued that Dan Brown allows Sophie to take control of the action by investigating the painting, the female protagonist is shown to have freedom, however, he limits her because the next crucial information is found by Robert which are six purple glowing words. This is a good example of gender stereotype were it is possible to see the female character handling the situation but it is actually Langdon who is provides information to Sophie, which is pivotal and led to the discovery of the key.

The discovery of the key was essential for the novel to progress, when Langdon gets to hold it, he is depicted as rather confused, then Sophie is there to enlighten him that it is a laser cut key. Nonetheless, it is Langdon who still finds the important information from the key, which is the address that leads them to the bank where they gain the cryptex. This shows us how she notices and recognizes the type of key, however, the male character Langdon did the higher level of skill for the interpretation of the key and what to do with it. This shows the underlying of the implementation of Dan Brown technique of superficially showing and giving power

to Sophie, nonetheless, the main information, which is vital for the plot, or mystery to unveil is discovered by Langdon. The next critical decision is made by Langdon, which leads them to Teabing. From there Teabing and Langdon are the main characters that contribute to what happens in the course of the novel. The author achieves this through making these two characters rely on their knowledge of the Holy Grail while Sophie listens to them. We see in chapter 58, which includes the discussion between Sophie, Langdon and Teabing, Sophie is just asking the questions to continue the plot. Teabing controlled most of the speech and the consecutive events which followed. She didn't have any input of making any significant discovery, which would aid in furthering the plot.

At the end of the mystery Langdon is able to attain the final prize of Sophie Neveu or finding the Holy Grail as most traditional stereotypical novels. "*I would love nothing more than to meet you in Florence, Robert.*" P.587 This is a phrase stated by Sophie and then the pair shared a kiss. From this evidence, it is plausible to state that the couple had a romantic future together as most fairy-tales end like this, with the prince having her princess. The initial role reversal seen at the beginning of the novel seems to have reverted to the more traditional format of the male initiating the action and the female following.

A neutral gender narrator narrates the entire novel. The narrator is able to see the thoughts and feelings of the different characters and convey this to the readers. However, there are certain aspects of the narration which is gender targeting and mostly stereotypical. In the whole book starting from the moment that Langdon and Neveu met in the Le Louvre. The narrator describes Sophie in a sexual manner compared to Robert. He describes her as "*She was attractive and looked to be about thirty. Her thick burgundy hair fell unstyled to her shoulders, framing the warmth of her face.*" p. 79. This quote can show how explicit her description was and in a sensual manner. While compared to the description of Fache and Langdon, the two male characters are described as man according to their appearance and body without complimenting or commenting about their bodies' beauty. For instance the description of Fache "like an angry ox, with his wide shoulders thrown back and his chin tucked hard into his chest". Lastly, the narrator mostly tells the story in the male perspective through Langdon, Silas and Aringarosa than through the female characters like Sophie and Sister Biel. This suggests that the book wasn't gender neutral/equal as the male characters mostly dominated the narrative and it was written with the focus on them.

Further analysing the roles of Aringarosa and Silas, it can be inferred that they were pivotal characters for the progression of the novel compared to the other two supporting female characters who were sister Sandrine and Sophie's grandmother, that were just reactive to what occurred to them. The two male antagonist actors made decision and where mostly proactive through the narration of the book, therefore for example Bishop Aringarosa took the initiative of saving Silas, finding a solution for saving his cult. In contrast, sister Sandrine is just seen sitting there in

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the church waiting for something to happen and not taking any action. These role allocations highly comply with gender stereotypes typically the ones in traditional tales, where the female characters are helpless and wait for all the action to be initiated by the male characters. Hence, this is an example of how Dan Brown utilised gender stereotype to further his novel.

Another critical character was Teabing. His traits, motive and relationship with other character like Sophie Neveu showed how Dan Brown used gender stereotype in the development of his novel. Teabing was infatuated by the Holy Grail and had a yearning for solving the mystery. His desire to uncover the mystery causes him to carry out various despicable actions. The desire was the fuel that drove Teabing to commit malicious deeds. An example of a gender stereotype can be shown here as his a man controlling other characters. The different ways that writer chose for Teabing to interacts with Langdon and Neveu portrays this. For example, when the two protagonists went to seek refugee at his chateaux. Teabing would always listen to Langdon and ignored Neveu advice. This can be seen as a gender stereotype because Teabing is neglecting the opinion and insight of the Sophie and listening to Robert. This shows that the Teabing thought that Sophie was inferior and uneducated. Nonetheless, it could still be urged that Teabing only did this subconsciously because he knew of Langdon's credentials. However, this happened so many times throughout the storyline that it is possible to believe that Dan Brown's own attitudes are appearing through Teabing's character.

A reoccurring gender stereotype scenario, which happens within the novel, is the underestimation of the female characters in the novel by the male characters. Again, on the surface, this could be seen as empowering the female characters. An example is Sister Sandrine who Silas didn't feel had any big ties with the Priory of Sion. However, she actually had an important rule in the group as the guard. He bestows power to the female character that people would overlook and think it is not possible. However, in many ways, both Sophie and Sister Sandrine are in the same situations throughout the book. They are both waiting for someone to initiate an action for them to respond to. Sister Sandrine had mostly reported speeches instead of her actually having her remarks stated out in most of the scenes she was featured in. In addition, the two female characters need a male character to protect them. This shows how the author conforms to gender stereotypes and uses it to further his plot.

Another character that exhibits gender stereotype is the Bank Manager who is a male. Firstly, there is a possibility that the manager could be female. I think that this is also a class stereotype as the manager is described as an upper class male with expensive and valuable entities, with therefore a good reputation. Hence, it is plausible to state that this is an example of Brown using gender stereotype to further his plot. The manager had the male gender stereotypical traits of being confident and a risk-taker.

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The ratio of male to female characters in the novel is 3 female characters to 10 male characters. This statistic firstly shows the gender inequality of the distinctive characters only having one female character to three male characters. Moreover, if the speeches are analysed on which characters initiate or control them, it is mostly the male characters.

To investigate the allocation of speech given to the different characters a quantitative research was carried out in the book from 3 chapters. One chapter at the beginning, one at the middle and the last at the end of the novel to count how many words each character had between Langdon and Neveu. The chosen chapters were chapter 9, 58 and 101. Chapter 9 was chosen because it was the first time that Neveu and Langdon met and it was at the crime scene in the Le Louvre. The fifty eighth chapter is when Langdon and Sophie were in Teabing's study with him and discussing about the Holy Grail, so we will be able to study the dynamics and relation through the three characters and analyse for any gender stereotype behaviour. The last chapter 104 was chosen because it was when the two protagonists were in their final stop in their journey of seeking to uncover the Holy Grail.

In chapter 9, Langdon had a total amount of 20 words in his speech, while Sophie had 210 words in her speech. From the analysis it shows how Sophie Neveu had the higher percentage of the speech through out the chapter and controlled the conversion between her and Fache as well as her and Langdon. Langdon can be seen as very quiet throughout the chapter. This is the chapter where the most obvious challenge to the traditional view of the passive female is seen. Sophie can be seen as controlling – but also manipulative - by the way he addresses Langdon and giving him her voicemail to instruct him on what he should do. Moreover, she is able to distract Fache while Langdon can listen to message. Sophie manipulates Fache and guided Langdon on what to do next to save him. This leads the two protagonists to the washrooms. In addition, most of the conversion is guided and initiated by her in this chapter, which shows that she had control and power over the other characters.

However, as the novel progresses, we see that the male characters gradually resumed their traditional role as dominant leader. Although in chapter 58 Langdon had 170 words and Sophie had 211 words in their speeches, most of the conversion was between Sophie and Teabing. Teabing had 1159 words of speech, him and Langdon were educating Sophie about the Holy Grail and telling her what they interpreted it to be, which is the Bloodline of Jesus. Most of the speech could be seen initiated by Sophie rather than Langdon, however they were questions, which showed the female character being unaware and not insightful about the topic. Langdon can be seen as calm and knowledgeable about the subject. The times he spoke, a sense of confidence could be felt as he gave factual information, which Teabing also agreed with him. Therefore, the character of Langdon in this chapter also conforms to gender stereotypes, as he was confident, knowledgeable and controlled. He was also able to assist Sophie in gaining more knowledge regarding

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the Holy Grail. Lastly, it can be seen that even though the dialogues might be initiated and continued by the female character, the male character is always there to further the plot by providing insightful information and aid the female character as they progress in their journey.

Then in chapter 104, Langdon had 131 words and Sophie had 86 words in their speeches through out the chapter. In this last chapter it was mostly focused on Langdon rather than Sophie. Moreover, Langdon mostly dominated the speech as he spoke to Sophie and the Rosslyn guide (Sophie's Brother). The other interesting fact about this chapter is how Langdon seems to neglect Sophie's claims of recalling the chapel and starts talking to the guide from where he discovers the truth. Hence, it can be stated that the book ends by conforming to gender stereotype by allowing the male character Mr. Langdon to uncover the truth about the Holy Grail. It can be questioned that why was Sophie not the one to uncovers this mystery as she recalls her trips to the chapel with her deceased grandfather. So the gender stereotypes that it shows is how the male character mostly ignores the female character, perhaps he thinks that she is just remembering thing that she has seen before which isn't there. To support this Sophie's character also complies to the gender stereotype by being submissive to Langdon and not standing up for her own thoughts as she doesn't want to seem stubborn.

The novel is similar to most common fairy tale like Cinderella and Snow White. Both of these folk tales have main female protagonists characters. However, these characters are set in a predicament were they rely on the male characters known as their prince to save them and the two characters, ergo the female and male live together happily ever after. From the Da Vinci code the story doesn't seem like a common fairy tale if you analyse it cursorily because both the male and female character seem to be dependent on each other as they quest to find the holy grail. Nevertheless,

Conclusion:

As shown throughout the whole essay, it is plausible to state that Dan Brown utilised gender stereotype to further his plot through out the novel. If the book is cursorily analysed it can be stated that the author is empowering the female characters and give both protagonist equal power, or even more power to Sophie. However, if the analysis is done thoroughly different factors can be uncovered to show that actual the author does use gender stereotype to build upon his plot. It can be argued that this occurred without the attention of author knowing because he tried to portray the women character as equals with the male character. Nonetheless, the author conformed to the gender stereotypes by following the normal men controlled novels of giving them the main power and focus in the pivotal sections of the novel.

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