

## Reconfiguring Cinematic Purview: The Process of Transposition on *Angels and Demons*

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### Abstract

This research will look at American author Dan Brown's novel *Angels and Demons* and Ron Howard's film adaptation of the same name through the lens of adaptation theory. The adaptation of Dan Brown's *Angels and Demons* by Ron Howard focuses on the mise-en-scene parameters in Dan Brown's writing and the pluralistic perceptions, precisely the narrative in the novel and the director's preferred frame of reference in the film. *Angels and Demons* revived a terrific impact on the readers through the narrative form by exposing the enigmas and motives for the obscure conceits. This paper explores the novel's process of transposition of the adaptation comprising the themes of the narrative. Following the conventions of filmmaking, directors/scriptwriters occasionally proffer reconstructed information, a radical in line with one's interpretation of the fact as contrasting with the one presented by the original author.

**Keywords:** Film Adaptation, Media Transposition, Adaptability, Authenticity, Fidelity.

## **Introduction**

Early in the twenty-first century, there has been a surge in interest in the field of adaptation studies, which has led to a plethora of discussions on the need to rethink both adaptation and the industry as a whole. As it applies its comparative mode of study to many media, adaptation studies can give new light on the content and dynamics investigated in convergence or transmedia studies. One of its advantages is the diversity of approaches used in adaptation studies, including intertextuality, poststructuralist writing and media theory, and cultural studies. Pre-digital adaptation studies use them to address issues like textual relationships, mediality, authorship, authority, and authenticity, to mention just a few major challenges.

*Angels & Demons* is a cryptic thriller based on the adventures of Harvard Symbology Professor Robert Langdon. When Langdon is hired to investigate a murder, he quickly finds himself caught up in a plan against the Catholic Church, which appears to be perpetrated by the mysterious Bavarian Illuminati. *Angels and Demons*, offers original insights, fascinating anecdotes, and compelling debate about nearly every current aspect of today's headlines, with the new fascination with the increasingly complex intersection of religion, politics, science, life, death, morality, and ethics in our culture is at the core. This book also discusses a fabled secret society in contrast to the Roman Catholic Church's traditional doctrines.

Dan Brown's thriller *Angels and Demons*, which is positioned as a historical work, challenges readers' perceptions of the past. Even though this book is fiction, the list of references it cites in the text attempt to persuade readers that it is factually accurate. The genres of crime, intrigue, conspiracy, and religion are all present in *Angels and Demons*. It is a code-cracking thriller that is jam-packed with problems and conundrums. All Brown has done is incorporate all of those components into a contemporary narrative to show an antiquated belief system. He introduces what is referred to as genre-crossing tendencies and combines subgenres to further key points that handle the narrative.

The process of transposition holds considerable work on the film's adaptability, and the director's discourse to capture readers' interest and imagination from the beginning of the novel

until all of the key information is incorporated into the movie. Brown's inferences can be a little too detailed at times. For example, in current adaptation studies, the term genre is mainly used as propaganda to sell a book to potential audiences worldwide.

### **Textual Exegesis of the Visual**

The adaptation of *Angels and Demons* into a film is identified as a partial adaptation that falls between the literary and flexible adaptations of the filmmakers whilst still upholding the novel's key features. The author is a creative artist who creates a fictional universe populated by characters who live in his imagination. The filmmaker is also an artist who draws his raw material from the novel, but the way he uses the character and plot must be unique. In the end, cinema is his art, and how he crafts the text is driven by his imaginative impulses and views, which underpin the story's development. (Desmond and Hawkes)

Ron Howard is a textual adapter in the utmost sense, interested in the adaptation of signs and symbols, besides genre, music, and attire. Dan Brown embraced that adaptation should be viewed as a creative process that involves a significant modification of the source material rather than reducing the source text. This is exemplified in Howard's adaptation work, which peaks from a modern reinterpretation of Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* to a modern deconstruction of Dan Brown's *Angels and Demons*. According to Brown, Ron Howard specialised in the practical intertwining of the literary and cinema through the employment of multiple scales and layers of voice, producing a multi-dimensional work with an impact on the audience. In this framework, the director's method of steering out lengthy narratives to the main subject, minimising or modifying characters, skipping or combining the scenes, altering the cultural milieu and timeline of the character's life, narrowing the small stories into a single visual sign and snipping long dialogues to focus on the key phrase, makes it clear that he reconfigures the writings in accordance with the options shared by cinematic art.

According to Mieke Bal, a Dutch narratologist, the narrative approach has five different tactics. 1) Ellipsis— a not-so-significant part of the story omitted during the narration by the director/scriptwriter; 2) Generalisation – summarising minor events of the story to describe the

significant action; 3) Scene - a summary of the action where the plot generalises the discursive time, although complete syncing would turn the text unreadable; 4) Slow-down – a deliberate stretching of the event to engage the reader’s mind with the character's vision. It is contrary to generalisation; 5) Pause – a complete stop in the story’s events to highlight the critical elements of the storyline to the picture. It is more occasional than a slow-down. (Bal, 101-106)

The association between literature and cinema can be seen in the film. While words are needed in literature to describe emotions and social issues, devices and techniques are needed in filmmaking to make films that are more accessible to audiences. The image scenes created by the director and the follow-up of the camera deliver a distinct connotation in the movie, retaining the heightened tension poised by the author throughout the novel. The filmmaker intends to make the most of motion images, dialogues, and sounds, which are the most potent aspects of cinema adapting the novel to the big screen.

### **Media Transposition**

The research is provided in terms of the media transposition of the novel to film. According to Brown, Ron Howard has a notable career as a director with specific cinematic visions. Howard's adaptation uses a set of techniques, such as twisting patterns and strengthening the cast headlined by Tom Hanks, whose role boosts the film's international social stature. His creative approach to original materials, presumably altered, is evident in the adaptation. The different phases of the storyline that are spread throughout the script's substance are assembled with care. The visual medium provides options that a verbal book would not, like - the elements are diverse - camera eye, narrator, lighting, space usage, dialogues, body language, facial expression, and silences, all of which are used to explore human interactions with unusual sensitivity.

Literary dialogue and film dialogue differ from one another, cinema is made up of both sounds and images in addition to words. While movies have many audiovisual backgrounds, literature does not. However, theatre is also audiovisual, allowing us to view actors on stage as well as on screens while we watch their performances.

The concept of adaptation has been performed to focus on understanding the approach taken by narrative and film. This will prompt us to put up with certain situations so that the idea of adaptation and change within the arts can persist. Film representation adapts new ideas, and adaptation establishes the boundaries of perception. The memory of a narrative, particularly a novel, that memory that has been drawn from the actual situations of reading, is constantly highlighted in adaptations. On the other side, adaptation uses up that memory as it works to erase it in favour of its new images. As a result, transposition reworks to take up narrative memory. Several effective adaptation approaches have been suggested by several academics and scholars. Some of them assume that adaptation must entirely modify its authenticity, completing the twin tasks of concealing and overwriting its sources, and providing the only interesting thing to be the transformation of words into images. The screenplay's and film's parameters may be divulged by fidelity. Literature and film have a distinct language of fidelity; texts are never compared to other kinds of art, notably films. Additionally, the idea of fidelity denotes a structure in which the narrative serves as the primary source and the film only serves as a replica. Although cinema is believed as the ubiquitous art that connects the most interested individuals, literature is the art of expression. Some critics contend that literature sometimes serves as inspiration for films and vice versa.

### **Catechization of Filmmaking the Novel**

Howard's *Angels and Demons* is a plausible high-level interpretation of one of today's finest creative directions. Howard and his adaptations push boundaries by realising the role of incorporation and originality in the adaptation process, which undercut the idea of source fidelity. All four cardinals are murdered in the novel, whereas in the movie, the final cardinal, who is also a doctor, lives and becomes Pope. This event may be viewed as the outset of science and religion communion, symbolically breaking down the cliché to attain the zenith of the audience's enjoyment at the moment of catharsis through the art of film. It is the foresight of the director that sculpts the plot and character of the movie.

Many focused and enduring camera viewpoints are available in film. The lack of the space-time continuum dilates or enlarges our experience. Edited together are images taken in

several locations which are possible to blend, connect, or splice at different timeframes. The regular sequential order of experience is altered, amplified, or omitted altogether. Production designer Allan Cameron and visual effects supervisor Angus Bickerton realised the twenty-four metres tall soundstages were only half as big as the actual church when attempting to recreate the inside of St. Peter's Basilica. The St. Peter's Baldachin area and the crypts below it was recreated, along with the bottoms of the columns and Saint Peter's statue, and a 360-degree greenscreen encircled them so the rest could be constructed digitally. Cameron had twenty team members photograph as much of the Sistine Chapel as they could while pretending as spectators. From the images, artisans created scaled-down recreations of the mosaics and paintings. Because he liked the contrast between the formerly smoky, subdued colours and the brilliant crimson of the cardinal's vestments, Cameron decided to depict the Sistine Chapel as it was prior to the renovation of its murals. The Sala Regia was downsized to fit within the stage while the chapel was constructed to its full size.

On the same backlot, sets for Saint Peter's Square and Piazza Navona were constructed. After shooting scenes in the first set, the second set required six weeks to convert, which included demolishing the Basilica side and digging up one metre of asphalt to construct the fountain. The transition between the real Piazza Navona and the reproduction had to be smooth because filming had taken place there. A police station in Rome was employed as the outside in order to portray the Santa Maria del Popolo as being under repair; the scaffolding concealed the fact that it was not the actual church. In order to save money, Cameron reproduced the interior of Santa Maria Della Vittoria on the same set as the interior of Santa Maria del Popolo, while also disguising the scaffolding. Santa Maria Della Vittoria was portrayed in the film as being larger than it actually was to accommodate the cranes needed to film the sequence. Two aediculae and the tomb of Raphael were reconstructed to scale at a height of 9 metres, while the rest of the interior of the Pantheon was green-screened. Filmmakers were able to shoot the entire scenario over the span of two days and retouch the real side to make it appear to be different due to the symmetric design of the building. The backcourt photographed the Large Hadron Collider and pasted the images into CERN-based sceneries.

### Secrets and Plot twists in the Novel and the Film

Both the book and the film present timelines invariably. In the narrative, there are two distinct timeline types that correspond to various events. The first timeline has as its goal the discovery of the antimatter bomb, while the second is focused on the urgent necessity to locate the scene of the intended assassination. The most glaring difference between the book and film concerns the Camerlengo, aside from minor characters and subplots that are omitted from the film (played by Ewan McGregor). In the film, we gradually discover that he is aggressive and profoundly mistaken, but in the novel, he is considerably more clearly evil—almost devilish. In the book, the Camerlengo decides to inform the media about the Illuminati's plot to annihilate the Vatican in order to elicit sympathy for the Church's defenceless position (Brown, 319). This is obviously a ruse because the Camerlengo knew where the bomb is because he himself planted it.

In contrast to the film, he backs down to The Illuminati in front of the media, declaring that science has triumphed over religion. He then openly fabricates a last-second miraculous epiphany, stating that God has told him where the bomb is hidden. Then he finds the bomb in the hiding place where he had earlier hidden it and 'saves' the Vatican. According to the text, they rejoice at this revelation that the world has "received a confidence of the beyond, a vindication of the majesty of the Creator" (Brown, 429). With the exception of Mortati, who continues to have misgivings, the Cardinals are all certain that they have seen a divine revelation and salvation.

In both versions, Camerlengo's triumph is short-lived because it turns out that his fabrication of the Illuminati menace was based on fragments of real history. Additionally, we deduce that the assassin who killed Vittoria's father, the four Cardinals, and took the anti-matter was hired by the Camerlengo himself. He killed the Pope after finding out he had fathered a child, breaching his vow of celibacy, which is revealed in the book. He later discovers, however, that the Pope's child was actually fathered by the Camerlengo himself through in-vitro fertilisation, which helped to preserve the Pope's chastity (Brown, 456). Thus, as the narrative draws to a close and The Illuminati plot is revealed to be a sinister fabrication, it may seem ironic that the film's main takeaway is to avoid falling for conspiracy theories.

## Conclusion

This article examines the verbal and visual approaches adopted by Ron Howard in Dan Brown's novel *Angels and Demons* in his film adaptation to address the significance of the process of transposition through adaptability and authenticity. Cinema scholium is significant for literary studies since it helps us look at things differently, looking for the subconscious reflective thinking of society and the underpinning corridors of power. It should not be overlooked that the novel at issue is drawn out from the author's pen, and also that the novel adapted into a movie lives by the director's language. As the film has a restricted plot, rather than wallowing in details, it maximises most of its particular visual language, focusing on crucial elements and characters. Critics commonly disparage the movie for being an arbitrary, partial depiction of the novel, jeopardising the fidelity of the movie to the original text.

Fidelity is biased in the same way as different perspectives in understanding the novel. Film takes back the audience to the early form of storytelling by oral. The environment of oral storytelling is purely controlled by the storyteller, pulling the string of his tone, facial expression and body language, thus displaying only one perspective to be interpreted. This changed when the narrative form shifted to papers - the novels. Although the emotion and situations are reflected through words in the paper, a sense of physical connectivity to the flow of the plot is missed. Based on their viewpoint and comprehension of the work, it caused the audience to mentally create a physical plot. Being a book reader came to be associated with it because it was so prevalent. When a new form of narrative (film adaptation) emerged displaying one person's perspective to a group of audience wired to have different versions of the novel, there came an uneasiness.

The sole aim of the director and screenwriter in the film adaptation is to minimise this discomfort and maximise satisfaction with the visual plot. The director brings out the physical essence of the novel by choosing a suitable cast and shooting spot matching the descriptions of the novel. Howard's choice of Tom Hanks created a spotlight for the movie along with the explicit portrayal of Robert Langdon. The use of settings and CGI for no-shoot spots preserved the background flow of the novel. As a director in Hollywood, sequencing the scenes and



altering the plot in favour of the visual and global audience, steals the focus of the director. In the novel, audiences are aware that the plot is fiction so they are not impacted by the ending of the novel. But as the movie visualises the plot realistically, audiences believe the plot to be true and debate if any controversy appears. This made Howard skip a controversial part of the ending which deals with questioning the Pope's purity. Also, Hollywood audiences are a setback to the classic Hero-Villain genre and so the part of climax justifying the Camerlengo's action is completely skipped, just to portray him to be the Villain till the end. This paper considers a wide range of factors that impacts how faithfully the novel is portrayed in the film adaption and emphasises the importance of the director's interpretation of these factors to create the perfect fusion that is visually appealing by the process of transposition through adaptability and authenticity.

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