

# The intertextuality of symbols: water and fire from “angels and demons” by dan brown

 Sadikova Dildora Nizomovna

Assistant teacher of Navoi State University, Department of Practical subjects of English language, Uzbekistan

**Received:** 27 January 2025; **Accepted:** 28 February 2025; **Published:** 29 March 2025

**Abstract:** This article investigates the intertextuality of the elemental symbols—water, fire, sand, and air—across literary, mythical, and cultural sources. Examining their recurrent themes, altering connotations, and connectivity helps the study show how these symbols go beyond personal stories to create a global language of human experience. To show the continuing relevance of these symbols, the study uses instances from ancient stories, religious writings, classical literature, and contemporary media.

**Keywords:** Intertextuality, hypotextuality, hypertextuality, symbol, water, air, sand, fire.

**Introduction:** The examination of intertextuality has been greatly impacted by postmodernism, which emphasizes the fluidity and diversity of meaning that are present in texts. The concept of a singular entity is rejected by postmodern theory.

The proposal is that the meaning of texts is formulated through a network of references and citations from other texts, rather than through an authoritative interpretation. This perspective is consistent with Julia Kristeva's concept of intertextuality, which regards texts as "mosaics of quotations." (Kristeva, 1986)

The first category of transtextuality, intertextuality was first studied by J. Kristeva and is a key component of his transtextual theory. G. Genette talked about this idea. According to the hypothesis, several elements or entities interact in either ways. Genette describes it as a "relationship of co-presence" amongst books. This shows that it either directly or subtly involves the cohabitation or presence of one text inside another. The intertextuality builds the categories as follows: quotation, allusion, plagiarism, pastiche. (Sadikova, 2024)

Symbols can evoke strong emotions by associating characters or actions with broader emotional or cultural associations. Through the process of recontextualizing symbols like air, water, fire in new works, intertextuality makes it possible to reignite the significance of these symbols. As an illustration, a

contemporary novel can adopt the concept of air as a symbol of environmental consciousness, borrowing inspiration from ancient ecological writings or myths concerning the harmony of nature. Through this process, the symbol gets defamiliarized, which in turn gives it fresh semantic vitality and relevance. In D. Braun's "Angels and Devils" tried to reveal unwritten history by symbols. "Illuminati" the society - group of people who joined to develop the science behind the cathedral in medieval periods. The symbol carries to how renaissance period was difficult to conduct any research without permission of church, the hidden strike between religious and science. (D.Sadikova, 2024)

The traditional elements—water, earth, fire, and air—as prominent symbols in a story examining the conflict between science and faith in Dan Brown's Angels and Demons reflecting more general issues of dualism, power, and ideological strife, this study examines how each element is weaponized by the Illuminati to stage ritualistic murders. By means of ambigrams, historical references, and the storyline of the book, these components act as analogues for the conflict between spiritual faith and empirical reason. Harvard symbologist Robert Langdon unravels an

Illuminati scheme in Angels and Demons to destroy the Vatican by means of murders linked to the four elements. These components—water, earth, fire, and air—are symbols rich in philosophical and historical relevance in addition to means of application. Through

each murder serving as a perversion of conventional iconography to emphasize this clash, this thesis contends that Brown used these aspects to juxtaposition the Enlightenment-era values of science against the orthodoxy of organized religion.

Each murder in the book corresponds to one of these elements. The killer uses a specific method related to each element to kill the cardinals. For example, the first cardinal is drowned (water), then another is burned (fire), one is suffocated or something related to air, and the last one is buried (earth), the elements are Water, Earth, Fire, Air, each associated with a specific church or location.

## DISCUSSION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

### Symbol of WATER

In *Angels and Demons* by D. Brown, Cardinal Vetra drowns and the first murder takes place at the Fountain of the Four Rivers in Piazza Navona. Traditionally a sign of life and spiritual cleansing, water starts to be used as a tool of death. The ambigram for "water" reflects its dual character: destructive but life-giving. Framing water as both a means of retribution and a source of rejuvenation, this act emphasizes how the Illuminati manipulates holy symbols to subvert Church authority. The symbolism of water is significant, as it embodies numerous thoughts and ideas deeply rooted in human history. It serves as a fundamental symbol of life, representing growth, vitality, and the essential energy that sustains all living organisms. Moreover, water is often linked to wisdom, enlightenment, and clarity, indicating that it serves as a wellspring of awareness and knowledge. Water symbolizes purity; it is often employed in religious and spiritual ceremonies to cleanse the body and soul, signifying rebirth and renewal. Water is also considered a purifying substance in Islam and is utilized in several rites. Muslims perform ablutions, or ritual washing, before prayer to attain cleansing. Water is associated with the prophet Muhammad, who is believed to have performed various miracles related to water. Additionally, the Kaaba, the holiest site in Islam, contains a well known as Zamzam, believed to have curative qualities. (Wahrman, 2016)

According to the majority of faiths, water has cleansing properties. Christian, Hindu, Islamic, Judaic, Rastafari, Shinto, Taoist, and Wiccan ritual washings are all part of the faith. (Wahrman, 2016) Baptism, the Christian sacrament of immersion, is practiced in many faiths around the world. In Islam, it is called Ghusl, in Judaism, it is called mikvah, and in Sikhism, it is called Amrit Sanskar. Furthermore, several faiths, like Judaism and Islam, observe a ceremonial washing of the deceased in clean water. (Lippincott & Co, 1870) Unless water is in

short supply, Muslims are required to perform the five daily prayers after purifying specific areas of their bodies with water (wudu) (Tayammum). Water is utilized in nearly every Shinto ritual for the purpose of cleansing, such as in the guzul ritual.

Water is also a symbol of cultural identity and environmental interconnectedness. Festivals like Holi in India celebrate its life-giving properties, while modern environmental movements emphasize its fragility and the need for conservation. This duality highlights humanity's deep bond with water, both as a resource and a spiritual force.

For Christian purposes such as baptism, blessing individuals, locations, or things, or as a defense against evil, a priest can sanctify water. (Altman, 2002)

Zoroastrianism reveres water (āb) as the wellspring of all life. (ABI, 2018)

Zoroastrians still show great respect for water, and in traditional villages offerings are often presented to the household well or adjacent stream. (Boyce, 1975) Officially for the "strengthening of the waters," the ape zaotira ceremony—the last rite of the Yasna service—is essentially the major act of worship.

Apas (/ˈɑːpəs, æp-/; Avestan: āpas) is the phrase in the Avestan language for "the waters," which, in its various forms, is embodied by the Apas, the hypostases of the waters.

To this day, Zoroastrians maintain a profound regard for water, and in orthodox communities, offerings are routinely offered to the household well or adjacent stream. The ape zaotira ceremony, the final rite of the Yasna service, which is the primary act of worship, is explicitly for the "fortification of the waters." (Boyce, 1982)

Avestan apas (derived from the singular āpō) is grammatically feminine, therefore the Apas are female entities. The Middle Persian counterparts are ābān/Ābān (alternatively āvān/Āvān), from which Parsi Gujarati āvā/Āvā (used solely in religious contexts) is derived.

The Avestan common noun āpas is identical to Vedic Sanskrit āpas, both originating from the same proto-Indo-Iranian root, stem \*ap- meaning "water," which is cognate with the British river Avon. In Avestan and Vedic Sanskrit writings, the waters—whether as waves, droplets, or collectively as streams, pools, rivers, or wells—are personified by the Apas, the pantheon of water deities. The association of divinity with elemental substances is fully realized in both cultures: in the Rig Veda, the deities are deemed beneficial for consumption, while in the Avesta, the deities are considered advantageous for bathing.

The Avestan language phrase for "the waters," Apas (/ˈɑːpəs, aep-/; Avestan: āpas) is the Apas, the hypostases of the waters in their countless aggregate manifestations.

Avestan apas (from singular āpō) is linguistically feminine; the Apas are female. From which Parsi Gujarati āvā/Āvā (in religious use only) derive the Middle Persian equivalents, ābān/Ābān (alt: āvān/Āvān).

From the same proto-Indo-Iranian word, stem \*ap-\*, the Avestan common noun āpas exactly matches Vedic Sanskrit āpas and is cognate with the British river Avon. The Apas, the group of divinities of the waters, represents the waters—whether as waves or droplets, or generally as streams, pools, rivers or wells—in both Avestan and Vedic Sanskrit writings. In both civilizations the association of deity with element is complete: in the Rig Veda the divinities are healthful to drink; in the Avesta the divinities are excellent to bathe in. (Boyce, 1975)

### Symbol of FIRE

**Fire** is a complex symbol that drives the themes of science versus religion, creation versus destruction, and enlightenment versus dogma in Dan Brown's *Angels and Demons*. Its function is intricately interwoven with the story, the characters, and the larger philosophical dispute.

Cardinal Baggia's immolation at St. Peter's Basilica associates fire with both a destructive and a purifying force. The Illuminati's branding of the flame ambigram echoes past persecutions (such as heretic burnings), but it is inverted to symbolize the vulnerability of the Church. In addition, fire symbolizes the "spark" of scientific innovation, which supports the Illuminati's objectives of promoting intellectual freedom. The climax forces science and religion to face their interdependence by using fire as a literal and symbolic catalyst for change.

Fire symbolizes the Holy Spirit in Christianity (e.g., the tongues of fire at Pentecost). In the novel, this duality is subverted—fire becomes a tool of violence (e.g., Cardinal Guidara's immolation in Santa Maria della Vittoria), juxtaposing divine purification with human brutality. Biblical references like Moses' burning bush (Exodus 3:2) contrast with hellfire imagery (e.g., Dante's *Inferno*). Brown repurposes these to reflect the Illuminati's wrath and the Church's vulnerability, framing fire as both sacred and destructive. By weaving fire into the narrative's fabric, Brown critiques institutional corruption while celebrating humanity's relentless, often dangerous, pursuit of enlightenment. Fire historically symbolizes the "light of reason" that

dispels ignorance. The Illuminati, as Enlightenment-era rebels, use fire to metaphorically and literally challenge the Church's suppression of scientific progress.

The hypotextuality of the fire sign investigates its complex meanings and intertextual connections among art and literature. Often signifying destruction, rebirth, passion, purification, and creation, fire, as a classical element, has been a recurrent motif in many philosophical and cultural traditions. According to ancient Greek philosophy and science, fire is one of the four classical elements. It was frequently linked to traits like vigor, assertiveness, and passion. In one Greek story, Prometheus was punished for his altruism in saving the otherwise defenseless mankind by stealing fire from the gods. (The elements of Fire, 2007)

Fire was one of the numerous archai that the pre-Socratics presented. The majority of these archai were of the opinion that the universe, or its genesis, could be reduced to a singular component. Heraclitus, an ancient Greek philosopher who lived between 535 BCE and 475 BCE, held the belief that fire was the most primordial of all elements. (D. Kranz 1970) He stated, "All things are interchangeable with fire, and fire is interchangeable with all things, just as goods are interchangeable with gold and gold is interchangeable with goods." He was of the opinion that fire was the origin of the other three elements. He was known for employing philosophical concepts that were challenging to comprehend and for speaking in riddles. He described the process by which fire emerged as the "upward-downward path" (ὁδὸς ἄνω κάτω), a "hidden harmony" or a sequence of transformations that he referred to as the "turnings of fire" (πυρὸς τροπαί). Fire was initially converted into the sea, followed by the transformation of half of the sea into earth and the remaining half into rarefied air. This concept anticipates both the four classical components that Empedocles proposed and the transformation of those four elements into one another that Aristotle proposed.

D. Kranz stated in his Freeman book ... "This world, which is the same for all, no one of gods or men has made. But it always was and will be: an ever-living fire, with measures of it kindling, and measures going out"

The chemical element of sulfur was frequently linked to fire in alchemy, and its alchemical symbol was an upward-pointing triangle. In alchemic tradition, metals are incubated by fire in the Earth's bosom, and alchemists merely expedite their development. (D. Kranz, 40)

Agni, a fiery god, is a Hindu and Vedic deity. Agni is a Sanskrit term that denotes fire (noun). It is cognate with the Latin word ignis, which serves as the

foundation for the English term ignite, and the Russian word огонь, which is pronounced agon and means fire. Fire, electricity, and the sun are the three manifestations of Agni.

Agni is one of the most significant spirits in the Vedic religion. He is the deity of fire and the one who accepts sacrifices. The sacrifices that are offered to Agni are instead presented to the gods, as he serves as a messenger between the gods. He remains perennially youthful despite his immortality, as the fire is rekindled on a daily basis. In Indian tradition, flames are associated with Surya, also known as the Sun, and Mangala, also known as Mars, as well as the south-east direction.

Teukāya ekendriya is one of the names that are employed in Jain tradition. This name is a reference to Jīvas who are believed to have reincarnated as fire.

## RESULTS

The hypotextuality and hypertextuality study of the elements of water and fire from the book *Angels and Demons* (2000).

Fire is one of the five elements that are present in the majority of Wiccan traditions that have been influenced by the Golden Dawn system of magic, as well as Aleister Crowley's mysticism, which was in turn inspired by the Golden Dawn tradition. (Hutton, 17)

This is a recurring theme in the book "The Hidden Messages in Water" by the esteemed Japanese scientist Dr. Masaru Emoto. In his groundbreaking work, Dr. Emoto presents his discovery that water molecules are influenced by our thoughts, words, and emotions, resulting in alterations to their molecular structure. Compelling evidence indicates that our fundamental structural components respond to both known and unknown influences on a regular basis.

The main aim is to analyze of hypotextuality of the symbol water. We can see various meanings in different works. The works that presents the symbol of water that T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. In this work water symbolize of spiritual renewal.

The *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge can be another example to illustrate the symbol. Water is shown by Taylor represents as both a source of life and a destructive force. For example; The cartoon *Moana*, The Shape of Water stands for a symbol of connection and transformation.

Depending on the context and the texts it references, a symbol such as "air" in semiotics can convey a variety of meanings.

Depending on the context in which it is used, air usually represents either freedom, vitality, or the intangible. Air, for instance, can be interpreted in literature as

either the breath of life or the unseen forces that contribute to the existence of things. Not only does its meaning change with time, but it also changes depending on how it is related to other signs and the social setting in which it is employed. In modern media water is one of major symbol in the cartoon, especially. Each murder in the book *Angels and Demons* corresponds to one of these elements. The killer uses a specific method related to each element to kill the cardinals. For example, the first cardinal is drowned (water), then another is burned (fire), one is suffocated or something related to air, and maybe the last one is buried or something with earth.

## CONCLUSION

The four elements in *Angels and Demons* transcend their literal roles, embodying the ideological battle between science and religion. Water, earth, fire, and air are perverted from life-sustaining forces into tools of vengeance, reflecting the Illuminati's critique of the Church's hegemony. Through ambigrams and ritualistic murders, Brown underscores the duality of symbols—their capacity to inspire and destroy—while questioning whether science and faith can coexist. Ultimately, the novel suggests that both realms rely on the same elemental truths, even as they clash.

## REFERENCES

- Altman, Nathaniel (2002) *Sacred water: the spiritual source of life*. pp. 130–133. ISBN 1-58768-013-0.
- ĀBI. The concept of water in ancient Iran". [www.iranicaonline.org](http://www.iranicaonline.org). Encyclopedia Iranica. Archived from the original on 16 May 2018. Retrieved 19 September 2018
- Boyce, Mary (1975). *History of Zoroastrianism*, Vol. I. Leiden: Brill. ISBN 978-90-04-10474-7. p-155
- Boyce, Mary (1975). *History of Zoroastrianism*, Vol. I. Leiden: Brill. ISBN 978-90-04-10474-7. p.71
- Boyce, Mary (1982). *History of Zoroastrianism*, Vol. II. Leiden: Brill. ISBN 978-90-04-06506-2.
- Brown, Dan. *Angels and Demons*. Pocket Books, 2000
- Diels-Kranz *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers: A Complete Translation of the Fragments in Diels Fragmente Der Vorsokratiker* B90 (Freeman [1948] 1970, p. 45
- "The Elements: Fire". [Cs.utk.edu](http://Cs.utk.edu). Archived from the original on 2007-10-29. Retrieved 2007-10-18
- Kristeva, J. (1986). *Word, dialogue and novel*. In T. Moi (Ed.), *The Kristeva reader* (pp.34–61). Columbia University Press.
- Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. Harcourt, 1959.

Hutton, pp. 216–23; Valiente, Witchcraft for Tomorrow, p. 17.

Sadikova D.N THE CATEGORY OF INTERTEXTUALITY: ALLUSION, QUOTATION, SYMBOL. International Journal Of LiteratureAndLanguages.(2024)4.46-54. 10.37547/ijll/Volume04Issue11

Sadikova, Dildora. "THE INTERTEXTUAL STUDY OF THE SYMBOLIC ELEMENTS FROM DA VINCE CODE BY DAN BROWN." Conference Proceedings:Fostering Your Research Spirit. 202

Jung, Carl. Man and His Symbols. Dell, 1964.

Z Wahrman M (2016). The Hand Book: Surviving in a Germ-Filled World. University Press of New England. pp. 46–48. ISBN 978-1-61168-955-6. Water plays a role in other Christian rituals as well. ... In the early days of Christianity, two to three centuries after Christ, the lavabo (Latin for "I wash myself"), a ritual handwashing vessel and bowl, was introduced as part of Church service.

<https://symbolismguide.com/symbolism-of-water/>