

# “Delineation of Story and Script Narration in Print and Visual Medium”

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## ABSTRACT

A plot is a few sentences long, and defines the genre, the nature and direction of the story. It is usually written in first person. On the other hand a story is written in prose form. It may extend to several pages containing information though real or imaginary like a novel. A script or a screenplay is a blueprint of the movie and written in present tense. A script covers various scenes, and written in three acts. It contains names of characters, descriptions of them and the environment, action, dialogues, details like interior or exterior for the locations, and night or day for the time the action is taking place in. Nothing is left to the imagination of the reader.

A story too portrays various details like a movie script but differ in their mode of representation. So the narrative of both the medium i.e. Print and Visual are far apart from each other.

The present research is an attempt to delineate a story narration and script narration with special reference to novella “The Blue Umbrella” by Ruskin Bond and its cinematic adaptation “The Blue Umbrella” by Vishal Bhardwaj. The objective of the paper is to depict how a narrative changes with the change in medium as print to visual one.

**Key Words: Delineate, Cinematic, Literary, Narrative, Adaptation.**

## 1. Introduction

A narrative can be presented in many ways by an artist. It can be done by using sequences of images, a central moment in a story which stands for the whole story. Narrative works often illustrate well-known historical, religious, legendary, or mythic stories. Sometimes, however, artists invent their own stories, leaving the viewer to imagine the narrative.

The term "storytelling" can refer to oral storytelling. The narrative of a story is also used in other media with various techniques. Elements of stories and storytelling include characters, narrative, point of view and plot. Any culture and its social activities are described with their native stories and representation of those narratives through storytelling which are shared as mode of entertainment.

The art of narrative is an aesthetic enterprise. There are a number of artistic elements that typically interact in well-developed stories including the essential idea of narrative structure with identifiable beginnings, middles, and endings, or exposition-development-climax-resolution-denouement, normally constructed into coherent plot lines.

In oral traditions, stories are told again and again to keep it alive. During the process of storytelling the element and material changes and takes place the process of adaptation. When a story is orally narrated through oral tradition in print media, it changes the perception of reviewer's with respect to originator's own perception. The shift is not limited to print medium but other medium too. Like oral tradition, when a story is being narrated through visual medium i.e. script, it has to undergo various modification and manipulation in terms of original creation of story. The perception here too depends on the audience as they are living the story. Visual perception and medium creates a living ambience before the spectator.

With the beginning of visual medium and print medium and their representation in cinema as a script narration and in novel as a story narration is interdependent and complementary art-form. They have often provided substance for expression in their respective domain. In fact, D.W. Griffith's the Birth of a Nation (1915), which is credited to be one of the first pioneers of the narrative feature film, was an adaptation of a novel. The first film made in India, D.B Phalke's Raja Harishchandra (1913) was an adaptation of a story domiciled by the Indian tradition of folklore. Most cultures have their own literature and their own film industries. The reason for this is perhaps a certain sense of semiotic congruency between the two art forms. Both are narrative media after all.

When a story is narrated in any piece of literature is having an independent mode of expression whereas the same story is being conveyed through any other mode its expression will certainly get changed from the original one.

In the paper I would try to explore the narration of novella's story and simultaneously its cinematic expression in film as a visual medium. For the present research novella "The Blue Umbrella" by Ruskin Bond and its Cinematic adaptation with the same name has been taken for thorough and deep study. Though the study is a comparative one but at the same time it shares many identical characteristics. A story and its core theme remains the same when its narrative mode is different but it differs from the original story in a way it is being depicted as its medium is different. Similarly in Bond's "The Blue Umbrella" the story narration is being portrayed in a different manner as compared to Bhardwaj's "The Blue Umbrella". Both the author and the director deal with the same story or plot line but they could not reach up to same destination as their perception and point of view is different.

## 2. Narration of "The Blue Umbrella" by Ruskin Bond

The Blue Umbrella is a great example of presentation of simple life and simplicity. It is a story of a young girl called Binya about ten years old who is a protagonist too. She is vivacious girl and successfully overcomes the self-centered attitude towards life. Bond adorns the story with the basic human instincts such as desire, possession, envy, greed and compassion for a non-living object 'Umbrella'. Amita Aggarwal depicts:

"Bond's favourite story "The Blue Umbrella" presents a moving account of human passions in third person narration. The beautiful blue umbrella emerges as a powerful symbol of longing and possession" (Amita Agarwal, *The Fictional World of Ruskin Bond*. 88).

Binya was quite sturdy, fair of skin with pink cheeks and dark eyes and her black hair tied in a pigtail. She wore glass bangles and necklace of glass beads with the leopard's claw.

It was a lucky charm. Bijju was her elder brother and his real name was Vijay but all used to call them Binya and Bijju. When she is calling for Neelu she heard voices, laughter, the clatter of plates and cups from a party of picnickers. Binya willingly lends her pleasing smile to anyone who is happy. She possesses the heart of a young lady. On a childish impulse, quickly gets ready to exchange her charmed pendant made up of a leopard's claw for a dainty, blue silk umbrella. The umbrella is owned by a wealthy woman who came for picnic in the hills. Binya's pendant created a stir in the heart of this lady. With a desire to possess the pendant, she reluctantly gets ready to exchange her umbrella for it. This was the first time Binya had seen such a small, dainty, colorful umbrella. She fell in love with it. She carried it wherever she went and seldom closed it.

" Sometimes Bijju snapped it shut that it got in the way, but Binya little later opened it again that it was not beautiful when it was closed. It accompanied her everywhere protecting her from storms and snakes. Whenever Binya went out-whether it was to graze the cows, or fetch water from the spring or carry milk to the little tea shop on the Tehri road she took the umbrella with her. That patch of sky blue silk could always be seen on the hill side" (Bond, "The Blue Umbrella". 16).

The Umbrella was so beautiful that everyone in the village desire for its possession. Like villagers the villain Ram Bharosa, the tea shop owner cannot resist its charms. Rom Bharosa put all efforts to get it for any cost but was refused every time that made him disappointed every time. All his efforts for Umbrella proved to be useless. The battle of wills between the old man and Binya took many unexpected turns.

Binya has received honorable position among the villagers with the possession of "Umbrella". Her umbrella has become the center of attraction for everyone and so Binya too. Her love for it changed her way of life. But on the other hand there were others in the village who are sharing same experience but without the "Umbrella". They were also in love for it as Binya. Ram Bharosa a tea shop owner was so much fascinated towards it that he decided to have it by hook or crook. One fine day, while looking the right opportunity he has stolen the umbrella from her.

Binya lost her most possession and desirable object because of Ram Bharosa's deeds. It was difficult for Binya to understand the situation forced to her by him. She was looking for it everywhere but got disappointment. This time her grief cannot be explained.

For Ram Bharosa, it was a welcoming situation. The pendulum of fortune this time swung back to him. He was experiencing the same honor which was experienced by Binya earlier. The sales of his shop have risen due to "Umbrella". He was honored where ever he goes. Binya was just witnessing all that has happened before her eyes.

One day when Ram Bharosa was going out of the village in a bus. He tried to fold the umbrella but got failure. All his efforts were useless. When Binya seen him getting difficulty in closing the Umbrella, she helped him by saying "it is done like this". But during helping him she sensed the touch of umbrella that actually belongs to her. She was in deep thought process and decided to disclose the truth of Ram Bharosa before villagers.

She tried hard but could not do so. The rainy days has arrived and so the misfortune for Ram Bharosa. When he was holding the umbrella in his hand, due to sudden rain its dyed color started spreading all over his body from head to toe. The Red umbrella now has turned into again in a Blue one. The color of both Umbrella and Ram Bharosa has changed and disclosed before others.

The misdeed for passionate desire has turned Ram Bharosa's fortune into misfortune. The villagers got embraced with his deed and decided to boycott him from village. All the villagers were with Binya and once again Binya was happy to get her love object "Umbrella".

Everyone in the village has now stopped visiting Ram Bharosa's shop. Children were making fun of him. He was treated with humiliation by elders. Ram Bharosa was realizing his deed too. He offered sweets to children free but was refused to take. He tried to get the easy life again but it was too difficult to be this time.

Binya too was not so happy and she was blaming herself to be responsible for his situation. She was true from heart and kind too. She could not tolerate his miseries and to change it went to his shop and asked for some sweets. While looking at Binya after a long time in his shop he was overwhelmed and gave her extra than demanded. He too refused taking money in exchange. Binya went back but before leaving for his shop she intentionally left her "Umbrella". When Binya has left, Ram Bharosa looked the umbrella and ran after her but she was out of sight.

"Binya has understood her faults in making Ram Bharosa a miserable outcaste. The tea-shop owner underwent a vigorous alienation giving him ample opportunity to realize his misery. Binya did not want him to feel too bad about what he'd done because it made her feel bad about herself. Towards the end of October, Binya went to the shop, left her closed umbrella deliberately. She asked him to keep it. Ram Bharosa also realized his fault and said that he was never in the sun or in the rain and what use is an umbrella to him. She left the old man holding the umbrella though he protested to have it. The barrier between Binya and Ram Bharosa had been broken symbolically that there was nothing between her and the bright blue sky. He tells everyone that it is a gift from Binya. It was left outside the shop and whoever wanted, can use it. It became everyone's property. People again started visiting his shop. After few nights, a bear visited Ram Bharosa's shop, scrambled on to the tin roof of his shop while climbing off the roof the bear had lost its claw. Next morning he picked it up and put it in his pocket. A bear's claw was a lucky find. He took the claw to the silversmith and made locket hanging in a thin silver chain. He presented the pendant to Binya for she gave him the umbrella. She walked back to her home with her cows singing of the stars and the trees stood still and listened to her and the mountains were glad" (Bond, "The Blue Umbrella". 71-86).

The story reaches at its climax. Our heart is over taken not by the malice of the villagers against Ram Bharosa but by the sympathy and love of Binya for this forsaken man. She secretly feels herself responsible for the miserable plight of Ram Bharosa whom the villagers and the children have made the target of their taunts and jeers. She questions herself -a mere object an umbrella is more important to her, or an old man and his feelings.

It is through Binya, Bond raises the pertinent question on the concept of material happiness and futility of the whole process. He highlights the feelings and concern for other, ignoring the material wealth. The battle of wills between the old man Ram Bharosa and the girl Binya takes many unexpected turns. But, at last, the compassionate heart of Binya wins. She discovers that there is more to life than material possession. This little girl, willingly donates her prize possession, the blue umbrella to Ram Bharosa by her kind gesture, she teaches the great lesson of humanity. Love breeds love and the crooked Ram Bharosa melts. He repays her generosity by presenting her a pendant made up of a bear's claw tied in a silver chain.

The story proves that a child can do and change the bad intention of elders as Binya did in this story. The projection of an undercurrent of the inherent moral education is very appealing. The story pays a tribute to the basic goodness of man and underlines that human vices and goodness are not in born but a result of circumstances. The villain is not devoid of nobility.

A touch of compassion, an ability to share and a sense of justice can turn a heart of stone into a heart of gold. Ram Bharosa's case is an example of it. He rises like a phoenix from Binya's kindness, lovely smile and selfless donation.

Umbrella is a sign or symbol and it is a barrier for love and happiness when Binya possesses it for herself. At the same time, it serves as a lamp, driving away the darkness of human mind, i.e. greediness, boastfulness and possessiveness in Binya and old man's mind. It serves the double purpose of diagnose the disease that is human vices as well as the remedy for the ailment. While the material umbrella becomes pale, faded one, the mind of the villagers becomes pretty, bright blue sky. As the color blue symbolizes love and serenity, it fills everyone's heart with love and compassion in this story at the end. Ram Bharosa learnt a lesson from Binya that sharing is enjoying. He felt guilty of his behavior. At last, as a new born man, he presented the bear claw to Binya as a token of love.

### 3. Narration of "The Blue Umbrella" by Vishal Bhardwaj

A small village located somewhere underneath the mammoth mountains of Himachal Pradesh, forms the scenery of Vishal Bhardwaj's "The Blue Umbrella", an adaptation of Ruskin Bond's novella of the same name.

The film's opening scene has Nandkishore Khatri (played by the brilliant Pankaj Kapur), owner of Khatri tea stall, lying on a charpoy, taking pleasure of a warm sunny morning, sucking his favorite lemon pickle. He is busy listening to the predictions about his future via a robot; the pre-recorded voice tells him delusional talks, which are contradictory to the realistic persona of Nandu. He is a shrewd shopkeeper, who gives credit to kids; in order to swindle them of their prized possession.

Biniya (Played fluently by Shreya Sharma), a nine-year-old girl, residing in the same village is well aware of the tricks played by Nandu and always prefers to keep up a safe distance. One day, while tending her two cows, her eyes spots something on the blue horizon, it is a dreamlike moment in the film, an artistic blue colored umbrella slowly lands right in front of her, its beauty awes her, she had never seen something such a stunning and artistically designed umbrella before. For Biniya, it is nothing short of a star that has fallen on to her feet. Vishal Bhardwaj presents the scene in such a way, that it is love at first sight for Biniya. She slowly places her hands on the umbrella, delighted by its presence; she makes it a part of her life, even going on the verge of exchanging a bear claw to a group of Japanese tourist to whom the umbrella originally belonged. She has felt the coldness under its soft paper like canopy, its opulent bamboos, and wants to experience its delicate ruffles.

Everyone in the village, astonished by the visual of little Biniya holding a blue umbrella under the snowy skies of Himalayas, but Nandu, who is not merely stunned, but rather fascinated over the umbrella, he doesn't like the pendulum of attention swinging towards Biniya's way. He approaches Biniya, and offers her candies, sweets, and pulls out many more lucrative proposals to exchange the umbrella, but always ends up getting a clear "NO" in response. There is a marvelous scene in the film, where Nandu carrying colorful balloons, approaches Biniya and offers less than 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the price of the umbrella (He got the actual price from a city store, but didn't had the required amount), assuming he would defraud her. Nandu receives yet another rejection, leading to a point where the balloons flutter away leaving Nandu all alone, simple yet a deep metaphor of Nandu's dreams to hold the umbrella getting beyond his reach.

At this point, Nandu's assistant asks him "is the oversized umbrella worth it?" Nandu replies with some extraordinary references to clear his motive, which for me forms the crux of the story, because there are certain moments in our lives where our fixation over any person, book, movie, city, food, TV Series or a non-living object empowers any rationalization, and we are not even bothered about any second opinions, till the point its aura surrounds us.

"Is seeing a rainbow on a sky worth it?"

"Is making a paper boat float in the water worth it?"

"Of what worth is watching Sun set behind the hills?"

"One cannot put a price tag on the peace that the soul is in constant search of" He explains, and claims that he and umbrella are soul mates from some earlier birth.

There is a deep attachment, which Nandu over the time has grown for the blue umbrella, which has become a symbol of pride and paradoxically according to his subconscious mind, a catalyst of peace. He is resolved in his quest to conquer the blue umbrella.

Soon after all the failed efforts on Nandu's part to get the guardianship of the umbrella, Biniya lose her most valued possession, she is heartbroken, devastated and the same village who stood in awe upon seeing Biniya walk into the village like a queen with the umbrella see her walking through rains without it. Biniya is totally lost, she has nothing on her mind but the blue umbrella, she suspects Nandu's involvement, but fails to prove it. Meanwhile, the suspicion has hurt Nandu's ego, and he swear to get a similar umbrella, and till then will not taste his favorite lemon pickle.

Nandu finally gets his hands on a similar red color umbrella; everyone in the village is yet again in awe by its sheer magnificence. I wonder there is something alluring about the umbrella that caught everyone's attention yet there are only two people, who takes a step ahead and make it an important part of their life, the difference being that while Biniya applauds the delicate nature of the umbrella, Nandu makes it an issue of ego satisfaction to have it under his ownership. The pendulum of attention swings towards Nandu; he has now become a center of attraction for the villagers. However, Nandu does not acknowledge the gracefulness of the umbrella; he is too preoccupied to massage his self-esteem.

There is an astute scene in the film, which portrays the dichotomy between Biniya and Nandu's attachment with the umbrella. Nandu is to travel via a bus, unable to close the umbrella and get inside the bus; he makes a turmoil scene out of the situation. It leads to him trying various awkward ways to close the umbrella, suddenly comes Biniya to his rescue, tells him "It doesn't shut like this", and takes the umbrella from Nandu, feel the touch of the bamboos, and effortlessly close it. Nandu holds the



umbrella close to him and Biniya watch him leave, it is an emotional moment, and tells you how much the umbrella means to both of them. While Nandu holds the umbrella close to his heart like how a mother would keep her newborn baby, Biniya, on the other side simply gaze at them going further away from her.

The decisive moment occurs; Nandu's ploy is finally out in the open, the red color embedded in the umbrella leaks out under rain. Panchayat order boycott of Nandu, and returns the umbrella to Biniya. The winter arrives soon afterwards, snow descends like pearls from the sky, the entire village sprinkles with silence, as if mourning for Nandu's embarrassing act of stealing an umbrella from a little girl. He is lonely, broken, and probably guilty of his act, but there is no one to notice that, and the kids he once conned, now mock him as "NandKishore Chatri Chor". Supposedly, a Himalayan Bear walks through his shops roof, scared for his life, and yet no one to ask, Nandu terrifyingly resorts to a corner in his small room. Nandu is resolute to not leave the village, despite all the insults and loathe thrown at him from the villagers.

Biniya feels the regret floating inside the abandoned Nandu. She goes to his shop, and buys candies, without mocking him or making him realize of his acts, she leaves, and moments later Nandu realizes she has left her umbrella. He takes the opportunity and takes the umbrella inside his tiny room, Nandu gets a personal moment of solace with the umbrella, he is not in atoned with the situation though, he blames the umbrella for transforming him as a person, he's fed up of the umbrella, which once was a catalyst to his peace of soul.

The thing about "The Blue Umbrella" which made me really love the film, in the first place is an innocent appeal of the story along with the atmosphere that Vishal Bhardwaj creates with his distinctive narration. A tricky genre in literature that he picks; Fable, which could have easily resulted into a one-dimensional children's film, but it turns out into a film that has a universal appeal. Ruskin Bond's short stories, novella's, novels always has a certain kind of earthiness, charm, straightforwardness, utmost honesty, real characters with a moral dilemma, realistic situations and to Vishal Bhardwaj's credit, he never dilutes those characteristics in his adaptation. More so, Vishal Bhardwaj gives Ruskin Bond's fable a deeper perspective with an intelligent use of the umbrella as a metaphor, which is very subjective in its nature; it could be a figure of desire, love, greed, status, attention-triggering object. The story might seem too rural in nature, but even if placed under urban settings, it would make viewer smile, because it is more about the emotions of the characters, and their transformation as individuals.

#### 4. Comparative Approach from Print (Story) to Visual (Script)

It is always a challenge to adapt a great literary work onto screen as the reader's imagination is set free and the filmmaker has to live up to that expectation.

Vishal Bharadwaj has been quite dedicated to his source that is the novella and has been honest to the soul of the work and is an effective film. But there are certain scenes or characters emphasis that is different in the film. For one the film seems to be more about

Nandkishore Khatri, a miserly old man who owns a tea stall in a village who is envious of the blue umbrella that Biniya possesses. The credit sequence and the actual film start by introducing Khatri to the audience while the novella starts with Biniya. In the film the focus was more with Khatri and less with Biniya. The performance of Pankaj Kapoor is also a key factor which draws to his character rather than the actress Shreya Sharma who did not touch a chord in the movie.

The film did not exploit the poetic quality and cinematic tools to present the beautiful object of the blue umbrella. As it is not a mere object but much more, it symbolizes desire and temptation and at the same time also symbolizes pure beauty which is touched upon in the lines of Khatri when he is told by Nandu his helper that it's not very valuable and why want it, I quote from the novella

"Of what use is a poppy in a cornfield? Of what use is a rainbow? Of what use are you numbskull? Wretch! I, too, have a soul. I want the umbrella, because – because I want its beauty to be mine." This also brings in the dimension of the human need to want more than material objects at the same time the material desire to possess beauty for power.

The novella and the film take the two protagonists on a journey of self discovery where they share the object of beauty 'the blue umbrella' and let go of the need to possess it. However in spite of not cinematically being able to project the blue umbrella as a special objects the film does remain true to its message which is special.

Another difference in the novella is that Nandu, Khatri's helper steals the umbrella but is caught by Biniya's brother but in the film we see that Nandu gets away and we see now the red/pink umbrella which Khatri claims to have bought for himself to prove that he is wrongly accused by Biniya and is not a thief but has enough money to buy one himself. This is not a big off-track but is a slight

variation to the structure which introduces another red umbrella in the film but is not such a bad choice but does add another shade to the story.

There is one small scene where Binya runs behind her umbrella when it's blown away by the wind which I felt had good cinematic lyrical possibilities but I did not find the scene in the film.

I quite like the way the film ends in spite of it not being like the novella and that brings me to my closing scene with a beautiful winter landscape which serves as a poetic backdrop as beautiful as the realization that the action conveys and adding a symbolic visual metaphor and mood to complete the experience. These are small liberties a filmmaker could take to make the film cinematically strong. The novella 's closing scene is when Khatri (in the novella named 'Ram Bharosa') as a thank you gesture presents Biniya with her lucky charm as she had given it up in exchange to picnickers from whom she got the blue umbrella.

Both the novella and the film are lovely in their own right but I did expect the songs and visual treatment of the film to have more of a visual poetic quality.

## 5. Conclusion

My last words would be 'it was an inspiring tale of hope and beauty' and happy to have experienced it in literature and film'. The novella gave you something to build your imagination and make it true and the film made you live with the characters and spaces which made it real. Will the blue umbrella and Biniya of my imagination be more truthful or the living portrayal of Nandkishore Khatri and the winter landscape make the experience more truthful, only time will tell, but both will live in different ways in my subconscious and probably meet to form a third existence.

Both plot lines were depicted beautifully. It is quite possible the variation in perception and representation because of two distinct the medium. The story of Ruskin Bond and Bhardwaj Vishal when compared did not go wide apart but share some variation at the part of visual and print presentation. The narration has also been done with the same pace as done by the Bond. A filmmaker has to take some liberties at his part or due to requirement of a medium in which he has to work. As the two ideologies never works with a same pace and style a story can also not be presented with the same manner in two distinct medium. It is found that two working style never matches as the two story narration never reaches up to the same line of destination.

Hence, it is equally true that the story narration of **Ruskin Bond's "The Blue Umbrella"** is though sharing many similar characteristics and point of view but it differs at many places in the director **Vishal Bhardwaj's "The Blue Umbrella"**.

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