

**CARLO VENTRESCA'S AMBITION THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION  
IN DAN BROWN'S *ANGELS&DEMONS***

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**Abstract**

Every human has aspirations hopes, and purposes to reach in their lives. Sometimes people break the norm, ethic, rule, and law to reach their ambition. The purpose of this study is to analyze Carlo Ventresca in Dan Brown's *Angels&Demons* in his efforts to reach his ambition to become a pope. His ambition leads to destruction to other people and also for himself. This study uses library research and psychological approach in the analysis of this novel. Carlo Ventresca has conflicts within himself and against other people. His efforts to reach his ambition include breaking the law and moral ethics. He even kills. However he fails to reach his ambition and finally commits suicide. His ambition leads to destruction to people around him, the church, the public and even himself. He experiences moral, mental, and physical destructions. Unrestrained ambition by the bad ways will result the failure and leads to destruction.

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**Keywords:** Ambition, Effort, Destruction

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**Abstrak**

Setiap manusia mempunyai cita-cita, harapan, dan tujuan untuk diraih dalam hidup mereka. Terkadang orang melanggar norma, etika, aturan, dan hukum untuk mencapai ambisi mereka. Tujuan pembelajaran ini adalah untuk menganalisis tokoh Carlo Ventresca dalam novel *Angels&Demons* karya Dan Brown dalam usahanya untuk meraih ambisinya menjadi seorang Paus. Ambisinya membawa kehancuran untuk orang lain dan juga pada dirinya sendiri. Pembelajaran ini menggunakan

studi pustaka dan pendekatan psikologis dalam menganalisis novel ini. Carlo Ventresca memiliki konflik dalam diri sendiri dan terhadap orang lain. Usahnya untuk mencapai ambisinya termasuk melanggar hukum dan etika moral. Dia bahkan membunuh. Tetapi dia gagal untuk mencapai ambisinya dan akhirnya melakukan bunuh diri. Ambisinya membawa kehancuran pada orang disekitarnya, gereja, publik, dan bahkan dirinya. Dia mengalami kehancuran moral, mental, dan fisik. Ambisi yang tak terkendali dengan cara yang tidak baik akan menghasilkan kegagalan dan membawa pada kehancuran

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**Kata Kunci:** Ambisi, Usaha, Kehancuran

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Background of the Study**

Ambition can be positive or negative. Positive ambition in achieving goals and success cause people to strive, work and study hard. It makes people dare to face all odds and take the risk. However, not all people want to strive hard to get what they want. Some people want to get what they want instantly in various ways, including breaking the rule of law and ethics in society and getting rid of people that can be the barrier in their efforts. In such cases, ambition becomes negative ambition. Such ambition can be found in Dan Brown's *Angels&Demons* a novel which tells about the ambition of Carlo Ventresca, who has a strong desire to become a pope.

### **1.2. Research Problems**

The research problems in this study are:

1. How do the character, conflict, and setting in Dan Brown's *Angels&Demons* show Carlo Ventresca's ambition?
2. What are Carlo Ventresca's efforts to reach his ambition to become a pope?
3. What is the effect of his ambition?

### 1.3. Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze character, conflict, and setting of Dan Brown's *Angels&Demons* that shows Carlo Ventresca's ambition.
2. To analyze the efforts made by Carlo Ventresca to reach his ambition to become a pope.
3. To analyze the effect of Carlo Ventresca's ambition

### 1.4. Methods of the Study

To analyze Dan Brown's novel, this study is employing library research and psychological approach. Library research is done by collecting data and source that can help the analysis in this thesis. According to George, library research: "involves identifying and locating sources that provide factual information or personal/expert opinion on a research question; necessary component of every other research method at some point" (2008: 6). This study gets the sources and references to support this analysis from available sources such as from library or internet. This study uses novel *Angels&Demons* by Dan Brown as the primary data. As for the other reference sources, books and source from internet also become reference in this study.

In addition, psychological approach is used to analyze the novel. Psychological approach is needed to discuss the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of Dan Brown's *Angels&Demons*. Wellek and Warren state:

By 'psychology of literature', we mean the psychology study of the writer, as type and as individual, or the study of creative process, or the study of the psychological types and law present within works of literature, or, finally, the effects of literature upon its readers (audience psychology) (1973: 81).

This study is more emphasized in the psychological types and law that applied in Dan Brown's *Angels&Demons*. Psychology is used to help the analysis of Carlo Ventresca's personality and trait, especially his ambition to become a Pope.

## **2. Biography of Dan Brown and Synopsis of *Angels&Demons***

### **2.1. Biography of Dan Brown**

Daniel “Dan” Brown was born on June 22, 1964 in Exeter, New Hampshire, United States. He is the eldest of three siblings. His father Richard G. Brown is a math teacher, and his mother Constance Brown is professional musician. When he was young, both his parents were always gave Brown and his siblings the gifts in various events on the form in codes.

### **2.2. Synopsis of *Angels&Demons***

This novel tells about the tragic and horrible events within 24 hours in Vatican, Rome. The story begins with the murder of Leonardo Vetra the scientist, who killed at CERN in Swiss by hired killer or called *Hassassins*. The *Hassassin* was killed Leonardo Vetra by imprinting his chest with “Illuminati” brand and gouging his one eye. The directors of CERN, Maximillian Kohler asks Professor Robert Langdon a symbologist from Harvard University to come to CERN. The antimatter, the invention of Leonardo Vetra was also stolen from his room. The antimatter can explode in 24 hours if not charged

## **3. Theoretical Framework**

### **3.1. Intrinsic Elements**

#### **3.1.1. Character**

A character is the doer in a story. With the existence of characters, a story becomes more alive. According to Roberts, character is “a verbal representation of a person. Through action, speech, description, and commentary, authors portrays characters who are worth caring about, cheering for, and even loving, although there are also characters you may laugh at, dislike, or even hate (2007: 153). Therefore, characters are created and can be presented by the author indirectly or directly. Perrine explains the characterization of a character:

Authors may present their characters either directly or indirectly. In direct presentation they tell us straight out, by exposition or analysis, what the characters are like, or have someone else in the story tell us what they are like. In indirect presentation the authors *show* us the characters in action; we infer what they are like from what they think or say or do (1988: 66).

The description of characters' trait and behavior in a story can make the readers like or even dislike the character. A character can also make the readers understand and feel as if they see the representation of themselves. Characters can also help the author in conveying the story message for the readers.

### **3.1.2. Setting**

Setting is an important element in a story. Setting makes a story line become clear because it provides the when and where of the story. Meyer defines setting as: "the context in which the action of a story occurs. The major elements of setting are the time, place, and social environment that frame the character" (1990: 107). In addition, according to Perrine setting is, "The context in time and place in which the action of a story occurs" (1988: 1415). Based on the two definitions from Meyer and Perrine, setting refers to the time and place of the occurrence of actions in a story.

### **3.1.3. Conflict**

Conflict is the element in a novel or story to attract the readers which cause them to read until the end of story. According to Perrine conflict is "a clash of actions, ideas, desires, or wills" (1988: 42). Conflict is an opposition that happens within or to a character in a story. Wellek and Warren explains: "Conflict is 'dramatic', suggests some matching of approximately equal forces, and suggests action and counteraction" (1976: 217). The two definitions of conflict above refer to the strength opposition. Conflict occurs because there are various wills and differences in thought among characters.

## **3.2. Extrinsic Elements**

### **3.2.1. Ambition**

The term ambition usually refers to strong desires to get something. Wishnubroto explains the definition of ambition from Tatenhove as: "An energy, expressed in active behaviors towards some purpose or aspiration (1992: 11). It can be concluded that the word ambition used to have negative connotation of greediness, selfishness, individualistic, and competitive. In modern era, however,

ambition is considered as an instinctive thing and has a positive connotation for a person to reach his purposes and aspirations.

### **3.2.2. Causes and Effects of Ambition**

Widarso explains from Tatenhove that there are two causes of ambition. Two causes of ambition are bad and good condition. Bad condition can happen either in a family or society that circles around a person. This bad condition defies the person to change or improve himself (1992: 14). While good condition, either within a person himself or in his environment is the reason which stimulates to improve himself eminently, approaching perfect if possible (1992: 17). Good or bad condition experienced by someone will propel the motivation to change and reach the ambition. Widarso adds that there are four bad mental attitudes that result from ambition. Four bad mental attitudes are selfishness, perfectionism, workaholic, and Type A personality. The selfishness characteristic is more appropriate in this study. Widarso explains from Erich Fromm that selfishness refers to person who is interested only in himself. Selfish people have no interest in knowing other people's needs. They have no respect on the value and integrity, and they do not like to give something for others. They are only happy when they get something from other people. They cannot see anything except when it benefits themselves and they judge each person or object just from the utility or benefit for them. They are not even able to love. When they seem to give too much attention to themselves, they actually just make useless effort to cover up and compensate their failure to understand their true self. Moreover, selfish people will not hesitate to exploit or take advantage of other people to satisfy their self (1992: 22). Selfish people just think of their selves and never think other people. Selfishness always brings badness. If someone fails in the efforts to reach his ambition, he might have big problems in his life. He must try again or even move to other plans. Harvey talks about failure, "There's also a darker reason for failure, and we can't avoid talking about it. Sometimes we fail because of sin-we speak callously, respond angrily, cover secretly, nurture jealousy, lust uncontrollably" (2010: 139). Sometime a person fails to reach his ambition because he has the uncontrollable desire or even jealous and heartless attitude. In

addition Harvey adds, “With ambition comes failure. Small ambitions can lead to small failure, like the new recipe that result in a culinary disaster. Large ambitions open the door to bigger disaster” (2010: 140). The effect of ambition depends on the major or minor measure of the ambition.

#### **4. Carlo Ventresca’s Ambition that Leads to Destruction in Dan Brown’s *Angels&Demons***

##### **4.1. Analysis of Character**

###### **Carlo Ventresca**

Carlo Ventresca is a Pope’s chamberlain, the pope’s personal assistant. When a Pope dies and before the new Pope is elected, the authority temporarily is devolved upon the chamberlain. It is his duties to ensure and check the death of the Holiness, lock the pope’s bedroom, smash the papal fisherman’s ring, arrange the pope’s funeral, and draw up the conclave in Sistine Chapel. When his ambition to become a Pope and all of his plans nearly reached, Carlo’s gentle, care, and patient attitude changes to become selfish, wicked, and not caring for other people.

##### **4.2. Analysis of Setting**

There are three elements of setting that will be discussed here. They are setting of place, time, and social environment. The places in this story are from the United States of America at Robert Langdon’s house to Swiss at CERN, and mostly in Vatican City. *Angels&Demons* does not mention clearly concerning the year of the event in this novel. However, the month mentioned in this story is April. The internal conflict can be shown when cardinal Mortati says that he actually was the Holiness’s son. He feels surprised and guilty after Cardinal Mortati explaining that he is the Holiness’s son with his mother, the late Maria by insemination. When Carlo killed the Holiness, he did not know that the Holiness was his father. Carlo is speechless and does not know what to do after hearing the truth. Carlo Ventresca has conflict with another person who especially with the Holiness who actually is his biologist father. Because of his anger emotion, his

heart and his mind could not think clearly. He decides to kill the Holiness who has lied to mankind and the church.

#### **4.4. Carlo Ventresca's Ambition**

Extrinsic element that will be discussed in this study is concerning ambition experienced by Carlo Ventresca in Dan Brown's *Angels&Demons*. Many efforts are done by Carlo to reach his ambition. Becoming a pope is his obsession, ambition, and purpose. Being a pope does not only mean become a leader of Christendom, but also get the dominant and highest position. Therefore Carlo will do many efforts to reach his ambition.

#### **4.5. Carlo Ventresca's Efforts to Reach His Ambition**

Carlo Ventresca performs a number of efforts to reach his ambition to become a pope. The efforts are deceiving Hassasin to facilitate his plans, forcing to delay the conclave, opening the pope's tomb, making a self-image, and entering the conclave. His efforts also include breaking the rules and committing criminal actions. Example of the crime are killing Leonardo Vetra and the four cardinals, and trying to kill Robert Langdon and Vittoria Vetra.

#### **4.6. Carlo Ventresca's Ambition that Leads to Destruction**

Carlo Ventresca's efforts to reach his ambition are resulting in failure and lead to the destruction. His unrestrained ambition and his using bad ways to reach his goals end in failure. His failure brings him to destruction not only for himself but also for other people. The destruction to others includes the destruction to other people personally, to church, and to the public. The destruction for himself include moral, mental, and physical destruction.

### **5. Conclusion**

Carlo Ventresca is a character who has ambition and does many efforts to reach his ambition. His ambition fails and leads to destruction on himself even to other people. The events in the novel take place in Massachusetts, United States of America, Swiss, and Vatican City. Within 24 hours which highlights Professor Robert Langdon and Vittoria Vetra are trying to find the four cardinals before being killed by *Hassasin* and the antimatter before explode by the codes.

Carlo Ventresca used to have caring attitude, kind, and gentle to other people. Unfortunately, he changes to be wicked, sly, selfish, and hypocrite. He takes advantage of other people to reach his ambition. It makes him to be a round and dynamic character. In addition, Carlo has obsession and ambition to become a pope and wants to reach the highest position. He wants to change and reforms the leadership of the church to become newer, younger, and stronger than before. The kind of his ambition is selfishness ambition. He takes advantages, does not care, and exploits other people to reach his purposes.

Actually, every person is allowed to show the ability, the self-image, or even the action until they can reach their goals as long as not excessive. Everybody may do the change in everything and make the efforts. However, it must be done by good ways. If only to find the sensation or self pride, it will just produce the senselessness and failure. His shame has lost because he makes excessive self image that actually will deliver him shows his weakness later on. He just hunts the approbation even wants success instantly without work hard. His ability should give many advantages to people around. His efforts are not only the form of ethic, norm, law, and humanity infringement but also criminal element. He makes big mistakes upon his effort by taking advantage, exploiting, and endangering other people. The politeness, ethic, even norm standard has decreased and has passed the limits.

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