

**Ivan Humberto Jimenez Williams**

*University of Abuja*

*Abuja, Nigeria*

## **Decoding and Encoding from Printed Page to Screen**

In the adaptation from the printed page to the screen the discursive and aesthetic properties of the original text come into question. The visual in acting for the camera adds or may even detract from the original literary images by defining what originally appear as “points of indeterminacy” in the written text. The semiotics of film in such novels as Witi Ihimaera’s *The Whale Rider* (1987), directed by Niki Caro (2002), Douglas Adams’ *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* (1979), directed by Garth Jennings (2005), and Patrick Ness’ *A Monster Calls* (2011), directed by J.A. Bayona (2016), pertain to adaptations that transform the original literary text. What stands out in a cinematic adaptation is the new visual and spoken encoding that takes place and even the use of metonymic and/or symbolic devices that may be absent or unclear in the original written work.

I propose to illustrate through the three texts above the semiotic aspects of the literary text that move on the screen into new semiotic, pictorial, receptive and performance practices and theories that involve linguistic and extra-linguistic values, which add new readings to both the cinematic performance and the literary text. The texts on the big screen may continue to be the site of cultural, social, historical and mythological contests, but additionally the overlap of text, acting and filming bring about an iconized and/or symbolic material that reinforces the encoding intended by the director and not necessarily by the original literary text. This meaningful characteristic in turn gives new information to the audience’s perception of both the cinematic and the literary text. Hence, I will show that a dialectical tension between the literary text and the cinematic text is always present and that invokes new readings.