EC[H]O IN FABULA

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Umberto Eco. IL NOME DELLA ROSA. *Milan: Bompiani, 1980.*

In 1979 and 1980, Umberto Eco published three books which synthesize his work thus far. In *Lector in fabula* [Milan: Bompiani, 1977], he presented his latest theories for the Italian audience, and reelaborated his *théorie d'ensemble* in English in *The Role of the Reader* [Bloomington: Univ. of Indiana Press, 1979]. In 1980, he followed with *Il nome della rosa,* a long historical novel set in fourteenth-century Italy. The predictable reaction, that of reading his novel as an exemplification of his theory, has already occurred [see Teresa de Lauretis, *Umberto Eco,* Il Castoro, No. 179 (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1981) and bibliography therein]. Eco himself has issued a pair of seductive challenges to precisely this sort of reading. Closing the introduction to *Role,* he announces that he will end the book with an analysis of Allais' *Un drame bien parisien,* and notes that "to conclude a book of textual explorations with a metanarrative text that speaks ambiguously and with tongue in cheek of its own ambiguity and its own derisory nature seems to me an honest decision. After having let semiotics speak abundantly about texts, it is correct to let a text speak for itself about its semiotic strategy" [p. 40].

This notion of ambiguous complementarity between theory and narrative, which is a warning against facile or automatic exegesis, is repeated on the dust-jacket of the first edition of *Rosa,* which constitutes a *défi aux lecteurs:*

> *Difficult to define (Gothic novel, medieval chronicle, detective story, ideological narrative* à clé, *allegory) this novel (whose story entwines itself with History, since the author asserts, perhaps mendaciously, that not one word is his own) may perhaps be read in three ways. The first category of readers will be taken by the plot and by the* coups de scène, *and will accept even the long bookish discussions and the philosophical dialogues, because it will sense that the signs, the traces, and the revelatory symptoms are nesting precisely in those inattentive pages. The second category will be impassioned by the debate of ideas, and will attempt to establish connections (which the author refuses to authorize) with the present. The third will realize that this text is a textile of other texts, a "whodunit" of quotations, a book built of books. In any case, the author refuses to reveal to any category of readers* what *the book means. If he had wanted to advance a thesis, he would have written an essay (like so many others that he has written). If he has written a novel, it is because he has discovered, upon reaching maturity, that those things which we cannot theorize about, we must narrate.*

The provocative remarks announce that semiotic theory and praxis may in fact be imperfectly complementary in these texts, and not mutually adequate "versions." What the pronouncements fail to indicate, except elliptically, is that *Il nome della rosa* is a semiotic duel, a "showdown" between medieval theocentric semiosis and a version of Peircean unlimited semiosis. Attempts have been made [De Lauretis, bibliography, pp. 103–6] to determine whether, in accord-

ance with Eco's most celebrated dichotomy, *Rosa* is an "open" or a "closed" text, and this approach is, perhaps unconsciously, an approach to the problem of limited vs. infinite semiosis. Speaking of *Opera aperta* [Milan: Bompiani 4th ed., 1976], Eco says that it was "haunted by the idea of unlimited semiosis that I later borrowed from Peirce" [*Role,* p. 3], indicating his own circuitous approach to the real crux of "openness." Part of the confusion surrounding Eco's rather impressionistic categories of "open" and "closed" texts can be eliminated by his subsequent approach to the question of model readers.

> *In the process of communication, a text is frequently interpreted against the background of codes different from those intended by the author. Some authors do not take into account such a possibility. They have in mind an average addressee referred to a given social context. . . . Those texts that obsessively aim at arousing a precise response on the part of more or less precise empirical readers (be they children, soap-opera addicts, doctors . . . or any other imaginable sociopsychological category) are in fact open to any possible 'aberrant' decoding. A text so immoderately 'open' to every possible interpretation will be called a* closed *one.* [*Role,* p. 8]

The problem of the implied or model reader vs. the empirical reader is the key to the paradoxality of "openness": referring again to *Opera aperta,* Eco says that his earlier work "presupposed a problem of pragmatics. An 'open' text cannot be described as a communicative strategy if the role of its addressee (the reader, in the case of verbal texts) has not been envisaged at the moment of its generation *qua* text. An open text is a paramount instance of a syntactic-semantico-pragmatic device whose foreseen interpretation is a part of its generative process" [*Role,* p. 3]. "Closed" texts are so called because they "apparently aim at pulling the reader along a predetermined path, carefully displaying their effects so as to arouse pity or fear, excitement or depression at the due place and at the right moment. Every step of the 'story' elicits just the expectation that its further course will satisfy." Such texts merit the label *closed* "because they seem to be structured according to an inflexible project." It was this intuition of "inflexibility," of a "predetermined path," which led Eco to the image of closure in texts. However, "closure" is nothing more than "tunnel vision" on the part of a text, its failure to attend to the most fundamental textual strategy, the projection of a model or implied reader, rather than an empirical one. Because the semantic encyclopedia is so vast, extreme closure is in fact extreme aperture: "Unfortunately, the only [element] not to have been 'inflexibly' planned is the reader. These texts are potentially speaking to everyone. Better, they presuppose an average reader resulting from a merely intuitive sociological speculation – in the same way in which an advertisement chooses its possible audience. It is enough for these texts to be interpreted by readers referring to other conventions or oriented by other presuppositions, and the result is incredibly disappointing (or exciting)." Ultimately, the tunnel vision of the closed text opens and subverts it, allowing it to be read "in various ways, each way being independent from the others" [*Role,* pp. 8–9].

Unlike the closed text, the open text "outlines a 'closed' project of its Model Reader as a component of its structural strategy." Its openness lies in its attention to the model reader, the care with which it potentiates alternative interpretations, leaving the model reader "free to reconsider the whole of [his] semantic universe," but binding him to the "indecomposable unity" of these interpretations: "'open' texts work at their peak revolutions per minute only when each interpretation is reechoed by the others." This "symphonic" model of the dialogue between text and model reader is also a harmonic model of multiple interpretations: dissonant interpretations will be excluded because "you cannot use the text as you want, but only as the text wants you to use it. An open text, no matter how 'open' it be, cannot afford whatever interpretation." Like the Foucaultian "author," the model reader of Eco is ultimately an extrapolation from textual strategies: "the pragmatic process of interpretation is not an empirical accident independent of the text *qua* text, but is a structural element of its generative process" [p. 9].

Eco himself prefers a spatial model of the "open" text to the harmonic model implied by his definition. "An author can foresee an 'ideal reader affected by an ideal insomnia' (as happens with *Finnegan's Wake*), able to master different codes and eager to deal with the text as

with a maze of many issues. But in the last analysis what matters is not the various issues in themselves but the maze-like structure of the text. ... . The reader is strictly defined by the lexical and the syntactical organization of the text: the text is nothing else but the semantic-pragmatic production of its own Model Reader" [*Role,* pp. 9–10]. The ambiguity of *issue* and *production* in these pronouncements finds a correlative in the statement (again on the dust-jacket to *Rosa*) that *Lector in fabula* "is concerned with the situation of the reader in the labyrinths of narrativity." The "cooperation" of reader-Theseus and labyrinthine text is further glossed in chapter 8 of *Role* (appropriately titled "Lector in fabula"), when Eco states that "every text is made of two components: the information provided by the author and that added by the Model Reader, the latter being determined by the former – with various rates of freedom and necessity" [p. 206].

What the maze-like open text confronts, unlike the purblind closed text, is the issue of a "specific encyclopedic competence" of its model reader: "a well-organized text on the one hand presupposes a model of competence coming . . . from outside the text, but on the other hand works to build up, by merely textual means, such a competence" [*Role,* pp. 7–8]. This competence is intertextual, in all the now-familiar senses, and thus the open work *qua* sum of textual strategies is a confrontation of infinite semiosis: "Since the semantic encyclopedia is potentially infinite, semiosis is unlimited, and from the extreme periphery of a given sememe, the center of any other could be reached . . . . Since every proposition contains every other proposition, a text could generate, by further semantic disclosures, every other text. (By the way, this is exactly what happens in intertextual circulation: the history of literature is a living proof of this hypothesis)" [*Role,* p. 24]. The open text is therefore both a model or microcosm of infinite semiosis, and a sum of strategies designed to trace a path through the maze of interconnecting semes "at large."

The modern closed text refuses or fails to confront the fact of infinite semiosis by refusing or failing to construct those intertextual "issues" and culs-de-sac which are foreseen and accommodated in the generative process of the open work. Eco maintains that medieval theories of semiosis similarly ignore the semiotic "issues" of open poetics. Although much medieval literary theory rests upon what Dante calls "polysemous" poiesis – theories of allegory and the four senses of Biblical exegesis – Eco dismisses this "measure of 'openness'" as "far removed from meaning 'indefiniteness' of communication, 'infinite' possibilities of form, and complete freedom of reception. What is in fact made available is a range of rigidly preestablished and ordained interpretative solutions, and these never allow the reader to move outside the strict control of the author." In large measure this pluriplane closure is dictated by the fact that "the meaning of allegorical figures and emblems which the medieval reader is likely to encounter is already prescribed by his encyclopedias, bestiaries, and lapidaries." Despite a range of possible interpretations for any one figure, the fact of limited significance remains, and it is in turn grounded in the logocentric theory of the universe evolved along the tradition running from St. Paul to Augustine to Bede, the twelfth century, the Scholastics, and ultimately, Dante.

> *Any symbolism is objectively defined and organized into a system. Underpinning this poetics of the necessary and the univocal is an ordered cosmos, a hierarchy of essences and laws which poetic discourse can clarify at several levels, but which each individual must understand in the only possible way, the one determined by the creative* logos. *The order of a work of art in this period is a mirror of imperial and theocratic society. The laws governing textual interpretation are the laws of an authoritarian regime which guide the individual in his every action, prescribing the ends for him and offering him the means to attain them.* [*Role,* pp. 51–52]

The Logos is the ultimate interpretant of every discourse, precisely because the cosmos is the expression of the Logos. Each living being, each stone and star has a limited range of objective meanings because all of Creation is a book written by the divinity; each entity is semiologically both discrete and connected to every other entity by grammatical and syntactic conventions which, while they may be open to dispute *sub specie humanitatis,* are elegant and unambiguous *sub specie aeternitatis.* In the eleventh book of the *Confessions,* Augustine compares the recital of a Psalm by a human being to the unfolding sense, not only

of that human's entire life, but to the history of the cosmos, demonstrating the absolute congruence of human and divine "semiologies." To continue Eco's metaphor of the labyrinth in the context of medieval semiology would be less than helpful, since, *al limite,* all textual labyrinths would have the same floorplan, the only "issue" of which would always be found in the same place, pointing in the same direction: upwards, toward the Logos as ground of all meaning. While Eco admits [*Role,* p. 40] that openness and closedness are shaded, not absolute, categories, he uses the labyrinth to designate the crucial quality of "richness" in the projection of a model reader in terms of "specific encyclopedic competence" as opposed to an immediate or ultimate predetermination of semantic response: the straight-line or pluriplane uniformity of medieval and modern closures. Elsewhere [*Role,* p. 74], Eco invokes Borges' metaphor of "forking paths." The Borgesian metaphor, which describes a text-as-labyrinth, relates the novel of Ts'ui Pên, in which "the hero dies in the third chapter, while in the fourth he is alive" [Borges, "The Garden of Forking Paths," tr. Helen Temple and Ruthven Todd], to Eco's notion of the ultimate "open work," the "work in movement," in which "the author offers the interpreter, the performer, the addressee a work *to be completed*" [*Role,* p. 62].

Eco hints at the Borgesian element of his categories in what might otherwise pass for a throwaway component of the dust-cover to *Rosa.* The cover is dominated by the floorplan of a labyrinth, which is explained by this caption:

> *On the cover appears the plan of a labyrinth which once appeared on the pavement of the cathedral of Rheims. Of an octagonal plan, it represented within each of the four lateral octagons [each of which extends from a side of the main octagon] the image of a master mason, each with his symbol, and in the center (it is said) the figure of the Archbishop Aubri de Humbert, who placed the first stone of the edifice. The labyrinth was destroyed in the eighteenth century by the canon Jacquemart because he was annoyed by the jocose use to which it was put by children who, during the sacred offices, attempted to follow its meanderings, for ends which were obviously perverse.*

The antagonism between the *bambini giocosi* and the upright canon, whose very title is synonymous with orthodoxy, is a hint at the birth of textual *jouissance,* the labyrinth standing in for "those texts that according to Barthes . . . are able to produce the 'jouissance' of the unexhausted virtuality of their expressive plane . . . just because they have been planned to invite their Model Readers to reproduce their own processes of deconstruction by a plurality of free interpretative choices" [*Role,* p. 40]. Jacquemart and the children are also a dramatization of the Augustinian dichotomy between *uti* and *frui,* between enjoyment, which is a proper human response to God only, and use, the linguistic exploitation of creatures and Creation as "signifiers" of the divine meaning. *Jouissance* is an improper, "idolatrous" misuse of signifiers, since it threatens to void them of their referentiality, their transparence to the Logos, and short-circuit the upward flow of meaning. In Augustinian terms, semiosis cannot be "unlimited," if by this term is intended a horizontal play of sememes, since none of them, nor even all of them together, can have meaning except as swept upward toward the ultimate interpretant which is the Logos, in a constant movement of "syntactic" interpretation.

Not only is the labyrinth of the dustcover both a challenge to read *Rosa* as an open work and a hint at the nature of the semiotic conflict which will govern much of its action. The diagram is also the first of a series of ghostly interventions by Jorge Luís Borges. Upon opening either the front or back cover of the book, the reader is confronted with a plan of the monastery in which the action of *Rosa* takes place. Upon reading the captions of the monastery-plan, the reader discovers that a building identified as the "Edificio" (edifice) has precisely the same shape as that of the labyrinth which encloses the book. In the second "chapter," the reader learns that the Edificio is the building which houses the library and scriptorium of the monastery, and he soon learns that the library is the nerve-center, not only of the life of the monastery, but also, by extension, of the series of murders which structure the plot of the novel. This diagrammatic conflation of a Borgesian anecdote mixing history and fiction with the preferred Borgesian hobbyhorses of labyrinths, libraries, textual repeti-

tion and mystery fiction is the first of many clues to the centrality of Borges to Eco's semiotic fiction. By the time he finishes the novel, the reader will know that one of its characters, an aged, blind librarian named Jorge da Burgos, has committed a series of murders in order to prevent the circulation and dissemination of a book stolen from the secret archive of heretical manuscripts in the monastery library. Long before the actual dénouement, however, the reader should have been following the intertextual clues which reveal Jorge da Burgos and Jorge Luís Borges as intertextual "interpretants" of each other and trace a path of *fabula* or "story" through the maze of plot or "discourse" in this most intertextual of novels.

It is Borges who has said that "perhaps universal history is the history of a few metaphors" ["Pascal's Sphere," tr. R. L. C. Simms]. Eco's novel is the battlefield for a duel between limited and unlimited semiosis, medieval and post-eighteenth-century poetics, medieval Realism and the Nominalism of Occam, seen as a precursor of both "scientific method" and Piercian semiotics. Eco's spectral "other Borges," the censorious librarian of Babel who sees infinite semiosis as a threat to Meaning, plays Moriarty to a fourteenth-century Sherlock Holmes, an English Franciscan named Guglielmo da Baskerville, a retired inquisitor whose taste for narcotic herbs can be allayed only by problems which appeal to his intellectual penchants: Occam, Franciscan populism, and the "science of machines, which is natural and saintly magic" [p. 25], learned by him from Roger Bacon. The clash of the two semiotics is foreshadowed from the time Guglielmo arrives at the monastery and dumbfounds both the community and his associate Adso with a Sherlockian display of deductive pyrotechnics.

> *"My good Adso," said my master. "Throughout our whole voyage I have been teaching you to recognize the traces through which the world speaks to us like a great book. Alan of Lille said that 'omnis mundi creatura / quasi liber et pictura / nobis est in speculum,' and he was thinking of the inexhaustible reserve of symbols with which God, by means of his creatures, speaks to us of eternal life. But the universe is a good deal more loquacious than Alan thought, and it doesn't only speak of the ultimate things (something which it always does darkly), but it also speaks of those things which are near, and in this it is most clear."* [pp. 31–32]

It is this split between a Sherlockian awareness of the multifarious banality of the *sensus literalis* and the ultimately Pauline valorization of the *visibilia mundi* as signifiers of the *invisibilia Dei* ["videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate, tunc autem facie ad faciem," cf. *Role,* p. 51] which structures the progress of meaning in *Rosa.* Both the model reader and the *lector in fabula,* Guglielmo, are immersed in a bibliomorphic labyrinth wherein the clues are tantalizingly anagogical from beginning to end, and the accommodation of this merely apparent anagoge to the necessary banality of a purely human solution can take place only by the identification and interpretation of intertextual "traces."

The ostensible structure of the novel is created by reference to Christian liturgy [cf. the Tetragrammaton in Borges' "Death and the Compass"]. At the surface level, the *Rosa* is a rosary: rather than being divided into chapters, it is a heptameral structure, the seven days of which are further divided into the canonical hours of worship: matins, lauds, prime, etc. Thus an event may happen at nones of the fourth day, for instance, rather than in chapter five or sixteen. At the cosmic level, liturgy is history. According to the theory of *Heilsgeschichte* or salvation history current throughout the Middle Ages, the Apocalypse will happen at the close of the sixth age of the world. After the present world is utterly destroyed in the final *ecpyrosis* or conflagration, there will be a new and eternal heaven and earth, and the elect will live eternally in the repose of the Sabbath.

Thus, at first glance, the numerous references to liturgy and Apocalypse might lead a reader to expect some sort of hexameral structure in which, during the course of six days of work, order emerges from chaos, sense from confusion, and certainty (*fabula*) from mystery (*plot*). Thus we would arrive at a structure in which the teleology of the murder mystery was equated with the teleology of history and the cosmos. This conclusion does not happen.

The theme of Apocalypse is introduced early on through the person of an apparent (illusory) Antichrist, an incarnation of Christ's malignant *Doppelgänger.* This counterfeit savior bears the emblematic name of Salvatore. Salvatore is a refugee from the *fraticelli,* a heretical sect of antimaterialistic Franciscan extremists who claimed that their radical poverty duplicated the beliefs of Christ. When Adso first sees Salvatore, he remarks that the man seems to be the Devil incarnate: "I have never yet experienced a visit from the Devil, but I think that if he should happen to appear to me someday, he would have no other features than those presented to me at that moment by our interlocutor" [p. 53].

Babylon is the kingdom of the Antichrist, and it is typologically connected in Biblical exegesis with Babel, so that Nimrod also foreshadows Antichrist. Hence, Salvatore incarnates Babel as well: "[then] I realized that Salvatore spoke all languages, and none." "I thought that his must be, not the Adamic tongue that a happy humanity had spoken, united by the use of a single speech, from the beginning of the world until the Tower of Babel, but rather just that babelic language of the first day after the divine chastisement, the language of primeval confusion" [p. 54]. Salvatore's idiolect is composed of *disiecta membra,* says Adso, the "scattered limbs" of all the language he has ever heard: "he might name a thing once in Latin, and again in Provençal" [p. 55]. The narrator recognizes that Salvatore's *favella* is not *lingua,* because, as he says, "in every human language there are rules, and every term signifies one thing *ad placitum*" [p. 54], by arbitrary convention. Since his *favella* shuns either a necessary (Adamic) or univocal (conventional) link between *res* and *verbum,* Salvatore is thus an anti-Logos in all senses, an organic representation of confusion and discord: "It was as if his speech were like his face, put together with pieces of other persons' faces, or like some of those precious reliquaries, which were born from the detritus of other sacred objects" [p. 55]. Salvatore is a negative incarnation of infinite semiosis, a walking Library of Babel, who makes all sense and none, who imitates and perhaps offends the Divinity by requiring an infinite model reader.

Salvatore stands in binary relation to a terrifying representation of Christ at the Last Judgment, on the sculptured tympanum over the portal of the Abbey Church. In describing the tympanum, Adso refers to Christ only as The Seated One, *l'Assiso,* never calling him by any of His proper names. This allusion to Dante's pun about St. Francis [*Paradiso* XI, 49–54], which connected Assisi with the notion of Ascension, takes the doctrine of the ultra-Franciscan *fraticelli* to its logical conclusion by stripping Christ of His last piece of property, His proper name, because, as the narrator says, the *fraticelli* "maintained that Christ and the Apostles had had no property at all" [p. 60]. Thus, while Salvatore is a kind of Anti-Christ who has usurped the name of the Redeemer, so, once Christ has been stripped of His proper name, He is no longer a Savior, but rather the terrifying "Magistrate of Assizes" at the Last Judgment.

The coincidence of Apocalypse and liturgy as apparent structural devices appears most clearly in the circumstances of the second murder. The incident is preceded by a description of the rhythms governing the monastic day; Adso observes that the monks who keep the night watch mark the passage of time by their precisely rhythmic chanting of psalms, and thus can compute with great precision the hour at which the office of matins must be sung. The connection of psalms with the passage of time is partly an allusion to Augustine's theories of eschatology and signification [*Confessions,* bk. XI], and, like Augustine, Adso notes that every person is nothing more than a verse in the great Psalm of Creation, a word in the *Liber mundi,* the Book of the world to which God will write *explicit* with the Apocalypse. The recital of psalms also forms a great part of the Liturgy, and during the office of matins, a verse from the Psalms strikes Adso as a bad omen. Almost immediately, the worship is interrupted by terrified servants who have just found a corpse in the tub of hog's blood from which *sanguinacci,* or blood sausages, were to be made [pp. 109–12]. This bizarre scene later takes on apparent significance as a parody of the plagues of blood which accompany the second seal and the second trumpet in Revelations [6:3–4; 8:8].

The conflation of Apocalypse and liturgy as an exemplar for the articulations of plot

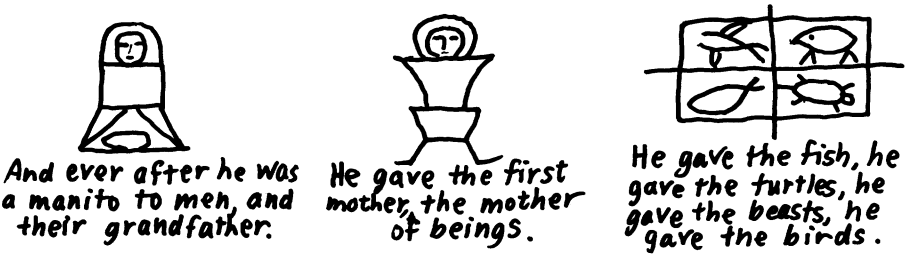
structure is so dramatic that some more pervasive structures of repetition risk being overlooked. *Mimesis* or imitation is in fact the most fundamental structure of the book. From the perspective of the conclusion, Apocalypse and liturgy are important only insofar as they serve an exemplary function, organizing the activities of murderer, detective, or both. In fact, the murders take place over possession and circulation of the archetypal treatise on *mimesis*. The librarian Jorge fears the spiritual damage that could be wrought if the monks of his convent were able to read the second book of Aristotle's *Poetics*, the only manuscript of which survives in the Abbey library. Their efforts to possess the book and Jorge's attempt to suppress it motivate the series of murders.

Aristotle is supposed to have explained comic *mimesis* in this now-lost second treatise, and Jorge fears it because he believes it constitutes an anti-Liturgy. For Jorge the Liturgy itself is basically a structuring of the fear of death, and this structure is threatened by laughter, which is an irreverent chaos. Laughter is the result of a semiotic *adynaton* or world-upside-down which stands in the same relation to *mundus* or *cosmos* as the Antichrist stands to the Logos. In the only passage of the second *Poetics* transcribed by Adso, Jorge's animosity to laughter and the comic is revealed as an opposition to the threat which unlimited semiosis poses to the closure of Liturgy and Cosmos:

> *In the first book we have treated tragedy, and how by arousing pity and fear it produces the purification of such feelings. As we had promised, we shall now treat comedy (along with satire and mime), and how by arousing the pleasure of the absurd, it arrives at the purification of this passion. In the book on the soul we have already stated how worthy this passion is of consideration, since, alone among the animals, man is able to laugh. Thus we shall define the sort of actions of which comedy is a mimesis; thence we shall examine the ways in which comedy arouses laughter, and these ways are through deeds and speech. We shall show how the ridiculous of deeds is born from the assimilation of the better to the worse and viceversa, from deceit and surprise, from the impossible and the violation of the laws of nature, from the irrelevant and inconsequent, from the lowering of personages, from the use of clownish and vulgar pantomimes, from disharmony, and from the choice of less worthy things. We shall then demonstrate how the ridiculous of speech is born from the equivocation between similar words for different things and viceversa, from garrulity and repetition, from plays on words, from diminutives, from errors of pronunciation and from barbarisms.* [pp. 471–72]

Jorge fears a universal liberation through laughter and a resultant victory of the anti-Logos: "on the day on which the word of The Philosopher should justify the marginal games of our unruly imagination, oh then truly that which had been at the margins would leap to the center, and every trace of the center would be lost" [p. 479]. The legitimation of laughter would, in Jorge's view, lead to the victory of the Feast of Fools, Carnival and monastic parody over the Liturgy, of Manichean corporeality over the mystery of the Incarnation, "if one day, no longer as a plebean exception, but as the ascesis of the erudite, consigned to the indestructible testimony of writing . . . someone should be able to say (and be heeded): 'I laugh at the Incarnation'" [p. 480].

Eco's choice of a Benedictine monastery emphasizes the importance of textual repetition, for the Benedictines are the order which devoted the greatest care to the conservation and copying of manuscripts. The life of the community revolves around the scriptorium, the hall where texts are copied by scribes. In a normal monastery, the library would be just as



prominent in the everyday life of the monks, but Jorge's library is closed to everyone but a few librarians. As locus of textual repetition through reading and writing, the scriptorium is utterly subordinate to the library, which is a forbidden city of *custodia.*

Although it is also a symbol of the semantic encyclopedia, Jorge's library has become a deadend in the process of signification, for it has been transformed into the graveyard of intertextuality, and thus of literature. "The good of a book," says Eco's detective,

> *lies in its being read. A book is made of signs which speak of other signs, which in their turn speak about things. Without an eye to read it, a book conveys signs which produce no concepts, and thus remains mute. This library was perhaps born to conserve the books it contains, but now it lives to entomb them. For this reason it has become an incitement to impiety.* [p. 399]

Fomite d'empietà: Eco's use of the word *fomite,* which means both incitement and tinder, implies that the sequestered books are already as good as burned long before the final conflagration which effectively destroys them [cf. Borges' "The Wall and the Books"].

The infinite production of signs and concepts is a process which appalls Jorge, the "other Borges," as much as it fascinates the real (empirical) Borges. Jorge's attempt to reconcile his bibliophilia with his censorious fear of heretical interpretation leads him to commit suicide by bibliophagy, an act which is simultaneously the biblioclasm of the treatise he dreads, by eating the pages of the *Poetics.* It is this gesture, repeating the bibliophagy of St. John and the "consummation" of the *Liber mundi* in the Book of Revelations, which finally makes Eco's *fabula* an effective repetition of the Apocalypse, for Jorge's suicide indirectly sparks the *ecpyrosis* which incinerates the Library and the entire monastery. It is only through Jorge's mimetic suicide that the Apocalypse and the liturgy finally structure Eco's novel in a meaningful sense.

Eco's novel, which deals so intensively with problems of literary repetition, is predictably filled with repetitions or "ec[h]oes" of all sorts. As is already evident, the book owes its heaviest literary debt to the fiction and essays of Borges, and explicates much of Eco's semiotics as Borgesian [compare chapter 2 of *Role* with Borges' "Joyce and Neologisms"]. The library of Eco's monastery is modelled on the short story of Borges which is best known to Italian readers, "The Library of Babel." [*Ficciones* was first published in Italy under the title *La biblioteca di Babele e altri racconti.*] Eco combines Borges' universal library with two of Borges' other favorite motifs, the labyrinth and the mirror. The abbey library is actually a labyrinth, "a structure compounded to confuse men: its architecture, rich in symmetries, is subordinated to that end" ["The Immortal," II, tr. James E. Irby]. The inner sanctum of the library, containing all the most heterodox texts [cf. the "Crimson Hexagon" in "Library"] and accessible only to the head librarian, can only be entered by passing through a tall looking-glass [cf. the mirrors in "Library"]. This "speculum maius" is a distorting mirror which ecphrastically proclaims that heresy is an improper *mimesis* of the Wor[l]d, but also hints at infinite representation or semiosis. The architecture of the library building valorizes the mystical numbers, especially four, five, seven and eight. The *struttura assente* is the number six, which is not only the number of the Antichrist [Revelations 13:18], but also the number around which Borges organized the Library of Babel. The rooms of Eco's library are organized by the number seven, and the shelf-plan derives from a conflation of the Apocalypse and the map of the world. Eco's library thus reflects Borges' idea that the library is a semantic cosmos, a specular inversion of the medieval idea of *liber mundi,* of the cosmos as a book [cf. "Library," opening]. The library can be opened and closed only by the head librarian, who must enter and leave through a secret catacomb, the *teche* of which, overflowing with *disiecta membra,* scraps of humanity, recall both the Babelic face and speech of the anti-Logos Salvatore, and the "graveyard" of books recalled from circulation in the *biblioteca* above, reinforcing the semiotic homology between Library and Cosmos.

A number of other echoes of Borges' stories subtend incidents and themes of Eco's novel, but the most striking one is spoken by the librarian himself. In his sermon on the Apocalypse and the Antichrist, Jorge speaks of the relation between heresy and repetition:

> *It is said that an Oriental califf once consigned to the flames the library of a famous and glorious and proud city, and that, while those thousands of volumes burned, he*

said that they not only could but should disappear; for either they repeated what the Koran had already said, and thus were useless, or else they contradicted that holy book . . . and thus were harmful. [p. 402; cf. the "several hundred thousand imperfect facsimiles" of "Library," and its "thousands of false catalogues."]

In this anecdote, which foreshadows the biblioclasm which he will later perpetrate, Jorge is quoting his Argentine namesake, on the subject of the burning of the Library of Alexandria, a city which is conflated by its modifiers with Babylon [Isaiah 13:19, etc.]. However, the "quotation" is not literal. Borges seems never to have recorded this anecdote, which is found, among other places, in his cherished 11th edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* [I, 570]. The quotation is contained *in nuce* however, in "On the Cult of Books," which discusses both the Library's burning by Caesar's troops, and the Arabic notion of the "Mother of the Book." The story told by Jorge da Burgos is also found in proximity to Borges in Jacques Bergier's *I Libri maledetti* [tr. Roberta Rambelli (Rome: Edizioni Mediterranee, 1972), pp. 40; 188–93].

In fact, as Guglielmo's pun on *fomite* intimates, Jorge's attitude toward literary repetition is very much like that of the Moslem general, even though he would not consciously advocate book-burning. He accuses his Benedictine brethren of having a heretical attitude toward their library: their crime is, he says, "that of understanding their own work not as a curatorship, but as the search for some knowledge which be not yet given to humankind" [p. 403]. Jorge reminds his listeners that the ultimate words have been spoken by the last angel of the last book of the Bible, and that no one can add to or detract from the message of Revelations without incurring divine wrath. The Moslem general is thus added to Jorge's repertoire of typological roles, and a conflation of his roles as biblioclast and Antichrist occurs by allusion at the moment Jorge accidentally sets fire to the library: his head, which seems to be "aflame" with fever and the red glare of lamplight, and his bloodshot eyes both recall features of the Antichrist which he mentioned in his sermon. Indeed, at the time Guglielmo had remarked that Jorge's portrait of Antichrist seemed a selfportrait [pp. 406; 486].

The catalogue of Jorge's library furnishes a number of clues which for Guglielmo and the reader point to him as the murderer. Although Guglielmo has not yet seen the manuscript for which the murders are being committed, he learns at one point from the catalogue that it is bound in a codex with three other manuscripts. The last of these other texts is a commentary by one Magister Alcofriba on the *Coena Cypriani.* As Eco well knows, the most famous library catalogue in literature was invented not by Borges, but rather by François Rabelais, who, as Alcofrybas Nasier, catalogued the imaginary holdings of the library of St. Victor in a parodic chapter of *Pantagruel.* Furthermore, both *Pantagruel* and *Cyprian* are parodies of Biblical lore, and the mention of the two parodies finally unites the resonances of *mimesis,* comedy, textual repetition, and Biblical lore which have previously resisted combination. In fact, in the previous chapter, the resonances had begun to harmonize by means of a prophetic dream of Adso's which Guglielmo interpreted as a parody of the *Coena Cypriani.* However, since he lived two centuries before Rabelais, Eco's detective is denied the reader's perception that Adso's dream also incorporates swatches of Rabelaisiana. The most obvious is a parody of the underworld as seen by Pantagruel's tutor Epistémon, but there are also purely stylistic touches. The most striking of these, "chi moriva ridendo e chi rideva morendo" recalls one of Rabelais' favorite wordplays, specifically the phrase "les ungs mouroient en parlant, les aultres parloient en mourant," which not coincidentally comes from a context involving a massacre in a monastery [*Gargantua,* xxvii]. The substitution of laughing for talking in the quotation is itself significant, since both Rabelais and Aristotle

maintain that "le rire est le propre de l'homme," that laughter, not speech, is the truly human faculty. And so to the model reader Adso's dream is already a resolution of the mystery by means of intertextual allusion.

The interplay of Adso's subconscious with the reader's intertextual competence duplicates a process outlined by Eco in his chapter on Joyce: "that each metaphor can be traced back to a subjacent chain of metonymic connections which constitute the framework of the code, and upon which is based the constitution of any semantic field, whether partial or (in theory) global" [p. 68]. As Eco defines the task of the essay, it is "first, to see if, from a point outside Joyce's linguistic universe, we can enter into the universe; then, departing from a point internal to that universe, to see whether or not we can connect, through multiple and continuous pathways, as in a garden where the paths fork, all the other points" [p. 74]. Eco begins to play with the formalist term *fabula* as an exemplar of narrative "forking paths" at prime of the fourth day, when Guglielmo decides to interrogate Salvatore, who seems to be at the nexus of several clues connecting heresy, sexual perversion, and the library murders. At the moment of Guglielmo's decision, Salvatore appears as if on cue. An English speaker would exclaim, "Speak of the Devil," and, given Eco's familiarity with English, the proverb is certainly appropriate to a character portrayed as the Antichrist. But Eco gives the Italian version of the proverb, and makes Guglielmo exclaim, "E, lupo nella favola, eccolo per l'appunto" [p. 271]. *Lupo nella favola* is an acrostic hint at the title of Eco's treatise *Lector in fabula*. Today most Italians give the Latin form of the proverb in everyday conversation: *lupus in fabula*. Since reading, detection and heresy are all being connected by the punning evocation of absent Latin and English proverbs, we might also exclaim in our turn: "Diabolus in fabula!" As calumniator (*diabolos*), the Devil is both the archetypal heretic and the archetypal narrator: the first misreader and the first creator of fictions.

All this wordplay signals another stage in the transition from the theological notion of the *liber mundi,* to which Adso has hitherto subscribed, in favor of a version of infinite semiosis. As usual, Adso makes the transition subliminally, by association. After the interrogation of Salvatore, Adso decides to accompany some monks on a truffle-hunt in order to relax for a while. As he narrates the truffle-hunt of long ago, Adso is now reminded of a German friend to whom he once explained the Italian custom of truffle-hunting. His friend mistook the Italian word for truffle, *tartufo,* thinking that Adso had said "der Teufel," the Devil. Adso meditates upon the irony of the fact that Italian noblemen gladly follow their truffle-sniffing pigs, "come fossero segugi nobilissimi" [p. 291]. By their mere proximity, these musings combine to create the most banal of all Holmesian metaphors. The word *segugio* means "sleuth," in both senses, both "bloodhound" and, metaphorically, "detective." In the course of Doyle's work, Watson refers to Holmes perhaps half-a-dozen times as a sleuth-hound, bloodhound, or foxhound. Adso's own *nobilissimo segugio,* Guglielmo, whose surname also recalls the great Hound of the Baskervilles, is indeed engaged upon a "*Teufel*-hunt," which Adso punningly mimics with his truffle-hunt at the precise moment when his *segugio* has found the first real scent, that of the devilish Salvatore. However, the real significance of the passage is revealed only at the end of the novel, when Guglielmo finally traps Jorge in the library. Adso describes the librarian as "una belva famelica," a famished savage beast driven by "una diabolica determinazione," and says that even he and Guglielmo "had become like animals, like dogs that hound a wild beast" [p. 486]. The true quarry of the *segugio* is not Salvatore, the apparent Antichrist, but Jorge, who is both a "fiendish" Moriarty, and unconsciously, a figure of Antichrist. Ironically, Jorge interprets himself not as Antichrist, but as his nemesis, and Adso expresses a version of this irony as he recalls the *tartufo/Teufel* pun: "Such is the magic of human tongues, which by human accord, often signify diverse things with identical sounds" [p. 291]. This anticipation of the Aristotelian passage on equivocation foreshadows Jorge's fear of infinite semiosis, and his own incarnation of its possibilities.

The duel between Jorge and Guglielmo is a battle of readings and misreadings by *lectores in fabula*. More importantly, it is an allegory of the dialogue between implied reader and the textual strategies through which the open text anticipates and provokes his forecastings. Jorge admits that he did not intend to make the murders allude to the events of Revelations until he heard that Guglielmo was interpreting them in this fashion, at which

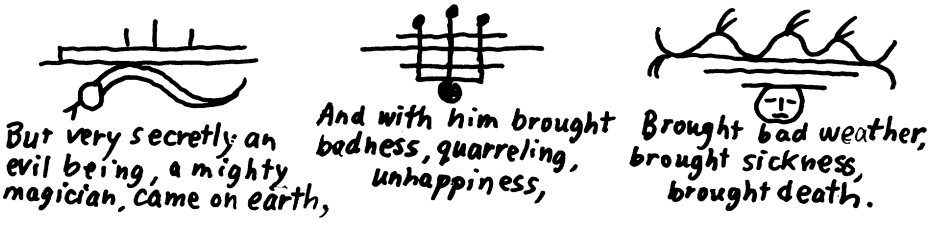
point he saw his own actions in a new light and began to believe that they were ordained by Providence, in order to keep the *Poetics* out of circulation. "So," replies Guglielmo, "I fabricated a false blueprint to interpret the movements of the culprit, and the culprit adapted himself to it. And it is precisely that false explanation which put me on your track" [p. 473; compare the end of Borges' "Death and the Compass"]. Once he accepts Revelations as his parent-text, Jorge is doomed to discovery, however, for this very model or archetype contains a moment of closure which he must also ultimately mimic: the *ecpyrosis* or conflagration in which he perishes. Ironically, this logocentric closure is also a triumph of openness, since it validates the intertextual link.

Although he too is denied access to the library, Guglielmo tracks down Jorge through bookish methods: the examination of codices, the library catalogue, handwriting analysis, cryptography, spectacles and papyrology. He is not merely a semiologist in the sense of the by-now hackneyed analogy between critic and detective, but an actual bibliologist who comes to detection through inquisition ("meta-interpretation"), and never forsakes inherently bookish methods.

When the plot has developed to the point of dénouement, not only Guglielmo, but everyone else recognizes Jorge's centrality to the mystery. "The monks were pointing out to each other the empty seat of the blind man, whispering. At the end of the service the Abbot invited everyone to recite a special prayer for the welfare of Jorge da Burgos. It was not clear whether he was referring to health or to eternal salvation" [p. 457]. However, the reader, unlike the congregation of monks, should by now have foreshadowed Guglielmo's reading of Jorge through a correct forecasting of the *fabula*. In a bookish narration filled with recognizably Borgesian musings, Jorge da Borgos must be either the prime suspect or the ultimate victim (indeed, he is both). The Burgos of the plot should be valorized by the intertextual pointers to Borges and thus provide the macropropositions of the *fabula*.

In fact, Adso, who should be a mere apprentice *lector in fabula*, is a surrogate for one half of the implied reader of the book; the other half is Guglielmo, whose intertextual competence should flesh out Adso's intuitions and musings and forecast the future development of *fabula*. Adso's chance associations, even his dreams, twice contain more complete indices to the crime than do Guglielmo's analyses. At those moments when Adso's intuitions become crucial to the model reader, Eco becomes something of a Narcissus, strewing intertextual clues to his theoretical works, a strategy which reinforces his contention that the Model Reader is foreseen or constructed by the text. While Guglielmo and Adso are rummaging through the library by night, criminally and without authorization, Adso comes upon a treatise (*Speculum Amoris*) which reminds him of his hitherto suppressed lovesickness for a young girl who has been introduced into the convent (by night, criminally and without authorization). As he leafs through the book Adso thinks "de te fabula narratur" [p. 325]. "The reader seems to get involved step by step in an Aristotelian process of 'pity,' that is, of compassionate participation: *de te fabula narratur*. A perfect device, indeed, in order to arouse 'fear,' that is, the expectation of some unanticipated and troubling event" [*Role*, p. 208]. At the moment, Adso's only fear is that Guglielmo should enter and ask him what he is reading, but the oblique allusion to Aristotelian pity forecasts both the identity of the mystery book and the capture of Adso's heartthrob, which will lead to her conviction and burning as a witch.

Ironically, it is at the moment that Guglielmo explains the principle of intertextuality to Adso that the stage is set for the reader's identification of Jorge as the culprit. Just before the truffle-hunt, Adso asks Guglielmo how he expects to solve the mystery without knowing the contents or even the title of the missing volume, since that volume alone can explain the



motive for the deaths. Guglielmo says he will have to read other books, and search them for traces of the missing text. Adso begins to understand the principle of intertextuality:

> *"It is true," I said, admiringly. Up until then I had thought that every book spoke of those things, human or divine, which exist outside of books. Now I realized that not infrequently books speak about books, or rather it is as if they talked among themselves. In the light of this consideration, the library appeared to me . . . as the locus of a long, ages-long whispering, an imperceptible dialogue between parchment and parchment.* [p. 289]

From this *sussurro di libri,* Guglielmo so thoroughly reconstructs the *Poetics* that he feels no need to read it when he captures it and Jorge [pp. 475–76]. It is this *sussurro di libri,* which Adso mentions, and not the belated whispering of the monks, which should all along have been pulling the implied reader's attention towards Jorge, for the whispering of books among themselves, one form of Peircian infinite semiosis [*Role,* ch. 7], is both the core of Borges' thought and the stuff of Eco's novel, "this semiotic novel which, like the *Don Quixote* of Pierre Menard in the story by Borges, turns out to be written entirely (or almost) from words already said, names already heard and stories already read, from commonplaces" [De Lauretis, *Eco,* p. 82].

If there is a homology between Guglielmo, Adso and the implied reader, there is also a homology between *Rosa* and Jorge's library, described by the metamorphoses of Adso's text, which is a *sussurro di libri* on several levels. In his epilogue, Adso recounts how he revisited the ruined monastery after a lapse of many years. By dint of poking around the ruins, he managed to recover a number of scraps of books. These he carefully preserved, and pored over them for many years in search of their identity.

> *Often by means of a residual word or image, I recognized which work was in question. When later on I found other copies of those books, I studied them lovingly, as if fate had left me that legacy, as if the fact of having discerned the destroyed copy had been a clear sign from heaven that said* tolle et lege. [p. 502]

"Tolle, lege" – take up and read – Adso's precise echo of the words Augustine heard at the moment of his conversion [*Confessions,* VIII] signals a literary metamorphosis, the transformation of the Abbey library.

> *At the end of my patient recomposition, there was outlined before me something like a minimal library, the sign of that greater one which had disappeared, a library made of shreds, quotations, unfinished sentences, stumps of books.* [p. 502]

When Augustine heard the command to take up and read, he opened his Testament to the words of St. Paul, imitating Saint Anthony before him who had heard the words of the Gospel and immediately converted. A few years after Adso's time, as Eco well knows, Petrarch attempted the same experience, using the *Confessions* of Augustine, and failed to be converted. (Eco may have read John Freccero's article, "The Fig Tree and the Laurel," in *Diacritics* [Vol. 5, Spring 1975].) Once he has understood the contingency of infinite semiosis, Adso himself no longer has a Gospel, a Testament, a complete text or *logos* of anything, nothing but a pathetic *florilegium,* a flower-garland of literary fragments.

However, Adso's *florilegium* is in turn converted into the book which the empirical reader holds and reads:

> *I almost have the impression that whatever I have written on these leaves, and which you will now read, unknown reader, is nothing more than a cento, a figure-poem, an immense acrostic which neither says nor repeats anything other than what those fragments have suggested to me.* [pp. 502–3]

This eminently Borgesian thought ("imperfect facsimiles") is summed up by Adso in a parody of the semiological perspective on language and authoring: "nor do I any longer know

whether I have spoken of [those fragments] or whether they have spoken with my mouth" [p. 503]. Here Adso is also repeating Borges' thought that the history of literature is a series of repetitions. At the same time, the infinity of semiosis also makes him a repetition or echo of Jorge da Burgos, a Jorge *minore* or *bibliotecario di Babele,* blindly conserving "quelle disiecta membra della biblioteca" [p. 502], those scattered limbs (phrases) of the library. This disquieting doubleness is thematically and lexically connected to another stage in Adso's central, prophetic vision.

> *The body of the girl, once so beautiful and sweet, was now scarifying itself, subdividing itself into fragments which dispersed themselves among the* teche *and the reliquaries of crystal and gold in the crypt. Or rather, it was not the body of the girl which was leaving to populate the crypt, it was the fragments of the crypt which, whirling, gradually composed themselves to form the body of the girl, by now a mineral thing, and thence again decomposed and dispersed themselves, a sacred haze accumulated by a maniacal impiety. It was now as if a sole immense body had in the course of millenia dissolved itself into its parts, and these parts had disposed themselves so as to occupy all the crypt, more resplendent but not dissimilar from the ossuaries of the defunct monks, and as if the substantial form of the very body of man, masterwork of Creation, had fragmented itself into many and separate accidental forms, thus becoming the image of its own contrary.* [p. 435]

As in the vision, Adso's literary *disiecta membra* allusively connect him to his opposite, the walking Babel named Salvatore who spoke a *favella* of *disiecta membra,* and had a body composed of scraps of humanity like the ones stored in the *teche* of the catacomb leading to the *biblioteca.* This disquieting resemblance to Antichrist is doubled by a curious synecdoche which suggests another way in which Adso resembles Jorge, the librarian of Babel. Adso stops writing abruptly, not so much because he has said his piece, as because he is uncomfortable. "It is cold here in the scriptorium, and my thumb hurts" [p. 503]. In Jorge's prophetic sermon, one of the signs which identified the Antichrist was his *pollice schiacciato,* or flattened thumb. Adso's own thumb is flattened and painful from the work of copying. We have seen that Jorge unwittingly resembled the Antichrist by synecdoche at the moment of his death; so does Adso at the moment he ceases to write, for he cannot repeat Jorge's work of literary conservation without also repeating his Babelic, logophobic resemblance to Salvatore and the Antichrist.

"I leave this writing, for whom I know not, nor do I know what it is about" [p. 503]. Ultimately, the ambivalent possibilities of repetition are too confusing for Adso, who cannot locate himself as an author, except in relation to another, and that other in relation to still another, and so on ad infinitum. Whether he views himself as a verse in the great Psalm of Creation, the *liber mundi,* or as a speaker spoken and created by his own language, Adso's own significance escapes him in the Babelic labyrinth of infinite semiosis. It is this need for an Archimedian point or ultimate interpretant which relates Adso's Augustinian "semiotics" to that of Peirce [*Role,* ch. 7.3–7.4]. Writing and librarianship are merely two different ways of appropriating authority over the realm of discourse. In Adso's world, there can no longer be a closed semiotic project like that which Jorge vainly attempted: any attempt to tap into the source of authority (ultimate referentiality) will always be both an infinite regression, a journey ever closer to the source without ever reaching it, as in Borges' favorite paradox of Zeno, and also an *ex abrupto* attempt to constitute a new discourse, an anti-Logos, an attempt which is itself doomed to mimicry. Every book is ultimately *a cento,* which both points toward the Logos, and away from it; one can both repeat the Koran (or Revelations) and contradict it. Any attempt to appropriate discourse, as either librarian or author, ultimately comes under the sign of Salvatore, the Antichrist, for it is also an appropriation of the *proprium* of the Logos, and an admission of infinite lateral semiosis.

Eco himself wittily attempts to avoid appropriating his novel. In a parody of Jan Potocki's *Manuscrit trouvé à Saragosse,* he claims to have found the narrative of Adso during the Russian invasion of Prague. However, Eco's "MS" is a translation based on an edition by the Benedictine Jean Mabillon (1632–1707), whose *De Re Diplomatica* founded modern textual criticism (appropriately, the French translation is published *Aux Presses de l'Abbaye de la*

Source). "Eco" (in his Borgesian persona as *alter eco*) translates the translation into Italian, only to have the original (*la source*) stolen. As in Borges' "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," the sourcebook is "a literal but delinquent reprint" the existence of which is unknown to bibliographers and which may be presumed to be a forgery, unless we are inclined to accept the independent confirmation of its existence provided in an equally anomalous text alleged by "Eco." "Eco's" confession of relief that he can now tell Adso's story "for the pure love of writing," "for the simple pleasure of fabulation" is thus both true and false. His assertion that the story is "gloriously lacking in connections with our times, atemporally extraneous to our hopes and our certainties" [p. 15], is merely false. The French translation by Jean-Noël Schifano is touted as "une réflexion sur l'Italie d'aujourd'hui" [*L'Express*, 9 April 1982, pp. 20–21] with somewhat less untruth. Jorge vainly wished to stop the mouths of the plebians and deny them a common discourse with the erudite: "This book would have justified the idea that the language of the simple might be the vehicle of some wisdom. It was necessary to stop this idea" [p. 482]. Eco, who made Jorge the Minotaur of a bibliomorphic labyrinth, wrote his *Rosa* for what must be acknowledged as an elitist implied reader, but his perspective on popular literature is not exclusively elitist: Superman and James Bond have attended classes at Bologna, and the *alter eco* has mimicked his own Guglielmo by writing a handbook on dissertation-writing for the vast despised *vulgus* of Italian students [*Come si fa una tesi di laurea* (Milan: Bompiani, 1977)]. Infinite semiosis destroys any idea, theocratic or political, of an "elect."

Though his categories of open vs. closed, Augustinian vs. Peircean are necessarily vague, and often unsatisfactorily so in theory, they gain, rather than losing, by becoming narrative strategies in *Rosa*. In a sense we should rather use *Rosa* to deconstruct Eco's theory, than the reverse. In more than one way the novel acknowledges a theoretical, rather than narrative, debt to Borges. The central images in Eco's version of Peircean semiotics, without which openness cannot be satisfactorily explained, are drawn from Borges: the labyrinth, the "garden of forking paths," Joycean neologisms, the monstrous other, the semantic identity of Judas and Christ, Christ and Antichrist, the spatialization of the infinite semantic encyclopedia. To make Borges the "villain" of *Rosa* was to acknowledge, via the ambiguity of infinite semiosis, a critical debt. Like every ec[h]o, this one is fraught with repetition: the infinite regress of the history of the text is merely a trope for the infinite semiosis of history and intertextuality as seen by Eco and his "source," Borges.

All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.