The Concept of Self-Reflexive Intertextuality in the Works of Umberto Eco

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Centre for Comparative Literature
University of Toronto

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Abstract

Umberto Eco’s novels are complex texts that work, that can be read and thus interpreted on several levels, including but not limited to the literary, semiotic, linguistic, philosophic, and historical. Notwithstanding the postmodern ideology of the irrelevance of the author (in terms of identity and intentionality) to a text’s interpretation, Eco’s novels offer another level of reading and interpreting that includes the author’s own personal reading experiences. In this way, the author arguably becomes an integral part of the text and is directly involved in the interpretive process. This dissertation is a reconsideration of the figure of the postmodern author whose authority in a text’s interpretation has been challenged by theories of structuralism, post-structuralism, and intertextuality. It undertakes this rethinking by considering the role of the author as reader—and thus as writer in the process of rereading and rewriting. This study also investigates the postmodern theory of intertextuality (i.e., the notion that all texts are [re]iterations of other texts) from the point of view of the author’s own reading experiences (since inevitably, consciously or unconsciously, what the author reads becomes an intertext). Thus, through a combination of the author’s own reading and writing experiences, presented and perceived intertextually and intratextually throughout the text
itself, and a series of fictionalized versions of personal experiences, not only is the reader able to gain insight into the author’s motives, intentions and personality, but the author is also able to retain or regain some of the authority over the text he or she creates.
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<td>Apocalittici e integrati</td>
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<td>AOC</td>
<td>Aesthetics of Chaosmos</td>
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<td>AOTA</td>
<td>The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas</td>
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<td>APG</td>
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<td>The Bomb and the General</td>
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<td>BI</td>
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<td>BE</td>
<td>Baudolino (English)</td>
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<td>CDC</td>
<td>Il costume di casa</td>
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<td>CHIL</td>
<td>The Cambridge History of Italian Literature</td>
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<td>CYN</td>
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<td>DAAL</td>
<td>Dall’albero al labirinto</td>
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<td>DQLSC</td>
<td>Dire quasi la stessa cosa</td>
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<td>FP</td>
<td>Foucault’s Pendulum</td>
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<td>FDC</td>
<td>Forme del contenuto (1971)</td>
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<td>IDGP</td>
<td>L’isola del giorno prima</td>
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<td>IODB</td>
<td>The Island of the Day Before</td>
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<td>IO</td>
<td>Interpretation and Overinterpretation</td>
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<td>IPETA</td>
<td>Il problema estetico in Tommaso d’Aquino (1956)</td>
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<td>ITC</td>
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<td>How to Travel with a Salmon</td>
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<td>LBG</td>
<td>La bomba e il generale</td>
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<td>LF</td>
<td>Lector in fabula</td>
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<td>LOI</td>
<td>The Limits of Interpretation</td>
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<td>MVASB</td>
<td>La memoria vegetale e altri scritti di bibliofilia</td>
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<td>MFDRL</td>
<td>La misteriosa fiamma della regina Loana</td>
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<td>NDR</td>
<td>Il nome della rosa (1981)</td>
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<td>NOR</td>
<td>The Name of the Rose</td>
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<td>OA</td>
<td>Opera aperta (1962)</td>
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<td>OL</td>
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<td>PNDR</td>
<td>Postille Il nome della rosa (1983)</td>
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<td>PNOR</td>
<td>Postscript to The Name of the Rose</td>
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<td>RR</td>
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<td>SA</td>
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**Introduction: How Eco Writes**

Recently and especially after the publication of his fourth novel, *Baudolino* (2000), Umberto Eco has been less reticent in providing autobiographical information to readers who may not have followed both his literary and non-literary writing process since its inception. *Baudolino* was considered at the time of its release, by such reviewers as Maria Corti¹ and Roberto Cotroneo,² as Eco’s most self-reflexive novel, and many references to his own experiences both with reading and with culture, already well documented in such works as *Diario minimo* and *Il costume di casa*, could no longer be ignored. According to Rocco Capozzi, in his essay “The Return of Umberto Eco, Baudolino *Homo Ludens*: Describing the Unknown,” Eco himself encouraged readers to make connections between the protagonist of the novel and its author:

> The first reviewers of the novel have not failed to mention Eco’s narrative skills or picaresque and autobiographical features of his writing. To some extent the author may have encouraged readers to see a connection between Baudolino and Eco when he, in an interview with Laura Lilli and in his article ‘Baudolino c’est moi!!,’ boasted, much the same way as the protagonist does in the novel, about his capacity to tell stories, such as the one about the birth of his native city Alessandria (Capozzi 213).

For new readers, the autobiographical level of Eco’s novel not only provides a foundation on which to base their reading but, together with his collection of essays in *Sulla letteratura* [SL] (*On Literature*) [OL] (2002), in particular essays on “Borges e la mia angoscia dell’influenza” (“Borges and my Anxiety of Influence”), “Sullo stile” (“On Style”), “Ironia intertestuale e livelli di lettura” (“Intertextual Irony and Levels of Reading”) and “Come scrivo” (“How I Write”), they

¹ For one of the first reviews of *Baudolino* see: Corti.  
² For a more comprehensive look at autobiographical elements in Eco’s novels, see: Cotroneo.
are also able to get a glimpse of his early theories of *l’opera aperta* (the open work), culture, and the role of the reader. To readers already well-acquainted with Eco’s novels and theories, this collection of essays offered clarifications and explanations of issues that might have remained vague throughout the corpus of his works. Though these essays shed some light on Eco’s writing process, they do not, however, give much away in terms of his motivations or intentions. In fact, his last essay in the collection, “Come scrivo,” points precisely to his method of writing but not his reasons; anyone who has read the *Postille* to his first novel, *Il nome della rosa*, knows that he wrote the novel simply because he felt the impulse to do so.3 An in-depth look into the writing process he describes in these essays – with their combination of inter/intratextuality and personal and collective memories – reveals, at one moment, a process of hybridization that culminates in his novels and at another, certain other revelations, if not of his precise motivations and intentions, at least more generally about the author himself.

The aim of this dissertation is a reconsideration of the figure of the postmodern author whose authority in a text’s interpretation has been challenged by theories of structuralism, post-structuralism and intertextuality; it will undertake this rethinking by considering the role of the author as reader and as writer in the process of rereading and rewriting. There already exist numerous studies seeking to define the figure of the author and his or her role in the interpretation of texts.4 Of these perspectives, those that are predominantly postmodern generally consider the author a non-relevant entity in a reader’s interpretation of the author’s work. They argue for an approach to reading that affirms that it is the text (not the author) that

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3“Ho scritto un romanzo perché me ne venuta voglia” (*PNDR* 510).
4 For a study of the history of the role of the author, see Bennett.
speaks to the reader and it is the reader (not the author) who offers the interpretation of the text. Rather than working with established histories of the figure of the author, this study investigates the postmodern theory of intertextuality (i.e., the notion that all texts are [re]iterations of other texts)\(^5\) from the point of view of the author’s own reading experiences (since inevitably, consciously or unconsciously, what the author reads becomes an intertext). Thus, through this process, that is, through a combination of the author’s own reading experiences, presented and perceived intertextually throughout the text itself and a series of fictionalized versions of personal experiences, not only is the reader able to gain some insight into the author’s motives, intentions and personality, but the author is also able to retain and regain some of the authority over the text he or she creates. Though this process also incorporates Gérard Genette’s concept of “intratextuality,”\(^6\) which inevitably already enriches a double-coded reading, the concept of a “self-reflexive intertextuality,” as posited in this dissertation, better describes the author’s writing process, since it incorporates personal memory as well and is not limited to notions of textuality. My focus on this authorial reconsideration is especially clear in my discussion of Eco’s work and his novels, from \textit{Il nome della rosa} [NOR] (1981) to \textit{La misteriosa fiamma della regina Loana} [MFQL] (2004), as well as his most recent \textit{Il cimitero di Praga} [CDP] (2010), for all are prime sources for exploring this concept.

Eco’s novels are complex texts that work, and can be read and thus interpreted, on several levels, including but not limited to the literary, semiotic, linguistic, philosophic, and

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\(^5\) For a study of Intertextuality theory, see Allan.  
\(^6\) For a definition of Genette’s concept of intratextuality see \textit{Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree} (207).
historical. Notwithstanding the postmodern ideology of the irrelevance of the author (in terms
of identity and intentionality) to a text’s interpretation or Roland Barthes’s claim of “la mort de
l’auteur” (152), Eco’s novels offer another level of reading and interpreting that includes the
author’s own personal reading experiences. In this way, the author becomes an integral part of
the text and is directly involved in the interpretive process. As such, generating interpretations
becomes an essential part of Eco’s poetics, though he shifts this responsibility from the author
to the text: “I would define the poetic effect as the capacity that a text displays for continuing
to generate different readings, without ever becoming completely consumed” (PNOR 508).7
Though he claims that a novel “is a machine for generating interpretations” (505)8 (on the part
of the reader), Eco’s works reveal, as we shall see, an evident, conscious progression of his own
thoughts, theories and inquiries, utilizing his novels as vehicles with which to raise questions
about the role of the author, intertextuality and hybridity, (re)writing and (re)construction, and
memory. When Eco speaks of his writing process it is clear that these themes are consistently
revisited in his non-literary writing and resurface as part of the narrative in his novels as well.

Eco admits in “Come scrivo” that writing “goes through phases” (OL 303).9 The essay
describes at once the historical/chronological phases of Eco’s writing as well as the
methodological. The former depict Eco’s writing career as having three major phases: the first
where, as a child and young adult influenced by the otherworldly adventures of first Jules
Verne, then Dante, he took to writing illustrated stories and comics, while in middle and high

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7 “E definirei l’effetto poetico come la capacità, che un testo esibisce, di generare letture sempre diverse, senza
consumarsi mai del tutto” (NDR 510).
8 “… è una macchina per generare interpretazioni”(NDR 507).
9 “Ma è vero che c’è una sorta di idea iniziale e ci sono delle fasi precise” (SL 330).
school he experimented with writing humorous sketches, parodies and poetry; the second phase involves his career as an essayist and philosopher; and the third, his evolution into a writer of fiction. Though several childhood experiences are obviously important (for some of them figure significantly in his novels), the first chapter of this dissertation focuses on the progression between the second and third phase where the role of the author is consciously put into question.

In the era preceding the death of the author, we might say that the author was generally believed to hold a great deal of power over the manner in which readers interpreted texts. Before Barthes’s famous declaration of the author’s death (1967), George Orwell, in his essay “Why I Write,” published in 1946, in contradistinction to Eco’s essay “Come scrivo” (“How I Write”), published fifty-six years later, described the author’s role and his/her motivations for writing a text, rather than the process itself. Orwell describes the author as having four main motivations to write: sheer egoism, aesthetic enthusiasm, historical impulse, and political purpose (10). The author’s motives for writing, Orwell argues, are influenced by the world around him, and the author’s personal experiences within the world are inherent in the creation of the written work. Orwell’s essay, predating postmodern theories of the author, is already a reconsideration of the author’s role. He is not, however, entirely convinced that the author’s motives can be known. “[A]ll writers are vain, selfish and lazy,” he explains, “and at the very bottom of their motives lies a mystery” (10). In a sense, Orwell almost predicts the postmodern argument regarding the ambiguity or inaccessibility of the author’s intentions. Whereas postmodern concepts turn away from the author’s authority entirely, including his or her intention and identity, Orwell considers this ambiguity to be directly related to the author’s
personality: vain, selfish, lazy, and inherently a mystery. It is this mysterious aspect that supports his suggestion that in order to create a good novel the author must attempt to set aside his or her personality. This suggests the later postmodern argument that authorial identity is just as ambiguous in relation to the overall interpretation of the text as is the author’s intention or motive: “writing a book is a horrible, exhausting struggle, like a bout of some painful illness [...]. And yet it is also true that one can write nothing readable unless one constantly struggles to efface one’s personality” (10). This effacement of personality may be a presaging of what would happen later in the course of the history of literary theory and criticism that made theorists, critics and readers alike deeply suspicious of the author as authority.

Eco’s own conceptions of the role of the author are born of this rift between the author and the reader. This dissertation does not, however, aim to provide yet another history of the role of the author. Rather, the first portion of this study will instead describe Eco’s role as an active contributor to that history. When Eco wrote _L’opera aperta_ (The Open Work) in 1962, his theories surrounding the role of the author in the interpretation of texts may have complemented those of his postmodern counterparts: Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, Michel Foucault, among others. What is significant, however, is that Eco’s concept of the author has evolved over time, making room within it to include himself and an ever-changing contemporary culture. As will be discussed in chapter one, more than in his theoretical works, the evolution of his concept of the author is especially apparent in his novels. The first chapter of the dissertation will therefore trace Eco’s own theories of the role of the author and their
development through both his theoretical works and the literary representations of these theories in his novels.

The question of who is speaking in Eco’s novels is particularly problematic as, more often than not, as in Baudolino or La misteriosa fiama della regina Loana, the speaker is surrounded by a fog (a recurring theme, literal and metaphorical, in Eco’s novels) of ambiguity as a result of the nature of irony and parody (discussed in chapter 3). Though the issue remains ambiguous to a surface or superficial reader of the text, Eco gives the responsibility to his Model Reader to decode the ambiguity left behind by the author. The intricate framework of Eco’s narratives makes it difficult to decipher who is recounting the story: the author, the narrator, the text, or a combination of these elements. Eco maintains in the Limits of Interpretation (LOI) that it is the text that speaks, not the author. The author simply “becomes a character of the narration” (LOI 53). It is difficult to comprehend, however, this idea of the author as a narrative strategy that effectively would eliminate the authority of the author, since manifestly it is the author who decides the type of narrative strategies to use in the work. This issue becomes even more complicated when the narrative has a direct correlation with the author’s own experiences, particularly when it is from these experiences that Eco begins the process of his writing.

In order to write fiction Eco follows, not always meticulously, a rigorous method that takes time: first, he has a seminal idea; second, he constructs a world based on this idea; and third, the constructed world determines the narrative style. The first stage of his method is essentially dependent on memory (to be discussed further in chapter 4)—conscious, unconscious or subconscious: “my three novels [Il nome della rosa, Il pendolo di Foucault and
L’*isola del giorno prima*] stemmed from a seminal idea that was little more than an image: that was what seized me and made me want to go on” (*OL* 308). For *Il nome della rosa*, Eco is unsure whether his seminal idea of a monk being murdered in a library originated from a reading experience or from a memory of a personal experience:

> I do not know whether I was under the influence of the traditional poetics of the English detective novel, where the murder has to be committed in a vicarage. [Or] perhaps I was following up certain emotions I had felt at sixteen, during a retreat in a Benedictine monastery, where I walked through Gothic and Romanesque cloisters and then went into a dark library where, open on a lectern, I found the *Acta Sanctorum* (*OL* 308).

Eco describes this introduction to the *Acta Sanctorum* (*The Acts of the Saints*), an encyclopedic, hagiographic text which outlines much of the history of the Middle Ages, in particular the lives of the saints (an important text for both of Eco’s medieval novels), as a “moment of upheaval” (*OL* 308). This personal experience would ultimately enable Eco to construct both the intertextual world of his first novel as well as the emotional world of its main protagonist, Adso, who, as a young monk (approximately Eco’s age at the time of this experience), has a similar “moment of upheaval” when he encounters the intricate architecture of the abbey for the first time (discussed further in chapter 3). The writing of *Il pendolo di Foucault* was sparked by two seminal ideas: “the first was that of the pendulum, which I had seen for the first time thirty

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10 “I miei tre romanzi sono nati da una idea seminale che era poco più di una immagine: è quella che mi ha preso, e mi ha fatto venire il desiderio di andare avanti” (*SL* 330).

11 “Non so se fossi stato l’influenza della poetica tradizionale del giallo anglosassone, per cui il delitto dovrebbe essere commesso in un vicario. Forse partivo da alcune emozioni che avevo provato a sedici anni, durante un corso di esercizi spirituali in un monastero benedettino, dove passeggiavo tra chiostri gotici e romanici e poi entravo in una biblioteca ombrosa dove, su un leggio, avevo trovato aperti gli *Acta Sanctorum*” (*SL* 331).

12 “Avevo avuto un momento di inquietudine” (*SL* 331).
years previously in Paris, and it had made a huge impression on me” (OL 309),¹³ and “the second image that imposed itself on me was that of myself playing the trumpet at a funeral of partisans” (OL 310).¹⁴ Both ideas would later figure in the novel’s story and plot. For L’isola del giorno prima, shipwrecking Roberto della Griva near the coast of the Solomon Islands was inspired by the combination of two events: the purchase of a world-time watch and his reading of Verne’s Around the World in 80 Days. As he writes about the first: “I bought one of those world-time watches […]. This provided a flash of inspiration: my man had to be west of that line and see an island to the east, an island distant in both space and time. It was a short step from here to deciding that he must actually not be on the island but opposite it” (OL 310).¹⁵

Baudolino is an exception to Eco’s rule, for several seminal ideas were incorporated and consequently provided the structure of many chapters of the text: “As for the seminal idea, for at least two years I had many, and if there are too many seminal ideas it is a sign that they are not seminal. In fact, each of them gave rise not to a general structure of the book but only to situations that were limited to just a few chapters” (OL 318).¹⁶ The conjuring up of this seminal idea is what inevitably leads to the next stage of Eco’s writing process, what he calls “construct[ing] a world” (OL 311).¹⁷

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¹³ “La prima, quella del Pendolo, che avevo visto per la prima volta, più di trent’anni prima a Parigi, e mi aveva impressionato” (SL 332).
¹⁴ “La seconda immagine che mi si è imposta è stata quella di me stesso che suonava la tromba a un funerale di partigiani” (SL 332).
¹⁵ “Mi sono comperato uno di quelli orologi detti world-time […]. È stata una folgorazione: il mio uomo doveva stare a ovest di quella linea e vedere un isolato a est, lontana non solo nello spazio ma anche nel tempo. Di lì a decidere che dunque costui non doveva stare sull’isola, ma di fronte all’isola” (SL 333).
¹⁶ “Quanto all’idea seminale, per almeno due anni ne avevo molte, e se di idee seminale ce ne sono troppe è segno che non sono seminale. Infatti, ciascuna ha dato origine non alla struttura generale del romanzo, ma solo a situazioni limitate ad alcuni capitoli” (SL 341).
¹⁷ “Anzitutto, costruire un mondo” (SL 334).
The second and third chapter of this dissertation focus on this phase of Eco’s writing process, which admittedly can take several years. This portion of his method is highly dependent on research and, therefore, on the process of intertextuality. In this manner, the author plays the role of (model) reader. This stage of study fulfills the requirements of a concept of self-reflexive intertextuality, since it is in this phase that the author’s role in text production cannot be ignored. Given that the research involves a combination of personal intertexts and intratexts—Eco’s own experiences with reading and writing, and cultural intertexts or collective experiences both with reading and culture—this phase of Eco’s writing process puts into question issues of intertextuality that until recently negated the value of the authorial figure in the production and interpretation of texts. Eco makes it clear that in order for him to feel confident in his writing he must feel comfortable in the world he creates. Only as a reader can he become confident about the world he creates as an author:

This is why, when I wrote *The Name of the Rose*, I spent a full year, if I remember correctly, without writing a line (and for *Foucault’s Pendulum* I spent at least two, and the same for *The Island of the Day Before*). Instead I read, did drawings, invented a world. This world had to be as precise as possible so that I could move around in it with confidence (*OL* 314).

The world of Eco’s novels is fundamentally based on the processes of intertextuality. As it stands, however, the existing theory of intertextuality can easily undermine the strength of any constructed (literary) world, since its definitions are often contradictory, particularly in the way it can negate the author’s role in text production and interpretation.

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18“Ecco perché, quando ho scritto *Il nome della rosa*, ho passato un anno abbondante, se ricordo bene, senza scrivere un rigo (e per *Il pendolo di Foucault* ne ho spesi almeno due, e altrettanti per *L’isola del giorno prima*). Leggevo, facevo disegni e diagrammi, inventavo un mondo. Questo mondo doveva essere il più preciso possibile, in modo che io potessi muovermici con assoluta confidenza ” (*SL* 337).
Intertextuality in general has become a major focus in postmodern literary theory and criticism mainly for two reasons: first, because of its hybrid character both as offering a methodology applicable to concrete passages of text and as an abstract concept defining the inter-relatedness of all writing; and second, because of the intellectual pleasure which can be gained from investigating the ‘hide-and-seek’ games that literary texts present through their intertextual references. The latter point relates to the aspect of playfulness which is often highlighted in postmodern works and, likewise, in contemporary criticism. Intertextual references can be introduced into literary works both consciously and unconsciously. In its conscious use, critics maintain that it allows for intricate, complex stories that challenge the reader with a handful of what Genette calls more or less recognizable hypotexts. This consciously used kind of textual game allows for a pragmatics of intertextuality from the perspective of the reader. These intertexts are more or less easily decipherable by a surface reading of the text, and generating meaning would depend on the individual reader’s (what Eco calls encyclopedic) knowledge.\(^{19}\) If we consider, however, the possibility that intertextual references can be introduced into literary works on an unconscious level as well, then the writer of postmodern fiction, perhaps inevitably, is unable to escape the broader implications of intertextuality: that is, that no written or spoken utterance can possibly be free from the influence of other texts. Just as (according to deconstructionist thought) it is in the nature of all

\(^{19}\) In *Kant and the Platypus* (1997), Eco discusses the difference between dictionary properties which are “semantic primitives for some and which in any case imply a categorical organization” (225) and encyclopedic knowledge. He explains: “the supporters of dictionary representation maintain that such representations take account of relations within the language, leaving aside elements of knowledge of the world, while knowledge in an encyclopedic format presupposes extralinguistic knowledge […]. Encyclopedic knowledge […] would be uncoordinated by nature, with an uncontrollable format” (226).
writing to defer meaning endlessly, from one linguistic sign to the next, so textual meaning is arguably established, and deferred, by calling up other literary texts—whether consciously or unconsciously.

There are numerous definitions of intertextuality but as a result of their inherent variability, it is as difficult for an author to adopt an intertextual method as a constructive narrative tool as it is for a critic to trace its functioning. Theories of intertextuality, as will be discussed throughout this dissertation, are particularly unbalanced in the way that they expound at once the simultaneous and transformative relationships between texts without taking into account the role of the authorial figure as an element that also exists simultaneously with texts or as one that transforms them. This is a result of intertextuality theories that concentrate on the reader’s responsibility in determining meaning without regard to the author’s role as reader as well. I want to argue that a concept of self-reflexive intertextuality can act as a collaborative tool with which to construct a readable narrative, since it simultaneously takes into account both the author’s and the reader’s (reading) experiences, thereby offering a hybrid perspective.

In its relatively brief history, the notion of intertextuality has undergone several changes. None of the resulting permutations, however, have sought to directly connect the concept with the author. This is perhaps due to a reluctance to consider intertextuality as a theory that supports the concept of a text as hybrid, choosing instead to focus on the notion of the text as process of metamorphosis. From the outset, however, intertextuality has always debated the notion of hybridity. Ferdinand de Saussure’s theories of the linguistic sign, for example, largely based on the notion of the differential sign, that is, “both signifier and signified
are purely relational and differential entities” (Culler 23), are easily adaptable and form the basis of the development of some of the major theories of intertextuality. According to Graham Allen in *Intertextuality*, if “all signs are in some way differential, they can be understood not only as non-referential in nature but also as shadowed by a vast number of possible relations” (11); literary texts, then, can also be encumbered by ‘a vast number of possible relations’ with other texts. Saussure’s theories of the linguistic sign were easily appropriated to a theory of literature since “in reading literature we become intensely aware that the signs deployed in any particular text have their reference not to objects in the world but to the literary system out of which the text is produced” (Allen 11). From a Saussurian perspective, this implies ignoring the author’s role in the production of texts. The text is “no longer the product of the author’s original thoughts” (Allen 12). Instead it becomes a space where multiple relationships can coexist: “A site of words and sentences shadowed by multiple potentialities of meaning, the literary work can now be understood in a comparative way, the reader moving outward from the work’s apparent structure into the relations it possesses with other works and linguistic structures” (Allen 12). Though Saussure’s insights eliminate the author from the text’s relevance, the space where these multiple relationships coexist, where both the original text and the new coexist as one product, implies that within this space a text undergoes a process of hybridization. Unfortunately, Saussure’s theories lead to a tradition in intertextuality theory that views the author as a mere arranger or orchestrator of things that have already been written. Even in this regard, however, the author participates in hybridizing texts.
When Kristeva popularizes the term “intertextuality” in her essay, “Word, Dialogue and Novel,” she breaks from traditional notions of the functions of the author to posit instead a theory that all signifying systems are constituted by the manner in which they transform earlier signifying systems. For Kristeva, a literary work is not merely the product of a single author; rather, according to Philippe Sollers, “Kristeva’s concept of ‘productivity’ was equated with intertextuality as ‘the junction of several texts of which it is simultaneously the rereading, accentuation, condensation, displacement and depth’” (Sollers 75). What is important in a text, according to Kristeva, is its relationship to other texts and to the structures of language itself: “any text is constructed of a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another” (Kristeva 66). This is why Kristeva refers to texts in terms of two axes: the horizontal axis that connects the author and the reader of the text and the vertical axis that describes a text’s connection with other texts (Kristeva 69). In this manner intertextuality is a method by which to account for the role of literary and extra-literary materials without recourse to traditional notions of authorship. For Kristeva, the authorial figure responsible for the structure of the text holds little meaning. Since every text is a rereading and rewriting of other texts and a text’s structure is based on these rereadings and rewritings, the author’s involvement in text production is no longer a concerning factor, since the structure already exists. This is where the contradiction lies. Kristeva’s theory maintains that a text can be transformed by a reader’s (re)reading and an author’s (re)writing and can exist simultaneously with other texts, but an author’s own reading experiences, own interpretations of texts, are considered unimportant to the overall meaning of the text.
Barthes’s theories of intertextuality also problematize the issue of authorship since he, like Saussure and Kristeva, also considers the author not the originator of what is written but the arranger of texts that have already been written. For Barthes, a text is a “multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash” (Barthes 146). The author’s only responsibility is to “mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as to never rest on any of them” (146). In this way, like Kristeva, Barthes also considers intertextuality in terms of productivity but he is also, perhaps indirectly, implying a process of hybridization. According to Barthes, intertextuality is what allows a text to come into being: “any text is a new tissue of past citations. Bits of code, formula, rhythmic models, fragments of social languages [...]. Intertextuality, the condition of any intertext, is a general field of anonymous formulae whose origin can scarcely be located; of unconscious or automatic quotations” (Barthes 39). Kristeva’s discourse, on the one hand, subverts the concept of text as self-sufficient and, on the other, maintains that all literary works exist in the presence of other texts, thereby defining the literary text as a veritable palimpsest. For Barthes, writing is considered at once iteration and re-iteration, a rewriting which foregrounds the traces of various texts it both knowingly and unknowingly places and displaces.

Considering intertextuality as a hybrid theory enables theories of intertextuality to describe texts at one time in terms of simultaneity/correlation and at another in terms of transformation/opposition. On the one hand, these different concepts suggest a literary text that is a hybrid construction (Bakhtin):20 a text exists simultaneously with other texts; a text is

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20 Bakhtin in *Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, defines hybrid construction as “an utterance that belongs, by its grammatical (syntactic) and compositional markers, to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within it
made up of various genres, references, quotations. On the other hand, they point to the text as a process of metamorphosis: a text as a transformation, a rereading or rewriting of other texts. The hybrid designation points to what the text is and metamorphosis points to what the text does. Both hybridity and metamorphosis are inherently necessary in order to produce and interpret texts. In his essay “Alcuni strumenti per capire: intertestualità, nomi,” Andrea Bernardelli asks: “What is Eco’s definition of intertextuality?” Eco does not theorize a concept of intertextuality until the late seventies with his publication *Lector in fabula*, a treatise in large part about the role of the reader in generating meaning from a text. Intertextuality, for Eco, is a way in which readers can recognize meaning in a text, particularly through archetypes (*THR* 197). Whereas earlier theories are heavily reliant on the reader’s textual experiences in order to conceptualize a theory of intertextuality, Eco brings non-textual experiences into the intertextual debate by distinguishing between *sceneggiature comuni* (common frames)--stereotyped situations based on normal everyday experiences--and *sceneggiature intertestuali* (*intertextual frames*)--stereotyped situations whose origins are found in textual tradition (79-84). The first is based on more cultural (both common and personal) experiences and the latter on the literary. Eco’s theory of intertextuality, developed several years after those of Kristeva and Barthes, is also similarly based on the notion of productivity but incorporates other theories of intertextuality, like those of Claude Lévi-Strauss and Michael Riffaterre, which define intertextuality in terms of transformation and integration. Eco’s metaphor in the *Postille* to *Il two utterances, two speech manners, ‘two styles, two languages,’ two semantic and axiological belief systems [...]. They are of enormous significance in novel style” (304-305).

 nome della rosa, which describes the text as a machine, as discussed earlier, simultaneously takes into account considerations of the text as ‘product’ and incorporates the integration and interplay of not only textual elements but cultural and personal elements as well. In this way, Eco’s concept of intertextuality implicitly includes the role of the author in the creation of new texts.

More than describing a process of hybridization, the history of intertextual literary theory has also debated the notion of the text as (re)writing and (re)construction. Whereas the second chapter explores the possibility of intertextuality as a hybrid theory, the third chapter focuses on the role of the author in the (re)writing and (re)construction process. Lévi-Strauss also considered the author as an intermediary between past and future texts, declaring that “books get written through me” (Wiseman and Groves 173) and that the text is a bricolage which operates through several key transformations: addition, deletion, substitution, and transposition (Noth 341). The author, the bricoleur, constructs the text by appropriating pre-existing (recognizable) materials that lead to the production of new texts. For Genette, intertextuality is reduced to a type of a larger category of transtextuality, that is, “all that sets the text in relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts” (Genette 1). Genette describes five types of transtextuality: intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, architextuality, and hypertextuality. In this way transtextuality becomes a more inclusive term which not only replaces early intertextuality theories but limits the concept to issues solely concerning quotation, plagiarism and allusion (Allen 101). The demotion of intertextuality to a type of transtextuality reveals a more pragmatic approach to the general concept of intertextuality which enables the reader to more easily decipher the author’s use of quotations,
plagiarism and allusions in his or her text. It is, however, unclear whether Genette is alluding to conscious or unconscious quotations. What remains clear, however, is that by fragmenting the literary text into types or degrees of transtextuality, Genette is able to transform semiotically-based theories of intertextuality that dissect the text word by word or sentence by sentence, to posit instead a theory of a text that is “a total field of relevant relationships” (Allen 102).

Similarly, Riffaterre’s conception of intertextuality is also dependent on this notion of a “totality of relationships,” particularly in terms of textual fragments that contribute to the text as a whole. Riffaterre’s definition of the intertext sees the text in terms of correlation rather than contrast: “a corpus of texts, textual fragments [...] that shares a lexicon [...] with the text we are reading (directly or indirectly) in the form of synonyms, or [...] antonyms [...]. [E]ach member of this corpus is a structural homologue of the text” (Riffaterre 142). In theorizing the text as a ‘total field of relevant relationships,’ both Genette and Riffaterre choose to ignore the author’s own relationship with texts and reading.

Intertextual theories, from the outset, have been discriminatory, especially in terms of their negation of the figure of the author who is described as merely a figure who puts pieces together to form a structure that has already been pre-formed. These theories ignore the author’s own reading experiences and how they can aid in not only constructing the structure of the text but in generating meaning as well. This metaphorical “architectural” undercurrent in theories of intertextuality and subsequently in Eco’s novels is difficult to ignore, given that the second step of his writing process, discussed in chapter two, involves both “construct[ing] a world” (OL 311) for his novels and providing textual material for possible worlds for future texts. This step in his process irrevocably reveals the link, already established historically,
between architect and author, architecture and literature. According to Vitruvius in his *De architectura libri decem* (*Ten Books on Architecture*), architects should adhere to certain professional standards. They should be “equipped with knowledge of many branches of study and varied kinds of learning” (5). They must, he continues, “know much about history, have followed the philosophers with attention, understand music, have some knowledge of medicine [...] and be acquainted with astronomy and the theory of the heavens” (6). This seemingly antiquated notion of the architect is just as relevant to the creator of texts, particularly Eco who, through his reading experiences, constructs worlds in his novels wherein all the above branches of study become viable intertexts and intratexts.

*Il nome della rosa*, for example, was published at a time when architecture, like literature, was seeking various new and innovative postmodern modes. Eco’s detailed design of the abbey is at one and the same time accurately medieval and deliberately postmodern. For Eco, postmodernism implied a revisiting of the past to search for meaning in the present; but this was not to be done naively: “[t]he postmodern reply to the modern consists of recognizing that the past, since it cannot really be destroyed, because its destruction leads to silence, must be revisited: but with irony, not innocently” (*PNOR*). Eco’s own reading experiences shape his work so that his postmodernism does not solely entail the revisiting of

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22 “Architecti est scientia pluribus disciplinis et variis eruditionibus ornate, cuius iudicio probantur omnia quae ab ceteris perficiuntur opera” (2).
23 “Itaque eum etiam ingeniosum oportet esse et ad disciplinam docilem. Necque enim ingenium sine disciplina sine ingenio perfectum artificem potest efficere. Et ut litteratus sit, peritus graphidos, eruditus geometria, historias complures noverit, philosophos diligenter audierit, musicam scierit, medicinae non sit ignarus, responsa iurisconsultorum noverit, astrologium caelique rationes cognitas habeat” (3).
24 “La risposta post-moderna alla moderna consiste nel riconoscere che il passato, visto che non può essere distrutto, perché la distruzione porta al silenzio, deve essere rivesitato: con ironia in modo non innocente” (*PNOR* 529).
only the general past, but of one’s own past as well. This is especially evident in one of Eco’s most recent novels, *La misteriosa fiamma della regina Loana* (2004). In the example of *Il nome della rosa*, it is clear from his pronouncements on the topic that Eco’s reading experiences directly aided him not only in constructing the abbey, but by revisiting the medieval world and its inherent allegories, in also attaching to it several layers of meaning. Eco’s imagined architecture, though destroyed in the end, is an inclusive structure insofar as it is able to facilitate multiple meanings – it is an active architecture, to use Eco’s own terms, a “work in movement” (*OW* 22).²⁵ Eco reminds us that this inclusiveness is not lessened by the fire in the story’s plot; rather, the building exemplifies Eco’s notion that the past is not dead. Though the structure is destroyed, the abbey continues to survive in Adso’s writing, where it awaits other interpretations. So that where postmodern and poststructural criticism declares the death of the author and the birth of a double-coded relationship between text and reader, Eco, in *Il nome della rosa*, is implicitly advocating a triple-coded relationship between author, reader and text; it is the author, after all, who offers the structure for the reader to interpret. In the case of the abbey and the library, Adso’s writing ensures their survival in those who read and interpret what he has written. In this way, architecture becomes a metaphor for writing and the novel since both are developed, as we shall see through the architecture theories of Eco, Paolo Portoghesi and Charles Jencks, through a combination of the past and present, of personal (reading) and cultural experiences. Architecture becomes the visible, structural memory of

²⁵ “Opera in movimento” (*OA* 19).
society through all its transitions, and the novel, particularly Eco’s in this case, becomes a metaphor for memory through narrative.

It is thus fitting that this second, intertextual, phase of Eco’s writing process determines the third, the narrative style of his novels, and subsequently the final chapter of this dissertation, since each of his novels, from *Il nome della rosa* (1981) to *Il cimitero di Praga* (2010), plays with the notion of memory. When Eco writes, he is not only incorporating various intertexts and his own personal reading and cultural experiences, he is (re)constructing and (re)writing a personal and cultural memory, allowing his novels a parodic level that not only takes into account the (re)construction of architecture and cities, but most notably, libraries.

Given that the library and reading are the themes that tie Eco’s novels together, and the library is the architectural structure that houses both personal and collective/cultural memory, the fourth chapter of this dissertation will also examine Eco’s recent views on bibliophilia and how he utilizes self-reflexive intertextuality in order to (re)construct the (notion of) library, and subsequently the encyclopedia, in his novels, distinguishing between a personal and collective library or memory. By participating in the (re)construction of the library and encyclopedic knowledge, Eco is offering through his novels a rewriting (*riscrittura*) and parody (*parodia*) of both the library and encyclopedic knowledge.

This process of ‘self-reflexive intertextuality’ is difficult to define given that much of it resides in the not always accurate realm of memory; but what the author writes, it seems self-evident to say, is in some way a reflection of the very things that he or she was able to retain of his or her reading experiences and life experiences in general. Be it on the conscious or subconscious level, the very sources of an author’s writing come from a combination of what he
or she has read and what he or she has experienced and imagined. What I will argue is that the
range of intertexts in Eco’s works helps define the complexity of the author’s conception of Self.
As these intertexts have much to do with the realm of memory -- memories of texts Eco has
read and personal experiences -- the third portion of this dissertation will focus on continuing
to develop in more detail a definition of the term ‘self-reflexive intertextuality.’ In so doing, a
close analysis and re-examination of intertextuality theory will include, not exclude, the role of
the author’s memory (of both reading and life experiences) as an interpretive tool in a reader’s
analysis of a text.

Throughout his literary and theoretical career, Eco has challenged the role of memory
(and forgetting) in several of his works. Recently, In, La memoria vegetale e altri scritti di
bibliofilia (2006), Eco has explored memory further, delineating its two main functions: “One,
the one that everyone thinks of, is that of retaining in memory the dates of our preceding
experiences; but the other is also that of filtering them, of letting some go and conserving
others.” He explains that this type of “selective memory, so important in allowing us to
survive as individuals, functions also on a social level and allows communities to survive [as
well].” In this way, memory is both personal and collective. It is argued in this chapter that
Eco’s novels are literary representations of different kinds of memory since they at once
describe selected personal experiences of the author and a collective memory. By exploring
various treatises on memory – Renate Lachmann’s Memory and Literature: Intertextuality in

26 My translation. “Una, ed è quella a cui tutti pensano, è quella di trattenere nel ricordo i dati della nostra
esperienza precedente; ma l’altra è anche quella di filtrarli, di lasciarne cadere alcuni e di conservarne altre” (MVASB 11).
27 My translation. “Questa memoria selettiva, così importante per permetterci di sopravvivere come individui,
funzione anche a livello sociale e permette di sopravvivere alle comunità” (MVASB 14).
Russian Modernism, and Lina Bolzoni’s La stanza della memoria -- this chapter will outline not only the role of memory in Eco’s novels but its progression from his medieval to more modern texts. In Il nome della rosa and Baudolino, the manuscript and the library are both representations of memory; in L’isola del giorno prima, it is the diary that has this role; in Il pendolo di Foucault, the computer fulfills the tasks of memory, and in La misteriosa fiamma della regina Loana, memory is lost. As much as Eco’s novels are about remembering, they are also about forgetting and losing memory. Books and manuscripts are lost and erased and libraries are destroyed in Eco’s medieval narratives; the diary is lost in the shipwreck of Eco’s baroque narrative, and memory proves to be erasable and lost in Eco’s contemporary narratives. This interplay between lost and found, memory and forgetting, ultimately leads to an (other) act of creating, possible rewriting.

Before the invention of writing, Eco explains in La memoria vegetale, memory was dependent on language and the oral tradition. With what Eco calls la memoria minerale, the invention of writing helped to construct memory by providing knowledge:

But with the invention of writing we assist in the naissance of a mineral memory. I say mineral because the first signs were inscribed on clay tablets, sculpted stone; because mineral memory is also a part of architecture [...] in short, it constituted, as it’s been said, an encyclopedia sculpted in stone.28

Literature, Renate Lachmann argues in “Mnemonic and Intertextual Aspects of Literature,” is “culture’s memory” (302). Thus, by writing, an author not only contributes to the production of memory but the text he/she writes is a text of memory. Moreover, Lachmann asserts that “the

28 My translation. ‘Ma con l’invenzione della scrittura assistiamo alla nascita di una memoria minerale. Dico minerale perché i primi segni vengono incisi su tavolette d’argilla, scolpiti su pietra; perché fa parte della memoria minerale anche l’architettura […] costituiva insomma, come è stato detto, un’enciclopedia in pietra” (MVASB 15).
memory of the text is formed by the intertextuality of its references” (305). Since memory and intertextuality have both collective and individual dimensions, it is possible for a text at one time to be open to independent interpretation, thus ignoring the author’s identity, and at another to give insight into the authorial identity postmodern works attempt to conceal. As was mentioned, Eco’s works are as much about remembering as they are about forgetting. Thus the chapter will be an intra/intertextual exploration of Eco’s novels (Il nome della rosa to La misteriosa fiamma della regina Loana) and the various methods by which Eco handles memory and memory loss: through flashbacks, diaries and manuscripts, travel writing, as well as lost diaries, lost manuscripts and lost libraries, which he uses to construct the possible worlds of his narratives.

From this point of view, we can consider Nelson Goodman’s statement in Worldmaking that “we can have words without worlds but no world without words and other symbols” (6) as inaccurate since words can themselves be worlds or at the very least can incite them. According to Goodman, possible worlds are only versions of the world which are based on symbolic systems and which can be described in various symbolic forms (music, images, etc.). Moreover, no world is more real than another, but we have the ability to select one world as the reference world that we call actual. Goodman lists five ways in which to create worlds: composition and decomposition, integrating and dividing parts; weighting, that is, the element of emphasis in one world and not in another; ordering, in the sense that objects of that world must be clearly grouped and classified before we can grasp them; deletion and supplementation, deleting old material and adding new; and deformations, reforming or destroying the world’s original form in order to correct or corrupt (Goodman 7-16). Goodman
maintains that worldmaking is linked to knowledge and that knowledge leads to a 
reconstruction of worlds. For Eco’s fiction, the possible worlds he constructs, based on his own 
knowledge, must propose a model for truth.

Thomas Pavel’s *Fictional Worlds* attempts to bring the issue of truth to light by 
incorporating the imagination into the argument. Quoting Aristotle’s example that “it is not the 
poet’s business to tell what happened, but the kinds of things that would happen – what is 
possible according to possibility and necessity,” Pavel maintains that the poet or author “must 
put forward either propositions true in every alternative of the real world (things possible 
according to necessity) or propositions true at least in one alternative of the actual world 
(things possible according to probability)” (46). For this to occur, Pavel suggests the necessity 
of a model that puts the onus on the reader of possible worlds rather than their creator:

To represent works of fiction as worlds involves a model that does not necessarily include a rigorous theory of the production of the fictional world: in this the model resembles the usual activity of the reader who can contemplate the world of Mr. Pickwick independently of who established it and when, leaving aside the inquiry about the process of creation. Besides, literary history favors this attitude since in addition to the modern cases in which the author can be said to have created the fictional world (or at least major parts of it), there are innumerable instances in which much of this world pre-exists, and the writer more or less ‘identifies’ and describes it […] (49).

In this manner, Pavel suggests that the author more often than not does not actually create the 
fictional world he/she writes about but merely describes it as if it already existed – contrary to 
Goodman’s belief. Pavel approaches possible words as “abstract correlations of states of 
affairs, distinct from the statements describing those states, distinct thereby from the complete 
list of sentences kept in the book about the world” (50). To broach the topic of differences 
between properties of worlds, Pavel asserts that a language must be ascribed, a language that
“possesses qualitative predicates” (52) and that the same world can be described in different languages. Along these lines, the same text can also “equally [...] refer to an infinity of distinct worlds” (52). It is clear that Pavel’s discourse has echoes of Eco’s concept of the *opera aperta*, a concept which is easily applied to the notion of an infinite number of possible worlds. Moreover, to accommodate the difference between the worlds of skepticism and belief, Pavel proposes a series of *ontological fusions* that provide a point of “articulation at which the two worlds meet” (138). As a result, a community’s worldview, be it profane or sacred, can divide into several *ontological landscapes* that, Pavel posits, “foster a plurality of worlds” (139). The creator of worlds not only needs to consider its inhabitants and their belief systems, but he/she must also be able to arrange the space in which these inhabitants live. In this manner, Pavel argues that “ontological space resembles landscape architecture and urban planning” (141), so that the possible worlds of fiction are able not only to evoke meaning but to render differences cohesive as well.

While Pavel links ontological landscapes to urban planning, Lubomír Doležel explores the use of intertextuality in constructing possible worlds. In his epilogue to *Heterocosmica*, Doležel affirms that an intertextually based analysis is “focused on semantic interpretation” (201). He differentiates between the process of influence, which is unidirectional, and intertextuality, which is bidirectional and can thus “bind together [texts] in a relationship of mutual semantic illumination” (201). Doležel finds the notion of an implicit intertextuality more challenging since the semantic traces of texts are more elusive and more difficult to grasp. This kind of implicit intertextuality has two main guiding principles. The first Doležel defines is marked by “allusions, which direct the interpreter from one literary text to other texts, to
artworks and so on”; the second, he continues, “follows the basic semantic rule of implicitness: the text’s meaning can be grasped without identifying the intertext but is enriched, often quite substantially, by its discovery” (201). This leads Doležel to formulate the view that works are linked not only on a textual level but by the fictional/possible worlds level as well. He argues that “fictional worlds gain a semiotic existence independent of constructing texture; they thereby become objects of the active, evolving, and recycling cultural memory. They enter into their own chain of succession, complementing and reinforcing, or competing and undermining one another” (202), thereby distinguishing between the intertextuality of texts and that of fictional worlds. To account for this distinction, Doležel offers the concept of literary transduction that is “an outgrowth of the idea of literature as a specific form of communication” (202); it not only includes intertextuality but “supersedes and absorbs [it]” (202). As a result, a general theory of communication is no longer sufficient when considering the notion of possible worlds, because it does not “notice that a fictional world is transmitted through the message” (203). Doležel’s new model of interpretation attempts to represent literary communication as interaction where the reader is held accountable for reconstructing the fictional world: “in the act of writing the author produces a text and thereby constructs a fictional world; in the act of reading, the reader processes the text and thereby reconstructs the fictional world. Both the author and reader perform communicative acts” (204). This schema, though reiterating what Pavel suggested before, seems to aim at redefining the concept of intertextuality, yet almost completely ignores the fact that the author’s construction of a possible world is already a reconstruction, since the world he/she constructs is based on ones previously read and thus remembered, consciously or unconsciously. It would seem that the
postmodern rewrite, as Doležel calls it, not only “rewrite[s], relocate[s], reevaluate[s] the classic protoworld” (206) but reiterates the notion of a passive author, and yet it is the author who will struggle through his/her experiences to bring the (im)possible world to light.

The types of theory that Pavel and Doležel develop cannot take into account the importance of Eco’s near complete encyclopedic knowledge because they do not consider the author the rewriter or reconstructor of fictional worlds, which are themselves intertextual and at times, and especially with Eco, intratextual. The author might lie about his/her intention when writing a text but he/she cannot lie about what he/she has read, particularly when the text makes it clear to the reader through the process of intertextuality. Theories like those posited by Pavel and Doležel are based on the knowledge of the reader; their theories can apply only if we were to consider Eco as a reader foremost and an author second. As an author, it is necessary for Eco to read in order to write; as it is, the author must read first, read signs, images, texts, in order to interpret or reinterpret, as the case may be. To make relevant the lives of authors, we must consider their roles as readers first and, as a result, consider intertextuality to include not only the author’s reading experiences, but life experiences as well, as a mode by which to construct a concept of self: a self as a reflection of the reading experience. The disparate views about the author’s function in intertextual theories can be remedied and the concept unified with a hybrid notion of intertextuality that involves the author’s role; in other words, a self-reflexive intertextuality which, unlike the concept of metafiction that calls attention solely to the writing process, incorporates the author’s reading and personal/cultural experiences as well.
Recent studies on intertextuality, like those by Bernardelli, Graham Allen and Robert Miola, do not attempt to offer new theories or definitions of the subject but instead attempt to clear up the confusion that, Bernardelli (writing in English) maintains, surrounds it:

The term *intertextuality* and the general concept that a text cannot exist and be interpreted as a self-sufficient whole, are the only two assumptions that have remained fixed within the subsequent tradition of literary theory. Moving on from such a general idea, it was inevitable that a different range of definitions of intertextuality would be coined, causing what has been defined as a confused state of *polysemy* (Bernardelli, “The Concept of Intertextuality” 3).

These types of studies illustrate the continuous evolution of the concept of intertextuality and often fail to include the author in the process. To alleviate the confusion surrounding the concept, Bernardelli explains how intertextuality requires a reorganization and re-categorization in terms of typology and history. In his essay “Introduction. The Concept of Intertextuality Thirty Years On: 1967-1997,” he distinguishes among six types of intertextuality: the *paragrammatic intertextuality* of Saussure with its emphasis on the signifier; Bakhtin’s *dialogic intertextuality* which focuses on notions of dialogism and heteroglossia that further developed into theories posited by Kristeva on the relationship between writing and ideology that, in turn, led to Barthes’s claim about the death of the author; *formal-evolutionary intertextuality* that has its roots in Russian Formalism and concentrates on the evolution of the history of the literary system. Since history is constantly changing, the literary system must be redefined. This inevitably leads to Genette’s conception of transtextuality and its components (intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, architextuality, and hypertextuality). There is also *philological intertextuality* with its reliance on topoi; *dialectic intertextuality* which focuses on the author’s relationship with literary tradition or what Bloom calls “the anxiety of
influence”; and postmodern intertextuality which emphasizes the double level of reading and interpretation or double coding (3-13). Allen’s book Intertextuality takes a more historical approach by retracing the origins of the term through Saussure, Bakhtin and Kristeva and its progression to the postmodern; and Mioli, in his essay “Seven Types of Intertextuality,” divides the concept into three categories and seven subtypes: Mioli’s first category is comprised of intertexts directly mediated by the author through revision, quotation, allusion, and sources; the second focuses on tradition and is divided in terms of conventions, figurations, and genres; and the third presents intertextuality as a type of paralogue (14-17). Notwithstanding these various distinctions and categories, each study offers an historical view in order to understand current intertextual trends.

But both old and more recently re-elaborated theories of intertextuality fail to conceive of a notion of the text that includes its author, and is a unified entity. Instead, the language used to define intertextuality reveals an inherent contradiction in texts that are at once ‘simultaneous,’ ‘blended,’ and ‘mixed’ with other texts and yet ‘different,’ ‘transformed,’ and that ‘clash’ with other texts. Both Eco’s theories and novels suggest that the only way to remedy this contradiction is by including the author in the intertextual process not merely in terms of conscious quotations but through Eco’s own (reading) experiences (conscious or unconscious) which also facilitate the production and interpretation of texts. Recognizing the author as a reader and interpreter of texts is essential in formulating a theory of the text that is unified. Andrew Bennett, for example, in The Author, reveals the duplicitousness of Barthes’s famous claim: “While its title and its polemical thrust assert that the author has passed away, that the figure of the author is now outdated, superseded by the text itself, at the same time
Barthes makes it clear that the author still holds sway, still asserts a ‘tyrannous’ hold on readers’ imaginations” (17). Though Barthes maintains that an author’s work is essentially unoriginal and has already been written, he also claims that literature is always “tyrannically centred on its author, his person, his life, his tastes, his passions” (Barthes 126). Readers are able to interpret a text free from the author’s influence, but Barthes further maintains that they are always seeking explanations “from the man or woman who produced it [...] the voice of a single person, the author ‘confiding’ in us” (126). Barthes’s becomes the exemplar of the failure of intertextual theories to successfully negate the author’s role in text production and interpretation, since admittedly the literary text is dependent as much as on the reader’s experiences and interpretations as on the author’s. In this way, my proposed theory of self-reflexive intertextuality enables a more unified concept of the text that includes the author.
Chapter One
The First Phase: Eco, the Author--from Theories to Novels

In an article entitled “Un sogno” (“A Dream”), which originally appeared in *L’espresso* in December 2003, then republished in *A passo di gambero* [APG] or *Turning Back the Clock: Hot Wars and Media Populism* [TBC] in 2006, Eco describes a dream of a global blackout that paralyzes the civilized world (*TBC* 329). This dream posits an end of days scenario that both describes a possible future world and revisits the past. The future world he describes, the product of a war made possible by modern technology—“an all-out war, not a marginal incident like the Second World War [...]. A war made possible by modern technology, with entire areas of the planet turned into radioactive deserts and at least half the world’s population dead from friendly fire, starvation and pestilence” (*TBC* 329)—is marked by a series of negations that link us to a time before modern technology—no television, no Internet, no electricity—and by a sequence of verbs that suggests a resurrection of the past: “riscoprirà” (“will rediscover”), “rifioriranno” (“will reflower”) and “riprenderanno” (“will take up again”). Consequently, the survivors in Eco’s dream (his family and friends among them) are forced to return to more traditional modes of living. They rediscover what today we would consider antiquated methods of communication (“communication will be handled by carrier pigeons”) (*TBC* 330); education (“I would do my bit by teaching grammar and history— not geography [...]. I’ll assemble my grandchildren and their friends and tutor them at home: first calligraphy [...]) and then gradually

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1 “Una bella guerra planetaria [...], non un incidente marginale come la Seconda Guerra mondiale che ha fatto solo cinquantacinque milioni di morti. Una guerra vera, di quella che la tecnica ci consente oggi di fare, con intere aree del pianeta desertificate dalle radiazioni, con almeno la metà della popolazione mondiale che scompare, per fuoco amico, fame, pestilenza” (*PDG* 323).
2 “Ma per comunicare si saranno anche riaddestrati colombi viaggiatori” (*PDG* 324).
 [...] I can give philosophy lessons”) (TBC 330); and narrating (“I will sit of an evening and amuse my grandchildren – by now bereft of television – by reading them old books of fairy tales found in the attic, or by telling them about the world before the war”) (TBC 330). This last point is the crux of Eco’s dream, and it is one that raises many questions which aid in proving the point of this dissertation. In telling his grandchildren about the world before the war, how will he decide what to tell them? Will he recount some events and leave others out? Will he rely on historical texts (if they even survive in this scenario), or will he rely on his own personal knowledge and memory, which include both his own writing and reading and life experiences?

There is an inherent dualism in this dream that immediately takes us back to the authorial debates of the 1960s when criticism and theory questioned the authority of the author over an interpretation of a text. Eco’s vision recaptures the very essence of those authorial debates since, on the one hand, his dream advocates the rediscovery of reading, and yet, on the other hand, it promotes the necessity of an authority figure when reading, narrating or re-telling. Eco acts as both author and reader in this dream and, consequently, everything he retells, narrates or teaches must, by necessity, not only be intertextual, as the knowledge comes from elsewhere (other texts), but since he is also the source of history in this scenario, self-reflexive as well, since he must remember his own experiences within that history, whether read or lived.

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3 “Darei il mio contributo, insegnando grammatica o storia – non geografia [...], radunerei I nipoti e i loro amici e farei scuola in casa: prima le aste [...], se ci fossero ragazzi più grandi potrei fare anche delle buone lezioni di filosofia” (PDG 324).

4 “Di sera, ai nipoti, ormai privi della televisione, potrò leggere vecchi libri di fiabe ritrovati in solaio, o raccontare di come fosse il mondo prima della guerra” (PDG 324).
It is no coincidence that Eco places great emphasis on the importance of the past in his dream about the future. Eco’s most recent works, among them *La misteriosa fiamma della regina Loana* (2004) [MFDR], *A passo di gambero* (2006), *La memoria vegetale* (2007) [LMV], and *Il cimitero di Praga* (2010) [CDP], focus on revisiting the past through both cultural (collective) and memories, often focusing on personal memories as well. In his essay “Alcuni ricordi della mia infanzia fascista,” Eco reveals a conscious or unconscious need or longing to step back into the past. He observes that even in these advanced times, history is with us: “in the form of a fake review in a book attributed to Crabe Backwards, I observed that recent times had witnessed technological developments that represented authentic steps back” (*TBC* 171).

Eco’s stance on the role of history as a way to predict the future contradicts some current notions of innovation that disregard history altogether.

*Opera aperta* [OA](1962), according to David Robey in his introduction to Anna Cancogni’s translation, *The Open Work* [OW] (1989), “is a polemical book in marked conflict with Crocean aesthetics that dominated the Italian academic world in the early sixties” (viii). *Opera aperta*, Eco’s first major theoretical work is, according to John Picchione in his *The New Avant-garde in Italy: Theoretical Debate and Poetic Practices* (2004), a direct reflection of his experiences as student of Luigi Pareyson. It was Pareyson who introduced to Eco new aesthetic principles that put the then current ideology into question: “studying under Luigi Pareyson, Eco was exposed to aesthetic principles that radically questioned the dominant positions

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5 Alastair McEwen opts to translate the title of Eco’s essay “Revisiting History” instead of the literal translation “A Few Memories of my Fascist Childhood.” McEwen’s translation implies a more general or collective revisiting, while the literal translation points to the more personal and provocative.
embodies the idealist legacy of Benedetto Croce” (Picchione 32). Where Croce argued that art was mainly a mental phenomenon that was communicated directly from artist to viewer or from author to reader—“the Crocean view of art as lyrical intuition, an interior process detached from any material reality and aimed at capturing transhistorical truths” (32)—Pareyson, Picchione argues, supported a more interdisciplinary approach which he called formativity:

Art, like all other human activities, is understood as a production of forms, an action conducted under specific historical conditions. Style is seen as the result of a dialectics between intrinsic potentiality of matter and human creativity—the latter identified with forms [...]. The artist’s personality brings to completion the potential of matter and exposes it to an infinite number of other personalities (33).

Orwell’s suggestion, mentioned in the previous chapter, that the author should suppress his or her personality in his or her writing, effectively rendering it an ineffectual tool for interpretation, is not a consideration for Pareyson, whose conception of the theory of formativity in Estetica: teoria della formatività (1954) includes the artist (among the readers), rendering the artist both an authority on the work and a means of interpretation.6

*Opera aperta* is a natural progression from Eco’s studies with Pareyson and also from the publication of Wayne Booth’s influential book, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, which, though

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6 In a related move, when Wayne Booth published *The Rhetoric of Fiction* in 1961, he argued that an author’s attempt at writing an impersonal text is ineffectual since the reader “will inevitably construct a picture of the official scribe” (71). Though the reader is the primary focus of this rhetorical theory, Booth is not excluding the author’s authority; rather, he makes the point that regardless of the elements of his or her personality that the author implies in his or her text, the actual reality of the author is replaced by the reader’s own conception derived from the text. The subsequent reception of Booth’s theory has tended to overlook the importance he grants to the author’s role, perhaps as a result of more reader-oriented theories of literature that were becoming popular at the time, but Booth’s notion of the ‘implied author’ still incorporates a level of the author’s intentionality as a possible interpretative tool: if the actual author implies clues about him or herself within the text, then the reader’s construction can still be guided by the author (who can of course skew the image as well). There is interplay between the author and the reader: the one is dependent on the other in order for the text to be successful.
primarily focused on the reader, does not outright exclude the author’s authority in the
interpretation of texts. Eco writes of the ‘openness’ of art in general, not breaking forcefully or
openly from traditional modes of writing, or supplying specific definitions of ‘author’ or
‘reader.’ Rather, Eco goes back and forth between the relationship of the author/artist and
what he variously refers to as the addressee, the interpreter and the performer. *Opera aperta*
offers a semiotic approach to the interpretation of texts, an invitation to the
addressee/interpreter/performer to supply his or her own interpretation of works of art:

[...] the individual addressee is bound to supply his own existential credentials,
the sense conditioning which is peculiarly his own, a defined culture, a set of
tastes, personal inclinations, and prejudices. Thus, his comprehension of the
original artifact is always modified by his particular and individual perspective. In
fact, the form of the work of art gains its aesthetic validity precisely in proportion
to the number of different perspectives from which it can be viewed and
understood (*OW* 3).^7^

Though at this time Eco considers the interpretations of addressees as unlimited, his definition
of the ‘open work’ does not yet entirely exclude the author from being a source of meaning in
the interpretation of a work:

Therefore, to sum up, we can say that the ‘work in movement’ is the possibility
of numerous different personal interventions, but it is not an amorphous
invitation to indiscriminate participation. The invitation offers the performer the
opportunity for an oriented insertion into something which always remains the
world intended by the author. In other words, the author offers the interpreter,
the performer, the addressee, a work *to be completed*. He does not know the

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^7^ “Ogni fruitore porta una concreta situazione esistenziale, una sensibilità particolarmente condizionata, una
determinata cultura, gusti, propensioni, pregiudizi personali, in modo che la comprensione della forma originaria
avviene secondo una determinata prospettiva individuale. In fondo, la forma è esteticamente valida nella misura
in cui può essere vista e compresa secondo molteplici prospettive, manifestando una ricchezza di aspetti e di
risonanze senza mai cessare di essere se stessa” (*OA* 26).
exact fashion his work will be concluded, but he is aware that once completed
the work in question will still be his own (OW 19).8

According to Robey, Eco’s theory of the open work, influenced greatly by the works of James
Joyce, reveals Eco’s own personal history, rather than concealing the author:

This discussion points to a clear analogy between Joyce’s artistic development,
as Eco sees it, and Eco’s own personal history. What interests him in Joyce is the
novelist’s move from a Catholic, Thomist position to the disordered decentered,
anarchic vision of life that seems to characterize Ulysses and Finnegans Wake.
Yet Eco also finds in Joyce’s mature work a degree of persistence of his youthful
faith, a nostalgia for the ordered world of medieval thought that is most notably
expressed in the system of symbolic correspondences (xvi).

Thus, from the outset, Eco’s theoretical work, as in his dream, is characterized by a series of re-
visitations and recollections with the past – both cultural/historical and personal. In Opera
aperta he expresses a need and nostalgia for an ordered world, one fundamentally based on
tradition. According to Robey, for Eco this world was that of the Middle Ages: “Yet a nostalgia
for the ordered world of medieval thought seems to have remained with him as well,
expressing itself not only in occasional excursions in the Middle Ages, culminating with The
Name of the Rose, but also, much more indirectly, in his interest in semiotics” (xvi). Opera
aperta is in this way dependent on Eco’s previous work, namely Il problema estetico in
Tommaso d’Aquino [IPETA](1956), and its presentation of the interplay between traditional
codes and present ideologies. Il problema estetico in Tommaso d’Aquino, he explains in the
1988 Preface (in English), “began as an exploration of an area which I considered to be living

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8 “L’opera in movimento, insomma, è possibilità di una molteplicità di interventi personali ma non è invito amorfo
all’intervento indiscriminato: è l’invito non necessario nè univoco all’intervento orientato, ad inserirci liberamente
in un mondo che tuttavia è sempre quello voluto dall’autore. L’autore offre insomma, al fruitore un’opera da
finire: non sa esattamente in qual modo l’opera potrà essere portata a termine, ma sa che l’opera portata a
terminerà sarà pur sempre la sua opera, non un’altra” (OA 19).
and contemporary. But as I proceeded, it gradually assumed the character of a remote past, though a past which I reconstructed with passion and affection” (viii). *Opera aperta* does not render the role of the author obsolete. It makes clear that the author’s role in the creating/interpreting of a text or a work of art is not only as essential as the reader’s or the viewer’s, but that the author, not unlike himself, requires the traditions of the past in order to construct the world of his novels. When trends in literature continued to change throughout the 1960s and ’70s, however, Eco’s views of the role of the author began to evolve, especially within his work while a member of *il Gruppo 63*.

Before the formation of *il Gruppo 63*, two opposing groups from France, *le Groupe Tel Quel*, launched in March 1960, and *Oulipo* (*Ouvroir de littérature potentielle* or "workshop of potential literature"), founded on November 24, 1960, tended to dominate the debates on literary thought and criticism in France and Italy. Authors, theorists and critics of *le Groupe Tel Quel* theorized new modes of interpretation which did not include the author. Prominent members of *le Groupe Tel Quel*, among them Roland Barthes and Julia Kristeva, maintained that a literary text cannot be decoded in relation to its author. Later, as we have seen, Barthes went so far as to declare the author dead and Kristeva argued that the author does not create his or her text from original ideas, but rather, a text is a “permutation of other texts,” a compilation of pre-existing works (36); and Michel Foucault, limited the author’s significance by assigning instead what is now his famous “author-function”: the author as a mere function of discourse (Foucault 382).

The *Oulipo* group, of which Italo Calvino was a member (and also a major influence for Eco), was not as unequivocally focused on theorizing as its *Tel Quel* counterpart; rather,
members of Oulipo concentrated on creating works by employing deliberately constraining techniques. These constraints were utilized as a means to incite ideas and new inspiration. By placing constraints on their writing, these and other authors began to seek new structures and patterns that they could use in any way they wished. Il Gruppo 63, founded a year after the publication of Eco’s Opera aperta, positioned itself in the middle between these two groups. In Italy, theorists were not so much concerned about the eradication of the author or the limits this figure imposes on interpretation. Il Gruppo 63, of which Eco was a founding member, for instance, did not set out to subvert the role of the author outright; instead it urged formal experimentation in language. The group consisted of writers, critics and academics who desired to experiment with new forms of expression, breaking ties with the traditional patterns set forth by the modernist and neorealist movements in the Italy of the ‘40s and ‘50s. The ultimate goal of the il Gruppo 63 was to bring a sense of innovation into Italian literature, a break from general traditions of style, not necessarily authority. Calvino’s works, though not as experimental as that of the Gruppo 63, substantiates this necessity for innovation in Italian literature, assigning to literature, and thus to its authors, a very specific responsibility:

This is a profound vocation of Italian literature that goes from Dante to Galileo: the literary work as a map of the world and knowledge, writing moved by a push for discovery that is at one time theological, at another speculative, at another bewitching, at another encyclopedic […]. This vein in the last centuries has become more sporadic and as a result, Italian literature has seen its importance decrease: perhaps today the time has come to recapture it.9

9 My translation. “Questa è una vocazione profonda della letteratura italiana che passa da Dante a Galileo: l’opera letteraria come mappa del mondo e dello scibile; lo scrivere mosso da una spinta conoscitiva che è ora teologica ora speculativa ora stregonesca ora enciclopedica […]. Questa vena negli ultimi secoli e diventata più sporadica e da allora la letteratura ha visto diminuire la sua importanza: oggi forse è venuto il momento di riprenderla.” (Calvino 232-33).
According to Kerstin Pilz, in *Mapping Complexity: Literature and Science in the Works of Italo Calvino*, Calvino affirms that literature’s principal role is “to re-establish a vision of unity between cultural discourses. He argues that literature needs to return to the role it had before the advent of modernity and the development of experimental science, when written discourse was identified with knowledge generally” (xiii). Literature, then, for Calvino, was to serve as a cultural unifier—a task the author has a huge hand in accomplishing.

At a reunion of *il Gruppo 63* in Bologna in May 2003, Eco opened the symposium with an introduction, “Il Gruppo 63, quarant’anni dopo” (The Gruppo 63, Forty Years Later”)¹⁰, that pointed out two reasons that this reunion should take place forty years after the group’s founding: “reuniting not twenty but forty years later can have two functions or features. The first is a reunion of those nostalgic for a monarchy that finds each other again because they would like to turn back the clock.”¹¹ In fact, Eco, in this Prolusione, returns to the origins of *il Gruppo 63* (“riandiamo dunque alle origini” [20]) which he characterizes as a movement to help young up and coming writers (himself among them) find a place within the literary culture. His account of the origins of *il Gruppo* are mainly based on personal experience, marked by the inception of the journal, *Il Verri*, and his encounter with Luciano Anceschi in May 1956:

Anceschi was about to start a review and sought to put together young people, not necessarily his students, diverse people, and he wanted them to talk amongst themselves [...]. Anceschi introduced me to the mysteries of Blue Bar of Piazza Meda [...] and every Saturday around six o’clock arrived gentlemen who would sit and chat about literature [...]. They were Montale, Gatto, Sereni, Ferrata, Dorfles, Paci [...] and Carlo Bo.¹²

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¹⁰ See Barilli and Lorenzini.
¹¹ My translation. “Riunirsi non vent’anni, ma quarant’anni dopo può avere due funzioni o profili. Una è la riunione dei nostalgici di una monarchia, che si ritrovan perché vorrebbero che il tempo tornasse indietro” (20).
¹² My translation. “Anceschi stava per iniziare una rivista e cercava di mettere insieme dei giovani, non necessariamente suoi allievi, gente diversa, e voleva che parlassero tra loro [...]. Anceschi mi introdusse ai misteri
This memory of Anceschi and the Blue Bar hints at what inevitably led to the death of the

Gruppo in 1968.

No matter what the intention was at its inception, unlike their French counterparts, Tel Quel and Oulipo, the Gruppo 63 was not a meeting of like-minded intellectuals. In his essay (written in English) “The Death of the Gruppo 63,” Eco describes the Gruppo as a movement forced upon young writers, critics and theorists by the generation that preceded it:

I say ‘forced’ because that constitutes a specific generational phenomenon. The group gathered together writers who had been formed in the fifties – the years of the great peace, the two so-called ‘white decades’—at a period when university struggles took place inside the comfortable womb of representative organizations and the individual could choose whether to submit to party bureaucracy or commit himself to a personal cultural specialization [...]. The Gruppo 63 was born because certain people, working inside established institutions, had made a different choice (OW 238).

In this way, il Gruppo 63 was formed in reaction to the non-reaction of these writers in the fifties, almost as if out of obligation to the generation before theirs. And what did they have to react against? In an article entitled “Quando la letteratura aveva i suoi pirati” or “When Literature Had its Pirates,” published in La Repubblica May 9, 2003, Eco offers an answer to this question:

For my generation the world had expanded [...]. Those of us born in the thirties belonged to a fortunate generation. Our older brothers had been destroyed by the war, a few ended up in Coltano, others had sacrificed their best years in the mountains. The survivors had returned to a normal life ten years late. We had arrived at the liberation and at the rebirth of our country fairly conscious of all that had happened, innocent because we hadn’t had the time to compromise ourselves, when all the opportunities were available. We were ready for every risk but -- let’s be honest –knowing that we wouldn’t have to pay a price. We

del Blue Bar di Piazza Meda [...] e tutti i sabati verso le sei arrivavano dei signori che si sedevano a chiachierare della letteratura [...] Erano Montale, Gatto, Sereni, Ferrata, Dorfles, Paci [...] e Carlo Bo” (21).
were not obligated to suffer for impossible conquests, we expressed our own form of impudent gaiety, and this made the author of earlier times’ suffer, who by definition wanted to be suffering and excluded.\textsuperscript{13}

Already at its inception, the group had no fundamental principles to build on. On the one hand, it was born out of a sense of obligation to its predecessors and, on the other, out of a necessity to compete at the same level as their French counterparts.

As Linda Hutcheon comments in \textit{Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox} (1980), there was “no unified movement, no constant political or literary theory centered around a critical journal, as there was in France at the time” (131). Though the main objective of the group remained vague and undefined, the focus was on the revolutionary aspects of the sixties. In this way, their aim was to formally subvert ideologies, using their power in an exaggerated way to “[blow] up the invisible structures of the ‘tiny clique’ which governed culture,” “to criticize,” “to pour ridicule” (\textit{OW} 239), and, as Eco explains in “Il Gruppo 63, quarant’anni dopo,” to “adjust the target, to shift the polemics onto more radical objectives, immunizable with difficulty, to change the times and the techniques of war and above all to anticipate and provoke, through solutions of art, a different vision of society in which we

\textsuperscript{13} My translation. “... per la nostra generazione il mondo si era allargato [...]. Noi, nati intorno agli anni Trenta, appartenevamo a una generazione fortunata. I nostri fratelli maggiori erano stati distrutti dalla guerra, alcuni erano finiti a Coltano, altri avevamo sacrificato i loro anni migliori in montagna. I sopravvissuti erano tornati a una vita normale con dieci anni di ritardo. Noi eravamo arrivati alla liberazione e alla rinascita del paese consapevoli abbastanza per aver capito quello che era accaduto, innocenti perché non avevamo avuto il tempo di comprometterci, quando tutte le opportunità erano aperte. Eravamo pronti a ogni rischio ma - diciamo la verità - sapendo che non dovevamo pagar pegno. Non eravamo obbligati a soffrire per conquiste impossibili, esprimevamo una nostra forma di impudente gaiezza, e ciò faceva soffrire lo scrittore d' antan che per definizione si voleva soffrente ed escluso” (1). Portions of this article can also be found in the \textit{Prolusione}.”Il gruppo 63, quarant’anni dopo.”
Il Gruppo 63, however, remained a largely individualized movement: “But these were only individual decisions which did not reach out to commit all of us” (OW 239), until a common path presented itself in the form of a critique of language: “Hence we decided to set up a debate about language. We became convinced [...] that to renew forms of communication and destroy established methods would be an effective and far-reaching platform for criticizing—that is, overturning—everything that those cultural forms expressed” (OW 239). Though this common path became the shared “poetics” (OW 240) of il Gruppo 63, Eco maintains that each member of the group had his own particular method with which to overturn established cultural systems:

At all events we had a clear idea: if one was moving toward a point of total rupture at the level of literature, art and philosophy – and at the level of ‘culture’ which constitutes the global communication by which a society continues to exist – it was absolutely no use to ‘communicate’ our plans by way of known tested media; on the contrary, we had to smash the very media of communication. This was the ‘poetics’ of the Gruppo 63 – and the single common aim at the heart of the group of writers who each had their own private axe to grind anyway (OW 240).

There is no ‘smashing’ of the very media of communication in Eco’s 1964 publication of Apocalittici e integrati [AI], and whereas many of his colleagues, including Nanni Balestrini, Angelo Guglielmi and Alfredo Giuliani, focused on a complete rupture from conventional cultural systems, Eco continued to promote a democratic involvement with works of art and literature -- which meant the interplay between author/artist and reader/viewer -- at the same

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14My translation. “Si tentava di aggiustare il tiro, di spostare la polemica su obiettivi più radicali, difficilmente immunizzabili, di cambiare i tempi e le tecniche di guerra e soprattutto di anticipare o provocare, attraverso le soluzioni dell’ arte, una visione diversa della società in cui ci si muoveva” (1).
time transposing the idea of the “open work” to a theory of culture which advocated the collaboration of high, medium and low or popular culture.

The shared poetics of il Gruppo 63 served as a detriment to Eco’s work while a member, as it provoked several primarily negative reactions which, more often than not, were undeserved. These shared poetics became the model against which his works were judged. According to Margherita Ganeri in Il “caso” Eco (1991), many also considered Eco’s works, in particular Apocalittici e integrati, as a response to the criticism he received for Opera aperta: “Apocalittici e integrati is Eco’s response to the climate of the reactions to Opera aperta: an answer that outlines a stance taken that is still more decisive and provocative” (Ganeri 21). \(^{15}\)

According to Capozzi, however, in a discussion on the relevance of critics’ reactions to Opera aperta as influential to Eco’s production of Apocalittici e integrati\(^{16}\), Ganeri is not a reliable source in this matter. Ganeri has misinterpreted Eco: Apocalittici e integrati is actually a reaction to the political and cultural theory and ideology of the time. Ganeri’s more restrictive hypothesis only serves to impose limits on Eco’s work, when in actuality Apocalittici e integrati is a natural progression from Opera aperta, since here he applies his poetics of an open work to a theory of culture.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Eco does not discriminate between high, medium and low or popular levels of culture; rather, he sees a necessary movement between the three.

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\(^{15}\) My translation. “Apocalittici e integrati è la risposta di Eco al clima delle reazioni ad Opera aperta: risposta che profila una presa di posizione ancora più decisa e provocatoria.”

\(^{16}\) Personal communication 2009.
This is possible, he affirms, only if we consider the individual of culture as a multi-dimensional rather than one-dimensional being, seeking more than one level of ‘entertainment’:

In other words, between the consumer of Pound’s poetry and the consumer of a detective story [...] no difference of social class or intellectual level exists. Every one of us can be one or the other at various moments of the same day, in one case looking for excitement of a highly specialized type, and in the other, a form of entertainment that is able to convey a category of specific values (AI 55).  

‘L’uomo di cultura’ or the man of culture, as Eco labels him, can have experiences of a high cultural quality (like listening to Bach) and can move to different levels and “by doing so he accepts coming down a level, enjoys being ‘normal’ equal to the masses who in his heart he despises but of whom he is under a spell, a primordial appeal” (AI 56). Just as the open work relies on the complementary interplay between author/artist and reader/viewer, so the only manner in which a theory of mass media can have potentially positive effects on culture, Eco suggests, is if we accept that levels of culture are not exclusionary: “therefore, only by accepting all the various levels as complementary and usable from the same community of users, can a path be opened towards a cultural reclamation of mass media” (AI 56). Though Eco advocates movement between the levels, he points out that problems arise when we consider the point of view of the common consumer who, more often than not, cannot move as easily from low to high levels of culture as the ‘uomo di cultura’ can from high to low: “the

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17 My translation. “In altri termini: tra il consumatore di poesia di Pound e il consumatore di un romanzo giallo [...] non esiste alcuna differenza di classe sociale o di livello intellettuale. Ciascuno di noi può essere l’uno e l’altro in diversi momenti della propria giornata, nell’un caso cercando un eccitazione di tipo altamente specializzato, nell’altro una forma di trattenimento che sia in grado di veicolare una categoria di valori specifica.”

18 My translation. “Così facendo accetta di scendere di livello, gode di farsi ‘normale’ uguale a una massa che in cuor suo disprezza ma di cui subisce il fascino, il richiamo primordiale.”

19 My translation. “Dunque, solo accettando la visione dei vari livelli come complementari e fruibili tutti dalla stessa comunità di fruitori, si può aprire la strada a una bonifica culturale dei mass media.”
problem is worse, [...] if it is considered from the point of view of the common consumer[...]
the problem [...] is above all political (an issue of education), above all, and then of free time
[...]. Insofar as this equality is accepted, a game of reciprocal crossings through various levels
will accentuate itself” (AI 57). As Eco expounds on his theory, we perceive the movement
through his own experiences within culture through music, television, film, literature, and
comics. Through these same experiences, it is clear that Eco considers that the ‘uomo di
cultura’ must also be able to move between past and present, between both personal and
cultural memory.

As was previously mentioned, Ganeri considered Apocalittici e integrati to be a
revolutionary and provocative theoretical work, and while this is accurate on some level, she
ignores the more personal level of the work. Following the model introduced in Opera aperta,
Eco continues to integrate memories, both personal and cultural/historical, as significant
components of his theories. In this work, Eco shares episodes of cultural/historical memory
that become personal at the same time. As such, ‘l’uomo di cultura’ must know how to move
not only between the various levels of culture (high, medium and low), but also between levels
of memory (personal and cultural). This is especially evident when Eco shares the memory of a
broadcaster friend caught in a situation where the teleprompter and the scene on screen did
not match. Forced to improvise, the broadcaster was able to describe the unexpected scene of
children playing by relating it to a traditional childhood experience of which he too was a part,

20 My translation. “Il problema è più grave [...] se viene considerato dal punto di vista del consumatore comune
[...]. Il problema [...] è anzitutto politico (un problema di scolarità), anzitutto, e poi di tempo libero [...]. In quanto,
accettata questa parità, si accentuerà un gioco di passaggi reciproci tra i vari livelli.”
rendering the episode relevant in both its personal and cultural connotations: “and here young boys, engrossed in their games of today, in their timeless games” (AI 58). For Eco, watching this episode, television is not, as other critics would argue, a divisive element in the sense of the depiction of culture (high, medium and low). Eco presents it as a mirror, a reflection of culture that though constantly changing, relies on tradition and nostalgia.

In the years following Apocalittici e integrati, structuralism had become a major literary critical practice, particularly in France with innovative works by Tzvetan Todorov, Genette, Barthes and Kristeva, and to a lesser extent in Italy, where the “neo avant-garde” writers of the Gruppo 63 were still debating amongst themselves the role of language in literature and politics, and to a greater extent, the role of language in mass communication. Peter Brand and Lino Pertile, in The Cambridge History of Italian Literature [CHIL] (1996), affirm that the basis of the poetics of the writers of the neo avant-garde was the insufficiency of language to provide a description of reality: “at the heart of the poetics of the neo avant-garde lies a radical distrust of language” (571). Instead, what some have called an ironic approach to language, since what language intends to communicate is not always what is interpreted, was adopted and relied heavily on techniques of montage and collage, linking elements that otherwise would have no relation to each other. Brand and Pertile maintain that this critique of language led as well to the formation of a major slogan of the neo avant-garde movement, mainly the “riduzione dell’io” or the reduction of self, where the poet ‘descends’ into reality, with an attitude of openness, engaged upon discovery or research, establishing a contact which may at first be difficult or painful. The idea is to get reality to reveal itself, beyond the deception of appearances [...]. [A]t

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the same time the poet ‘enters into reality,’ s/he brackets it through a double process of estrangement: a distancing of the world, and a refusal on the poet’s own part to be taken in by its appearances (CHIL 571).

For the reader, this also entails a process of estrangement as, according to Brand and Pertile, the reader, like the poet, is “no longer satisfied with given meanings” (571); the reader begins to look for something more. Eco’s subsequent publication, Le poetiche di Joyce [PDJ] (1966), can be considered a first attempt at laying the foundations of the theory of what he would later call il lettore modello or the Model Reader: a reader who goes beyond the surface reading of a text. It is with this work that Eco not only provides a close reading of Joyce’s texts, particularly Ulysses and Finnegans Wake, but he also shows us how they could be read in terms of a neo avant-garde poetics.

Eco’s work on Joyce began in the wake of the Italian translation of Ulysses in 1960. According to Serenella Zanotti’s “James Joyce among the Italian Writers” (2004), Ulysses had already been floating around in Italy for the previous twenty years:

U[sic] acquired Italian citizenship much later than its naturalization elsewhere. Leonardo Sciascia ... sees this fact as a symptom ‘of the confusion in Italian culture’, but he also recalled that thanks to the 1929 French translation and fragments appearing in Italian in the course of the following twenty years, ‘U is already up in the air’ (Zanotti 348).

By the 1960s, many considered Ulysses passé or even obsolete. Carlo Bo, Zanotti points out, believed that Joyce’s novel would have no merit for the Italian literary community:

He said that since the subversive potential of the book seemed to have been almost neutralized, the Italian translation of U would have no effect on Italian writers: nobody would consider it an example to be followed and therefore it was no longer a novelty that gave rise to disputes (Zanotti 349).
The content of Italian literature in the following years disproved Bo’s prediction. Joyce had indeed become a “model for the Italian writers of the sixties” (Zanotti 349), especially in relation to concepts of form. Eco’s first edition of *Opera aperta* dedicated a chapter to Joyce’s poetics, for Eco considered Joyce’s novels the ideal literary works with which to theorize his conception of the ‘open work.’ *Il Gruppo 63* would later adopt Joyce as the author whose works best exemplified their aims, thus making the translation “the watershed between old fictions, where content had pride of place, and the new formalism” (Zanotti 351), of which Eco was a student.

For all its posturing about the ‘reduction of self’ by *il Gruppo 63* and the neo avant-garde movement, the subsequent conception of the experimental novel was essentially an attempt to find or create an Italian literary identity, especially in terms of the novel, replacing the individual identity of the poet or author with the cultural identity of Italian literature: “the argument about the novel was in certain respects more bitter, and more personalized, than those which had to do with poetry. This may have been in part because of the sense that there was no serious tradition of the novel, still less of the experimental novel, in Italy, and that one had to therefore be created” (*CHIL* 575). Compared to its French counterpart, the Italian novel tradition was more recent and was considered by some to be too short to enable the building of a literary identity rooted in the novel. France had much earlier established a literary identity based around the novel and that provided the context for the avant-garde concepts like that of the *nouveau roman* that were being developed at the time. Italy, on the other hand, did not as yet even have a *vieux roman* tradition, and so was relegated to playing a game of catch-up that at times bordered on desperation. It is perhaps because of this desperate need or desire to
define the Italian novel that no agreement or consensus about its poetics could be agreed upon within the Group. Each member had his individual viewpoint:

The debate about the novel went through two successive phases. In the first, there was a general agreement on the non-mimetic function of fictional prose, but participants were exercised nevertheless by the problem of what the novel does in society. On this central issue, there was profound disagreement [...] Angelo Guglielmi [...] denied any functional value to literature whatsoever [...]. Sanguinetti [...] took for granted that the literary product is autonomous, but wanted to interpret that fact in ideological terms [...]. Renato Barilli [argued] that at contemporary experimentalism constitutes a ‘normalisation’ and a lowering (abbassamento) of the sense of anguish generally portrayed in modernist authors (CHIL 575-6).

With no resolution to the debate in sight, it was no coincidence that, instead of proposing or expanding on his theories of the open work and culture, Eco concentrated his efforts on a close reading of one such “modernist author.”

Eco’s work on Joyce uses neither a structuralist approach to interpreting the text, nor a neo avant-garde one. Even though he was a member of il Gruppo 63, Eco did not utilize Joyce’s works in order to push for a cultural revolution; he used them instead to describe the lasting cultural revolution of modernism. According to Robey in his “Notes to the 1989 Edition,” for Eco, Joyce is “the exemplary modern, or modernist, writer. His work is the most powerful, radical, and influential embodiment of the tendencies that dominate the literature and art of our time – tendencies formulated by Eco in the concept of the ‘open’ work par excellence” (AOC vii). In contrast, according to Sam Slote in his essay “‘Après le mot, le deluge’ 2: Literary and Theoretical Responses to Joyce in France” (2004), the bulk of Tel Quel’s treatment of Joyce occurred after the events of 1968 and was politically motivated:

[According to Jean-Louis Houdebine] ‘the name Joyce was inscribed from the beginning in the history of Tel Quel’ [...]. Joyce always held ‘une valeur
symbolique importante’ [... and] it helped place Joyce into French avant-garde thinking in the 1960s and 70s [...]. Because of Tel Quel’s interdisciplinary bent, discussion of Joyce was not limited to literary critics. For Tel Quel, Joyce, along with Mallarmé, Sade, Lautréamont, Artaud and Bataille, was exemplary of a certain canon of modernist literature that ruptures classical codes. Therefore, reading Joyce became for Tel Quel, part of their ‘révolution culturelle’ (Slote 394-5);

However, Slote maintains that Le poetiche di Joyce is a “contribution to a discussion which has remained topical in a great a deal of modern literary theory – a relatively early contribution that predates the explosion of literary theories in the mid-sixties and anticipates much subsequent work” (Slote 394). According to Robey, Eco is not concerned with utilizing Joyce as a way to rupture literary “classical codes,” but rather sees in Joyce’s works, particularly Ulysses and Finnegans Wake, a literary mode with which to offer a reflection of and on the world:

[the work] is distinguished by a number of features that reflect Eco’s particular concerns at the time he wrote it [...]. The conception of works of art as ‘epistemological metaphors,’ which plays a major role in Opera aperta, is applied with special force to Joyce, in whose evolution as a writer Eco finds an embodiment of what he considers the major development in the history of Western thought: the transition from models of rational order [...] to the sense of chaos and crisis that dominates the modern experience of the world [...]. Ulysses and Finnegans Wake give form to this experience [...] and therefore constitute in their own way a kind of knowledge, a bringing into consciousness of the modern condition (AOC viii).

Unlike his French counterparts, who transform Joyce’s works into more impersonal literary critique, Robey maintains that Eco’s works are explicitly personal: “there is, too, an engagingly personal aspect to Eco’s discussion of Joyce. Not only does Joyce’s evolution from Catholic, Thomist interests to a disordered vision of life mirror Eco’s; the coexistence of models of order and disorder that Eco finds in Ulysses has also characterized most of his own work” (vii-viii).

Unlike members of Tel Quel, Eco does not condone a total rupture from “classical codes”;
rather, Eco’s reading of Joyce is dependent on the very codes the other group challenges, especially those concerning the traditions of the Middle Ages.

When Eco writes about the Middle Ages, it is because he has a personal affection for the period. In *Travels in Hyperreality* [*TIHR*] (1990) Eco provides a translation of an essay entitled “Dieci modi di sognare il medioevo” (“Ten Ways to Dream the Middle Ages”), originally published in *Sugli specchi e altri saggi* [*SSAS*] (1985). In this essay, Eco distinguishes between the ten types of Middle Ages which history and culture have ‘dreamed’ since the end of the period in 1492. According to Eco, these designations saw the Middle Ages as: i) pretext, ii) the site of ironical revisitation, iii) a barbaric age, iv) a romantic one, v) *philosophia perennis*, vi) a search for national identities, vii) decadentism, viii) philological reconstruction, ix) tradition, and x) the expectation of the Millennium (*THR* 69-72). What the translation lacks, however, is what Eco considers his Middle Ages. For Eco, his personal Middle Ages are beyond these distinctions; rather, they are characterized by their continuous transition:

My Middle Ages is intended as a period in transition, of plurality and pluralism, of contradiction between an empire that is born, an empire that dies, and a third society that is rising. My Middle Ages presented itself as an ‘interesting’ period because it was a period of a reshuffling of cards in which the great poverty existed side by side with the great inventions and the foreshadowing of new ways of life.

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22 “Il medioevo della maniera è pretesto [...] della revisitazione ironica [...] come luogo barbarico [...] il medioevo romantico [...] della philosophia perennis [...] delle identità nazionali [...] un medioevo carducciano [...] di Muratori e Rerum italicarum [...] della Tradizione [...] dell’attesa del Millennio” (*SSAS*).

23 My translation. “Il mio medioevo era inteso come un’epoca di transizione, di pluralità e di pluralismo, di contraddizione tra un impero che nasce, un impero che muore, e una terza società che sta sorgendo. Il mio medioevo si presentava come un’epoca ‘interessante,’ perché era un’epoca di rimescolamento di carte in cui alle grande penurie si affiancavano le grandi invenzioni e le prefigurazione di nuovi modi di vita” (*SSAS* 98).
For Eco, the Middle Ages was a sort of obsession; in his *Postille a Il nome della rosa* (*Postscript to The Name of the Rose*) (1983), he describes it as a “constant temptation”: “In this way, the Middle Ages had remained, if not my profession, my hobby – and my constant temptation, and I would see it everywhere, against the light, in the things in which I occupy myself that do not seem medieval but are” (NOR 512). In explaining the obviousness of his choice in situating the novel in the Middle Ages (“Ovviamente, il Medio Evo” [NDR 510]), Eco makes a “ricorso” to his first published works, namely the medieval treatise on *Il problema estetico in Tommaso d’Aquino* (1956) and that subsequent work on Joyce:

So, I began rummaging among my files. After all, I was a medievalist in hibernation (I had published a book on medieval aesthetics in 1956, another hundred pages on the subject in 1969, then a few scattered essays, and had returned to the medieval tradition in 1962 for my work on Joyce; in 1972 came a long study of the Apocalypse and the illuminations of the commentary by Beatus Liébana: so the Middle Ages were kept limber). I dug out a huge amount of material (file cards, photocopies, notebooks) accumulated since 1952 (PNOR 510).

In the Preface to the 1988 English edition *The Aesthetics of St. Thomas Aquinas* [AOTA], Eco describes this first theoretical work as a product of youth,

with all the faults that this implies: a convoluted style, a tendency to equate the readable with the unscientific, the headstrong insistence of a young scholar upon technical-sounding phrases instead of plain language, and an overblown apparatus whose purpose, often enough, was merely to show that the writer had read everything he could find on the subject (AOTA vii).

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24 “Così il Medio Evo e rimasto, se non il mio mestiere, il mio hobby – e la mia tentazione costante, e lo vedeva dovunque, in trasparenza, nelle cose di cui mi occupo, che medievali non sembrano e pur sono” (NDR 511).
25 “Mi sono messo a scartabellare tra i miei archivi di medievalista in ibernazione (un libro sull’estetica medievale nel 1956, altre cento pagine sull’argomento nel 1969, qualche saggio strada facendo, ritorni alla tradizione medievale nel 1962 per il mio lavoro su Joyce, e poi nel 1972 il lungo studio sull’Apocalisse e sulle miniatures del commento di Beato Leibana: dunque, il Medio Evo veniva tenuta in esercizio). Mi è capitato tra le mani un vasto materiale (schede, fotocopie, quaderni) che si accumulava dal 1952” (NDR 511)
The youthful tendencies he describes in this passage and even those described in his essay “Come scrivo” (already discussed in the introduction) offer a model on which to consider the protagonist of his fourth novel _Baudolino_ who, like Eco, utilizes his reading experiences, in particular those about the marvels of the East, to construct a world which, for Baudolino, is the world of Prester John.

By the time Eco’s work on the Middle Ages reaches the sixties and _Opera aperta_, Jacques Le Goff, in France, had been working on his own ‘youthful’ work: _Les intellectuels au moyen age_ (1957). Le Goff’s medieval intellectual is defined by his diverse personalities: “A scholar and a professor, a thinker by trade, the intellectual can be defined by certain psychological traits which could bend the mind, by certain wrinkles in his character which could set and become habits, manias. As a reasoner, the intellectual risked sinking into hair splitting. As a scholar there was the constant threat of drying up” (Le Goff 3). 26 Eco’s version of the medieval thinker, postulated in his subsequent work on Joyce, “cannot conceive, explain or manage the world without inserting into it the framework of an Order [...]. This framework of Order provides an unlimited chain of relations between creatures and events” (_AOC_ 7). This framework, Eco continues, is also “the mechanism which permits epiphanies, where a thing becomes a living symbol for something else and creates a continuous web of references” (7). Eco’s theory, therefore, is poised between the historic (Le Goff) and the semiotic (Barthes). These two progress hand in hand in the following years with Le Goff’s encyclopedic work, _La

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26 “Savant et professeur, penseur par métier, l’intellectuel peut aussi se définir par certains traits psychologiques qui peuvent s’infléchir en travers d’esprit, par certains plis du caractère qui peuvent se durcir, devenir habitudes, manies. Raisonneur, l’intellectuel risque de tomber dans la ratiocination. Scientifique, le dessèchement le guette” (LeGoff, _Les intellectuels_ 5)
civilisation de l’occident médiéval (1964), and Barthes’ “Éléments de la sémiologie” (1964).

Notwithstanding Le Goff’s historical work, literary theory at the time persisted in its pursuit to break away from traditional systems. This is especially evident in Foucault’s Les mots et les choses (1966) where history is replaced with a new sense of archeology (xxiv) and Genette’s Figures (1966) which marks a rejection of rhetorical figures used throughout history since “the self-signifying function of Literature is no longer conveyed through the code figures, and modern literature had its own rhetoric, which is precisely (for the moment at least) a rejection of rhetoric” (Genette 59)—and a rejection of history. In opposition to his French counterparts, Eco put great stock in history and historical figures and models, especially those medieval models that were the focus of most of his early works and later his novels. Eco considered the historical medieval aspects of Joyce’s novels especially pertinent, not least because they were reflected in his own work.

In Le poetiche di Joyce, Eco is paradoxically the author with a specific directive and the reader searching for meaning within the text: as the author, Eco consciously chooses Joyce’s work because of a certain personal affection that he developed as a reader. Moreover, Eco is able to recognize the interplay in Joyce’s work between past, present and future that he too embodies in his own text: “To me, Joyce was the node where the Middle Ages and the avant-garde meet” (AOC xi). Thus, rather than offering a rupture from traditional or classical codes, Eco’s study brings otherwise contradictory elements together: author and reader; past, present and future. In this way, Eco fulfills what he describes in Le poetiche di Joyce as the medieval thinker’s attempt to decipher the diversity of the reality of the world. In order to do so, Eco relies on those very classical figures that Genette rejected. In order to attempt to understand
the universe, Eco affirms that the medieval thinker endeavors to find a key, an order with which to decipher it: “the first approach to the reality of the universe was of an encyclopedic type [which] was the technique of Inventory, the Catalogue, or, in classical rhetorical terms, the Enumeratio” (AOC 8). Here, objects that would not normally fit together coexist. For the medieval thinker, the enumeratio or the list is open to every possibility and is thus compatible with the concept of what he will call a regenerative literature. Eco’s interpretation of Ulysses and Finnegans Wake is able to bring to light what, in Apocalittici e integrati, are described as apocalyptical characteristics of literature and thus its possibilities for “regeneration.” Eco considers Ulysses to be a total work: “Joyce thus conceived a total work, a Work-as-Cosmos” (AOC 33),27 where the poet is no longer the “reference point” of the work. The type of enumeratio is especially important for Eco, since the interplay between objects that often do not appear to share any relation with each other find “ricorsi” with other objects on the list. The list is a prominent figure in Eco’s most recent work, including La misteriosa fiamma della regina Loana (2004) and La vertigine della lista (2009).

Following his analysis of ‘l’uomo di cultura’ in Apocalittici e integrati, where the individual becomes embedded within the larger cultural community, with Ulysses Eco notes that “the reference point is not the subjectivity of the poet isolated in his ivory tower, but the human community and, ultimately all history and culture. The book is not the journal of the artist exiled from the city but of every man exiled in the city” (33). The book “destroys Ireland and its Middle Ages” (AOC 35) but, at the same time, through allusions and symbols, offers

27 “Joyce pensa a un’opera totale, a un opera-cosmo” (PDJ 60).
another possible outcome: “Joyce creates a story interwoven with symbols and ciphered allusions, with ‘winks’ from one scholarly intelligence to another, for under the ‘Velame delli versi strani’[‘veil of strange verses’] lies an ulterior reality, and each word, each image, not only points to one thing, but at the same time indicates another” (AOC 48). In Finnegans Wake, Eco notes that the movement from the historical to the present is reversed: “Joyce had reduced reality to the world of myths, traditions, ancient fragments, the words by which man had designated his experiences” (AOC 65). For Eco, however, this movement of present reality and history is more than a reversal—it is cyclical; everything has a connection:

Here everything moves in a primordial and disordered flow [...] no event is new for something similar has already happened; a ricorso, a connection is always possible. If history is a continuous cycle of alternations and recurrences, then it does not have the characteristic of irreversibility that we are accustomed to confer upon it today. Rather, each event is simultaneous; past, present and future coincide (AOC 65).

Thus, there can be no rupture from history, as the formalist literary criticism of the time would argue, only a simultaneous existence between past, present and future, with each having a necessary connection to the other.

Through Joyce, Eco maintains that a possible regeneration of literature is only feasible within this kind of simultaneity. With Ulysses we are able to maintain a tether to the past:

“Ulysses is the image of a possible form of our world. But between the image and the real

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28 “Ridotto il reale al mondo dei miti, delle tradizioni, dei frammenti antichi, delle parole con cui l’uomo ha designato e reso sensate le sue esperienze” (PDJ 123).
29 “Tutto scorre in un flusso primordiale e disordinato, ogni cosa può collegarsi a tutte le altre; ogni evento non è nuovo, qualcosa di simile e già accaduto, un ricorso, una relazione è sempre possibile, tutto è scomposto e quindi tutto può essere permutato. Se la storia è un ciclo incessante di avvicendamenti e ritorni allora essa non ha quei caratteri di irreversibilità che noi siamo soliti oggi a conferire alla Storia, ma ogni evento è simultaneo, passato presente e futuro coincidono” (PDJ 123-4).
world from which it grew an umbilical cord still remains” (AOC 85);30 Finnegans Wake offers a
definition of the world while withholding the device necessary to understand it: “Finnegans
Wake defines our universe, offering us the ‘propositional function’ to be filled with all possible
contents, but it no longer provides an instrument for grasping the world” (85).31 As an author
who is also a Model Reader (a concept to be discussed further later in this chapter), Eco knows
that this interconnectedness cannot be ignored. If at one level Eco speaks about a shift in
reference point from poet to a larger human community that is still tethered to the past and
that the past, present and future are simultaneous movements, at another level, the author
(poet), a member of the larger community, might share the same cultural history as the
community, but his experiences within that community are his own. His personal memories
provide the ‘umbilical cord’ from which he grew, and at the same time shape his present and
future reality. So that when Eco concludes that Finnegans Wake offers a reflection of the world
(“Finnegans Wake signals the birth of a new type of human discourse. This discourse no longer
makes statements; rather it becomes a mirror-like representation of the world” [AOC 85],32 the
world can also simultaneously mean the personal world of the author, separate from the larger
human community, and also perhaps that of the reader as well (who brings his or her own
experiences to the work). Moreover, this passage illustrates Eco’s continued belief that a

30 “Ulysses era l’immagine di una possibile forma del nostro mondo; ma tra l’immagine e il mondo reale cui esso
dava forma c’era ancora un cordone ombelicale” (PDJ 164)
31 “Finnegans Wake definisce il nostro universo senza più compromessi, ce ne porga per così dire la funzione
proposizionale riempibile di tutti i contenuti possibili. Ma non ci offre più alcun strumento di presa sul mondo”
(PDJ 165).
32 “Significa riconoscere la nascita di una nuova dimensione di discorso umano – in un preciso contesto di cultura –
l’affermarsi di un discorso che non fa più affermazioni circa il mondo utilizzando significati che i significati
organizzano in un certo rapporto, ma si fa esso stesso rappresentazione specular del mondo” (PDJ 168).
“ricorso” is always possible and that a connection is always viable as a result of the encouraged interplay between past, present and future.

Eco’s interpretation of Joyce’s works of literature that offer a “mirror-like representation of the world” is further elaborated in his subsequent publications: *La bomba e il generale* [LBG] (The Bomb and the General [BAG]) and *I tre cosmonauti* [ITC] (The Three Astronauts [TTA]), two children’s books written in collaboration with cubist artist Eugenio Carmi in 1966. Both books bring to light contemporary global issues: the arms race and the space race. According to Maria Truglio in “Wise Gnomes, Nervous Astronauts, and a Very Bad General: The Children’s Books of Umberto Eco and Eugenio Carmi” (2008), one of the very few critical works on Eco and Carmi’s children’s books, “Bomba and Cosmonauti promote cooperation and peace over competition and fear in response to the global climate of Cold War suspicion manifested in these two races” (116). Needless to say, the books were not successful since, as Eco suggests, “parents who viewed their children as innocently apolitical may then have been dissuaded by the books’ direct engagement with what Eco terms ‘temi politici particolarmente scottanti in quegli anni’ (political themes especially heated in those years)” (Truglio 116). Notwithstanding the lack of success of these two books, *Bomba* and *Cosmonauti* are, once again, examples of Eco’s need to bring together (i.e., peace and cooperation), instead of breaking away from traditional models.

As such, *Bomba* begins with the traditional “Once upon a time” (“c’era una volta”) and continues, “there was a mean general in a uniform full of stripes.”33 Carmi’s accompanying

33My translation. “C’era una volta un generale cattivo con una divisa piena di galloni” (8).
image requires a symbolic interpretation. The collage is made of various swatches of fabric where we are to imagine the general in his uniform — the general himself is not depicted (no head or face, arms or legs), and though the colours and placement of fabric might incite fear and feelings of doom, the fact that the general has no specific identity implies the relevance of the story through all time: the use of the past imperfect “c’era”, the traditional tense and opening of all fairytales, not only implies that there once was a bad general, but that a bad general would always exist. The past imperfect tense, moreover, gives the book a sense of timelessness and recalls what Eco interpreted in Joyce’s works as a necessity to return to the “world of myths,” the language of human experience. This children’s tale with its accompanying art is ambiguous enough at one and the same time to link the reader to the past and also to render the past relevant in the present. Truglio maintains, however, that the book is purposely simplistic: “the linear development of plot, as well, constructs a reader of limited narrative sophistication and experience. Eco returns to the familial [...] and the elemental [...] to illustrate the effects of intricate, global, political events. He thus further reinforces the reader’s position as, precisely, small and domestic, of limited experience” (122). Bomba is yet again an example of Eco’s bringing together diverse elements, including, not excluding, every kind of reader: the one who interprets only the text, the one who interprets only the visual art, and the one who incorporates both text and art in his or her interpretation. This could apply to children as much as it could apply to adults.

In this vein, Bomba is not merely a children’s tale, or a tale for children, but we must keep in mind the parents, or the other adults who read to (their) children, who inevitably interpret the text as well. In this way the book can be read on more than one level: simple and
on the surface for the child and complex and more in depth for the adult. In fact, Truglio admits that on the back cover of *Cosmonauti* (the 1966 edition), Eco expressed a desire to reach more than one audience:

> The fables are offered as a locus of communication, as intermediaries between adults (parents, teachers, or other mentors) and the children with whom they read: ‘Questa è una fiaba di oggi per i vostri bambini. O forse no. È per voi. Comunque provate a raccontarla a loro. Forse riconosceranno il loro linguaggio di domani, e la racconteranno a voi’ (This is a [contemporary] fable for your children. Or maybe not. It is for you. In any case, try to read it to them. [Perhaps] they will recognize their language of tomorrow, and then they will read it to you). The authors invite a conversation between adults and children, and posit the role of the child not merely as recipient but as narrator and author, as not only consumer but as empowered producer of meaning and, perhaps, change (140).

Regardless of the conversations that the book promotes between adult and child and the subsequent production of meaning, Truglio believes the adult “reader who comes to these texts already familiar with Eco’s popular novels will find none of the multilingual wordplay, dense intertextuality, or sophisticated literary games and mental puzzles that delight and flatter his fans. This voice is that of condescending adult to naïve child, with almost no conspiratorial winking to potential adult readers” (123). Truglio, however, is referring to a contemporary audience, not an audience that began to read Eco in the fifties and sixties, the period when these books were originally conceived and published. If the books are read with the knowledge of the works that preceded them, the adult reader can appreciate the cumulative aggressiveness of the language, the “smashing” and “striking” that mirrors the terminology of the rupturing poetics of *il Gruppo 63* and Eco’s revisiting of the past with the fairytale tradition.

*Bomba* contains, if not a dense intertextuality, a rich intratextuality, linking this text with Eco’s previous works. For instance, when Eco describes the atoms being smashed and their
parts striking other atoms until an explosion takes place, the atoms are the embodiment of the “interwoven symbols and ciphered allusions” that “point to one thing but at the same time indicate another” that Eco previously described in *Le poetiche di Joyce*. The explosion does not mean the complete eradication of the atoms; rather, it opens the way for various other possibilities. And who can’t appreciate the fact that the general is relegated to opening doors towards the end of the book? Any avid reader of Eco, contemporary or not, would be able to take pleasure in the interconnectedness of the children’s books with his previous texts and theories. Moreover, instead of accepting Truglio’s commentary of the last image in the book as depicting “the humiliated general as a tiny, blushing-red figure tucked away in the bottom right hand corner of the page” (124), the last image of the book can instead be seen as a last link to Eco’s regenerative theory of not only literature, but history as well. The deep red in Carmi’s image suggests the opposite of humiliated and silent. If Eco and Carmi intended to insinuate the end of the general, red, which is symbolically an explosive colour conveying anger, fire, blood, also conveys the danger of the general’s return. This interpretation would be in keeping with Eco’s view of the cyclical characteristics of history and time. Furthermore, in light of the events taking place in Italy in the mid-sixties (re-examinations of language and literature), we can consider a third, more personal level of meaning in our interpretation of the books: an attempt by Eco and Carmi to reinvigorate the ideals of the revolutionary experimental avant-garde.

Eco and Carmi’s children’s books, like Calvino’s *Italian Folk Tales*, can be regarded as experimental in the way in which they unite avant-garde art with a literature that at once is steeped in tradition and also provides a regenerative representation of the world through their
encouraging interpretations of not only the texts but the art as well. In his essay “The Death of the Gruppo 63” (written in English), Eco notes the necessity of the revitalization of the experimental avant-garde:

At the 1965 Palermo congress one of the key phrases had been: ‘Emergency: that which was Other is on the way to becoming the Same.’ Sanguinetti’s coup was pulled off: museum culture was on the way to gobbling up the avant-garde. All this meant that an experimental avant-garde from sleeping cars and station restaurants eventually acquired the very attributes of the historical avant-garde which it claimed to repudiate: Activism, Antagonism, Terrorism, Demagogism, Cult of Youth, and Revolutionism (*OW* 246-7).

For this reason, the journal *Quindici* (1967) was conceived as a way to renew the poetics of *il Gruppo 63*. Eco maintains that it was “initially conceived as a lively magazine with lots of illustrations, halfway between a *Playboy* with a full-length pinup of Gertrude Stein as ‘playmate of the month,’ plus the layout of the *New York Review of Books* and a *Sunday Times* supplement specially for university heads of department” (*OW* 247). Ironic as this proposal was, Eco admits that this type of review would have been largely supported financially by the ‘Establishment’ of which they were now members. *Quindici*, however, became what Eco calls “our first escape pang” (*OW* 247), a way to turn away from a politically charged review.

The decision to turn away from this financial backing was not only a political decision but one that ought to have reunited the group in its literary and artistic focus; instead, as Eco clarifies in his essay “Il Gruppo 63, lo sperimentalismo e l’avanguardia” (1985), the journal shed more light on the obvious ideological rifts within the group:

The men of the group sought to redefine their role of middle generation, between the elders and the youth. In doing so, as we shall see, they had discovered that they were no longer a group. This would not have happened if the group had existed as institution: it happened because it existed as
atmosphere, and atmospheres, besides being impalpable, are mercurial and volatile.\textsuperscript{34}

The journal, on the other hand, began to reflect the more and more volatile political atmosphere and, as a result, became highly politicized: “it turned out that poets began to analyze the Middle East crisis, linguists discussed the Pope’s latest encyclical, and novelists explained whom they were going to vote for in the next election. All this was still a personal authoritarian analysis conducted by a group of writers for their own fan club” (OW 247). As a result, \textit{Quindici} did not serve to revitalize \textit{il Gruppo 63}’s experimental avant-garde (literary) ideology; rather, its 1967 publication actually prompted the beginning of the \textit{Group}’s death, since from its inception and especially after the 1968 May student revolutions, the journal gave up its original objectives to advocate instead for a mainly political ideology. Ironically, it was only in this manner that it achieved some level of success: “the circulation of the journal increased to four times its original issue, until, eventually, \textit{Quindici} was being read by very young militants who were not interested in literature at all, but only in politics” (OW 248). By adopting an essentially political point of view, \textit{Quindici} sacrificed the very values of the poetics that served as the foundations of the work of \textit{il Gruppo 63}; in France, Barthes had declared “la mort de l’auteur” and in Italy many authors refused to write literature. Eco, however, sees these events as appropriate, since the death of \textit{il Gruppo 63} “achieved the last feature of any avant-garde: sacrifice of self, the Dionysian fantasy of a beautiful death in order that something new might be born in its stead” (OW 249). Was this “beautiful death,” for Eco, the one Barthes

\textsuperscript{34} My translation. “Gli uomini del gruppo cercavano di ridefinire il loro ruolo di generazione di mezzo, tra gli anziani a e i giovanissimi. Nel far questo, come vedremmo, hanno scoperto di non essere più un gruppo. Questa non sarebbe accaduto se il gruppo fosse esistito come istituzione: è accaduto perché esisteva come atmosfera, e le atmosfere, oltre che impalpabili, sono mercuriali e volatili ” (SSAS 95).
proclaimed or was the “something new” a theory of semiotics that would eventually leave the author behind?

Though the first edition of *La struttura assente* was formally published in 1968, the same year of Barthes’ decree of the author’s death and the year of student unrest in France and Italy, it is the 1980 *Tascabili Bompiani* republication, in particular Eco’s preface “Riflessioni 1980” (“Reflections 1980”), that hold particular interest for the purposes of this dissertation. Twelve years after its original publication, Eco sees an opportunity here to explain what, according to him, he had written as a result of certain cultural impulses: “This edition of *Struttura assente* appears over twelve years after the first. Too many years for a book that was written under the impulse of cultural discussions that had afterwards evolved and, at times, had produced considerable reversals.”35 Allen Ruch points out that during those twelve years many of the original theoretical viewpoints had already been reworked and re-elaborated in other texts:

> After a few translations into other languages, Eco again revised and expanded the work, giving it the new name of *Le forme del contenuto* in 1971. Then, after several unsatisfactory translations into English, Eco, with the help of David Osmond-Smith, finally decided to completely revise and rewrite the entire work directly into English in 1973. Realizing that by now it was a completely different book than the original *La struttura assente*, in 1975 Eco translated this English work into Italian and called it *Trattato di semiotica generale*.

Whereas *Le forme del contenuto* and *Trattato di semiotica generale* offered theoretical clarifications, Eco’s 1980 edition, published without these clarifications and dependent solely

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35 My translation. “Questa edizione della *Struttura assente* appare oltre dodici anni dopo la prima. Troppo, per un libro che è stato scritto sotto l’impulso di discussioni culturali che si sono in seguito evolute e che talora hanno prodotto vistose inversioni di rotta” (SA 1).
on the “Reflections” to clarify certain ambiguities, offers a more personal approach to the text. Since the original was published, as noted above, in the same year of Barthes’s infamous claim of the death of the author and the student revolutions, Eco’s “Reflections” reveal his own personal experiences of these events which in turn motivated him to write the text in the first place.

The “Reflections” offer the reader an ordered, chronological account of Eco’s experiences which are indeed cultural but primarily personal. As he says, “let’s go in order [...] between 1962 and 1965, preparing the French edition of Opera aperta, I was transforming my approach to the problems of communication [...], to Anglo-Saxon semiotics in an approach that felt the continuous impact of structural linguistics of Russian formalism.”36 This shift in approach can also be considered as a direct result of Eco’s reading of Barthes’s 1964 publication Éléments de la sémiologie. Eco felt indebted to this text as it was the one that inspired him to formulate his own theory of semiotics: “it seems fair to me to remember here what that brief text, deliberately modest and encyclopedic, had represented to all of us that are interested in semiotics today: an impulse to work on a system of signs and on the processes of communications [...]. But without Barthes’s appeal many things would not have happened.”37

While a member of the Faculty of Architecture in Florence, Eco published independently, and to some extent in competition with Quindici, a small book entitled Appunti per una semiologia

37 My translation. “Mi pare giusto ricordare qui ciò che quel breve testo, volutamente umile e compilatorio, ha costituito per tutti noi che ci interessiamo oggi di semiotica: un impulso a lavorare sui sistemi di segni e sui processi di comunicazione [...]. Ma senza l’appello di Barthes molte cose non sarebbero successe” (SA ii).
*delle comunicazioni visive* (1967), which included work on iconography, film and architecture. Eco’s book saw much success, maintaining as its primary focus a general theory of semiotics in the visual fields of communication, instead of limiting itself to political ideology, as was the case with *Quindici* at that moment.

Eco’s theory of semiotics is thus not a theory that he had been developing over the course of several years, like his theory of the Middle Ages or his conception of an ‘open work.’ With semiotics, Eco’s work was always current: “I establish these dates in order to explain the nature of the *pamphlet* [...]. I was writing on the waves of hot new readings and discussions under way: I was not elaborating a critical study, I was intervening in a live debate.”

This timeliness is perhaps precisely the reason that, following its original publication, many revisions had to be made. In this way, *La struttura assente* becomes for Eco a palimpsest: “these reshufflings are not only due to the normal attitudes of an author who reconsiders his book a few years after having written it, but of the nature itself of the semiotic discipline that, making and remaking itself day after day, obligates scholars and readers to consider every work a palimpsest.” In this way, the work and its writing take on a kind of cyclical patterning and, though there may be revisions, elements of the original work and the original reading will always remain. Especially interesting about the 1980 edition of *La struttura assente* is that it appears in the same year as the publication of Eco’s first novel, *il nome della rosa*, which is an

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38 My translation. “Stabilisco queste date per spiegare la natura di *pamphlet* [...]. Scrivevo sull’onda di letture fresche e di discussioni in atto: non elaboravo uno studio critico, intervenivo nel vivo del dibattito” (SA v).

39 My translation. “Questi rimaneggiamenti non sono solo dovuti all’atteggiamento normale di un autore che riconsidera il suo libro qualche anno dopo averlo scritto, ma alla natura stessa della disciplina semiotica che, facendosi e rifacendosi giorno per giorno, obbliga studiosi e lettori a considerare ogni opera un palinsesto” (SA vi).
example, along with *Baudolino*, of the narrative possibilities of palimpsests, particularly those of lost and revised manuscripts.

The 1968 student revolutions sparked a flurry of literary activity, particularly in the fields of semiotics, (post)structuralism, and deconstruction—all of which brought about a reconceptualizing of the role of the author. So that while 1968 is a year marked by death—the death of author and the imminent death of the *Gruppo 63*—it also signals the birth of several new theories whose foundations lay, first, in the authorial debates that I outlined in the last chapter (e.g., what is the role of the author?), and, second, in the textual debates (e.g., what constitutes a text?). Both of these debates helped give rise to the birth of the reader as well. It is not that the theories and forms of criticism conceived before 1968 became null and void after the student revolutions. On the contrary, many theories, such as those of Barthes, Foucault and Kristeva, evolved, in keeping with the new direction language and literature had embarked on after the events of 1968. Kristeva’s essay “Le mot, le dialogue et le roman” (1966), in which she popularized the term *intertextualité*, became a full semiological study in *Séméiòtiké* (1969). Kristeva’s work on Bakhtin and her further development of a conception of intertextuality incited much debate about questions of textuality and referentiality, making Kristeva’s work essential to the development of a conception of a new kind of author and reader.

As we have seen, the two most recognized definitions of the role of the author came from Barthes’s “The Death of the Author” (1968) and Foucault’s “What Is an Author?” (1969) in which both theorists linked the role of the author with death. Barthes claimed that:

> Writing is that neuter, that composite, that obliquity into which our subject flees, the black and white where all identity is lost, beginning with the very identity of that body that writes. No doubt it has always been so: once a fact is *recounted*—
for intransitive purposes, and no longer to act directly upon reality [...] – this gap appears, the voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death (49).

Barthes’s essay speaks of ‘subverting’ (50) and ‘removing’ (51) the author: the historical Author is replaced instead by the modern ‘scriptor’ who no longer “contains passions, moods, sentiments, impressions, but that immense dictionary from which he draws a writing that will be incessant: life merely imitates the book, and this book itself is but a tissue of signs, endless imitation, infinitely postponed” (53). In this way, the modern scriptor remains ambiguous, as does the text. If the Author were to be firmly positioned, Barthes argues that the text would then be able to be “explained,” thus reducing it to its most simple meaning. If meaning is continuously deferred, however, the work always has life: “we know that in order to restore writing to its future, we must reverse the myth: the birth of the reader must be requited with the death of the Author” (58). Foucault also speaks of the role of the author in terms of death, elaborating on Barthes’s claim that once the Author is dead, the text has new life: “our culture has metamorphosed this idea of narrative, or writing, as something designed to ward off death” (378). In other words, the author must sacrifice him or herself in order for the reader to be liberated to interpret meaning. Since each reader has his or her own set of experiences to bring to a work, a work can therefore have infinite meanings: the reader, not the author, generates meaning and the author, according to Foucault, must gracefully step aside:

Writing has become linked to sacrifice, even to the sacrifice of life [...]. [T]he work, which once had the duty of providing immortality, now possesses the right to kill, to be its author’s murderer [...]. [T]his relationship between writing and death is also manifested in the effacement of the writing subject individual’s characteristics. Using all the contrivances that he sets up between himself and what he writes, the writing subject cancels out the signs of his particular individuality [...] he must assume the role of the dead man in the game of writing (378).
Foucault, however, later reveals how both the conceptions of oeuvre and écriture never fully allow the effacement of the author’s identity. In order to deal with this obvious conflict, Foucault limits the author’s role to specific “author-functions.” Both Barthes’s and Foucault’s works share a common distrust of the author and his or her intentions, opting instead for a more hermeneutical approach where the author’s intentionality is secondary. Instead, the onus is on the reader to interpret and provide meaning for a text. Whether Eco shares this common mistrust at this time is not clear; his own conceptions of author and reader are not formally developed until his publication of Lector in fabula (1979), which appears ten years after Barthes’s and Foucault’s essays.

In the decade or so between La struttura assente (1968) and Lector in fabula (1979), Eco dedicates most of his efforts to the several revisions and rewritings of his book on the theory of semiotics. There is, in these, no direct analysis of the role of the author or reader and no theory of the effacement of the author’s identity. On the contrary, Eco’s Il costume di casa: evidenze e misteri dell’ideologia italiana [CDC] (1973) points instead to the broader question of identity, more specifically of an Italian identity of which Eco is a part. Previously, as we have seen, Italian writers of the fifties and sixties attempted to establish a tradition of the Italian novel, specifically through the experimental novel (after realist, historical models were rejected), but were unable to do so because of a lack of common ideals and a changing culture influenced by new media. Eco, as a member of the group that endeavored to conceptualize the experimental novel and as a cultural thinker was an active participant in Italy’s pursuit of this new Italian identity. Still, his work makes no clear rupture with tradition and history:
The writings [...] are the specimen of a more comprehensive corpus: I wrote them because they seemed to me the least aged, or even because they were the only ones left in my box, and of the others I lost copies. Essentially, they were interchangeable. They can be read out of order. Some, like the readings of billboards or television news, can be read at night to children: so that they learn to distrust and read backwards, across, sideways.\textsuperscript{40}

The essays are not only interchangeable in the order in which they can be read, but also in the manner of their meaning, as Eco shifts from cultural to personal experiences. What makes this work even more personal is that it remains one of the few works, if not the only one, that Eco dedicates to family members: “in any case, seeing as how all these writings appeared in the decade in which my parents passed away, I would like to dedicate this collection to them [...]. Thus, the dedication is: ‘To my father, who taught me to \textit{not believe}, and to my mother who taught me to say it.’\textsuperscript{41} This is the first explicit indication that Eco’s theoretical and narrative works might have roots in something other than scholarly knowledge and reading, but rather in more personal memories. In this way, in contrast to Barthes’s and Foucault’s obvious distrust of the author, Eco’s collection reveals the author’s distrust of the system of knowledge that surrounds him, a distrust that can be linked back to the lessons of his parents.

This learned mistrust provokes a pursuit for knowledge where he, in turn, becomes able to voice that which he has learned. Perhaps we may also consider the model of democracy and cooperation in Eco’s work to be a direct result of the lessons taught to him by his parents as

\textsuperscript{40} My translation. “Gli scritti [...] sono lo specimen di un corpus più ampio: li ho scritti perché mi parevano i meno invecchiati, o addirittura perché erano gli unici a essermi rimasti nei cassetti, e degli altri ho perso copia. In fondo erano intercambiabili. Possono essere letti a salti. Alcune, come le letture dei manifesti pubblicitari o del telegiornale, possono essere raccontati la sera ai bambini: perché imparano a diffidare e a leggere dietro, attraverso, di fianco” (\textit{CDC} 6).

\textsuperscript{41} My translation. “In ogni caso, visto che questi scritti sono tutti apparsi nel decennio in cui sono scomparsi i miei genitori, vorrei dedicare a loro questa raccolta [...]. La dedica sia dunque: ‘A mio padre, che mi ha insegnato a \textit{non crederci}, e mia madre che mi ha insegnato a dirlo’ (\textit{CDC} 6).
well. At any rate, it is this cooperative role that Eco advocates in *Lector in fabula* [LIF] or *The Role of the Reader* [ROR] (1979): \(^{42}\) “the introductory essay of this book makes clear what I mean today by such a categorical polarity [between open and closed texts] and how I see it as a special case of a more general semiotic phenomenon: the cooperative role of the addressee in interpreting messages” (ROR vii). In the preface, Eco is resolute when he reiterates that the focus of this work is the interplay, the cooperation between the reader (addressee), the text (the message) and the author (the sender): “to make clear (to myself as well as to my readers) the constancy of the theme of the interpretative cooperation in the essays collected here, I have written the introductory essay, ‘The Role of the Reader.’ Here the textual problems approached in the course of the earlier essays are viewed in connection with the present state of art” (ROR vii). Some modern art, we remember from *Opera aperta*, also advocates the interplay between artist, message and viewer. Eco admits, however, that his theory raises a number of questions that remain unresolved: “text theories are still heuristic networks full of components represented by mere ‘black boxes’. In ‘The Role of the Reader’ I also deal with some black boxes. The earlier analyses deal only with boxes I was able to fill up [...]. It goes without saying that the role of the reader of this book is to open and to overfill (by further research) all the boxes that my essays have necessarily left inviolate” (ROR viii).

In section 0.2.4, “Author and Reader as Textual Strategies,” Eco “renounces the use of the term /author/” (ROR 11) but never replaces it, thus begging the question whether the

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\(^{42}\) The translation of *Lector in fabula* is the first of Eco’s works to be translated a short time after the original publication. This is the first instance where both the Italian and English version, *The Role of the Reader*, can be read simultaneously, though the sections are not translated in the same order.
author is ever truly absent. This seems a contradiction of the cooperative roles in interpretation he had been advocating thus far. He acknowledges in section 0.2.1 that the author “must foresee a model of the possible reader [...] supposedly able to deal interpretively with the expressions in the same way as the author deals generatively with them” (ROR 7).

According to Eco, though the author must predict the Model Reader of his text, it is not the author but the text that creates the reader’s competence. Eco defines a Model Reader of closed texts in this way:

> 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 [...] are in fact open to any possible ‘aberrant’ decoding. A text so immoderately ‘open’ to every possible interpretation will be called a closed one (ROR 8).

In other words, closed texts are those texts that pull the reader upon a “predetermined path”; the reader has no flexibility and thus no cooperation between text and reader can take place.

Then there is the Model Reader for open texts that “work at their peak revolutions per minute only when each interpretation is re-echoed by the others and vice versa” (ROR 9). This reader must be able to differentiate between different codes and “be eager to deal with the text as with a maze of many issues” (9). In other words, though the text is delineated as ‘open,’ it cannot be dependent on just any interpretation. Interpretations must attempt to resolve the issues set them within the maze that is the text. Until those issues (boxes) are fully resolved, the text remains ‘open.’
Though not all the issues in the maze-like structure of the text can be dealt with in one reading, it is essential for readers to come up with an interpretation that the text can support in order to attempt to make their way out of the maze. Needless to say, this guarantees a proliferation of interpretations: the text will always remain ‘open’ because by putting the onus on the many readers who read and will continue to read the text, the author opens the novel to infinite interpretations (since every reader comes with a different set of knowledge and experiences). In order to get out of the maze, arguably, the reader must also attempt to interpret the author’s intentions as well, since only the author knows the correct way out of the maze that he or she has created through his or her own various experiences. Though Eco considers the author a textual strategy, much in the same way that Barthes considered him or her a character, relegating the author to mere strategy or element of style alters Eco’s cooperative maxim, shaping the way in which the reader would tackle what would be his first major novel, *Il nome della rosa*. Consequently, it would eventually also force Eco to reconsider and re-clarify what he meant by the notion of the ‘open work.’

Eco’s *The Role of the Reader* raises, he admits, many problems, not all of which he is able to solve. One such problem is Eco’s renunciation of the author as interpretative tool, by demoting him to the role of a textual strategy. Eco’s preceding theoretical works (*Opera aperta, Apocalittici e integrati, Le poetiche di Joyce, La struttura assente*) had already laid the groundwork for a possible conception of what I am calling self-reflexive intertextuality, since Eco simultaneously always presents himself as author and reader in those works. Eco continuously brings his own reading experiences into the act of writing, experiences which are both cultural/historical and personal, thus allowing the reader to interpret his works on more
than one level: on the level of ‘open’ text, as described in The Role of the Reader, and on the level of his own subjectivity, that is, if the reader chooses (and Eco advocates democracy in interpretation) to use what is known of the author’s experiences as interpretative tools. In this way, all communicative elements—sender, message and addressee or author, text, and reader—are always working in collaboration, and the authority of both the author’s and the reader’s choices is restored.

The reduction of the author to a textual strategy is not a sufficient basis for a theory of self-reflexive intertextuality, dependent as it is upon the concept of the author as the Model Reader. The one thing that is explicitly clear throughout Eco’s works is the fact that he is an avid reader—his theories and his novels depend on this very fact. As an author it is necessary for Eco to read in order to write; the author must read first, be it signs, images, or texts, in order to interpret or reinterpret, as the case may be. To delve into the lives of authors, we must consider their roles as readers and, as a result, consider intertextuality to include not only the author’s reading experiences, but life experiences as well, as a basis upon which to construct a conception of intertextuality that can be self-reflexive: a self-reflecting upon the reading experience.

By taking into account the author’s reading experiences, the question of who is speaking in Eco’s novels becomes somewhat less problematic. The intricate framework of Eco’s narratives often makes it difficult to decide who is recounting the story: the author, the narrator, or the text. By using a concept of self-reflexive intertextuality, however, it is possible to consider a combination of the three, since regarding the author as reader restores the cooperative act of interpretation that Eco had advocated in Opera aperta, that first major work.
What renders the whole issue of who is speaking particularly challenging is the fact that Eco insists that it is the text that speaks, not the author. Rather, he contends that “his personality is in the style.” Thus, it is the text that speaks and has a personality, not the author. The author simply “becomes a character of the narration” \((LOI \ 69)\). It is difficult to reconcile, however, this idea of the author as simply a narrative strategy (that eliminates the authority of the author) with the fact that it is the author who obviously decides the type of narration, and everything in that narration, present in the work. This issue becomes even more problematic when the narrative offers a direct correlation with the author’s own experiences.

*Il nome della rosa* (1980) opens with a passage from a prospective author who has found a version of Adso of Melk’s memoirs (a manuscript said to be originally written in the fourteenth century) which are to serve as a seminal idea for his own future text. The novel opens with an important date: “il 16 agosto 1968” (August 16, 1968) \((NDR \ 11)\), an allusion to a personal event, namely the publication of *La struttura assente*, which establishes a set of allusions that pertain to Eco’s previous works and the culture in which he wrote them. These first few pages of the novel, written by a supposedly anonymous author or narrator (who I would maintain is clearly Eco), summarize what 1968 meant: it is not only the year that Eco publishes *La struttura assente* (and Barthes declares the death of the author), but it is also the year, as has already been mentioned, that *La struttura assente* also creates a “state of intellectual excitement” \((NOR \ 1)\). Eco had confessed in *La struttura assente* that what led him to writing a general theory of semiotics was a particular set of impulses that the culture at the

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43 “La personalità sta nello stile” (personal communication Oct 2009).
44 “Una clima […] di grande eccitazione” \((NDR \ 11)\).
time had produced. As well as referring to his works, he also refers to other familiar themes in these first few pages, such as his suspicion of literature and even scholarly knowledge. As a result of his inability to locate the lost manuscript, the ‘author’s’ only option is to rely on his notes: “and I was beginning to have doubts about them” (NOR 3). But these notes and these doubts, together, produce what he describes as “motor excitement” (3) wherein the historical people he was writing about in his notes come to him in visions. Eco’s allusion to Nerval’s *Sylvie*—“As I retrace these details I have to ask myself if they were real or if I dreamed them”46—is of the utmost importance here since it at once puts into perspective the mental state of the ‘author,’ who is having trouble distinguishing between truth and falsity and also prefigures Eco’s later novel, *La misteriosa fiamma della regina Loana*, wherein Nerval’s narrative provides the underlying discourse of memory (as discussed further in chapter four).

Not happy with the impasse in his research, the prospective author opts to use his notes to present his own authentic manuscript. In so doing he must consider various formal elements: who will narrate? What models and what language should be used? The answers to these questions become the material for Eco’s own *Postille*. Towards the end of these introductory pages, we get the sense that the author is unhappy with the type of theory, rampant at the time, that limits the text’s generative interest. Adso’s writes his manuscript freely, not worried about the accuracy of the facts: “I transcribe my text with no concern for [current events]. In the years when I discovered the Abbé Vallet volume there was a widespread conviction that one should write only out of a commitment to the present in order to change the world” (NOR

45 “E non mi rimanevano che le mie note, delle quali cominciavo a dubitare” (NDR 12).
46 “En me retraçant ces détails, j’en suis à me demander s’ils sont réels, ou bien si je les ai rêvés” (NDR 12).
11). As such, the author’s text would not have been supported in earlier times: “Now, after ten years or more, the man of letters (restored to his loftiest dignity) can happily write out of pure love of writing [...]. I am comforted and consoled in finding it immeasurably remote in time [...] gloriously lacking in any relevance for our day and temporally alien to our hopes and our certainties” (NOR 12).\footnote{“Trascrivo senza preoccupazioni di attualità. Negli anni in cui scoprivo il testo dell’abate Vallet circolava la persuasione che si dovesse scrivere solo impegnandosi sul presente, per cambiare il mondo” (NDR 15). Weaver translates “attualità” as “timelessness,” but my translation of “attualità” as “current events” supports the atmosphere of the culture of which he speaks: namely that culture of theory that after 1968 rendered not only the author obsolete but the role of history as well.}

\footnote{“A dieci e più anni di distanza e ora consolazione dell’uomo di lettere (restituito alla sua altissima dignità) che si possa scrivere per puro amore di scrittura [...] e provo conforto e consolazione nel ritrovarla così incommensurabilmente lontana nel tempo [...] così gloriosamente priva di rapporto coi tempi nostri, intemporalmente estranea alle nostre speranze e alle nostre sicurezze” (NDR 15).} It nome della rosa, he states, is a story about books (NOR 12), not about the human community, like Eco’s previous texts. When he signs the pages: “5 gennaio 1980,” it brings us back several years to that first edition of La struttura assente, rereleased in its original format (minus the many revisions that came after it) in the same year as the novel, and presented perhaps in the spirit in which the original was intended, for the love of writing. (This passage also takes us back to Le poetiche di Joyce where Eco also demonstrated a love for reading, connecting with Joyce’s work because of a shared interest of the Middle Ages.) In the grand scheme of Eco’s novel, this date may have no great importance, but it does have significance for Eco, the author, since it ties the text to an historical time—Eco’s personal historical time. Thus, it becomes a challenge not to link the unknown prospective author in the novel with the (quasi) unknown author of the novel.

Eco’s various novels over the years show a development from his theories about the act of narration to a practice in which narration enacts his theories. In this way, Il nome della rosa
is arguably a narrated portrayal of his previous theoretical work. Those opening pages of the novel, though seemingly written by an anonymous prospective author, make the link between Eco’s theories and novels abundantly clear, with their direct references to his theoretical work and to pertinent literary and cultural theory in which he was an active participant. Eco’s conception of the Model Reader is one of the reader as an active participant in the development of meaning in the text. He is consistent when he notes that the reader has his or her set of knowledge which he or she brings to the text in order to interpret and produce meaning. A loyal reader of Eco’s previous work, however, would find it difficult not to derive meaning from the author himself.

Only six years after its initial publication, Eco had sold over five million copies of *Il nome della rosa*, which had been translated into several languages. Renato Giovannoli, in his introduction to *Saggi su Il nome della rosa*, attributes the success of the novel to its rich intertextuality: “[Eco’s text] is a complex book rich (in the extreme) of inexhaustible meaning; a book made up of fragments from other books, eminently intertextual.”49 Sven Ekblad, in *Studi sui sottofondi strutturali nel “Nome della rosa” di Umberto Eco*, asserts that the novel’s success is as a result of its ability to convey hidden meaning: “there is also something underneath.”50 Eco attempts, in his novels, to reveal that there is always something—a clue to meaning, a sign or a structure—that might help determine the (interpretive) fate of the text, and more often than not, these clues are accessible through a reading of his previous works. Only Eco, the

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49My translation. “È un libro complesso, ricco (fino al eccesso) di significati inesauribile; un libro fatto dei frammenti di altri libri, eminentemente intertestuale” (7).
50My translation. “Che c’è anche qualcosa di sotto” (9).
author, knows what he intended his novel to mean, since it his experiences (as both a reader and an individual within a culture) that enable a construction of a world within his novels. Perhaps this is part of the “something underneath” to which Eckblad refers: the author hidden within the text. Notwithstanding the obvious allusions to Eco’s previous work, Il nome della rosa has been praised mainly for its intertextual qualities and its invitation to the reader to join in the game of references. There is, however, an intratextual level that criticism has opted to overlook. Moreover, the novel, much as Eco admits happened with Lector in fabula, rather than generating new interpretations, served to raise more questions among readers, and many of those questions, especially the ones referring to the role of the author, still today, remain unanswered.

In his 1983 Postille a il nome della rosa, Eco explained many of the reasons why he chose to write the novel and attempted to answer many of the questions that arose from its reading. One of the main concerns he acknowledged is exactly that question readers ask from the novel’s beginning: who is speaking? The novel obviously confuses the issue, leaving the reader uncertain as to who is recounting the story: Eco the author, an unknown author, a prospective author, or Adso of Melk. In the Postille, Eco eliminated one possibility for the narrator: “a narrator must not supply interpretations of his own work otherwise he would not have written a novel, which is a machine for generating interpretations” (NOR). He also revisits the issue of the role of the author:

Nothing is of greater consolation to the author of a novel than the discovery of readings he had not conceived but which are prompted by his readers. When I

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51 “Un narratore non deve fornire interpretazioni della propria opera altrimenti non avrebbe scritto un romanzo, che è una macchina per generare interpretazioni” (PNDR 507).
wrote theoretical works, my attitude towards reviewers was judicial: Have they or have they not understood what I meant? With a novel, the situation is completely different. I am not saying that the author may not find a discovered reading perverse, but even if he does, he must remain silent, allow others to challenge it, text in hand. For that matter, the large majority of readings reveal effects of sense that one had not thought of. But what does not having thought of them mean? (NOR 506).  

While Eco attempts to make a clear distinction between his theoretical and narrative work, his conception of the controlling role of the author remains unclear. While he concedes that a reader might make an aberrant interpretation, at the same time, he admits that readers bring to light many readings which he had not consciously thought about but were nonetheless potentially present in the text. For Eco, the author must remain silent and allow the readers to argue valid interpretations amongst themselves, even though, as the author of his texts, he already knows which interpretations are valid and which are not.

An author’s known memories can, in fact, act as a control, a constraint to prevent readers of the novel from generating too many (often irrelevant) interpretations. For example, Abulafia, the supercomputer in Eco’s second novel, *Il pendolo di Foucault* (1988), is rarely discussed in terms of its personal attributes linked to the author. The computer is, more often than not, seen as a generator of infinite interpretations and not as Belbo’s personal computer, used for his personal writings. The computer, a modern-day palimpsest, like the manuscript in *Il nome della rosa*, comprises both Belbo’s personal memories and neutral data inputted by the

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52 “Nulla consola maggiormente un autore di un romanzo che lo scoprire letture a cui egli non pensava, e che i lettori gli suggeriscono. Quando scrivevo opere teoriche il mio atteggiamento verso i recensori era di tipo giudiziario: hanno capito o no quello che volevo dire? Con un romanzo è tutto diverso. Non dico che l’autore non possa scoprire una lettura che gli pare aberrante, ma dovrebbe tacere, in ogni caso, ci pensino gli altri a contestarla, testo alla mano. Per il resto, la gran maggioranza delle letture fa scoprire effetti di senso a cui non si era pensato. Ma cosa vuol dire che non ci avevo pensato?” (PNDR 508)
Group in order to make new texts. These differences among Casaubon’s account of the story, Belbo’s personal diary, and the infinite connections made by Abulafia render confusing, once again, the issue of the speaker in the novel. In *Il pendolo di Foucault* we find three levels of narration that are interdependent and interconnected. Though the issue of who is speaking remains unclear, a clear reference to Eco’s own works is readily apparent, particularly Eco’s reference to his own conception of the three levels of culture (high, medium and low) that he describes in his *Apocalittici e integrati*. These are dependent on the interplay with each other and necessitate that the individual (l’uomo di cultura) adapt to each level at any given time, as must Casaubon. In this way, Eco continues to advocate the necessary connections between his past, present and future as well as between the personal and the cultural. Abulafia, a modern technological representation of Eco’s notion of the “open work,” uses the connections to create new works.

In 1990, only a year after the release of the English translation of *Opera aperta*, Eco published *The Limits of Interpretation* [*LOI*] in order to clarify further what he meant by the concept of the “open work.” Eco had realized that his readers were focusing mainly on the ‘open’ quality of the term:

It is merely accidental, but by no means irrelevant that [these essays] appear a little after the English translation of an old book of mine, *Opera aperta* [...]. In that book I advocated the active role of the interpreter in the reading of texts endowed with aesthetic value. When those pages were written, my readers were focused on the ‘open’ side of the whole business, underestimating the fact that the open-ended reading I supported was an activity elicited by (and aimed at interpreting) a work. [...] I have the impression that in course of the last few decades, the rights of the interpreters have been overstressed. (*LOI* 6)
Eco emphasizes that “this means that the text imposes some constraints upon its interpreters. The limits of interpretation coincide with the rights of the text (which does not mean with the rights of the author)” (LOI 7). But given the obvious reality that it is the author’s reading and personal experiences that shape the text, in the end the textual emphasis only serves to further support the rights of the author. One could argue that Eco exercises these rights by providing, as his work on the Middle Ages describes, a code for interpretation.

When he discusses scriptural interpretation and the need for a system of order, it is evident that he is reflecting on his own practice and the need for his own work also to be governed by a code in order to ensure interpretations that are not superfluous. A loyal Eco reader can therefore perceive a code in Eco’s works, derived from his personal (reading) experiences and cultural experiences as well. It is these coded elements that can serve the very purpose of imposing limits on the text: “this is a very delicate point because without this profound need for a code, the scriptural interpretation would look very similar to our modern interpretative theories of deconstruction [...] free jouissance” (12). By providing a code for interpretations, Eco admits that there exists a correct interpretation of a text: “[the code] provided a sort of guarantee for a correct decoding of the Books” (12). The formation of a code, however, does not signify the impossibility of new readings; rather, according to Eco, the question becomes: “how to read [texts] by discovering in them, not new things, but the same everlasting truth rephrased in ever new ways” (12). In this vein, the intention of Eco’s novels, up to this point, is not to reveal new things. On the contrary, Eco’s deeply intertextual novels reveal what we already know (or what he assumes we already know). His novels are his rephrasing of this knowledge: “the functioning of a text can be explained by taking into account
not only its generative process but also [...] the way in which the text focuses and directs this kind of interpretive cooperation” (45). When Eco distinguishes between a semantic interpretation (where the text has a secret meaning) and a critical interpretation (where the text has a secret code), he makes clear his desire for a text to reveal meaning: “to critically interpret a text means to read it in order to discover, along with our reactions to it, something about its nature” (57). If by the nature of the text Eco implies the very foundations the text is built on--I will argue, his (reading) experiences--we find ourselves dealing with an author whose obvious role in the construction of the text also contributes to the generative process of interpretation. Whereas Eco maintains that interweaving biographical remarks in a textual analysis is not interpreting but using the text (58), this dissertation argues that the biographical remarks can also be used as an interpretive tool for readers, offering yet another level of meaning. Meaning, Eco affirms, is produced by a Model Reader and it is the Model Reader who creates the figure of the Model Author: “since the intention of the text is to produce a Model Reader able to make conjectures about it, the initiative of the Model Reader consists in figuring the Model Author that is not the empirical one and that, at the end, coincides with the intention of the text” (59). But if it is up to me as a Model Reader (and as a loyal reader of Eco) to figure a Model Author, and the text clearly includes biographical information about the author, then there is no reason that my interpretation should not include this information that the text itself provides, especially if I can argue that it corresponds to the intention of the text. If the Model Reader, according to Eco, figures the Model Author, what figures the intention of the text, the intentio operis as Eco calls it, if not in some way the intention of the author?
In *Interpretation and Overinterpretation* ([IOI](#)) (1992) Eco reiterated the necessity of providing a criterion for interpretation: “in my recent writings [...] I have tried to show that the notion of unlimited semiosis does not lead to the conclusion that interpretation has no criteria [...]. [T]o say that a text has potentially no end does not mean that every act of interpretation can have a happy end” ([IOI](#) 24). In this way, he stands between two kinds of contemporary theory, the one that maintains that “the only reliable reading of a text is a misreading” where “a text is only a picnic where the author brings the words and the reader the sense” (24), and the radical alternative, those theories “extolled by those who say that the only valid interpretation aims at finding the original intention of the author” (25). Eco proposes a third possibility: an intention of the text (25). Since his novels require the interplay of author, reader and text, one possibility need not cancel out the other; rather, all are possible. This is in keeping with the idea of a cooperative reading or interpretation. His revisiting of the issue of meaning of texts restates the possibility of an underlying mystery in his novels: “Every object hides a secret. Every time a secret has been discovered it will refer to another secret in a progressive movement toward a final secret. Nevertheless, there can be no final secret” (32). This notion that even secrets have a “ricorso” takes us back to Eco’s early works in the fifties and sixties, especially to his reading of Joyce. In *Le poetiche di Joyce*, Eco acted as an interpreter who read Joyce’s work as an “open-ended universe where the interpreter could discover infinite interconnections” (39), but whereas Eco accepted Joyce’s biographical information as necessary for an accurate reading of his texts and correct development of meaning, in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, he maintains instead that the reader must suspect the author of always deferring meaning: “to salvage the text [...] the reader must suspect that
every line of it conceals another secret meaning [...]. The glory of the reader is to discover that texts can say everything, except what their author wanted them to mean” (39). Interpretation and Overinterpretation does not succeed in excluding the author outright; rather, Eco, always advocating a cooperative or democratic process of the interpretation of a text, delineates some instances where the presence of the author can actually serve certain functions.

In his reading of Wordsworth’s “Lucy” poems, for example, he admits that there are instances when the author’s presence can hold some importance: “Nevertheless, it can look rather crude to eliminate the poor author as something irrelevant for the story of interpretation. There are, in the process of communication, cases in which an inference about the intention of the speaker is absolutely important” (66). The first case to consider is the “author’s cultural and linguistic background” (69). By situating the author in the context of his experiences (both personal and collective) within the culture of his time, the interplay between Eco’s “uomo di cultura” and all levels of culture (and meaning) can be maintained. The second is to take into account whether the author is still living, so that the reader might be able to ask the author “how much and to what extent he, as an empirical person, was aware of the manifold interpretations his text supported” (73). Whereas Eco believes that the author’s response should not validate a reader’s interpretation of the text (73), this dissertation maintains that asking the author questions regarding these interpretations, after the fact, can lead to a re-reading and a new interpretation of the text with that information in mind. The third case in which Eco believes the author’s intention might hold some merit is if the author plays the role of a textual theorist: “in this case it would be possible to get from him two different sorts of reaction. In certain cases he could say, ‘No, I did not mean this, but I agree
that says it [...]’ or ‘Independently of the fact that I did not mean this, I think that a reasonable reader should not accept such an interpretation, because it sounds uneconomical’” (73). This brings to light the problem of the author’s unconscious memories: “I have read critical analyses in which the interpreter discovered influences of which I was unaware when writing, but I certainly had read those books in my youth and I understood that I was unconsciously influenced by them” (75). In order to try to solve the problem of memory, Eco depends on conjecture:

a text is a device conceived in order to produce its Model Reader [...]. This reader is not the one who makes the ‘only right’ conjecture. A text can foresee a Model Reader entitled to try infinite conjectures. The empirical reader is only an actor who makes conjectures about the kind of Model Reader postulated by the text. Since the intention of the text is to basically produce a Model Reader able to make conjectures about it, the initiative of the Model Reader consists in figuring out a model author that is not the empirical one and that, in the end, coincides with the intention of the text (64).

As a text’s incarnation of the Model Reader, I may also make the conjecture that what I know and have read by and about the author can also coincide with the intention of the text since, as a Model Reader, I can follow the Eco’s progression from each of his works and am therefore able to perceive the history of his work in terms of his identity or presence from text to text, whether it be theory or narrative.

In Eco’s third novel, L’isola del giorno prima [IDGP] (The Island of the Day Before) [IDB] (1994), for example, the question of who is speaking is once again raised (as in Il nome della rosa and Il pendolo di Foucault) by means of both a lost text, Roberto della Griva’s lost letters, and a prospective author who attempts to recreate the story of the lost text. Eco’s third novel thus becomes his third palimpsest, where Roberto’s letters and the prospective author’s
conjectures share the same space. The novel begins with an excerpt from one of the lost letters, where, in the English translation (the Italian does not make this emphasis), special importance is placed on the “I,” the author of the letter: “I take pride withal in my humiliation, and as I am to this privilege condemned, almost I find joy in an abhorrent salvation: I am, I believe, alone of all the race, the only man in human memory to have been shipwrecked and cast up upon a deserted ship” (IDB 1, my italics).53 To confuse the idea of who is speaking, the prospective author, acting as the Model Reader described by Eco in Interpretation and Overinterpretation, makes conjectures that also put emphasis on the individual, thus mirroring the language of the letters: “I believe the sea grew calm” (1);54 “I believe that at such moments a dying man can become a Hercules” (2);55 “I do not believe he entertained other hypotheses” (3).56 Therefore, at one point the line between the historical letters and the fictional conjectures is blurred and the reader is left to make his or her own conjectures about how much is real and how much is the prospective author’s recreation. By the end of Eco’s novel, we are left uncertain as to whether Roberto actually wrote the letters at all, and the prospective novel is left open to conjecture: “unless the story to be told is not that of Roberto but of his papers – though here, too, all must be based on conjecture” (505).57 As a result, while Eco blends the historical with the prospective author’s present attempt to reconstruct

53“Eppure m’inorgoglisco della mia umiliazione e, poiché a tal privilegio son condannato, quasi godo di un’aborrita salvezza: sono, credo a memoria d’uomo, l’unico essere della nostra specie ad aver fatto naufragio su di una nave deserta” (IDGP 5).
54 “Ma credo che il mare si fosse calmato” (IDGP 5).
55 “Credo che in questi istanti un morente diventì un Ercole” (IDGP 6).
56 “Non credo avesse tentato alter ipotesi” (IDGP 7).
57 “A meno che la storia da raccontare non sia quella di Roberto, ma delle sue carte – benché anche qui si debb andar per congetture” (IDGP 446).
Roberto’s letters and with the reader’s future interpretations, he reveals the unreliability of
texts and their authors, claiming that to write a novel entails creating a palimpsest: “finally if
from this story I wanted to produce a novel, I would demonstrate that it is impossible to write
except by making a palimpsest of a rediscovered manuscript” (512).\textsuperscript{58} In Eco’s case, this
palimpsest, though exceptionally intertextual, is also highly intratextual: Eco’s novels continue
to represent and enact his theories through his narratives. At the end of the novel, the
prospective author actually quotes Eco from \textit{Interpretation and Overinterpretation} (69): “the
author is unknown”’ (513).\textsuperscript{59} In so doing, he breaks through the pretense of anonymity. By
quoting his own work, he makes that work part of the interpretative process.

By the time Eco’s fourth novel, \textit{Baudolino}, was published in 2000, the question of the
role of the author in the interpretation of texts was being revisited. Carla Benedetti’s study, in
\textit{L’ombra lunga dell’autore: indagine su una figura cancellata} (1999) or \textit{The Empty Cage: Inquiry
into the Mysterious Disappearance of the Author} (2005), questions the validity of the dominant
theories of the role of the author and brings the whole authorial debate into the twenty-first
century. She does what Eco had already done in his earlier works and what he noted Joyce had
accomplished in \textit{Finnegans Wake}, which was to reduce the discourse and literature that
supported Barthes’s claim of authorial demise to the realm of myth. When Barthes had
declared the death of the author and the subsequent birth of the reader, it was accepted that
the author could no longer have any bearing on the interpretive outcome of his work, and the

\textsuperscript{58} “\textit{Infine, se da questa storia volessi farne uscire un romanzo, dimosterei ancora una volta anche non si può
scrivere se non facendo palinsesto di un manoscritto ritrovato}” (\textit{IDGP 472}).
\textsuperscript{59} “\textit{L’autore è ignoto}” (\textit{IDGP 473}).
author hardly complained, sacrificing him/herself for the good of the text. But for all the cultural and communication theory that was developed during the subsequent decades, none predicted or focused on the progressive impact of “celebrity culture.” The author became, willingly or not, an integral part of this culture, gaining publicity for the text he or she had created. Benedetti rightly notes that

The hypocrisy of cultural journalists goes hand in hand with the peaceful dreaming of theoreticians who nowadays talk about texts and readers, and never about authors. It is as if the author no longer exists for them, whereas the pillar of today’s literary institution is precisely the author. It is the author that supports its various movements, from production to promotion, from criticism to the act of enjoyment [...]. If the author is dead, who then is this figure who continues to wander, like a ghost, over the literary continent? (4).

Andrew Bennett supports Benedetti’s claim and maintains that in the post-postmodern era, the author has indeed returned, but his or her role is not always clear. According to Bennett in The Author (2005), Barthes’s and Foucault’s claim that the author is dead only served to fix the author’s role in the interpretation of texts: “far from ridding the world of an authoritarian despot, the critique of authorship launched in the 1960s by Barthes and Foucault may in fact be understood to have securely fixed the question of the author in the interpretation of literary and cultural texts” (108). This, Bennett explains, has much to do with the public’s curiosity about the life of the author who has written an especially exceptional work: “contemporary culture seems to have an endless appetite for literary biographies, for example, or for newspaper and TV interviews with famous writers” (109). The public or, in other words, the reader, has an “appetite” to know what inspired authors to write their texts, whether some insight into their methods and intentions might help decipher some mystery within the text. As
we shall see, Umberto Eco, with *Baudolino* especially, has been very obliging in satisfying this request by the reader for information.

Benedetti’s text coincides with Eco’s translation of Gerard de Nerval’s *Sylvie* [ST] where, in his “Rilettura di Sylvie,” he not only reiterates the role of the Model Reader in the interpretation of the text, but also notes that the intertexts in Nerval’s work reveal not only Nerval’s memories, particularly regarding his reading experiences, but also connections between his works as well: “There is a type of note (I will call them intertextual) that are the *tarte à la crème* of every nervalian […] because Nerval spent his life rewriting his memories in diverse ways and cross references can be established from *Sylvie*, from *Angélique*, from *Aurélie*, from the *Chimères* or from *Voyage en Orient*, not to mention other minor works.”60 With *Sylvie*, Eco, like the loyal readers of his own novels, finds it a challenge *not* to link the prospective author of *Sylvie* with the actual author of the text, especially since each text has a connection not only to other texts but to his personal reading experiences as well:

These cross references are certainly of little moment for those who want to travel into the vast archipelago of Nerval’s work and gather echoes of obsessions and memories from text to text. It is difficult for scholars to resist the temptation of noting that in *Sylvie* Apuleius is cited and Nerval had written about the *Golden Ass* and Iside […]. But if these intertextual references cannot be disregarded by those who work on the totality of Nerval’s corpus, the reader of *Sylvie* can ignore them.61

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60 My translation. “C’è un tipo di note (le chiamero intertestuali) che sono la tarte a la creme di ogni nervaliano […] perché Nerval ha passato la vita a riscrivere in forme diverse i suoi ricordi, e si stabiliscono riferimenti incrociati tra brani di *Sylvie*, di *Angélique*, di *Aurélie*, delle *Chimères* o del *Voyage en Orient*, per non dire di altri scritti minori” (ST 204).

61 My translation. “Qesti rimandi sono certo di poco momento per chi voglia viaggiare nel vasto arcipelago dell’opera nervaliana e cogliere echi di ossessioni e ricordi da testo a testo. E difficile per gli studiosi resistere alla tentazione di notare che in *Sylvie* si cita Apuleio e Nerval ha scritto sull’*Asino d’oro* e su Iside […] Ma, se questi richiami intertestuali non possono essere trascurati da chi lavora su Nerval nel suo insieme, il lettore di *Sylvie* può ignorarli” (ST 104-5).
Though Eco makes the distinction between two types of readers, the one who takes all of Nerval’s works into account when interpreting *Sylvie* and the reader who has only read *Sylvie*, he no longer ignores the possibility that both interpretators are possible: the one who knows the author’s intertextual references and therefore shares his reading experiences and the one who has no former knowledge of Nerval’s work and must rely on his or her own knowledge and ability to make conjectures in order to interpret the text. Eco’s translation of Nerval’s *Sylvie* forms the basis of his theory of translation in his later theoretical work, particularly in *Experiences in Translation* (2001) and *Dire quasi la stessa cosa: esperienze di traduzione* [DQLAC] (2003): “the problem of translation could not have been absent from my study on *The Search for the Perfect Language* (1993b), and for minute analyses of translation I returned to whether speaking of a translation of Joyce (Eco 1996) or with regard to my translation of Nerval’s *Sylvie* (1999b)”.62 When Eco refers to “experiences of translation” he is not referring so much to his experience as a translator but of the more personal experience of being translated: “I begin from personal experience.”63 For the most part, Eco contends that translations of his novels can be read like any other literary texts, reiterating the distinction between what he calls the naïve reader (il lettore ingenuo) “who does not detect the quotations and follows the same development of discourse and plot as if what is being recounted was new and unexpected” and the cultured reader (il lettore colto) who can “detect


63 My translation. “parto da esperienze personali” (DQLSC 19).
the cross references and sees them as mischievous quotations.”64 The author, however, has a guiding role in interpretation if, for instance, he chooses intertexts and references for the purpose of some literary game. Though Eco maintains that it does not matter if the naïve reader does not get the game, the cultured reader will find enjoyment in it. It is for the cultured reader that it is imperative that the author make the intention of this game clear to the translator:

As an author of novels that play much with intertextual echoes, I have always been pleased when the reader has understood the cross reference [...]. It is necessary, however, to inform the translators as much as possible of allusions that, for some reason or other, can escape [the translation] and thus, usually, I send them pages and pages of notes that render the various references explicit.65

And in this way, the author can and consciously does aid in guiding the reading. Eco’s translation and subsequent re-reading of Nerval’s *Sylvie* concede that the author can have some bearing on the outcome of the text, particularly if the reader takes into account the entirety of Eco’s work when reading one of his novels. With *Baudolino* (2000), Eco’s fourth novel, he offers a text that is an accumulation of all of his works thus far, including all his theories of the Middle Ages, semiosis, the interplay involved in intertextuality, and the linking of the past, present and future, as well as the relationship between truth and falsity. And all of these, I will argue, incorporate his personal (reading) experiences.

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64 My translation. “(i) il lettore ingenuo, che non individua la citazione, seque lo stesso lo svolgersi del discorso e dell’intreccio come se ciò a che gli viene raccontato fosse nuovo e inaspettato [...] (ii) il lettore colto e competente individua il rinvio, e lo sente come citazione maliziosa” (DQLSC 213).

65 My translation. “Come autore dei romanzi che sugli echi intertestuali giocano moltissimo, sono sempre stato lieto quando il lettore ha colto il rinvio [...]. Occorre però informare il più possibile i propri traduttori di allusioni che, per motivo o per l’altro, potrebbero sfuggire, e quindi di solito invio loro pagine e pagine di note che rendono espliciti i vari riferimenti” (DQLSC 217).
When *Baudolino* was published in 2000, it was at once celebrated as a “a true jewel,”\textsuperscript{66} considered the book “without a doubt the author’s most playful work” (Corti),\textsuperscript{67} and inevitably compared to his first successful novel, *Il nome della rosa*:

A certain emotion accompanies the reading of a new novel by Umberto Eco [...]. It creates admiration in the entire intellectual world [...]. And this is in fact what happened with the first novel *The Name of the Rose*, a success that upset the charts in all of Europe [...and] enjoyed innumerable translations [...].\textsuperscript{68}

His other novels, *Il pendolo de Foucault* and *L’isola del giorno prima*, have been deemed less successful, “less accessible, perhaps less cheery, certainly addressed to a more selective public.”\textsuperscript{69} Maria Corti’s early review for *La Repubblica* in November of 2000, days before *Baudolino*’s wide release in Italy, was one of the first to introduce readers, especially those who had not read Eco’s essay, “Il miracolo di San Baudolino” in *Il secondo diario minimo* (1992), to the notion that Eco and his protagonist are connected through shared legends of their hometown: “Behind the figure of the protagonist is a legendary character in history, Saint Baudolino, protector of Alessandria as well as its creator, thus a character that does not exist, except in the minds of Alessandrians and therefore also of Umberto Eco.”\textsuperscript{70} Corti asked the question that guides readers to this mode of interpretation: “And what if behind him [the character of Baudolino] we were to read that of another Alessandrian who travelled the world

\textsuperscript{66}My translation. “Vero gioiello” (Bompiani).

\textsuperscript{67}My translation. “Senza alcun dubbio [...] più ludico dello scrittore” (Corti).

\textsuperscript{68}My translation. “Una certa emozione accompagna la lettura di un nuovo romanzo di Umberto Eco [...] creerà ammirazione in tutta l’intelletualità mondiale [...] . Ed è infatti questo che è avvenuto col primo romanzo *Il nome della rosa*, un successo che ha sconvolto le classifiche di tutta Europa [...] goduto innumerevoli traduzioni” (Bompiani).

\textsuperscript{69}My translation. “Meno accessibili, forse meno felici, di certo rivolti a un pubblico più selezionato” (Bompiani).

\textsuperscript{70}My translation. “Dietro la figura del protagonista sta un personaggio leggendario, San Baudolino, protettore di Alessandria oltre che suo creatore, personaggio dunque che nella storia non esiste, fuorché nelle menti degli alessandrini e quindi anche di Umberto Eco” (Corti).
becoming famous for his brilliance and innovative strength?”

Roberto Cotroneo, in *Eco: due o tre cose che so di lui* (2001), maintains that the very foundations of *Baudolino* are based upon a series of Eco’s memories described in “Il miracolo di San Baudolino” (“The Miracle of St. Baudolino”) and that he traces back to Eco’s *Il costume di casa* (1981). In the essay, memory plays the fundamental role of providing a foundation of knowledge that can help to guide the reader’s interpretation of the text. The essay, however, is not solely about Eco’s personal memories. By invoking the patron saint of his native city, Alessandria, Eco also incorporates the collective memory of its community: “in ‘The Miracle of Saint Baudolino’ Eco revisits the city and the people where he was born and where he lived until the age of twenty.”

This is perhaps also why, as we read *Baudolino*, we once again have the impression that we are reading about Eco—or at least about the memory of his (reading) experiences and his work:

this is very clear in *The Island of the Day Before* where through the story of young Roberto, there is the sensation that it is possible to read about all of Umberto Eco’s intellectual adventures: from his years in Torino up to now. And even more so in *Baudolino*, where Eco’s return home is a clear and indisputable element. A double return: after twenty years since *The Name of the Rose*, there is, again the medieval, and there is Alessandria, the siege of his city [and] the character of its people.

Cotroneo astutely points out that the more we read Eco, the more we get to know about him.

With *Baudolino* it is even easier for the reader to link the protagonist with the author since

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71 My translation. “Se dietro le si dovesse leggere quello di un altro alessandrino che ha girato il mondo divenendone noto per genialità e forza innovativa?” (Corti).

72 My translation. “Nel ‘Miracolo di san Baudolino’ Eco racconta la città e la gente dove è nato e dove è vissuto fino a vent’anni” (Cotroneo 18).

Baudolino’s manuscript is lost and he must rely on a verbal account of his memories, which are shared by Eco himself and the inhabitants of the city in which he lived. Baudolino is in large part a novel about remembering and in this way prefigures Eco’s most recent works on memory, particularly his essay on “Vegetal and Mineral Memory: The Future of Books” (2003), later published as La memoria vegetale (2006), and his fifth novel, La misteriosa fiamma della regina Loana (2004).

When La misteriosa fiamma della regina Loana was first released, it met with mixed reviews. Thomas Mallon of The New York Times considered the novel a “discursive reconstruction of what one surmises to have been the author’s early reading life. Eco, who began publishing fiction in 1980 with ‘The Name of the Rose,’ has never stopped being a professor of semiotics, and his academic preoccupations still show” (Mallon). Simon Hughes, writing for the Sydney Morning Herald, found it difficult to believe that the novel “is not an exercise in outrageous nostalgia, an autobiography tricked out in the motley of theory” (Hughes). Alberto Manguel, in his review for the Spectator, saw the novel as a beautifully constructed work that encourages the reader to take a deeper look into how reading shapes us: “our talents, our foibles, our experience no doubt lend us traits that make us who we are, but ultimately the face we send out into the world and which we recognize every morning in the mirror depends just as well on how we read those traits in our remembered books, and how those books retell our story” (Manguel). Regardless of the evaluation, most critics considered the novel Eco’s most autobiographical. Though Yambo, the protagonist, loses his autobiographical memory, he is able to reconstruct his personal as well as a cultural memory through tracking his reading experiences. Though at times Eco allows the fog that permeates
Yambo’s childhood home to delude the reader, the novel makes it especially difficult to separate the protagonist of the story from its author who, throughout the entirety of his corpus, has played with the notion of blurring the lines between remembering and forgetting, the past and the present, the true and the false, and has continuously shaped his theories and narratives around his own reading experiences. Eco is a reader like any other reader and, according to Manguel, “[e]very reader, Eco seems to say, invents, up to a certain point, not only the books he reads but also his own character, and different readers, using identical material, will construct other characters, other memories of the same reading, other associations, other Queen Loanas” (Manguel). But the novel also expressed one of Eco’s deep underlying fears. In an article published in La Repubblica in January 2007 entitled “Vi racconto i miei incubi notturni,” Eco recounted his most frightening nightmares. Unlike the idyllic circumstances described in his essay “Un sogno” (2003), where, in an end of days scenario, Eco and several friends and family members are forced to revert to more traditional practices (dependence on the past) and memory and knowledge are obtained through verbal communication and books (reading), his nightmares involve forgetting:

The next morning there was nothing but a vague idea of what I had dreamed about. I was never able to hold on to the memory of my dreams. Today, in a more advanced age, I find it easier. I do not have another explanation except to say that I no longer sleep the deep sleep of my childhood. In the meantime, I am able to remember what I dreamed, even past dreams. And I like that.74

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74 My translation."La mattina successiva non restava che una vaga idea di quello che avevo sognato. Ma non riuscivo a tenere memoria dei miei sogni. Oggi, in età avanzata, mi risulta più facile. Non riesco a darmi altra spiegazione se non che non dormo più il sonno profondo e lungo dei bambini. Nel frattempo riesco a ricordare cosa ho sognato, anche i sogni del passato. E mi piace” (La Repubblica 2007).
Eco’s recurring nightmares and anxieties are similar in the sense that they all involve the fear of not only forgetting, but the fear of being lost or late as well. These anxieties, he admits, influenced several of his stories:

Nevertheless I must admit that sometimes my dreams have sometimes influenced my writing even if in very rare cases. In my novel *Foucault's Pendulum* I make the editor Jacopo Belbo experience one of my most fearful dreams: I find myself in an unknown city that in reality I believe I know very well. I know that if I turn right I arrive at a place that I like very much. The problem is that I no longer find it. Another dream inspired a chapter in my novel *The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana*. In that dream I live in a villa, I search for a room that I believe I know. But I am not able to find it. It was my favourite room, a space filled with wonderful antique furniture and interesting books. I know that it is at the end of a corridor. But there is an impenetrable wall. Something similar happens to the protagonist of the book, but breaking down the wall he finds the room. It is the room of his youth, in other words, Paradise.75

Writing, for Eco, is a way in which to control his fantasies: “When you have been writing for years, as in my case ranging from essays to novels to scientific treatises, you become at certain point a prisoner of this autonomously created situation from which it is impossible to escape. This is not all that bad because I love to write. It is a sort of dream. Only in this case, I have full control of my fantasy.”76

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76 My translation. “Quando si scrive da anni, come nel mio caso spaziando dai saggi ai romanzi ai trattati scientifici, si diventa ad un certo punto prigionieri di questa situazione autonomamente creata da cui è impossibile evadere. Il che non è così negativo, perché amo scrivere. È una sorta di sognio. Solo che in questo caso ho il pieno controllo della mia fantasia” (La Repubblica 2007).
love of writing with which he controls his dreams, but his love of reading as well, which shapes his writing as well as his self.
Chapter Two
The Second Phase I: Intertextuality and Hybridity

As previously mentioned, theories of intertextuality describe texts at one time in terms of simultaneity/correlation and at another in terms of transformation/opposition. On the one hand, these different concepts suggest a literary text that is a hybrid construction (Bakhtin): a text exists simultaneously with other texts; a text is made up of various genres, references, quotations. On the other hand, they point to the text as a process of metamorphosis: a text as a transformation, a rereading or rewriting of other texts. Caroline Walker Bynum, for instance, in *Metamorphosis and Identity*, maintains that the hybrid designation points to what the text *is* and metamorphosis points to what the text *does* (31). The concepts of the hybrid and hybridity can, however, account for both process (as in the Middle Ages) and product. This notion of hybridity is inherently necessary in order to produce and interpret texts. As we have seen, in his essay “Alcuni strumenti per capire: intertestualità, nomi,” Bernardelli asks: “What is Eco’s definition of intertextuality?” Eco does not theorize a concept of intertextuality until the late seventies with his publication, *Lector in fabula*, a treatise in large part about the role of the reader in generating meaning from a text. Intertextuality, for Eco, is a way in which readers can recognize meaning in a text, particularly through archetypes (*TIHR* 197). Whereas earlier theories are heavily reliant on the reader’s textual experiences in order to conceptualize a theory of intertextuality, Eco brings non-textual experiences into the intertextual debate by distinguishing between *sceneggiature comuni* (common frames)—stereotyped situations based

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1 My translation. “Ma qual è la definizione di intertestualità di Eco?” (199).
on normal everyday experiences--and sceneggiature intertestuali (intertextual frames)--stereotyped situations whose origins are found in textual tradition (LIF 79-84). The first is based more on cultural (both common and personal) experiences and the latter on the literary. Eco’s distinction between common and intertextual frames is not, however, explicitly directed solely towards the reader. An author, as a reader, shares these same experiences. In this way, the collaborative relationship between author-text-reader, advocated by Eco in Opera aperta, as we have seen, remains intact. But Eco contradicts this relationship when, in the Postille to Il nome della rosa, he alludes to the hybrid characteristics of a text by comparing it to a machine.

Though in the Postille, as we have seen, Eco maintains that a “narrator must not interpret. But he can tell why and how he wrote,”\(^2\) thus aligning himself with early theories of intertextuality, his claim that “a text is a machine for generating interpretations” (NOR 505),\(^3\) on one hand, supports the text’s relationship as both a hybrid construction and a process of metamorphosis and, on the other, contradicts his earlier views on the collaboration of author-text-reader. By implicitly eliminating the author as a figure of the Model Reader, Eco’s analogy only serves to describe a detached relationship between author, text and reader. His analogy of the text to a machine at once points to the text as hybrid construction--the text, like a machine, is made up of several parts (intertexts) which work simultaneously--and metamorphosis--the process of the text (interpretation) or the text’s transformation. According to this analogy, texts can generate a limitless number of transformations (through reading and writing) but the end

\(^2\) “È una macchina per generare interpretazioni” (PNDR 507).
\(^3\) “Un narratore non deve fornire interpretazioni della propria opera, altrimenti non avrebbe scritto un romanzo, che è una macchina per generare interpretazioni (PNDR 507).
result, the text, is always considered both distinct from and linked to a previous text. Eco’s mechanical analogy for the text does not take into account the figure who puts the machine together or, in other words, the author who constructs the text (through self-reflexive intertextuality) to be interpreted. By being silent about his own role as an author who reads or a Model Reader, Eco, whether consciously or unconsciously, contradicts his own work. In her essay, “A Novel, Which Is a Machine for Generating Interpretations: Umberto Eco and The Name of the Rose,” Elizabeth Dipple describes the inherent contradiction between what Eco’s analogy of the machine promotes and what it actually achieves. According to Dipple, the entire Postscript to The Name of the Rose is completely incongruous to Eco’s theories of interpretation which negate the author’s role:

For Eco, the reader must be ‘free.’ Although the author implants the signs and imagines the possibilities that the ‘Model Reader’ might pursue, the authorial task is essentially finished when the book is written [...]. Eco has repeatedly said that the author must not interpret. Indeed his efforts not to do so have been both stalwart and ironically disingenuous. When asked for the ultimate code that would transform the philosophical metaphysic of the novel into a statement, Eco claims that he doesn’t know what it is, or indeed what the novel is about, and he constantly throws the task of interpreting to the reader. Unfortunately, Eco quickly and it seems unconsciously broke his consistency with the rapid publication of a little explanatory book entitled Postscript to The Name of the Rose [...]. The resulting contamination of the reader’s freedom despite Eco’s claim to the contrary cannot be underestimated for almost every fact he gives us directs the reader in a predetermined way (Dipple 91).

As a result, the analogy of the text as a machine for interpretations actually results in a revealing of the limits of the text: “paradoxically, this novel has turned out decidedly not to be in any straightforward way a free ‘machine for generating interpretations,’ as its author claimed” (93). The comparison of the text to a machine is also contradictory when read in conjunction with his essay, “Casablanca: Cult Movies and Intertextual Collage,” in Travels in
Hyperreality (1986), published only four years after Il nome della rosa and only a year after the Postille, where he again advocates the collaboration of common and intertextual frames, experiences shared by both author and reader.

In his essay on “Casablanca” Eco elaborates on the necessity of the collaboration of both common and intertextual frames that describe, on the one hand, stereotyped everyday events and, on the other, stereotyped textual events (archetypes) that are easily decipherable. He adds, since he is dealing with film, a third, visual frame in this essay that he calls the “magic frame” (TIHR 200) which he defines as “those frames that, when they appear in a movie can be separated from the whole, transform the movie into cult object” (200). Eco’s threefold approach to the topic of intertextuality is in accordance with previous theories, indeed is a bringing together of those theories, and yet also points to a more personal and cultural level. Casablanca, “a hodgepodge of sensational scenes strung together implausibly” (197), like those references and quotations in a literary text (as argued by Kristeva and Barthes), becomes a cult object only when it is broken down and fragmented into smaller scenes (as suggested by Genette and Riffaterre): “to transform a work into a cult object one must be able to break, dislocate, unhinge it” (198). Though Eco does not directly acknowledge the author’s role in textual (or visual) production, his inclusion of the common cultural frame in Lector in fabula does not exclude the author from those everyday experiences that also form the foundation of a work. In opposition to theories of intertextuality that attempt to negate the author’s role altogether, Eco suggests that as readers and viewers we must suspend our belief that there exists an authorial figure behind the work. A movie (like a text) should “display not one central idea but many [...] its addressee must suspect it is not true that works are created by their
authors. Works are created by works, texts are created by texts, all together they speak independently of the intention of their authors” (199). That the addressee must pretend that the author had nothing to do with the work’s production contradicts Eco’s notion of *il lettore modello*. Often, an author’s writing skills and narrative style might help the addressee forget that an authorial figure exists behind the work, but the Model Reader knows that an author, influenced by personal (common), intertextual (literary) and cultural frames, whether in film or in literature, writes or creates the work. Moreover, taking a work that is an “intertextual collage,” a “hodgepodge of sensational scenes,” and then ‘breaking,’ ‘dislocating,’ and ‘unhinging,’ it, on the one hand, does, as Eco claims, make certain scenes more memorable (thus becoming cult objects), and on the other, makes it easier for the addressee to decipher the authorial figure who has fewer places to hide. The common, intertextual and cultural frames must, like the relationship between author, text and reader, work in collaboration with each other in order encourage the unity of the text as the product of a process of metamorphosis that results in hybridization.

Cultural notions of hybridity that focus on process rather than product can easily be adapted to a theory of texts and intertextuality as hybrid product (one created by an author, as we shall see) since culture, like a text, is made up of disparate elements that exist both simultaneously and in contradiction to each other. In *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity* (1995), a text which focuses on the notion of hybridity in social issues such as migration, economics and mass communication, Néstor García Canclini advocates a democratic process of hybridization that allows conflicting elements in various cultures to work together freely. His concept of hybridity follows that of François Laplantine and Alexis Nouss,
for whom, in *Le métissage*, hybridity is simultaneously “not only fusion, cohesion, osmosis but confrontation and dialogue’” (xxxii). Rather than identifying hybridity through descriptions of doubleness and contrast, in other words, of elements that cannot coexist in the same space, Canclini considers hybridization as a process of “intersection and transaction” (xxxii) where “policies of hybridization can work democratically with differences” (xxxii). Similarly, Peter Burke, in *Cultural Hybridity*, has no difficulty in defining a concept of hybridity that merges elements together rather than keeping them apart: “examples of cultural hybridity are to be found everywhere, not only all over the globe but in most domains of culture – syncretic religions, eclectic philosophies, mixed languages and cuisines, and hybrid styles in architecture, literature or music. It would be unwise to assume that the term ‘hybridity’ has the exact same meaning in all cases” (13). Instead, he posits a theory of hybridity that involves the three main elements that define a culture: artifacts, practices and people (13). Marwan Kraidy, in *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization*, also notes the risk of a one-dimensional view of hybridity: “Hybridity is a risky notion. It comes without guarantees. Rather than a single idea or unitary concept, hybridity is an association of ideas, concepts and themes that at once reinforce and contradict each other” (vi). Kraidy, like Canclini, suggests a process of hybridization where the purpose would be to find a way “to integrate different types of hybridity in a framework that makes connections between these types both intelligible and usable” (vi). When applied to a theory of the text, this process of hybridization can also include the ‘intersection’ and ‘transaction’ of the authorial figure and his or her own (cultural) experiences in the creation and the reader’s interpretation of texts.
Though in his earlier novels intertextuality becomes part of a conscious game (on the author’s part) to entrap his reader within an infinite number of intertexts, with his most recent novels, *Baudolino*, *La misteriosa fiamma della regina Loana* and *Il cimitero di Praga*, it is clear that Eco has gone beyond simply playing with the reader. In his essay, “Biblical Studies and Intertextuality: Should the Work of Genette and Eco Broaden our Horizons?”, Peter Philips explains that in his recent work on translation, *Mouse or Rat: Translation or Negotiation*, Eco no longer considers intertextuality only as a mode of entrapping his readers; rather, intertextuality “signals a text’s integration within a wider cultural setting, with a specific cultural identity” (10). Furthermore, in his essay “Borges e la mia angoscia dell’influenza,” it is evident that Eco simultaneously plays the dual role of author and reader, since authors can be influenced by a multitude of texts which they might have read in the (recent) past. In this manner, Eco is able to question his own influences, wondering whether intertextuality is a conscious or unconscious process. With his most recent novels Eco has, consciously or unconsciously, provided answers to these questions by including his own life experiences and imaginings as possible influences in the creation and interpretation of his texts. By doing so, Eco has redefined intertextuality to include the author (himself). In this manner, the initial formalist definition of a literary text as a hybrid construction necessarily falls short, since it does not include the authorial figure and his or her (reading) experiences in the mix. In purely practical and logical terms, without this authorial ingredient, there would be no text to speak of in the first place. By adapting Canclini’s designation of hybridization as process, we can see that intertextuality can democratically interact with otherwise conflicting elements, including the author.
By redefining intertextuality as a hybrid process as well as product, we can see how an author writes a text based on his or her own encyclopedic knowledge, that comprises personal, cultural and reading experiences, and that works in conjunction with the reader’s own encyclopedic knowledge, also comprised of personal, cultural and reading experiences. In other words, an author creates a text that is both intertextual and intratextual, combining personal references with various literary genres, allusions and quotations, either consciously or unconsciously, and as such, it exists simultaneously with other texts. Though the text is transformed and undergoes a process of metamorphosis when it is read, the end result, either through a reader’s interpretation (that will not ignore the author’s presence within the text), or an author’s rewriting, is always participating in the process of hybridization. In this way, intertextuality can succeed in unifying the text, allowing us to revisit the notion put forward by Eco in *Opera aperta* of a work being a collaboration between author, text and reader. Eco’s essay on Yuri Lotman, “Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture,” in *Reading Eco: An Anthology*, reveals that he too was already aware in the sixties of a concept of hybrid culture and semiotics: “Even in the [s]ixties, Lotman understood clearly that the multiplicity of codes in a given culture gives rise to contrast and hybrids, or ‘creolizations’” (*Reading Eco* 58). In relation to texts, this would entail the co-existence of varying elements, including but not limited to genres, references, allusions and quotations, as well as codes and models, all necessarily unified in order to create or construct a text. According to Eco, “Lotman was already considering [thirty years before] the concept of the text as unity” (58) which included, along with the above aforementioned elements, the role of the author.
What is striking about the whole notion of intertextuality is that for decades we have come to believe that the concept has been responsible for the murder of the author, or at least of any authoritative conception of the author. This is because, thus far, the theory of intertextuality has been limited to formal and hermeneutic dimensions (the text and the reader). It has not been interested in exploring or explaining the manner in which intertextuality functions as a meaningful way of access to the author as manifested in the work. In other words, Barthes’s “death of the author” has short-circuited a full theoretical investigation of the phenomenon of intertextuality; in effect, the only death that has occurred here is the death of critical thinking about authorial issues. Intertextuality could be opened up to include not only the reader’s interpretations but the author’s as well, resulting in a conception of an authorial self that has less to do with intention than with experience -- of language and culture, but also of personal elements and memory. As such, intertextuality, as a hybrid theory and process, does not require ‘the death of the author.’ It can instead offer clues to the author’s identity. By ignoring the possible relevance of the authorial figure in the interpretation of texts, both Kristeva and Barthes (among others) neglect the opportunity to fully theorize a concept of intertextuality that also takes into consideration those conscious quotations and references that derive explicitly from the author and his or her cultural background.

In *Sulla letteratura* Eco devotes two essays to the topic of intertextuality: “Borges e la mia angoscia dell’influenza,” as we have just seen, and “Ironia intertestuale e livelli di lettura.” In the first essay Eco discusses the difference between Borgesian intertexts and Borgesian influence, adding to the triad relationship he had established in *Limits of Interpretation* of
intentio auctoris, intentio operis, and intentio lectoris, the concept of an “intentio intertextualis” (OL 121). Eco suggests that there are three levels at which such intention worked for him:

1) the cases where I was fully conscious of Borgesian influence; 2) the cases where I was not aware of it, but subsequently readers [...] forced me to recognize that Borges had influenced me unconsciously; 3) the cases where, without adopting a triangle based on preceding sources and the universe of intertextuality, we are led to consider as straight two-way influence cases of three-way influence – namely, the debts Borges owed to the universe of culture, so that we cannot attribute to Borges what he always proudly declared he took from culture (OL 121).

In this way, Eco distinguishes between a conscious, direct intertextuality (the cases where he was fully aware of Borgesian influence); unconscious intertextuality (the cases where he was not aware but was forced by his readers to confront the intertexts); and cultural intertextuality (the cases where the author was indebted to culture). Thus, Eco’s labels of conscious and unconscious intertextuality also take into account Borges’ own influences or (reading) experiences within his own culture. As a result, intertextuality, for Eco, goes beyond citation, coding and (re)iterations; it is also a cultural phenomenon. A possible fifth level of intention is what I have been calling “self-reflexive intertextuality”: just as an author is influenced by culture in general, he or she is also influenced by his or her own personal experiences within that culture. The two are interrelated.

Eco’s essay offers a multi-dimensional concept of intertextuality that promotes the simultaneity of both conscious and unconscious intertextuality and not only the role of the

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4“1) i casi in cui ero ben cosciente dell’influenza borgesiana; 2) i casi in cui non ne ero cosciente ma poi i lettori [...] mi hanno costretto a riconoscere che Borges mi aveva influenzato in modo inconscio; 3) i casi in cui, non triangolando su fonti precedenti e sull’universo dell’intertestualità, si è indotti a considerare come influenza diadica casi di influenza triadica e che sono i debiti che Borges aveva con l’universo della cultura, così che non si può attribuire certe volte a Borges quello che orgogliosamente ha sempre dichiarato di avere preso dalla cultura” (SL 131).
author who utilizes intertextuality to construct the world of his or her text but also the role of
the world or culture within which the author is both consciously and unconsciously being
influenced. This is why Eco cannot specify in “Come scrivo” a precise set of rules for writing:
“There is no set of rules,” he says, “or rather, there are many varied and flexible rules; and
there is no hot magma of inspiration. But it is true that there is a sort of initial idea and that
there are very precise phases in a process that develops only gradually” (OL 308).5 These
seminal ideas that Eco utilizes as the starting point of his texts usually derive from a personal
experience or memory and are not easily detectable to readers. But detection, according to
Eco, is the responsibility of the Model Reader. In “Ironia intertestuale e livelli di lettura,” Eco
defines a concept of intertextual irony that is not strictly a form of irony but more a way to
transform what Eco calls the naive reader into a reader who can detect a second sense or
meaning within the text:

And lastly, not even the most naïve of readers can pass through the meshes of
the text without entertaining the suspicion that sometimes (or often) it refers to
something beyond itself. Here one sees then that the intertextual irony not only
is not a ‘conventio ad excludendum,’ but a provocation and invitation to include,
such that it can gradually transform the naïve reader into a reader who begins to
sense the perfume of so many other texts that have preceded the one he is
reading (OL 235).6

5 “Non c’è la regola, ovvero ce ne sono molte, variabili e flessibili; e non c’è il magma dell’ispirazione. Ma è vero
che c’è una sorta di idea iniziale e ci sono delle fasi molto precise di un processo che si sviluppa a poco a poco” (SL
330).
6 “E infine, neppure il più ingenuo dei lettori può passare attraverso le maglie del testo senza avvertire il sospetto
che talora (o spesso) esso rinvii fuori di sé. Dove si vede allora che l’ironia intertestuale non solo non è conventio
ad excludendum ma provocazione e invito all’inclusione, tale da poter trasformare, a poco a poco, anche il lettore
ingenuo in un lettore che incomincia a percepire il profumo di tanti altri testi che hanno preceduto quello che sta
leggendo” (SL 251).
The second sense of ironic intertextuality points to a technique that is, according to Eco, “horizontal, labyrinthine, convoluted, and infinite, running from text to text – with no other promise than the continual murmuring of intertextuality” (*OL* 235)\(^7\) which unites the reader and the author in a common purpose: “but it is certainly true that the text, to the extent that it is tormented, asks its reader to be aware of the rumble of intertextuality that has preceded our torments, and that author and reader also know how to unite in the mystic body of worldly Scriptures” (*OL* 235).\(^8\) In this way, it is clear that, unlike early theories of intertextuality that excluded the author’s role from the interpretation of texts, Eco’s theory, much like that in *Opera aperta*, is dependent on the three-fold or co-operative relationship of author-reader-text; in order for a text (or work of art) to be considered an “opera in movimento,” the three must exist simultaneously. This is clearly in contradiction to some of the early conceptions of intertextuality that ignored the author altogether.

Various personal “moments of upheaval” (*OL* 308)\(^9\) in not only *Il nome della rosa*, but *Il pendolo di Foucault* and *L’isola del giorno prima*, move Eco’s novels beyond the realm of simple linguistic creations; rather, each of his works offers a different constructed world, though they are all part of Eco’s own personal world. Eco himself maintains that a novel “is not just a linguistic phenomenon”; rather, he continues, “a novel (like the narratives we construct everyday) [...] uses a plane of expression [...] to convey a plane of content, namely the narrated

\(^7\) “Il sovrasenso intertestuale è orizzontale, labirintico, rizomatico e infinito, di testo in testo – non essendoci altra promessa se non il mormorio continuo dell’intertestualità” (*SL* 252).

\(^8\) “Ma certamente, per tanto che il testo sia tormentato, chiede che il lettore abbia anche presente il brusio dell’intertestualità che ha preceduto i nostri tormenti, e che autore e lettore sappiano anche unirsi nel corpo mistico delle Scritture mondane” (*SL* 252).

\(^9\) “momento di inquietudine” (*PDG* 331).
facts. But on the level of content itself we can identify two more sides, story and plot” (OL 311). With his fourth novel, Eco exempts *Baudolino* from several of his characteristic writing rules. This novel contradicts two main principles of Eco’s own self-proclaimed writing practice: that the novel must begin from a seminal idea and the style is to be determined by the narrative. As we have seen, Eco admits that with *Baudolino* there were several seminal ideas from which to start, but they were either abandoned altogether or incorporated into the plot events. I will argue that Eco’s novels, looked at in a progressive manner and culminating in *Baudolino*, and even more so in *La misteriosa fiamma della regina Loana*, offer yet another form of intertextuality, one that incorporates the author’s reading and personal experiences -- in other words, what I am calling a self-reflexive intertextuality. Taking into consideration the fact that intertextuality is comprised not only of references, quotations and reiterations from other texts but also of echoes of the author’s own experiences with those texts and their culture of origin, as well as the culture in which the author is living, and the fact that these elements exist simultaneously within a text, provides the possibility of labeling Eco’s texts as processes (and products) of hybridization. In “Come scrivo” Eco describes this hybridized writing process as the way in which he determines the style of his narratives. In other words, it is how he writes his novels.

The third stage of Eco’s writing process, a combination of both the first (seminal idea) and second (constructing a world) phases, is contingent on Eco’s skills as a writer, something he often parodies in his novels. In *Il nome della rosa*, for example, the narrative style of Adso,

10 “Ma al livello del contenuto possiamo individuare ancora due altri versanti, la fabula e l’intreccio” (*PDG* 335).
Eco’s protagonist who writes a manuscript based on his memories as a young monk investigating murders in a library, is an accurate depiction of a fourteenth-century monk’s own writing style: “the medieval chronicler, precise, faithful, naïve and amazed, flat when necessary” (OL 316). Given the inherent dissonance in his next novel, style in _Il pendolo di Foucault_ is dependent on “a plurality of language” (OL 317) and the role of the writer is relegated to the unpredictable interpretations of the computer (Abulafia). The baroque setting in _L’isola del giorno prima_ leaves Eco no choice but to have his protagonist write in a baroque manner. With _Baudolino_, Eco must invent a language (Fraschetta) in order for his protagonist to be able to narrate. And since the protagonist, Yambo, in _La misteriosa fiamma della regina Loana_, no longer has any personal memories, Eco must enable his character to adopt a more commemorative narrative style which allows him to reconstruct his life story through the traces of cultural memories. It is evident that each of Eco’s novels adopts a different basic narrative style, but within each of his novels, various styles are nonetheless able to coexist. This suggests an undercurrent of stylistic hybridity in Eco’s novels that supports the consistent collaboration of author, text and reader (through idea, world, and style).

In terms of a general theory of intertextuality, equated in this chapter with a process of hybridization, every text is a rereading and rewriting of other texts and each product or interpretation consistently participates in a process of hybridization that results in a transformation of the text(s) that precede it. This same process can be attributed to the phases of Eco’s own writing. Each phase, from seminal idea to the construction of a world to the

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11 “Del cronista medievale, preciso, fedele, ingenuo, stupito, all’occorrenza piatto” (SL 340).
12 “E invece nel _Pendolo_ doveva entrare in gioco la pluralità di linguaggio” (SL 340).
development of style, comes to fruition upon completion of the text—a process of hybridization based on the components of self-reflexive intertextuality—when the reader can participate in the process. This process of hybridization is inherent in Eco’s threefold writing process: idea, world, and style. The succession of these three phases in order to produce a text brings about the simultaneous interplay of memory where the idea originates (discussed in the following chapter) and both the intratextual and intertextual worlds which encompass all of Eco’s encyclopedic knowledge and subsequently determine his narrative style(s). Eco’s narratives focus on three different levels of hybridity: the first is characterized by representations of the monstrous; the second is represented through themes of the library, the computer, the diary, the letter and memory; and the third is demonstrated through a plurality, particularly in terms of language.

When constructing the world of the Middle Ages in *Il nome della rosa* and then in *Baudolino*, Eco distinguishes between the medieval notion of hybridity, which focused on the physical and the consequent moral perversions, and the more contemporary notions of hybridity, which see hybridization as a means of integration and transaction. The theories of Claude Kappler and Caroline Walker Bynum support the medieval notion of hybridity that is dependent on characteristics of doubleness or mixed elements. Kappler, in *Monstres, démons et merveilles à la fin du Moyen Âge*, points to the unfortunate generalization of the definition of hybrid: “we designate under the general term of hybridization all those beings that are made up of ridiculous, mixed elements that break from normal physical attributes.”13 According to

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13My translation. “Nous désignerons sous ce terme général d’hybridation tous les êtres qui sont constitués d’éléments antimasque disparates qui rompent l’aspect physique normal” (Kappler 147).
Kappler, generalizing the notion of hybridity to include only “beings” (in nature) suggests a medieval limitation to only a biological definition of hybridization. Kappler’s definition, however, goes beyond the biological to include other categories, including (literary) genres: “We consider hybrid a crossbreeding of differing subjects at least by a variety. Those hybridizations between varieties and different species are virtually common, those between genres extremely rare.” In referring to hybridity as a process of crossbreeding, Kappler implies that hybrids undergo a process of change or metamorphosis.

In *Metamorphosis and Identity*, Bynum explains the devotion twelfth-century writers have for the subject of change, differentiating between metamorphosis and hybridity: “the contrast is that metamorphosis is process and hybrid is not” (30). Working with twelfth-century notions of hybridity, especially those of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Bynum considers hybrids as purely visual forms that can never experience a process of change and whose existence is restricted to revealing the coexistence of contradictory elements: “[a hybrid is] a double being, an entity of two parts, two or more. It is an inherently visual form. We see what a hybrid is; it is a way of making two-ness, and the simultaneity of two-ness, visible [...]. Forever in the present, the one plus one that we find together in the hybrid must be in conversation with each other; each is a comment on the other” (30). Thus, hybrids reveal difference and multiplicity and “force contradictory and incompatible categories to coexist” (31). Bynum’s definition of medieval hybridity depicts a certain sterile characteristic of a hybrid that can never

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participate in a natural process of change or evolution. As such, medieval notions of hybridity reveal a tendency to see hybrids as physical aberrations. Medieval literature, particularly Dante’s *Commedia*, further reveals a propensity to employ hybrids as allegories for moral corruption. Though for Dante, hybridity is a form of *contrapasso* or divine justice, Eco does not have a religious or moral code in mind. Whereas Dante is offering a concept of hybridity as physical and moral, Eco utilizes hybridity as a metaphor for texts.

*Il nome della rosa* and *Baudolino* are in a way a pastiche of modern perceptions of the Middle Ages. The reader is greeted with many stock figures of the time, among them theologians, saints, historians, poets, crusaders, forgers, liars and murderers, among other literary and historical characters of the medieval world, all of which, as Terry Jones explains in his *Medieval Lives*, have become stereotypical personages of that time period. It is for this reason that *Baudolino* is among the most “ludico” of Eco’s novels: these stereotypes are easily accessible to a wide audience and give the historical novel a paradoxical sense of timelessness. Jones clarifies that this ‘accessibility’ of knowledge of the Middle Ages through stereotype is a result of the Romantics’ attempt to mythologize otherwise very common, daily medieval events: “The Romantics of the late nineteenth century began to be intrigued by what they saw as the mysterious glow and gloom of the Middle Ages and, dressed in interesting flowing robes and mocked up suits of armour, went exploring there with candles, [coming] back with tales and paintings of a magical fairy-tale world” (Jones 13). This method of utilizing stereotype to eradicate individual medieval identities, described in detail, explains Jones, in Jacob Burckhardt’s treatise *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860), was helpful in the way that it provided clear answers to our questions about the medieval world:
In this fantasy land there was no sense of historical change; the medieval world was essentially timeless. The lack of individual identity which Burckhardt had claimed as a mark of medievalism meant it was convenient and helpful to understand this place in terms of stereotypes. And those stereotypes have become standardized and generalized to the point where everyone now ‘knows’ what it was like to live in medieval England (Jones 13).

The reality is that this modern version of the Middle Ages never existed: “an unholy alliance of nineteenth-century novelists and painters with twentieth-century movie-makers has created a period of history that never existed” (Jones 13). In Il nome della rosa and Baudolino these types of creations include the medieval notion of hybridity. In Eco’s Middle Ages, through irony and parody, the hybrid is also a stereotype.

The stereotypes of the Middle Ages that Jones distinguishes are, in part, responsible for the initial success of Il nome della rosa and later Baudolino since, throughout Eco’s complicated narratives, many readers (not all Model Readers) were able to recognize and thus derive meaning from them. In this way, Eco’s first novel becomes what he would later describe in his essay on “Casablanca” a cult object (THR 198). Notwithstanding the stereotypical or ‘archetypal’ (THR 200) level of the text, the novel’s intertextual and intratextual undercurrent, rooted within the cyclical form of both a cultural and personal history, contributed much to the novel’s success since, despite the surface medieval elements in this novel, Eco was able implicitly, through fiction, to pose new theoretical questions about intertextuality proper and ask whether the textualized process of intertextuality is able to provide a conception of an authorial figure and the author himself. Capozzi, in Lettura, interpretazione, intertestualità: esercizi di commento a Il nome della rosa, recognizes the novel’s success in precisely the multi-dimensional way it is written and read: on the one hand, in terms of intertextual ability, “the
great success of the novel [...] is the genius product of someone who knew how to construct a narrative capable of generating as many interpretations as readers, as a result of all their diverse abilities [...] but also of their knowledge of theoretical notions like those of intertextuality”; on the other, in terms of Eco’s ability to put his own theories into practice in his own narrative work: “The Name of the Rose presents itself as the buildup of essays and of Eco’s scientific works. [...] In brief, Eco’s scientific essays and narrative work demonstrate his ability to be able to put theory into practice.” The process of metamorphosis in, but not limited to, Il nome della rosa, which transforms and puts into practice Eco’s scientific and theoretical work, proves successful because it has its roots in a medieval model that is easily identifiable.

Readers, particularly Eco’s Italian readers, of Il nome della rosa and Eco’s subsequent novels, depending on their intertextual competence, would have immediately been able to decipher the fact that the medieval world model Eco adheres to is the one articulated by Dante. In his article “Sogno un film con Benigni nell’Inferno di Dante,” later published in Benigni’s Il mio Dante (2008), Eco praises Benigni’s successful ability to recite Dante accurately, as it would have been recited in the fourteenth century:

Still speaking an Italian of the fourteenth century today would not be a good sign, but here is Benigni as consolation who can read us Dante because Dante is linguistically current. Then, he is able in a way that from his tone, emphasis, passion (to say nothing of his comments that precede his recitation) even the lexically obsolete terms, or the bold syntactic constructions can be understood

15 My translation. “La grande fortuna del romanzo [...] è il frutto geniale di chi ha saputo costruire una narrazione capace di generare tante interpretazioni quanti sono i suoi lettori, in ragione di tutte le loro diverse competenze [...] ma anche della loro conoscenza di nozioni teoriche come quelle di intertestualità” (Capozzi 17).

16 My translation. “Il nome della rosa si presenta nell’insieme il rovescio dei saggi e dei lavori scientifici di Eco [...]. In breve, nei saggi scientifici e nell’opera narrativa, Eco dimostra la sua capacità di saper completare la teoria con la pratica” (Capozzi 18).
The second aspect of the success of Benigni’s Dante: he recites it, and with a Tuscan accent. In other words, he does exactly what Dante’s contemporaries did and what Dante wanted done.17

The subsequent commentary Benigni provides during each recitation offers his audience, many of who may have never read Dante, impassioned explanations to which they can easily relate. Eco is so impressed with Benigni’s faithful portrayal of Dante’s text, made culturally relevant in contemporary times by a culturally relevant actor, that he dreams of making a movie with him: “Better to imagine a film in which not only Roberto Benigni imitates the voyage of his Teacher, circle by circle, sky by sky [...]. I can play Virgil [...]. I have the title already: The Other Life Is Beautiful.”18

Eco’s article may praise Benigni’s success with Dante, but we cannot overlook the fact that before Benigni took on the oral challenge of reciting Dante, Eco had already been providing a Dante narrative in his own literary works. In other words, some readers immediately began to see the relationship between Eco’s novel(s) and Dante’s Commedia. This is especially true in regard to the collaboration between intertextual and intratextual elements and to what Guy P. Raffa, in his essay “Eco and Calvino Reading Dante,” considers a movement toward interdisciplinarity:

The different responses of Eco and Calvino, a variation on the play of differences between Dante and Aquinas, reveal that even in a cultural moment favourable toward multi and inter-disciplinarity at least two general directions coexist: an

17 My translation. “Sarà che parlare ancora l’italiano del Trecento non sia un buon segno, ma come consolazione ecco Benigni, il quale ci può leggere Dante perché Dante è linguisticamente attuale. Poi lui fa in modo che dal tono, dall’ enfasi, dalla passione (per non dire dei commenti che fa precedere alla recitazione) si capiscano anche i termini lessicalmente desueti, o le costruzioni sintattiche troppo ardite [...]Secondo aspetto della fortuna del Dante di Benigni: lo recita, e con accento toscano. Cioè fa esattamente quello che facevano i contemporanei di Dante e che Dante voleva che facessero” (5-6).
18 My translation. “Meglio immaginare un film in cui non solo Roberto Benigni rifaccia il viaggio del suo Maestro, girone per girone e cielo per cielo [...]. Virgilio potrei farlo io [...]. Ho già il titolo, L’altra vita è bella”(11).
encounter with multiple discourses of knowledge [...] and a belief that new epistemological configurations are possible only by allowing for the interplay – and even contamination of different lines of inquiry (199).

By borrowing Dante’s text as one of the many models of his own, Eco is able to restore the Commedia as a relevant text in contemporary times. Amilcare Iannucci, in his introduction to Dante, believes that the reason that Dante’s poem continues to be “contemporary” and “continue[s] to engage us” (xiii) is as a result of the poem’s “distinctive textual characteristics” (xiii). In relation to textual theories of open and closed texts, like those posited by Eco in Opera aperta and Lector in Fabula, Iannucci maintains that the contemporary success of Dante’s poem is due to its ability to generate meaning through both open and closed levels of textuality:

The Commedia generates a number of possible readings, all of which flow naturally from the literal narrative, which is easily accessible and complete. In this light, the Commedia is neither an open or closed text; it is neither writerly nor readerly. An open or writerly text, at least as Eco (Opera aperta) and Barthes (S/Z) originally theorized it, is multiple, difficult, and self-reflective, designed for the refined reader who delights in discovering its complex discursive strategies and consequently in participating in a writerly way in the production of meaning. On the other hand, a closed or readerly text is one which is easily accessible and thus has wide popular appeal [...]. Although the Commedia exhibits many of the qualities of an open or writerly text, it also ‘reads’ easily and succeeds in communicating meaning and giving pleasure even to those unable to appreciate the nature of its elaborate allegorical and metaliterary discourse (xiii).

In this way, Dante’s text stands as an exemplar to Eco’s whose own text finds similar success in its simultaneous engagement of both ‘writerly’ and ‘readerly’ concepts of textuality.

Following both Kappler and Bynum’s definition of medieval hybridity, Dante’s and subsequently Eco’s texts can be defined as hybrid since they combine otherwise contradictory elements. Both texts are heavily intertextual, intratextual and self-reflexively intertextual; both texts are dependent on mixing references from other sources – in Dante’s case, from Virgil and
Ovid – and from their own work. As a result, their works are self-reflective since through their blended process the reader is able to determine information about the author, his reading experiences and how these determine his narratives. Both Dante and Eco, in his first novel, describe a relationship between teacher and student where the student eventually surpasses the teacher in knowledge; the protagonists in both works are inevitably linked with their creator and both deal thematically with hybridity on a physical level. But whereas Dante uses his Ovidian and Virgilian intertexts, telling of physical hybridity as allegories of moral corruption, Eco uses Dante (and his sources) not to represent deviant behaviour but as a way to determine the hybrid as stereotype or metaphor of the Middle Ages.

Sven Ekblad’s *Studi sui sottofondi strutturali nel “nome della rosa,”* a study of the relationship between Dante’s *Commedia* and Eco’s *Il nome della rosa,* provides an in-depth account of Eco’s use of Dante’s work as a foundational intertext in the creation of his novel. Ekblad’s focus, however, is on temporal analogies and the rapport between teacher and student: Dante and Virgil, and Adso and William. Though Eco does not directly theorize a concept of hybridity, medieval or contemporary, it is a consistent undercurrent in most of his works, especially those concerning the Middle Ages. An excerpt from Bernard of Clairvaux’s twelfth-century *Apologia ad Guillelmum,* in Eco’s first major publication, his doctoral thesis on *Il problema estetico in Tommaso d’Aquino,* which describes Clairvaux’s abhorrence of the Cluny style of church architecture that Abbot Suger had adopted for the renovation of St. Denis, describes the dangers of an architecture which depicts monsters, hybrid and deformed beings:

But in the cloister under the eyes of the Brethren who read there, what profit is there in those ridiculous monsters, in that marvelous and deformed comeliness, that comely deformity? To what purpose are those unclean apes, those fierce
lions, those monstrous centaurs, those half-men, those striped tigers, those fighting knights, those hunters winding their horns? Many bodies are there seen under one head, or again, many heads to a single body. Here is a four-footed beast with a serpent’s tail; there, a fish with a beast’s head [...] In short, so many and so marvelous are the varieties of divers shapes on every hand, that we are more tempted to read in the marble than in our books, and to spend the whole day in wondering of these things rather than in meditating the law of God. For God (AOTA 9).19

This episode from Eco’s first theoretical work is revisited in his first narrative work through Adso’s description on the first day of his admiration of the abbey’s portal and the subsequent vision it inspired:

When our eyes had finally grown accustomed to the gloom, the silent speech of the carved stone, accessible as it immediately was to the gaze and the imagination of anyone (for images are the literature of the layman), dazzled my eyes and plunged me into a vision that even today my tongue can hardly describe. I saw a throne in the sky and a figure seated on the throne [...]. Before the throne, before the feet of the Seated One, a sea of crystal flowed, and around the Seated One, beside and above the throne, I saw four awful creatures – awful for me as I looked at them (NOR 41).20

What follows this vision, greatly inspired by Ezekiel’s vision of the sacred god-head in the Old Testament (1:25) and reintroduced later in Baudolino as Baudolino’s vision of the temple of

20 “Abituati finalmente gli occhi alla penombra, di colpo il muto discorso della pietra istoriata, accessibile com’era immediatamente alla vista e alla fantasia di chiunque (perché pictura est laicorum literatura), folgorò il mio sguardo e mi immerse in una visione di cui ancor oggi astento la mia lingua riesce a dire. Vidi un trono posto nel cielo e uno assiso sul trono [...]. Davanti all’trono, sotti i piedi dell’Assiso, scorreva un mare di cristallo e intorno all’Assiso, intorno al trono e sopra il trono, quattro animali terribili – vidi – terribili per me che li guardavo rapito” (NDR 49).
Prester John, is an encyclopedic account of creatures, divine and demonic, most double or triple-natured, which essentially summarizes the entire hybrid debate of the Middle Ages:

And as I withdrew my fascinated eye from that enigmatic polyphony of sainted limbs and infernal sinews, I saw beside the door, under the deep arches [...] other visions horrible to contemplate, and justified in that place only by their parabolic and allegorical power or by the moral lesson that they conveyed. I saw a voluptuous woman, naked and fleshless, gnawed by foul toads, sucked by serpents [...]. And around them, mingled with them, above their heads and below their feet, more faces and more limbs [...] and all the animals of Satan’s bestiary [,] fauns, beings of double sex, brutes with six-fingered hands, sirens, hippocentours, gorgons, harpies, incubi, dragopods, minotaurs, lynxes, pards, chimeras, cynophales [,] two-headed creatures [...]. The whole population of the nether world seemed to have gathered to act as vestibule, dark forest, desperate wasteland of exclusion (44). 21

The vision, a medieval enumeration of multi-formed beings, provides a catalogue of infernal creatures as described in the Liber monstrorum. According to Andy Orchard in Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf Manuscript, that text, “far from being a casual compendium of the bizarre and outlandish, is in fact the rather subtle and sophisticated work of a learned author who drew on and cunningly manipulated a number of disparate texts to offer a cogent (if uncomforting) view of the monstrous in nature” (87). This highly intertextual manuscript was heavily reliant on “the celebrated and successively dependent accounts of (mostly human) monsters by Pliny, Augustine and Isidore, that all provided useful material for the author of the Liber monstrorum who managed to combine aspects of all their approaches”

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21 “E mentre ritraevo l’occhio affascinato da quella enigmatica polifonia di membra sante e di lacerti infernali, vidi al lato del portale, e sotto le arcate profonde [...] altri visioni orribili a vedersi, e giustificate in quel luogo solo per la loro forza parabolica e allegorica o per l’insegnamento morale che trasmettevano: e vidi una femina lussuriosa, nuda e scarificata, rosa da rospi immondi, succhiata da serpenti [...]. E intorno a loro, frammisti a loro, sopra di loro e sotto i loro piedi, altri volti e altre membra [...] e tutti gli animali del bestiario di Satana [,] fauni, esseri dal doppio sesso, bruti dalle mani con sei dita, sirene, ippocentauri, gorgoni, arpie, incubi, dracontopodi, minotauri, linci, pardi, cenopri dal muso di cane che lanciavano fuoco dalle narici [...]. L’intera popolazione degli inferi pareva essersi data convegno per far da vestibolo, selva oscura, landa disperata dell’esclusione (NDR 51-52).
Linking Eco with the author of the *Liber monstorum* proves to be a relatively simple task, as both authors clearly use intertextuality as a way to question the truth. In the *Liber monstorum* the author “carefully distances himself from the source material” often “sniping at the very sources on which he depends” (Orchard 90). In his novels, Eco creates doubt about the veracity of his narratives by consistently (re)writing the story of a possible lost text within other texts. Adso’s vision in *Il nome della rosa* is more than just an enumeration of multi-formed beings. Like the *Liber monstorum* it is also an enumeration of sources or intertexts that describe multi-formed beings stemming from Pliny’s *Historia Naturalis*, Isidore’s *Etymologiae* and Augustine’s *De civitate dei* (XXVI, viii). Eco’s narrative also has Dante as an intertext, since Adso’s vision provides a catalogue of infernal creatures that feature in the *Inferno* as well.

Eco’s designation, in the original Italian, of this infernal gathering of hybrid beings as a “selva oscura” immediately points to the first canto of Dante’s *Inferno* wherein the Dante-protagonist meets the hybrid “lonza” (canto I, vv. ii). Ekblad similarly equates Adso’s vision of the “awful creatures” with the three beasts Dante-protagonist encounters in the dark wood (*Studi* 113), and further links the ‘selva’ with the labyrinth of Eco’s library. Supporting Ekblad’s connection of Dante’s ‘selva’ with Eco’s library is the relationship between Dante’s “lonza” and Eco’s “LEONES.” Both terms, the former in reference to the beast that impedes Dante-protagonist’s path in the first canto of the *Inferno* and the latter in reference to the South Tower in *Il nome della rosa*, share the same etymological, zoological, and allegorical significance. The etymological history of the term “lonza” suggests, according to Gloria Allaire’s essay, “New Evidence Towards Identifying Dante’s Enigmatic Lonza,” a derivation from the Old French *lonce* which descended from the Vulgar Latin *luncea* (Allaire
http://www.princeton.edu/~dante/ebdsa/ga97.htm). The case for leondra, according to Allaire, has its foundations in a fifteenth-century chivalric text by Andrea da Barberino. His Guerrino meschino (c. 1410) describes the protagonist’s observations as he travels from Alexandria toward the Libyan Desert. In a particular passage describing the local fauna, Guerrino recounts the tale of the leondra:

They said that... they were lands full of lions, snakes, dragons and various animals, leopards and lonze. I asked what a lonza was. They answered that is was generated by a leopard and lioness. I asked: ‘what is a leondra?’ They answered it is was generated by a lion and female leopard and that these two distinctions of animals, that is leonza male or female fused, would not reproduce except the way mules do here, and that is what leondre do [...] These beasts live mostly in Libya and Morea in Africa in the great deserts [...] And I marveled at how they did not breed [...] lions and leopards different from one another – but those that are born from their union cannot procreate (Allaire). 22

The passage, a combination of works by Pliny (Historia Naturalis) and Alberto Magno (De animalibus), simultaneously makes reference to the creature’s etymology, zoology, and various allegorical designations. The passage supports its preceding intertexts, situating the animal geographically in Africa, more precisely in the Libyan and Morean deserts. The “lonza,” a result of unnatural coupling, is representative of the barrenness of the desert and as the desert cannot breed life, neither can the offspring of the unnatural coupling. The heat of the desert is inherently linked with what Pliny referred to as the “libidinous” (Hist. Nat. 8:17), feline

22 My translation. “Dissono che . . . erano paesi pieni di lioni e di serpenti e di dragoni e di diversi animali, liopardi, e lonze. Io addombandai che chosa era la lonza. Rispose che era ingienerrata da uno leopardo et da una leonessa. Io addombandai: 'Che chosa e’ne leondra?' Rispose: 'E’ ne gienerrata da uno leone et da una leoparda femmina,' e cche di queste due ragioni di animali, cioe' leonza maschio o femmina che fusse, nonne inginerravano se non come fanno tra noi i muli e lle mule, et cosi' fanno le leondre[...]. Di queste fiere sono assai per le parti di Libia e della Morea et d'Africha per li grandissimi diserti [...].Ed io maravigliava come non inginerravano[...]lioni e liopardo fuori di natura l'uno dall'altro--et pero' quelli che nascono non ingienerano insieme” (http://www.princeton.edu/~dante/ebdsa/ga97.htm).
creatures. The “lonza’s” confusing etymology and mode of creation inevitably become associated with allegorical representations not only of procreation, luxuria or lust but of fraud and falsehood as well as is the case, as we shall see, of the library in Eco’s debut novel.

When Dante and Eco introduce the “lonza” and the “LEONES” in their works, it is at a moment of great emotional and mental upheaval for both protagonists. In the *Inferno* Dante has just successfully crossed the “selva oscura” and is left not understanding how or why he did not fail: “And just as he who, with exhausted breath, having escaped from sea to shore, turns back to watch the dangerous waters he has quit, so did my spirit, still a fugitive, turn back to look intently at the pass that never has let any man survive” (*Inferno* I, 22-27). Dante’s “lonza,” “a leopard covered with a spotted hide,” does not give much away in terms of allegorical significance or zoological information except for small details about its slender physique and its spotted fur. An intertextually competent reader (a Model Reader) would be able to make those connections between Dante’s “lonza” and Pliny’s beast with ease; others would depend on commentaries in order to gain some understanding of its double nature. Eco has the advantage of knowing Dante’s poem well, its intertexts and intratexts, and the commentaries as usable sources for the designation of the South Tower of the library. Having knowledge of all this information, it is no coincidence that Eco’s LEONES is inherently linked with Dante’s beast.

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23 “E come quei che con lena affannata uscito fuor del pelago a la riva si volge a l’acqua perigiosa e guata, così l’animo mio, ch’ancor fuggiva, si volse a retro a rimirar lo passo che non lasciò già mai persona viva” (*Inferno* I. 22-26).

24 “Ed ecco, quasi al cominciare de l’erta, una lonza leggiera e presta molto, che di pel macolato era coverta” (*Inferno* I. 31-33).
That the South Tower is the darkest and creates the most fear is not an unconscious attribution on Eco’s part. By naming the tower LEONES, Eco immediately sends us back to the darkness of Dante’s “selva” where he meets the “lonza” - - an aberrant creature; the beast’s African descent alludes to African texts of which the South Tower is full. These texts are the most difficult to decipher because they are believed to be replete with falsehoods:

‘Leones: south. On our map we are in Africa, hic sunt leones. And this explains why we have found so many texts by infidel authors’ [...]. ‘The Koran, the Bible of the infidels, a perverse book...’ ‘A book containing a wisdom different from ours. But you understand why they put it here, where the lions, the monsters are. This is why we saw that book on the monstrous animals, where you also found the unicorn. This area called LEONES contains the books that the creators of the library considered books of falsehood’ (NOR 314-315).

According to Adele J. Haft in her essay “Maps, Mazes and Monsters: Iconography of the Library in Umberto Eco’s The Name of the Rose,” Eco’s mapping of the library provides “clues for comprehending and unraveling the mystery” (193) of not only the labyrinthine library but the secret of the finis Africae as well. In order to map out the library, Haft explains that Eco utilizes medieval maps as models and that “by examining these maps in the context of medieval theology and philosophy we embark upon an adventure of our own, in which the discovery of the ultimate ‘cartographic’ source for Eco’s library map will lead us logically and accidentally through worlds both known and unknown, accepted and imaginary, to the center of Eco’s elaborate puzzle” (Haft 193). Eco’s puzzle, especially as it pertains to the finis Africae, again sends us back to the first canto of the Inferno and to Dante-protagonist’s state of confusion.

25 “‘Leones, meridione, nella nostra mappa siamo in Africa, hic sunt leones. E questo spiega perché vi abbiamo trovato tanti testi di autori infedeli.’ [...] ‘Il corano, la bibbia degli infedeli, un libro perverso ...’ ‘Un libro che contiene una sagezza diversa della nostra. Ma comprendi perché lo abbiamo posto qui, dove stanno i leoni, i mostri. Ecco perché vi abbiamo visto quel libro sulle bestie mostruose dove hai trovato anche l’unicorno. Questa zona detta LEONES contiene quelli che per i costruttori della biblioteca erano i libri di menzogna’” (NDR 317).
upon his encounter with the “lonza”. The existence of the secret text about the finis Africae engenders much confusion on Adso’s part who, like Dante as he encounters that first creature on the hill, begins to question and doubt himself. The secret text and its position in the library constitute a threat to Adso’s parameters of knowledge:

No sooner has William translated LEONES as ‘Africa’ than he recognizes the connection between the south tower of the library and the ‘monsters’ that the abbot had hinted were in the library: "books by wizards, the cabalas of the Jews, the fables of pagan poets, the lies of the infidels." William also discovers why room 'S' contains not only Arabic scientific texts but several bestiaries written in Latin. To the abbot and those controlling the library, these books by the 'Africans' are filled with falsehoods and correspond to the monstrous creatures believed to exist in the unexplored parts of Africa: Blemmyae, headless tribes with faces fixed in their chests; Cynocephali, 'dog-headed' races; Sciopods or Sciapodes, with one giant 'foot' that they use to 'shade' themselves from the sun's heat (Haft 203).

The possibilities that the texts in the tower propose force Adso to question what he holds as true, to doubt everything he knows. Moreover, Adso’s deviant sexual behaviour begins with the knowledge of the secret text’s existence. In this way, the finis Africae, according to Haft, has many meanings:

It is the land of the Ethiopians, located at the southern extremity of an abbreviated Africa. It is terra australis incognita, the 'unknown southern continent,' considered to be habitable, but generally not by human beings. It is the place where Lucifer first landed. Yet it is also the promised home of the righteous following the Last Judgment. Separating this fourth land mass from the known world is the equatorial ocean of orthodox belief, thought to be uncrossable because of the extreme heat, its great expanse, its invisibility to the naked eye, or all three (Haft 211).

The apocalyptic ending of the novel, where all the books are destroyed, fulfills the meaning of the allegorical level of unnatural coupling between contradictory elements, so that the
structure of the library, instead of representing knowledge, becomes the epitome of the hot, desert lands of Africa that the lonza’s history describes.

In Canto XII of the *Inferno*, Dante’s questioning about the ambiguous nature of beasts and humans reaches its culmination. The Canto begins with Dante’s encounter with the Minotaur, a human/animal hybrid from classical mythology, “with the body of a man and the head and horns and tail of a bull” (March 509), a product of an unnatural union between Pasifae and a bull. Canto XII also introduces Dante’s readers to the violence of the Centaurs, also a mix of both human and animal parts, and to the violence of Alexander the Great: “Here they bewail their heartless crimes: here lie both Alexander and fierce Dionysius who brought long years of woe to Sicily” (*Inferno* XII, 106-108). In his novels, Eco not only refers to but capitalizes on these same aspects in Dante, since in his first novel it is clear that he is not against “unnatural unions” and secondly, Eco’s first hint at hybridity in his *Baudolino* (first page of first chapter) links Eco’s protagonist with Alexander the Great, whom Dante associates with hybridity.

Though Eco is not against “unnatural unions,” his descriptions of embryology put into question such acceptance. In *Il pendolo di Foucault*, for example, Casaubon continually refers to his offspring as *The Thing*: “I touched her belly and did not ask myself what would come out. We called it the Thing” (*FP* 363). Descriptions of it border on the monstrous: “Poor little Thing...Feel it. Now it’s so cozy there in the dark, sucking up humors like an octopus, all free,

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26 “Quivi si piangon li spietati danni; quivi è Alessandro, e Dionisio fero, che fé Cicilia aver dolorosi anni.”
27 “Le tastavo il ventre, non mi chiedeva che cosa ne sarebbe venuto fuori, avevamo deciso di chiamarlo la Cosa” (*PDF* 462).
and then – wham—it pops out into the daylight, blinks, and says, Where the hell am I?” (FP 363) There is an intratextual progression in Eco’s novels, from Il pendolo di Foucault to Baudolino, that associates the womb and embryo with the grail tradition, particularly the tradition that Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln in Holy Blood, Holy Grail attribute to the womb of Mary Magdalene and the bloodline she gave birth to. When Casaubon visits Salon near the end of Foucault’s Pendulum, he is struck by the various odd things he finds around the room. Salon has taken to restoring dead animals (taxidermy) and often blending them together, mimicking scientific inquiry. A particular image that strikes Casaubon is Salon’s mixing of bird with pendulum: “A great disemboweled bird swayed, following the movement of the lance that pierced it. The weapon had entered the head, and through the open breast you could see it pass where the heart and gizzard had once been, then branch out to form an upside down trident [...]. The bird swung, and the three points cast their shadow on the floor, a mystic sign” (FP 366). The shadow (or the sign, which is the case in the English translation) sparks a series of emotions and associations in Casaubon who begins to compare the Thing “that throbbed in Lia’s belly” (FP 377) with the monstrous objects that surround him. Salon continues to show him things of his own creation: “He took a strange

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28 “Poverino poverina ... Senti, ora sta così bene al buio, succhia umori come una piovra, tutto gratis, e poi puffete, schizzerà fuori alla luce del sole, sbatterà gli occhi e dirà dove diavolo sono capitato capitata?” (PDF 463).

29 Other grail traditions are discussed throughout the novel, including Chrétien de Troyes’s Perceval ou le Conte du Graal where the grail is figured as a dish, Robert de Boron’s Joseph d’Arimathie where the grail is the cup used to collect Christ’s blood at his crucifixion, and Wolfram von Eschenbach’s Parzival where the grail is figured as a stone that fell from the sky.

30 “Un grande uccello squartato oscillava seguendo il moto della lancia che lo trafuggeva. Questa gli entrava per il capo e dal petto aperto si vedeva che gli penetrava là dove un tempo erano il cuore e il gozzo, e qui si annodava per diramarsi a tridente capovolto [...]. L’uccello dondolava lievemente e le tre punte indicavano sul suolo la traccia che avrebbero lasciato se lo avessero sfiorato” (PDF 466). The “mystic sign” that the translator mentions is not in the original italian text.

31 “E intanto pensavo alla cosa viva che palpitava nel ventre di Lia” (PDF 466).
specimen from one of the shelves [...]. A dragon, a reptile with black membranous wings, a cock’s crest, and gaping jaws that bristled with saw-like teeth” (FP 377), an amalgamation of dead animal parts (like Frankenstein’s monster).

Casaubon attempts to immediately distinguish between the death of the animals and the life of the Thing: “I didn’t stuff dead animals; I created living animals [...]. My Rebis. I, too, had made him, and not with chunks of dead bodies and arsenic soap” (FP370-371). Casaubon, however, is unable to resist Salon’s influence. The dragon Salon creates and describes, which he admits is a recreation inspired by “a great folio” (FP 366) of Athanasius Kircher’s Mundus Subterraneus, engenders a comparison of the Thing with the creature and its habitat: “I thought of the Black Work, of Lia’s belly, of the Thing that was struggling to break out of its sweet volcano” (FP 367). Kircher’s description of the dragon’s cave-like dwellings further allows Casaubon to link the lair of the dragon with Lia’s womb. Eco links the grail and Dante traditions. The metaphor of the womb becomes connected with both the redeeming figure of the grail (as the cup of life): “The Grail again, my God. But what Grail? There was only one grail: My Thing in contact with the radioactive strata of Lia’s womb, perhaps now preparing to come out” (368). It is, however, also linked with the damning structure of hell (death):

“Giulio/Giulia, my Rebis planted like Lucifer at the center of Lia’s womb, but he/she, the Thing,
would be upside down, would be struggling upward, and would somehow emerge” (369).  

Casaubon’s confusion, much like Adso’s in Eco’s previous novel, when he is confronted with the blending of these contradictory elements, is obvious and forces him to question the validity of the Plan he is attempting to bring to life. The Plan also, inevitably, becomes equated with the life growing inside of Lia’s womb and life, womb and Plan all become associated with the grail: “Lapis exillis. My Stone that was slowly coming out of exile, from the sweet oblivious hypnotic exile of Lia’s vessel; my Stone, beautiful and white, not seeking further depths, but seeking the surface” (FP 369). Embryology and its association with the grail tradition continue to be a prevalent themes in Eco’s next novels, particularly in Baudolino where the notion of hybridity is apparent vis à vis the novel’s intertexts.

In the Historia Prelis, J1, for example, found in Dennis M. Kratz’s The Romance of Alexander, Alexander’s appearance is described as:

not like his father or mother but completely his own. The hair on his head resembled a lion’s mane. His eyes were large, glittering, and the one was not the same as the other: one was black, the other gray. His teeth were sharp, his disposition like that of a raging lion. It was as if his appearance was an omen of what was to come (6).

Eco models Baudolino on this very description: “I Baudolino son of Galiaudo Gagliaudo of the Aulari with a head that looks like a lion hallelujah gracias” “(BE 1). Eco’s take on the notion of hybridity, however, tends towards the natural, and even more, the sexual. Eco is able to

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36 “Giulio Giulia, il mio Rebis piantato come Lucifero al centro del ventre di Lia, ma lui, lei, la Cosa si sarebbe capovolta, si sarebbe proiettata verso l’alto, in qualche modo sarebbe uscita” (PDF 470).
37 “Lapis exillis. La mia Pietra che stava lentamente uscendo dall’esilio, dal dolce smemorato ipnotico esilio nel vaso capace di Lia, senza cercare alter profondità, la mia Pietra bella e bianca che vuole la superficie” (PDF 471).
38 “Io Baudolino di Gagliaudo Gagliauo de li Aulari con na testa ke somilia un lione alleluja” (BI 5).
equate beauty with monstrosity. When Baudolino attempts to be “like other men” (*BE* 232), as he puts it, when he settles down with Collandrina, a simple peasant girl whom he marries and impregnates, the outcome is a hideous entity. The *Historia Preliis* describes an incident where a child is born in Babylon who “from head to navel resembled a human being and was dead but from navel to feet resembled different beasts but was alive” (Kratz 77). The interpretation that follows this omen reveals to Alexander that “half the body with human form signifies that you will depart from this life. The half that is bestial and alive signifies the Kings who are going to reign after you” (Kratz 78). In Eco’s novel, Baudolino’s own son from Collandrina is born dead and looking almost beastly as well: “‘it was a little monster [...] like the ones we imagined in the Land of Prester John. The face had tiny eyes, like two slits, a thin chest, with little arms that looked like polyp’s tentacles. And from its belly to its feet it was covered with fine white hair, as if it were a sheep’” (*BE* 231). In *Baudolino*, the death of this child is also an omen, but of several things. On the one hand, it could signify Baudolino’s inability to reach the kingdom of Prester John, leaving behind in Pndapetzim the ruling of the White Huns; on the other hand, it could denote the “sterility” of his narrative.

Baudolino has lost all his personal parchments and his story, as we come to learn at the end of the novel, will not be chronicled or retold by Niketas. Above all, however, Baudolino explains to Niketas that the child was a product of his lies: “My son was a lie of nature [...] I was a liar and I had lived the life of a liar to such a degree that even my seed had produced a lie.

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39 “Ho deciso che se quella era la mia sorte, era inutile che provassi a diventare come gli altri” (*BI* 239).
40 “Era un mostricattolo [...] come quelli che noi immaginavamo nella terra del Prete Giovanni. Il viso dagli occhi piccoli, come due fessure di traverso, un petto magro magro con due braccine che sembravano tentacoli di polpo. E dal ventre ai piedi era coperto di una peluria bianca, come fosse una pecora” (*BI* 238).
A dead lie” (BE 232). And he comes to the conclusion that it “is best for you to withdraw into the world of your portents, for there at least you can decide yourself how portentous they are” (BE 232). So that when Baudolino and his companions finally go off in search for the Land of Prester John, a place that was invented but was believed to be true (in myths and legends), he is careful to describe the various mirabilia and hybrid species he sees, and though it is clear that many of these marvels come from “The Wonders of the East,” Baudolino claims to have seen nothing of what these writers described: “these and other most horrendous things had they seen, but the wonders of the East never, as if all those who had written about them were great bastards” (BE 334). What makes Baudolino so angry at this moment is the fact that this portion of his travels cannot be invented; it is based on what he actually sees. These are his real experiences. It is fitting that in a land full of hybrids, the protagonist is able to find a moment of truth. And it is within this atmosphere that Baudolino meets Hypatia (half woman, half goat) and produces offspring with her (an act of hybridity). In this way, Baudolino’s relationship with Hypatia is at odds with that of his human wife: “As for Colandrina, I realized – after having known Hypatia – that with her it had not been passion, but, rather, gaiety, tenderness, very intense affection: what I might have felt, God forgive me, for a daughter, or a younger sister” (BE 439). With Colandrina, Baudolino is fearful of a hybrid offspring whereas

41 “Mio figlio era menzogna della natura [...]. Ero bugiardo e avevo vissuto da bugiardo a tal punto che anche il mio seme aveva prodotto una bugia. Una bugia morto” (BI 238).
42 “Dunque è meglio che ti ritiri nel mondo dei tuoi portenti, che in quello almeno puoi decidere quanto siano, appunto, portentosi” (BI 239).
43 “Queste e altre orrendissime cose avevano visto, ma le meraviglie dell’Oriente mai, come se tutti coloro che ne avevano scritto fossero dei gran bastardi” (BI 341).
44 “Quanto a Colandrina, mi accorgevo – dopo aver conosciuto Ipazia – che con lei non era stata passione, ma piuttosto allegria, tenerezza, affetto intensissimo, come avrei potuto provare, Dio mi perdoni, per una figlia o una sorella minore” (BI 444).
with Hypatia he expects it: “‘But it could be a male, and therefore a satyr-that-is-never-seen!’
‘And it could be a little Hypatia. I will love that child in any case’” (BE 519). What is
interesting here is that Eco challenges the whole of Dante’s Canto XII and the notion that
hybridity constitutes a double nature and thus is inherently evil. In Eco’s novel, this act and this
creature are put in stark contrast with the episode of Pasifae and the bull that Dante describes
in his narrative. In Baudolino, this active hybridity is put into a positive light, as it is based on
love and beauty.

The concept of a process of hybridization that insists on the collaboration of both
complementing and contradictory elements is supported in Il nome della rosa by Eco’s
description of the library (to be discussed in detail in chapters 3 and 4). The abbot’s description
of the library to William and Adso on the first day presents the library as a sort of mecca for
things that coexist. The library “‘is not like the others’” (NOR 35). It is superior to all libraries
precisely because of its hybrid features. The library is a cultural melting pot where people from
far-off lands come in search of obscure manuscripts: “‘I know that many of the monks living in
your midst come from other abbeys scattered all over the world. Some stay here a short time,
to copy manuscripts to be found nowhere else and to carry them back then to their own house,
not without having brought you in exchange some other unavailable manuscript’” (NOR 35). It
is also a space where many forms of knowledge coexist. As a result, this exchange of

45 "‘Ma potrebbe essere un maschio, e dunque un satiro-che-non-si-vede-mai.’ ‘E potrebbe essere una piccola
ipazia. Amerò quella creatura in ogni caso’ “ (Bi 523-524).
46”‘La nostra biblioteca non è come le altre...’”(NDR 43).
47 “‘So che tra i monaci che vivono tra voi molti vengono da altri abbaie sparse in tutto il mondo: chi per poco
tempo onde copiare manoscritti introvabili altrove e portarli poi alla propria sede, non denza avervi portato in
cambio qualche altro manoscritto introvabile che voi copierete e inserirrete nel vostro tesoro’” (NDR 43).
manuscripts enables the library to constantly renew itself so that it accommodates texts old and new, true and false, monstrous and theological:

‘So in the library there are also books containing falsehoods...’ ‘Monsters exist because they are part of the divine plan, and in the horrible features of those monsters the power of the Creator is revealed. And by divine plan, too, there exist also books by wizards, the cabalas of the Jews, the fables of pagan poets, the lies of the infidels. It was the firm and holy conviction of those who founded the abbey and sustained it over the centuries that even in books of falsehood, to the eyes of the sage reader, the pale reflection of the divine wisdom can shine. And therefore the library is a vessel of these, too’ (NOR 37-38).

With Baudolino, Eco would later utilize these ‘monstrous’ texts, restricted in the library of Il nome della rosa, to develop the Letter of Prester John, a process of hybridization in its own right.

If in the Postille to Il nome della rosa Eco theorizes a concept of the text that is “a machine for generating interpretations,” Abulafia in Il pendolo di Foucault is an attempt by Eco to put that concept into practice, by replacing the medieval library with the online library. Abulafia, Belbo’s personal computer, is mainly used for his personal writings, many of which are scattered throughout the novel, but it also comes equipped with a program that can rearrange text. In order to conceive of their “Plan,” Belbo, Casaubon and Diotallevi enter into Abulafia a hybrid concoction of randomly selected words, truisms and “neutral data” in order to create new text. But whereas in the Postille Eco depicts this new hybrid creation as a positive element in text production, in Il pendolo di Foucault, the randomness and unpredictability of Abulafia

48 “‘Ci sono dunque in biblioteca anche libri che contengono menzogne...’ ‘I mostri esistono perché fanno parte del disegno divino e nelle stesse orribili fattezze dei mostri si rivela la potenza del Creatore. Così esistono per disegno divino anche i libri dei maghi, le kabbale dei giudei, le favole dei poeti pagani, le menzogne degli infedeli. È stata ferma e santa convinzione di coloro che hanno voluto e sostenuto questa abbazia nei secoli, che anche nei libri menzogneri possa trasparire, agli occhi del lettore sagace, una pallida luce della sapienza divina. E perciò anche di essi la biblioteca è scrigno’” (NDR 46).
represent his distrust of the ‘machine’: “I knew why Diotallevi distrusted Abulafia. He had heard that word processors could change the order of letters. A text, thus, might generate its opposite and result in obscure prophecies.’ ‘It’s a game of permutation,’ Belbo said, trying to explain” (FP 33). In this way, Eco is already commenting on the conscious misinterpretation by his readers of his theory of the “open work” and the dangers of unlimited interpretations formally expressed in *The Limits of Interpretation* and *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*:

“Abraham Abulafia’s *Hokmhat-ha-Zeruf* was at once the science of the combination of letters and the science of the purification of the heart. Mystic logic, letters whirling infinite change, is the world of bliss, it is the music of thought, but see that you proceed with caution, because your machine may bring delirium instead of ecstasy” (FP 34). Like the abbey library, Abulafia is a mecca for contradictory elements to coexist but is complicated by the fact that Belbo’s personal writings become integrated within the computer’s interpretive process. Though Abulafia complements the library’s designation as a vessel for both truth and falsehood, the fact that Belbo’s personal writings inevitably become a part of the interpretive process marks the importance of the role of memory and consequently the role of the author in text creation.

Memory, as will be discussed in chapter four, continues to play an important role in Eco’s narratives and also contributes to the notion of text as a process of hybridization.

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50 “A questo ha dedicato la vita Abraham Abulafia [...]. La sua *Hokmhat ha-Zeruf* era al tempo stesso scienza della combinazione delle lettere e scienza della purificazione dei cuori. Logica mistica, il mondo delle lettere e del loro vorticare in permutazioni infinite è il mondo della beatitudine, la scienza della combinazione è una musica del pensiero, ma attento a muoveri con lentezza, e con cautela, perché la tua macchina potrebbe darti il delirio, e non l’estasi’” (PDF 42-43).
When Eco, in his essay “The Quest for the Perfect Language” (1992), concludes that Dante understood that language was mutable, for “[it] was a living, spoken language, and that it is the nature of living language to change over time” (12), he recognizes that the development of language, already in Dante’s time, is dependent on a process of hybridization. Dante attributes to language not only the element of hybridity but also the process by which it becomes something else, in other words, a process of becoming other. Dante does not limit this process strictly to language; in the Commedia, he also attributes it to humankind. For Eco, this process can also be attributed to a theory of text. Beyond this theoretical context, the notion of hybridity extends to and defines Eco’s Baudolino, as is apparent from the very beginning of the novel. The opening pages alone introduce the three most pertinent aspects of hybridity explicitly present in the text. At first glance we can see that there are two languages at work here: Fraschetta and Latin. At second glance, we are made aware that we are dealing with two texts: one which Baudolino is writing about himself, and the other consisting of remnants of the parchment he has attempted to erase. At a third glance we discover a metaphoric hint of physical hybridity, as Baudolino claims that his head is similar to that of a lion (5). In his essay, “The Languages of Paradise” (in Serendipities), Eco makes explicit reference to Dante’s De Vulgari Eloquentia, which, he explains, is the text where Dante attempts to conceive of an ideal Italian vernacular suited for literature: “Dante’s project was to

51 Eco’s essay, “The Quest for the Perfect Language,” can be found in Versus: Quaderni di Studi semiotici 61-63 (1992):12. The original is found in a collection of essays entitled La ricerca della lingua perfetta in the essay “La lingua perfetta di Dante.” The Italian reads differently than the translation, putting emphasis on the mutability of language analogous to mutability of man: “Quest’ultima si è frammentata in una pluralità di dialetti che talora, come a esempio a a Bologna, variano da zona a zona della città. Questo perché l’uomo è animale instabile e mutevole, per costumi, abitudini e linguaggio, nel tempo come nello spazio” (RDP 42).
discover one language, more decorous and illustrious than the others, which had to become
the language of his own poetry” (31). This was to replace Latin with an ideal vernacular:

to create such a language Dante had to take the various vernaculars in turn and
subject each to a severe critical analysis [...]. Dante wanted to create a vernacular that might be more ‘illustris’ [...] useful as guiding rule, worthy of being spoken in the royal palace of the national king [...] and worthy to be a language of government, of courts of law and of wisdom (31).\(^5^2\)

But it would only exist as an ideal, since Italian regional dialects (which still exist and thrive today) were especially prominent. These vernaculars flourished, Dante explains, because it is what an infant first learns, before any knowledge of any grammatical rule. And seeing how few were formally educated during the Middle Ages, these vernaculars persisted. Eco’s own novel, however, is set in the twelfth century, before Dante’s treatise on language. When Baudolino first introduces himself on paper, it is clear that, first, he is not educated, and second, he is attempting to write his memoirs in the vernacular he learned from birth. It is evident that he is writing in the same manner as he hears and speaks. His writing is put into stark contrast with the Latin that exists literally beneath it. What purpose does this serve in Eco’s commentary on literary language? When looking at the passage closely, we are actually able to see materially how the one has come to be derived from the other. What we are a witness to is that process of mutation, or, to use my chosen metaphor, the process of hybridization of language.

\(^5^2\) Again, from “La lingua perfetta di Dante”: “Se vogliamo trovare una lingua più decorosa e illustre, si deve procedere a una critica analitica e severa dei vari volgari regionali, tenendo conto che i poeti migliori si sono, ciascuno a proprio modo, allontanati dal volgare della loro città, e mirare un volgare illustre (diffusivo di luce), cardinale (che funzioni da cardine e regola), regale (degno di prender posto nella reggia di un regno nazionale, se mai gli italiani l’avessero), e curiale (linguaggio del governo, del giure, della sagezza). Questo volgare è di ogni città italiana e di nessuna, rappresenta una sorta di regola ideale a cui si sono avvicinati i migliori poeti, e rispetto alla cui norma ideale tutti i volgari esistenti dovranno essere giudicato” (RDP 42).
Eco may be constructing the literary version of the Fraschetta language (a regional dialect from Alessandria and Torino) here, but it is also evident that he is commenting on how even constructed languages are influenced by other languages and vernaculars, as well as by personal experience within the setting of that particular language, since, as we know, Eco comes from Alessandria and has experienced first-hand the effect of this regional dialect. He again represents the metamorphosis of language materially in chapter 35 of the novel where several of the races in Pdnatezim are participating in a procession and are reciting the Lord’s Prayer, each in its specific vernacular:
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There is a sequence here which begins with well-known constructed languages: spokil (established in 1880s by Adolphe Charles Antoine Marie Nicolas), volapuk (established in 1880s by Johann Martin Schleyer), spelin (created by George Bauer in 1889) and carporphilus (established 1734). The last two sequences, however, denote less “illustrious” forms of language. They are regional dialects or vernaculars: Formosa is an Austronesian-based language, predominant in Taiwan, and the last sequence, harder to decipher, has links to Indonesian dialects. But each sequence has similarities with others; each is arguably a mutation of the others, making each one hybrid.

Eco’s novel is a hybrid as well, but it also blurs that line Bynum defines between hybridity and metamorphosis, because there is metamorphosis in the novel, but the outcome of the process is always something hybrid, and even beyond a doubled nature. We’ve seen how a hybrid language, an invented language, can mutate and change into other hybrid languages; we’ve seen how humans can successfully copulate with beasts. But by reading Eco’s text, we also are witness to a novel that is an amalgamation of history and fantasy, truth and
falsity, reality and unreality, and, in addition, authorial personal experience and memory. Eco takes the reader on two simultaneous journeys: through a collective and a personal history. In the essay “How I Write,” Eco admits that *Baudolino* was founded on this expressed notion of hybridity since there were several seminal ideas from which to start, but they were either abandoned altogether or incorporated into the plot. The third idea he had about his fourth novel was based on a group of characters who made forgeries. These characters, he explains, “were to have been contemporaries who decided to found a daily paper and who experimented, in a series of dummy numbers, with how they could create scoops” (*OL* 319).\(^5^3\) Having explored the semiotics of fakes and forgeries on other occasions (*The Limits of Interpretation* and *Serendipities*), he was led by this initial idea eventually to the Letter of Prester John, an idea, he claims, that came from various experiences, both personal and in reading:

This idea fructified a series of memories and reading experiences. In 1960 I edited the Italian edition (*Le terre legendarie*) of *Lands Beyond* by Ley and Sprague du Camps for Bompiani. There was a chapter on Prester John’s kingdom and another on the lost tribes of Israel [...] . In short, Prester John had always intrigued me, and I was attracted by the idea of making the monsters that populated his Kingdom come alive again, as well as those spoken of in the various Alexander Romances, Mandeville’s Travels and a whole series of bestiaries [...] (*OL* 319).\(^5^4\)

In this instance, Eco is more forthcoming with his sources, not only willingly revealing from

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\(^{53}\) “Inizialmente i personaggi dovevano essere dei contemporanei, che decidevano di fondare un quotidiano e sperimentavano, in una serie di numeri zero, come si potessero ‘creare’ degli *scoop*” (*SL* 342).

where his seminal idea derived, but supplying the intertexts for his novel as well. I would argue that Eco’s novels, looked at in a progressive manner and culminating in *Baudolino*, characterize another form of intertextuality that incorporates the author’s reading and personal experiences: in other words, what I am calling a self-reflexive intertextuality. With *Baudolino*, however, Eco is more obliging with revealing his writing process and unreservedly reveals how it is greatly affected by what he himself has read, experienced and imagined. With *Baudolino* he is defining himself as a hybrid author.
Chapter Three  
**The Second Phase II: Self-Reflexive Intertextuality and (Re)Construction**

Considering Eco a multi-faceted author is not difficult seeing as how he constructs the worlds of his novels through hybrid means: a combination of personal (reading) and cultural experiences, as was argued in the previous chapters. This chapter, which focuses primarily on how Eco constructs space in his novels through a) architecture and b) cityscapes, demonstrates the progression of Eco’s writing process from seminal idea to world (re)construction. In this way, the method in which Eco constructs his novels reveals an inherent link between building and text that helps us understand the concept of a self-reflexive intertextuality more fully.

A. **Architecture as a metaphor for texts**

Architecture and literature have evolved side by side during the course of their history, often intersecting with one another in order to narrate, (re)construct, and (re)present space. In this manner, the creation of texts and the spaces reconstructed within them -- cities, buildings, rooms -- become sites of lived experience and spaces that communicate the passing of time. Eco’s novels, particularly *Il nome della rosa*, are perfect examples of the often seamless connection between architecture and literature, since both the structures of his novels and the spaces narrated within them are dependent on his writing process, already described in chapter one. Eco’s writing process, which includes his research, his personal (reading) and cultural experiences, and memories, or what I have been referring to as a “self-reflexive intertextuality,” is projected onto the structure and narrative of his novels. In other words, his experiences provide the materials used to construct the worlds of his novels. In this way, since architecture and literature share similar aesthetic and structural principles and often use the same language
to describe textual and architectural spaces, the architecture of the novels creates readable spaces. As such, architecture becomes a metaphor for Eco’s writing process and, in turn, his writing process renders architecture legible. With *Il nome della rosa* Eco fulfills the role, previously described in the introduction, of the Vitruvian model of the architect who combines various branches of study in order to successfully design and build structures. While it is clear that the (re)constructions of the abbey and the library in the novel are influenced by many fields of study (aesthetics, cosmology), it is ultimately Eco’s personal (reading) experiences that give the architecture in the novel a certain narrative quality.

Though the actual relationship between architecture and literature spans several centuries, it is not until the middle of the twentieth century that theorists begin formally to conceptualize a theory of a communicative architecture. This reassessment of the role of architecture comes at a time when the tenets of the Modern Movement (urbanism and functionalism) as developed by the Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne (CIAM) lose sway. According to Eric Mumford in *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960* (2000), the CIAM “intended to create an international avant-garde of modern architecture. It was to be an elite new structure of association for architects to advance their cause against the then-dominant neoclassicism of the academies of architecture, which its founders hoped would place the new architecture into its ‘true economic and social environment’” (Mumford 9). The goals of this new architecture, developed predominantly by Le Corbusier and other French and German architects, were “to formulate the contemporary program of architecture, to advocate the modern idea of architecture, to forcefully introduce this idea into technical, economic and social circles [and] to see the resolution of architectural problems” (10). This new, utopian
vision of architecture ignored its historical roots, seeing those legacies as problematic, choosing instead to focus on a form of architecture that would function in the present and as future social environment. In *Functionalism Revisited: Architectural Theory and Practice and the Behavioral Sciences* (2010), Jon Lang and Walter Moleski divide the Modern Movement into two streams -- rationalism and empiricism -- attributing the failure of the new architecture to its ignoring of the identity of the inhabitants as elements of the functionality of its designs:

Rationalists and Empiricists are united in their concerns for enhancing the quality of life of people and their belief that the built world can be made a better place than it is now. They differed because each had its own image of what future societies should be like and, implicitly, the functions that buildings and urban places should serve. Neither, however, had a fully fleshed model of the functions buildings do serve and might serve for people on which to clearly build their arguments (Lang and Moleski 4).

Highly criticized for its “[in]adequacy of the knowledge of base designs” (10) and as a “kind of syndicalist political party of architects, devoted to the goal of furthering modern architecture and oriented toward winning over any suitable modernizing ‘Authority’ to the cause, regardless of orientation” (Mumford 6), the modern movement in architecture is deemed unsuccessful in part due to its willful disregard of its historical roots and in part due to its ignoring of the role of the inhabitants of architectural spaces. As such, it failed to function as a fully developed communicative tool.

In Italy, a similar reassessment occurred later in the fields of language and literature, with the result of these reconsiderations culminating in the foundation of *Il Gruppo 63*. As was previously discussed in chapter one of this dissertation, *Il Gruppo 63*, of which Eco was a founding member, consisted of writers, critics, and academics who desired to experiment with
new forms of expression, breaking ties with the traditional patterns set forth by the modernist and neorealist movements in the Italy of the ‘40s and ‘50s. The goal was to bring a sense of innovation to Italian literature by breaking from usual traditions of style. *Il Gruppo 63*, however, was not unified in its agenda and became an overtly politicized movement until its death in 1968, coinciding with both the student revolutions and Eco’s first treatise on semiotics in *La struttura assente*: an examination of semiotics in a wide range of subjects, including language and architecture. What sets Eco apart from his contemporaries in *Il Gruppo 63* is his interest in the past. This interest is apparent in his theories of “l'opera aperta,” “l'opera in movimento,” and in his theories of semiotics and in particular a semiotics of architecture. His theory does not exclude, as *Il Gruppo 63* intended, the traditions of the past; rather, his theory depends on the combination of subjects, past and present, in order to fulfill a communicative function.

Eco’s concept of a semiotics of architecture in *La struttura assente* (1968) is very much in tune with his early seminal works on art and culture (*L'opera aperta* and *Apocalittici e integrati*), especially with his theories of “the open work” and “the work in movement,” discussed in the first chapter. There is a fluidity apparent in Eco's treatise on architecture that is similar to that of his theories of art and textuality: both are structured by the same method through a combination of sources past and present, personal and cultural. Eco's theory of general semiotics and of the semiotics of architecture is influenced by Charles Sanders Peirce’s work on semiotics and sign theory, the then-current theories of structuralism in Claude Lévi-Strauss’s *La pensée sauvage* (1962) from which Eco adapts his concepts of the bricoleur and
bricolage,\(^1\) the theory of deconstruction for which Jacques Derrida uses a metaphor of architecture in *Grammatology* (1967),\(^2\) the architectural theories of Paolo Portoghesi and Charles Jencks, and his own theories stemming from his previous works. They have in common the cooperation between modes of thinking and knowledge, enforcing the democratic interplay, discussed earlier in the first chapter, among artist/author, work, and viewer/reader, and between past and present. When Eco’s *Opera aperta* was first published in 1962, the aesthetics of modern architecture had already been viewed as outdated, flawed and insufficient in relating with the community. Eco knew it from his work in the field, as we shall see in *La struttura assente* (1968), that modernist architecture lacked a communicative quality that could be rectified by applying a more contemporary, even literary, approach. As a result, Eco took a structuralist approach, applying the tenets of structuralism to a description of the legibility of a work of art. He claimed that in “every century, the way that artistic forms are structured reflects the way in which science or contemporary culture views reality” (*OW* 13).\(^3\)

“L’opera aperta” is dependent, like Lévi-Strauss’s structural anthropology, on the participation

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\(^1\)In *La pensée sauvage*, a treatise concerned with forms of thought used in various aspects of life, Lévi-Strauss uses architectural language to define his theory of anthropology. Lévi-Strauss distinguishes between a **bricoleur**: a do-it-yourselfer who is able to build and repair things with materials already on hand, adept at putting preexisting structures together in new ways; and the **engineer**: the true craftsman who deals with projects in their entirety, from conception of the idea to procuring the materials needed to build the structure. Though for Lévi-Strauss the engineer is the ideal architect, he must, like the bricoleur, consider a preexisting set of knowledge and practices in order to be able to construct.

\(^2\)In an interview with Eva Meyer, “Architecture Where Desire Can Live,” published in *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995* (1996), Derrida states: “Now the concept of deconstruction itself resembles an architectural metaphor. It is often said to have a negative attitude. Something is constructed, a philosophical system, a tradition, a culture, and along comes a de-constructor and destroys it stone by stone, analyses the structure and dissolves it” (Derrida 146). This process is not about destroying the structure; rather, Derrida sees it as freeing the structure in order to make way for space and pathways where writing is free from constraints. In this way, Derrida’s de-constructing of structures leaves a path open for a space that is able to communicate.

\(^3\)“In ogni secolo, il modo in cui le forme dell’arte si strutturano riflettono […] il modo in cui la scienza o comunque la cultura dell’epoca vedono la realtà” (*OA* 42).
of its various parts: “the various component parts are all endowed with equal value and dignity, and the whole construct expands toward a totality which is close to the infinite. It refuses to be hemmed in by any ideal normative conception of the world. It shares in a general urge toward discovery and constantly renewed contact with reality” (OW 14). In this way, Eco implicitly links art and literature with architecture. In the case of architecture, the democratic interplay among artist/author, viewer/reader, and work includes the architect, the structure, and its inhabitants. Eco’s interpretation of architecture in terms of sign theory allows structures to communicate their various meanings. Thus, Eco’s theory is a natural progression from his concepts of the “open work” and culture, since both are deemed successful in terms of the elements of knowledge they combine.

Architects of the modern movement were often criticized for their overly functional structures, accused of not taking the inhabitants into consideration when designing their structures, making it impossible to derive any meaning from the structure’s formation. Perhaps modern architects were attempting to find meaning through a structure’s functionality. Le Corbusier, for example, in Vers une architecture (1923) was already describing architecture in terms of an accumulation of parts which participate in the common goal of building a structure. The end result of this construction goes beyond the relationship of raw materials

4 “Le parti appaiono tutte dottate su uguale valore e autorità, e nel tutto aspira a dilatarsi all’infinito, non trovando limite né freno in alcuna regola ideale del mondo, ma partecipando ad una generale aspirazione alla scoperta ed al contatto sempre rinnovato con la realtà” (OA 43).

5 Le Corbusier equated the ingenuity of architecture with the way its various parts were used in construction: “On met en oeuvre de la pierre, du bois, du ciment; on en fait des maisons, des palais; c’est de la construction. L’ingéniosité travaille” (165). (“You work with stone, with wood, with concrete; you make them into houses or palaces; this is construction. Ingenuity is at work” [195]).
and invites an emotive response on the part of the architect viewing his/her work. Though Le Corbusier’s structure incites an emotive, not necessarily a communicative, response, it negates the historical elements of the structure as well as the people who inhabit it -- in other words, the elements that can interpret and give it meaning. Architecture, however, cannot be isolated from other forms of knowledge.

As was previously described throughout the first chapters of this dissertation, debates and new examinations of the communicative function of language and literature flourished in the sixties. Alongside these examinations came new ideas and theories about architecture as well, so that by the time Eco writes his first formal treatise on the semiotics of architecture, a culture of new architectural theories examining the communicative function of architecture is already in place. In Italy, for example, Paolo Portoghesi, in *Borromini nella cultura europea* (1964), likens the communicative ability of architecture to textual interpretation:

> Other than the totality of buildings and roads, a city is considered, for who would like to penetrate its image and draw from it an experience of truth, a grouping of people, a node of human history past and present: and therefore a text to

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6 He further describes these various parts as the language of architecture which incites an emotional response:

> “Mais, tout à coup, vous me prenez au coeur, vous me faites du bien, je suis heureux, je dis: c’est beau. Voilà l’architecture. L’art est ici. [...]. Mais les murs s’élèvent sur le ciel dans un ordre tel que j’en suis ému. Je vois vos intentions. Vous étiez doux, brutal, charmant ou digne. Vos pierres me le disent. Vous m’attachez à cette place et mes yeux regardent. Mes yeux regardent quelque chose qui énonce une pensée. Une pensée qui s’éclaire sans mots ni sons, mais uniquement par des prismes qui ont entre eux des rapports [...]. Ils sont le langage de l’architecture. Avec des matériaux inertes, sur un programme plus ou moins utilitaire que vous débordez, vous avez établi des rapports qui m’ont ému. C’est l’architecture” (165). ("But suddenly you touch my heart, you do me good, I am happy, I say: ‘It is beautiful.’ This is architecture. Art is present [...]. But the walls rise against the sky in an order such that I am moved. I sense your intentions. You were gentle, brutal, charming, or dignified. Your stones tell me so. You rivet me to this spot and my eyes look. My eyes look at something that states a thought. A thought that clarifies itself without words or sounds, but only through prisms that have relationships with one another [...]. They are the language of architecture. With inert materials, based on a more or less utilitarian program that you go beyond, you have established relationships that moved me. It is architecture” [195]).
interpret, putting in relation the forms that offer themselves to our sight with the civilization and the life that produced them.\(^7\)

Portoghesi’s work is a great example of the importance of the past to present architecture. He uses Borromini to speak contemporaneously about the architecture of his own time, ascribing to architecture a sense of timelessness, not unlike what Eco does in his own novels.\(^8\) In the United States, Robert Venturi, in his *Complexity and Contradiction* (1966), also described the communicative function of architecture by offering a new consideration and definition of ‘post’modern architecture that sought to integrate otherwise contradictory elements, as was previously discussed in chapter two, with regard to the notion of hybridity and texts:

I like elements which are hybrid rather than ‘pure,’ compromising rather than ‘clean,’ distorted rather than ‘straight-forward,’ ambiguous rather than ‘articulated,’ perverse as well as ‘impersonal,’ boring as well as ‘interesting,’ conventional rather than ‘designed,’ accommodating rather than ‘excluding,’ redundant rather than ‘simple,’ vestigial as well as ‘innovating,’ inconsistent and equivocal rather than direct and clear. I am for messy vitality over obvious unity. I include the non sequitur and proclaim the duality (Venturi 22).

In order for architecture to be valid, adds Venturi, it must “[evoke] many levels of meaning and combinations of focus: its space and elements become readable and workable in several ways at once” (23). Venturi sees in architecture a very legible language.

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\(^7\) My translation. “Oltre che un insieme di edifici e di strade una città va considerata da chi vuol penetrare la sua immagine e trarne una esperienza di verità, un insieme di uomini, un nodo di storia umana passato e presente: e quindi un testo da interpretare mettendo in relazione le forme che si offrono ai nostri occhi con la civiltà e la vita che le ha prodotte” (3).

\(^8\) This is in direct agreement with Eco’s theories on art in *L’opera aperta*. Though Portoghesi’s work predates Eco’s own discussions on the semiotic functions of architecture, it is clear that they are both in agreement in terms of classifying architecture as a communicative language.
In this same vein, in his Preface to *Borromini: architettura come linguaggio* (1967), a year before Eco's own treatise on semiotics, Portoghesi begins to describe architecture as a language determined by a system of signs:

In recent years the analogy between architecture and language, between civilization and speech, has often been insisted upon, and semiotic and linguistic terminology has been mechanically transferred to architectural criticism [...]. Architecture is language insofar as it is a ‘system of signs’ used according to conventional rules of a combinative character with the aim of communicating, but that which it communicates is solely its own structure, that combination of rules it obeys, and which, in the act of producing the real object, it recreates and modifies. Or we might say that in the process of architectural communication and artistic communication in general, that which really counts, that from which it is possible to deduce a value judgment, is solely in the communication of a structure (vii).\(^9\)

Portoghesi is clear that any consideration of architecture as a system of signs is dependent on reconstructing and re-establishing its historical, social and cultural conventions, particularly through a textual tradition: “At the limit, in conjunction with it, drawings, documents and comparisons of images, organized with statistical criteria, should provide exhaustive material for judgment, or better, for the classification of the phenomena examined” (vii).\(^10\) In this way, the process of architecture is as dependent on the reading experience as is the process of writing described in the previous chapter. Using Borromini as the ideal, Portoghesi describes

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\(^9\) “Si è spesso insistito negli ultimi anni sulle analogie tra architettura e linguaggio, tra civiltà e lingua e si sono anche tentati meccanici trasferimenti della terminologia semiologa e linguistica nella critica architettonica [...]. L’architettura è linguaggio in quanto << sistema di segni >> usati secondo regole convenzionali di carattere combinatorio allo scopo di comunicare, a ciò che essa comunica non è che la propria struttura, quell’insieme di regole alle quali obbedisce e che, nell’atto di concretare in un oggetto reale, ricrea e modifica. O almeno nel processo di comunicazione dell’architettura e in genere dell’arte, ciò che realmente conta, da cui può dedursi un giudizio di valore, è solo la comunicazione di una struttura” (7).

\(^10\) “Al limite, disegni, documenti e accostamenti di immagini, organizzate con criteri statistici, costituirebbero una istruttoria esaierente per il giudizio o meglio per la classificazione dei fenomeni esaminati” (7).
the inevitability of architecture becoming a textual, communicative, experience: “In Borromini
the architectonic idea is none other than the idea that tends to manifest itself in its unity, even
in the form of space, the idea that in music becomes rhythm and in art image, but which is
above all word, and is in any case not separable from language as a social institution” (viii).11
Portoghesi rejects the idea of architectural language as autonomous communication. For him,
Borromini’s architecture

is language, but not a language that exhausts its communicative force merely by
making manifest its laws and presenting itself as an organism; architecture con
communicate sentiments, emotions and judgments, and show didactically how
impersonal to supra-personal ‘langue’ [...] goes on to ‘parole’ [...] through a
process of challenges and logical revisions of the rule, and above all through the
choice of those processes that are more fully endowed with human experience
(viii).12

Portoghesi’s definition of Borromini’s architectural process goes beyond Le Corbusier’s simpler
emotive response. In order for architecture to communicate successfully it must keep in mind
the complete human experience: historical, social, cultural, and emotional. In this way, the
communicative function of architecture is dependent both on the architect whose (reading and
living) experiences influence the design of the structure and the inhabitants (observers) who,
through their own experiences, attach to the structure its meanings. This inherent unity of

11 “In Borromini il pensiero architettonico è nient’altro che il pensiero che tende a manifestarsi nella sua unità
anche nelle forme dello spazio, il pensiero che si fa ritmo nella musica e immagine nell’arte, ma che è soprattutto
parola, e non è comunque distaccabile dal linguaggio come istituzione sociale” (8).
12 “Per Borromini l’architettura è linguaggio ma non esaurisce la sua forza comunicativa nel manifestare le sue leggi
e nel porsi quindi come organismo; essa può comunicare sentimenti, emozioni, giudizi e mostrare didatticamente
come dal meccanismo impersonale e sovra personale della ‘langue’ [...] si passa alla ‘parole’ [...] attraverso un
processo di contestazione e di revisione logica della regola e soprattutto attraverso la scelta di quei processi che
sono più carichi di significati umani” (8).
architecture describes, as Portoghesi puts it, “the story of a man”:\textsuperscript{13} the architect specifically, and society generally.

Though Eco never mentions Portoghesi in his work on the semiotics of architecture, his influence is arguably obvious. Eco, however, is no stranger to the culture of new architectural theories flourishing in the sixties. In fact, architecture is a prominent theme in much of his early works. In his doctoral thesis, \textit{Il problema estetico in Tommaso d’Aquino} (1956), architecture is included with other (medieval) art forms that communicate meaning. Following that publication, he lectured on aesthetics at the Department of Architecture at the Politecnico di Milano and taught Visual Communications at the Department of Architecture at l'Università di Firenze. No doubt because of this, architecture and building have always played an integral role in Eco's work since its inception. In his essay, “La funzione e il segno (semiologia dell’architettura)” in \textit{La struttura assente} (1968), later translated as “Function and Sign: The Semiotics of Architecture” [\textit{FS}] in \textit{A Theory of Semiotics} (1976), Eco asks: “Why does architecture pose a challenge to semiotics? [Because] the objects of architecture apparently \textit{do not communicate} (or at least they are not conceptualized to communicate) but they \textit{function.”}\textsuperscript{14} How do they function? Architectural signs communicate possible functions through a system of conventions and codes: “the architectural code generates an iconic code [and] becomes an object of communicative transaction.”\textsuperscript{15} Eco divides signs into two functions: the primary functions that \textit{denote} and the secondary functions that \textit{connote}:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} “La storia di un uomo” (8).
\item \textsuperscript{14} My translation. “Perchè l’architettura pone sfide alla semiologia? Gli oggetti dell’architettura apparentemente non comunicano (o almeno non sono concepiti per comunicare) ma funzionano.”
\item \textsuperscript{15} My translation. “Il codice architettonico genera un codice iconico [e] diventa oggetto di commercio comunicativo” (SA 193).
\end{itemize}
So, in the course of history, both primary and secondary functions might be found undergoing losses, recoveries and substitutions of various kinds. These losses, recoveries and substitutions are common to the life of forms in general and constitute the norm in the course of reading works of art proper. If they seem more striking (or paradoxical) in the field of architectural forms, that is only because according to the common view one is dealing there with functional objects of an unequivocally indicated function, and thus univocally communicative nature (FS 190).16

In a paragraph not available in his 1976 translation, Eco, using a Dantean metaphor, explains that the univocal communicative function of architecture can be re-evaluated as a result of the cyclical nature of history:

Our time proceeds according to a continual spiral (Dante), that unfolds in the sense that every rediscovery is also an enhancement, and my rereading of Art Nouveau is not based only on codes and ideologies recovered by the bourgeoisie at the beginning of the century, but also on codes and ideological prospects specific to our time [...], that permit us to insert the antiquated object in other contexts, to enjoy it for what it meant then, but also to use it for the connotations which we attribute to it based on our current lexicon [...]. But this process is accompanied by the conservation, the rediscovery of ancient codes.17

In this way, according to Eco, history is constantly spiraling and, as a result, constantly revisiting itself. The functions of the objects of architecture acquire both old and new meaning; both are relevant. We may revisit those functions, but if they remain affixed to a strict set of codes, what Eco streams into the syntactic, semantic and denotative (SA 223), then architecture remains

16 “Nel corso della storia, funzioni primi e seconde sono soggette a perdite, ricuperi, sostituzioni di vario genere; perdite, ricuperi e sostituzioni che sono comuni alla vita delle forme in generale, e che costituiscono la norma nel corso della lettura delle opere d’arte propriamente dette, ma che diventano più evidenti (e paradossali) nel campo delle forme architettoniche, là dove l’opinione comune ritiene che si abbia a che fare con oggetti funzionali portatori di indicazioni inequivocabili, e quindi univocamente comunicativi” (SA 210).
17 My translation. “Il nostro tempo procede secondo una spirale (Dante), che si svolge nel senso in cui ogni riscoperta è anche un accrescimento, e la mia rilettura dell’Art Nouveau non si base soltanto sui codici e le ideologie della borghesia inizio secolo, ma anche su codici e prospettive ideologiche specifiche dei nostri giorni [...], che ci permettono di inserire l’oggetto antiquariato in altri contesti, di goderlo per quel che significava allora, ma di usarlo anche per le connotazioni che vi attribuiamo in base ai nostri lessici di oggi [...]. Ma questa operazione si accompagna alla conservazione, alla riscoperta dei contesti antichi” (SA 213).
static, immovable and therefore in direct opposition of his concept of “l’opera in movimento”
(“the work in movement”) in Opera aperta. If, instead, the functions of the objects of
architecture are considered historically relevant in contemporary culture, as they are in
Portoghesi’s view, and free of fixed codes, then old architecture is put in context with new
architecture in a new culture; it may serve the same or different function, but it can always
generate new meaning. As such, the process promotes what Eco considers an unlimited
semiosis:

Architecture seems to present itself as a persuasive and undoubtedly comforting
message, but it possesses at the same time heuristic and inventive aspects. It
starts from the premises of the society it lives in, but only to subject them to
criticism, and every true work of architecture brings something new not only
when it is a good machine for living or it connotes an ideology for living, but
when it criticizes, by its very existence, the modes and ideologies of living that
had preceded it.18

Consequently, Eco’s consideration of ‘good’ architecture as a “good machine for living”
predates his consideration in his Postille to Il nome della rosa that good novels are “machines
for generating interpretations.” Moreover, Eco’s model of the architect offers another link,
 deriving from the Vitruvian contention that architects must be able to work with various modes
of knowledge:

So the architect in practice is continually obliged to be something other than an
architect. Time and again he is forced to become something of a sociologist, a
psychologist, an anthropologist, a semiotician. And that he can rely in this to
some extent on teamwork – that is, on having experts in the various fields work
with him – does not change the situation very much [...]. Forced to find forms

18 My translation. “L’architettura pare presentarsi come un messaggio persuasivo e indubbiamente consolatorio
ma che possiede nel contempo degli aspetti euristici e inventivi. Parte dalle premesse della società in cui vive, ma
per sottoporle a critica, e ogni vera opera d’architettura apporta qualcosa di nuovo non solo quando è una buona
macchina per abitare o connota una ideologia dell’abitare, ma quando critica, col suo solo sussistere, i modi di
abitare e le ideologie dell’abitare che l’avevano preceduto” (SA 229). This portion is also absent in translation.
that will give forms to systems over which he has no power, forced to articulate a language that has always to express something external to it [,] the architect is obliged in his work to think in terms of the totality (FS 199).\textsuperscript{19}

Missing from the published English translation is Eco’s claim that the architect is “probably the only humanist figure in contemporary society,”\textsuperscript{20} an element revisited in Le forme del contenuto [FDC](1971).

Eco's treatise on the semiotics of architecture seems to have influenced several complementary theories. In his essay on “Semiology and Architecture,” published a year after Eco's La struttura assente, Charles Jencks (known to have coined and defined the phrase “postmodern architecture”), considered the architectural environment as being in a constant in-between state: “the whole environment, including language, is always in this ambiguous state of limbo – somewhere between life and death. Every dead form that one can perceive is a sign waiting to be resuscitated” (11). Both Eco and Jencks use Dantinean metaphors in order to indicate a constant revisitation of forms. Eco, as we have seen, employs the spiral, while Jencks the image of limbo. Eco’s chosen metaphor suggests movement (a spiral must be traveled through), whereas Jencks’ suggests a more ambiguous state of inaction. The circular form of the spiral allows for continuous revisitation of the past; with Eco's definition of a semiotics of

\textsuperscript{19} My translation. “L’architetto, per costruire, è continuamente obbligato ad essere qualcos’altro da se stesso. È costretto a diventare sociologo, politico, antropologo, semiotico. E che lo diventi lavorando in équipe, e cioè facendo lavorare intorno a se semiologi o antropologi, sociologi o politici, non cambia molto la situazione [...]. Costretto a trovare forme che mettono in forma sistemi di esigenze su cui non ha potere, costretto a articolare un linguaggio, come l’architettura, che deve dire sempre qualcosa di diverso a se stesso [...] l’architetto si trova condannato [...] obbligato a pensare la totalità” (SA 245). The original Italian text adds politician and anthropologist in the list of requirements an architect must possess. The reason why they are not mentioned in the English translation is unknown. Perhaps, at the time of publication it reflected the political turmoil that was non-existent and therefore irrelevant at the time of the translation.

\textsuperscript{20} My translation. “L’architetto si trova condannato, per la natura del proprio lavoro, ad essere forse l’unica figura di umanista della società contemporanea” (SA 245).
architecture all forms, past and present, are relevant and must be so in order to communicate meaning.

Revisiting his essay on the semiotics of architecture in *Le forme del contenuto* a few years after the publication of *La struttura assente*, Eco is consistent in his regard of architecture as a communicative tool, as it is structured around a combination of various forms of knowledge. Since an architect builds with various modes of knowledge in mind, architecture, like semiotics, is part of a process of communication: “One of the principal tasks of semiotics consists in the successful study of all aspects of culture as communicative processes [...]. It is obvious that - in this sense – a semiotics of architecture should represent one of the most crucial moments of semiotic research.”

The objects of architecture still communicate meaning: “either in or out of context, [...] they can be carriers of meaning and therefore are considered the pertinent unities of a semantics of architecture, the signs that culture recognizes and organizes into a structured system. But if and how the system would be structured remains to be seen.” For Eco, how the system is structured is demonstrated through his novels. Though, according to Capozzi, Eco abandons the structuralist approach to texts and architecture, he maintains the idea of Lévi-Strauss’s bricoleur who uses preexisting structures and puts them together in new ways. In this manner, I would argue that for Eco architecture functions as a metaphor for constructing his novels.

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22 My translation. “Certì oggetti architettonici, sia fuori contesto, sia in contesto, ma sempre in quanto oggetti singoli, possono essere portatori di significato e quindi vanno considerati le unità pertinenti di una semantica dell’architettura, i segni che la cultura riconosce e organizza in un sistema strutturato. Ma se e come il sistema sia strutturato rimane da dimostrare” (*FD* 179).
Though this chapter is in no way to be considered a thorough analysis of postmodern architecture, it is necessary to highlight a few of the theories which ultimately culminate in the publication of Eco's first novel. *Il nome della rosa* (1981) is published at a time when architecture, like literature, was seeking various new and innovative modes of meaning, particularly in light of the debates around postmodernism. In fact, by the time Eco's debut novel is published, the issue of defining postmodernism (and especially postmodern architecture) has already lead to the establishment of a new critical discourse that has seen a flourishing of new theories. Immediately following the publication of the architectural theories of Eco and Jencks, Diana Agrest and Mario Gandelsonas downplayed theories of 'post'-modern architecture, dismissing new theories of architecture as ideologies that were detrimental to the theoretical development of architecture and arguing that these ideologies impeded true knowledge. Agrest and Gandelsonas were concerned that a semiotic theory of architecture is dependent on isolated formulas, even though Portoghesi had already established that language of architecture as non-autonomous. Theories of pluralism and inclusive architecture also emerged. Mario G. Salvadori, for example, continued the trend that Portoghesi and Eco had begun by assigning to architecture functions that speak of the human experience, but more importantly speak of how architecture is able to shape that experience. Robert A.M Stern distinguished between “white” (exclusive) and “gray” (inclusive) architecture and the three attitudes -- contextualism, allusionism and ornamentalism -- that characterized, in his opinion,

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23 For an in-depth look at this counter-argument against theories of post-modern architecture, see: “Semiotics and Architecture: Ideological Consumption or Theoretical Work” (1973).

24 In the Foreward to Eugene Raskin’s *Architecture and People* (1974), Salvadori echoes Eco’s *La struttura assente* by claiming that “good architecture is a machine for living” (x-xi).
the postmodernism of the time that in some people’s eyes saw architecture as a collage of elements without any real order.⁵

For Jencks, this multivalence was precisely the aesthetic postmodern architecture should strive to achieve. In “The Rise of Post-Modern Architecture” (1975), he revisits and revises his take on the semiotics of architecture as a rebirth of “dead forms” by theorizing a concept of a multivalent architecture that includes both emotional and cognitive responses:

> It is the power of the multivalent work to engage the perceiver’s powers of creation which is significant here. Not only does this allow the architecture to come alive in different ways to each generation and thus result in a lasting architecture, but it also stimulates each generation to reach beyond its familiar abstractions. Multivalent architecture acts as a catalyst on the mind, provoking wholly new interpretations which, in however small a way, affect the individual. The range, delicacy and complexity of meanings which exist in a multivalent work have an analogous effect on the mind that interacts with them. Ultimately, we are transformed by what we experience, and the quality of a work is transferred, even if indirectly, into organizational states of mind (26).

Jencks revisits again the issue of multivalent architecture a few years later in his essay “Post-Modern Architecture,” included in *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (1977), recommending that in order to ensure an inclusive architecture, the architect must him/herself be multivalent. A revision of the definition of multivalent architecture now includes a revisiting of the role of the architect whose aim is now pluralism. The architect must expand his or her knowledge base (a Vitruvian echo) and be “trained as an anthropologist” (an Eco echo) (312), while adhering to what he calls “schizophrenia” as “the only intelligent approach” (313). This results in a particularly messy definition of postmodern architecture that, even for all its inclusiveness, depends too much on the present.

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There was immediate backlash against Jencks's work. Portoghesi in *Postmodern: l'architettura nella società post-industriale* (1982) views Jencks's concept of postmodern architecture as unsatisfying. According to Portoghesi, Jencks's definition “certainly gathers the unifying aspect of many of the most significant works realized in the last decade in the sense of overcoming the ideological crisis of the modern movement.” It does not, however, “satisfy the historical demands made by the architectural culture with the profound changes in society and the risk of confining the phenomenon internally to the private affairs of architects, remaining more of a psychological definition than a socio-critical one” (11). According to Portoghesi, it is more accurate to consider postmodern architecture as a reintegration of forms:

> It is more correct, in my way of seeing, to seek to discern the specificity of the phenomenon by pointing out the substantial differences from what it wants to distinguish itself from, modernism, precisely [...]. In the architectural field, postmodernism means explicit, conscious abolition of the carefully constructed barrier [...]. The barrier abolished, old and new forms have reshuffled themselves and the product of this reshuffling is, before our very eyes, a paradoxical and ambiguous but vital preparatory moment for something different that can only be imagined: reintegration in architecture of an enormous quantity of values, layers and semitones that the homogenizing of international style had irrevocably dispersed. The restitution of architecture to the lap of history [...]. To convince ourselves of it, it is enough to go over the historical symptoms of this postmodern condition (12)."
However, Ada Louise Huxtable, in her essay in “Rebuilding Architecture” (1983) in *On Architecture: Collected Reflections on a Century of Change* (2008), views this proliferation of theories as ineffectual in terms of architecture's progress:

How is recent architecture literature dealing with the transition between modernism and postmodernism? This unusually provocative moment when the art of building is straddling orthodoxy and revolt has produced some of the most spectacular books and periodicals that the profession has ever seen. It soon becomes clear, however, that much of this outpouring will not move the art of architecture forward. Neither buildings nor the books about buildings are escaping the dead ends and enchantment with trivia of the popular culture, or the more dubious, esoteric concerns of the academic culture (212).

Huxtable explains that “postmodernism has simply become an umbrella label for whatever starts by rejecting the principles and practices of modernism. Beyond that, it is a license to hunt – for forms, for decoration, for meaning; its sources are the near and distant past, and its values, which turn away from society and inward to personal tastes and concerns, are primarily and almost exclusively aesthetic” (215). Huxtable sees much to disagree with in Jencks's definition of postmodern architecture, “saying that 'multivalence' is not achieved by sticking a lot of stuff together or assigning meanings so subjective a glossary is needed [...]. If, as critics point out, late modernism is simplistic, inappropriate, brutish, and dull, postmodernism can be confusing, trivial, corny and inconsequential” (218-19). In other words, postmodern architecture lacks consistency, whereas Eco's own concept of architecture is always consistent because of its reintegration, to use Portoghesi's term, of the past. This is done, as we shall see in chapter four, through memory. In this way, for Eco, architecture functions as memory and it is memory that is communicated through various modes of study, including texts too. Eco's
(re)construction of the library in *Il nome della rosa* is of utmost importance because it is the structure that best symbolizes the realm of memory.

There is nothing lacking in the narrative or actual architecture of Eco's first novel, *Il nome della rosa*. Notwithstanding the fact that Eco aptly describes his writing process in “Come scrivo” twenty years after the publication of *Il nome della rosa*, a Model Reader of Eco would be able to discern the way in which each of Eco's works plays into the next one. In other words, Eco's works are the epitome of his concept of “l'opera in movimento” or “the work in movement.” His works, theoretical and fictional, reveal a consistent progression. The abbey in *Il nome della rosa* is a prime example of this continuity. Carefully (re)constructed, the abbey is a combination of Eco's previous theories of architecture and a product of his (reading) experiences – elements which support the concept of a self-reflexive intertextuality. As was previously discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation, the first phase of Eco's writing process consists of a seminal idea and the second involves constructing a world. In order to construct the medieval world of *Il nome della rosa*, Eco admits in “Come scrivo,” as we have seen in the introduction, that the seminal idea originated in an experience he had at a Benedictine monastery at age sixteen. Seminal ideas, however, are often vague and not quantifiable. In order for Eco to construct a world out of a seminal idea, it must consist more than just the narrative. The structures, the geography and the overall environment he builds must not only be architecturally sound, but accurate as well, in order for the novel to work for him as well as the readers. For this, as we have seen, Eco relies on his (reading) experiences:

this is why, when I wrote *The Name of the Rose*, I spent a full year, if I remember correctly, without writing a line [...]. Instead I read, did drawings and diagrams, invented a world. This world had to be as precise as possible so that I can move
Both Eco’s personal experiences at the monastery and his reading experiences, specifically those pertaining to architecture, are echoed throughout the novel through his protagonist, Adso, and through the architecture of the abbey and the library.

Almost from the outset, the abbey and the library are juxtaposed. Adso’s reaction to the abbey at once recalls Eco’s own “moment of upheaval” and encapsulates Eco’s view of architecture as emulating the universe: “For architecture, among all the arts, is the one that most boldly tries to reproduce in its rhythm the order of the universe, which the ancients called ‘kosmos,’ that is to say ornate, since it is like a great animal on whom there shine the perfection and the proportion of all its members” (NOR 26). In this light, the abbey is depicted as good architecture both in terms of structure and moral purpose. The abbey is “the only light that Christianity can oppose to the thirty six libraries of Baghdad” (NOR 35), and it is a mecca for other monks: “[the abbey] is first and foremost a community of scholars, and often it is useful for monks to exchange the accumulated treasures of their learning” (NOR 68).

28“Ecco perché, quando ho scritto Il nome della rosa, ho passato un anno abbondante, se ricordo bene, senza scrivere un rigo [...]. Leggevo, facevo disegni e diagrami, inventavo un mondo. Questo mondo doveva essere il più preciso possibile, in modo che io potessi muovermi con assoluta confidenza. Per Il nome della rosa, ho disegnato centinaia di labirinti, e di piante di abbazie, basandomi su altri disegni, e su luoghi che visitavo, perché avevo bisogno che tutto funzionasse, avevo bisogno di sapere quanto ci avrebbero messo per andare parlando da un luogo all’altro. E questa definiva anche la durata dei dialoghi” (SL 337).

29“Perché l’architettura è tra tutte le arti quella che più arditamente cerca di riprodurre nel suo ritmo l’ordine dell’universo, che gli antichi chiamavano kosmos, e cioè ornato, in quanto è come un grande animale su cui rifulge la perfezione e la proporzione di tutte le sue membra” (NDR 34).

30 “È l’unica luce che la cristianità possa opporre alle trentasei biblioteche di Bagdad” (NDR 43).

31 “Ma l’abbazia è anzitutto una comunità di studiosi e spesso è utile che i monaci si scambino i tesori di dottrina che accumulano” (NDR 76).
that monks who travel to the abbey are not there to see the abbey; they are there specifically to catch a glimpse of the library, which, as was previously discussed in chapter two, is a convoluted, labyrinthine structure where one is easily lost within its walls and within its volumes. While a monk is able to “move freely through the whole abbey” (NOR 35), this is not true for the library. In order to “conform to the rules of the abbey” (NOR 38), a monk must never enter the library. William and Adso break the rules and penetrate the dark library and spark a series of events, including Adso’s first sexual experience, for instance, which ultimately lead to the destruction of the library. In this manner, while the abbey is designated as good architecture, the library is its opposite, dark, even apocalyptic, architecture.

Another mode in which the abbey and the library are juxtaposed is in the way Eco (re)constructs them. As was previously discussed, the architecture in Il nome della rosa, particularly the abbey, is a product of Eco’s (reading) experiences and research, in which he studied various plans and blueprints. While the (re)construction of Eco’s medieval abbey is intertextually sound on a structural, aesthetic level, the architecture of the library is intertextually sound on a more narrative level. In the New York Times article, “Who Needs Poets?” (1971), Jorge Luis Borges defined the writer’s trade as a “strange one. Chesterton said ‘Only one thing is needful – everything.‘ To a writer this everything is more than an encompassing word; it is literal. It stands for the chief, for the essential, human experiences […]. In fact he needs the universe.” Borges’s definition of the writer shares several similarities with

32 “‘Potete aggirarvi per tutta l’abbazia, ho detto. Non certo per l’ultimo piano dell’Edificio, nella biblioteca’” (NDR 43).
33 “‘adeguate alle regole dell’abbazia’” (NDR 46).
Vitruvius’s classic definition of the architect and adheres to Eco’s views that when constructing the world of a novel, every experience can have relevance. The library is the perfect structure to exemplify the integration of “everything” -- of all forms of knowledge and experience.

The structure of the library in Borges's “Library of Babel” is spiral: “also through here passes a spiral stairway, which sinks abysmally and soars upwards to remote distances” (51). Borges's library is “unlimited and cyclical [sic]” (58) and gives the reader a sense of the infinite. Borges and Eco's libraries share the same Dantean metaphor of the spiral, but while Borges's spiral library lives on infinitely, Eco's is destroyed in an infernal fire. Christina Grau, in Borges y la arquitectura (1989), explains that the infinity of Borges's library is due to its baroque characteristics: “Borges describes 'The Library of Babel' as ‘a very baroque tale’ […]. All baroque architecture suggests infinite spaces; each work of art is converted into a symbol of the universe that points towards an uninterrupted continuity of space, infinite and immutable” (77).34 According to Grau, notwithstanding the grandeur of Borges's library, some of the spaces denote a sense of entrapment along with a sense of confusion:

But the architectural elements that generate in the reader the sensation of increasing space are the stairways and the ventilation shafts […]. This description – leaving aside the irony that it includes – sends us to dark spaces, subterranean, to a labyrinth that seems to not only cover the whole universe but penetrates the deepest depths of it. In reading, our architectural experience intermingles and inevitably confuses itself with other experiences – literary or pictorial – that take as base the figure of the spiral […]. The sensation is of loss of coordinates, including one of vertigo (77-78).35

34 My translation. “Borges calificaba 'La Biblioteca de Babel' como 'un cuento muy barroco.' […]. Todo la arquitectura barroca sugiere los espacios infinitos; cada obra de arte se convierte en un símbolo del universo que señala hacia una continuidad ininterrumpida del espacio, infinita e inmutable.”
35 My translation. “Pero los elementos arquitectónicos que generan en el lector la sensación de espacio creciente, son las escaleras y los pozos de ventilación […]. Esta descripciones – dejando aparte la ironia que encierran – remiten a espacios oscuros, subterráneos, a un laberinto que parece no sólo recubrir todo el universo sino penetrar en los más profundo de él. En la lectura nuestra experiencia arquitectónica se entremezcla y se confunde
While William and Adso are able to penetrate what is in part Eco's reconstruction of Borges's library, the library is ultimately destroyed in the end. Having uncovered the truth of the library, the library loses its purpose for them. If there is no more pursuit of the truth, then what is the purpose of the library? What is it good for? The library must work like architecture (and texts) in a democratic relationship with its various elements, past and present, and its users, in order to ensure its continued existence. For Eco, the inclusion of the human dimension is a sign of a good library, but so is its relevance to the past and present.

Eco opens his essay “De biblioteca,” given at a conference celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Biblioteca Comunale in Milano in the same year Il nome della rosa is published, citing Borges's tale of the utopian library:

> I wonder if all of us here, library-goers, library directors and library workers alike, on listening to and thinking about these pages again, have not had similar personal experiences – in youth or in maturity – of long corridors, long rooms; in other words there are grounds for wondering if the Library of Babel, created as an image and model of the universe, is not also the image and model of many possible libraries (8).

According to Eco, “a good library,” like Borges's, should invoke nightmares: “a good library, in the sense of a bad library (that is to say a good example of the negative model that I'm trying to
create), must first and foremost be a giant *cauchemar* [sic]“(8). Nightmares, as is the case with Borges’s library, are rarely conquered and as Eco’s library in *Il nome della rosa* is in large part a reconstruction of Borges’s, it is at the outset doomed to failure. Rather, for Eco, the construction of the library, as described in “De biblioteca,” goes back to his views on architecture as an anthropological concept:

> If the library is, as Borges put it, a model of the universe, we must try to transform it into a universe on a human scale. I would remind you, a human scale also means a light-hearted scale, with a chance of a coffee [...]. In other words, a library people feel like going to, one that is gradually transformed into a great edifice devoted to leisure time, like the Museum of Modern Art where you can go to the cinema, take a stroll in the gardens, go look at the statuary or eat a full meal (14).  

For Eco, a library should not only be a place in which to pursue knowledge through books, as in Michael Lapidge’s definition in *The Anglo-Saxon Library*(2008): “a library is a collection of books acquired and arranged for the purposes of study and the pursuit of knowledge [...]. The more books, the more knowledge, in theory at least, and again with the corollary that the sum of human knowledge could be contained and represented in a single library, however vast” (1).

But Eco’s library is also an inclusive architecture that involves human participation – a place for various types of experiences outside of books. According to Alberto Manguel in *The Library at Night* (2008), for Eco, “the library should have a haphazard, flea market quality”(163). In other

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37 “Una buona biblioteca, nel senso di una cattiva biblioteca (e cioè di un buon esempio del modello negativo che cerco di realizzare), dev’essere anzitutto un immenso *cauchemar*” (http://www.liberliber.it/mediateca/libri/e/eco/de_bibliotheca/html/testo.htm).

38 “Cioè se la biblioteca è, come vuole Borges, un modello dell'Universo, cerchiamo di trasformarla in un universo a misura d'uomo, e, ricordo, a misura d'uomo vuol dire anche gaio, anche con la possibilità del cappuccino [...], cioè una biblioteca in cui faccia venire voglia di andarci e si trasformi poi gradatamente in una grande macchina per il tempo libero, com'è il Museum of Modern Art in cui si va al cinema, si va a passeggiare nel giardino, si vanno a guardare le statue e a mangiare un pasto completo” (http://www.liberliber.it/mediateca/libri/e/eco/de_bibliotheca/html/testo.htm).
words, it is not meant to be easily reconstructed, for each visit supplies different experiences. The difficulty in reconstructing Eco's library is perhaps in part due to its hybrid characteristics.

Just because these hybrid elements make it difficult to reconstruct the library does not mean theorists have not attempted to do so. Eco, himself, attempts to rebuild Borges’s library, and there are many classical references – Ezekiel, as we shall see – to attempts to build structures that are, in fact, impossible to build. Theorists have attempted to imagine Eco’s library in an effort to take it from its fictional realm into a realistic one. Lapidge points to John Ward's essay “Alexandria and the Medieval Legacy: The Book, the Monk and the Rose” (2005): “On the basis of information given by Eco concerning the size of the rooms which housed the books, and the number of shelves in each, John ward was recently able to calculate that this vast (but fictional) library contained some 87,000 books” (2). Ward, however, clarifies in his essay that that number is inaccurate and “violently wrong” (Ward 170). While on the one hand, Lapidge criticizes the size of Eco’s library as being unrealistic for a medieval library, on the other, he applauds it for its success: “The Name of the Rose is fiction, of course. But what makes it such compelling reading is the underlying motif that the library functioned to ensure the preservation of all knowledge” (Lapidge 3). The reason that Lapidge has difficulty considering Eco's edifice a medieval one is because it is not solely medieval. It is a combination of past and present, and of reading and personal and cultural experiences. It is at once medieval and postmodern. In fact, what Lapidge finds as a negative in Eco’s structure is what the spirit of postmodern architecture is all about.

In the Postille to Il nome della rosa (1983), on the heels of Jencks's work on The Language of Postmodern Architecture and its critique by others (such as Portoghesi and
Huxtable), Eco defines postmodernism as a “term bon à tout faire” (PNOR 530). On this, both Eco and Huxtable agree. Eco's views of postmodernism, however, are broader in scope, not focusing solely on architecture; nor does he make mention of Jencks’s postmodern works. He agrees with Huxtable, however, that postmodernism is a highly subjective practice: “I have the impression that [postmodern] is applied today to anything the user of the term happens to like. Further, there seems to be an attempt to make it increasingly retroactive” (PNOR 530). According to Eco, postmodernism is not an innovative concept limited to this period: “Actually, I believe postmodernism is not a trend to be chronologically defined, but, rather, an ideal category – or, better still, a Kuntswollen [sic], a way of operating. We can say that every period has its own postmodernism, just as every period has its own mannerism” (PNOR 530). In this way, Eco's is a paradoxically historical approach: “the postmodern reply to the modern consists of recognizing the past, since it cannot really be destroyed, because its destruction leads to silence, must be revisited: but with irony, not innocently” (PNOR 530). In fact, the world Eco constructs in his novel is far from innocent: the structures inherent in the novel are carefully constructed through his various research and experiences, and then carefully destroyed and resurrected.

39 In fact, Eco mentions Jencks only recently in Sulla letteratura (2002) and Confessions of a Young Novelist (2011) and attributes to him the phrase “double-coding” (CYN 30).
40 “Ho l'impressione che oggi lo si applichi a tutto ciò che piace a chi lo usa. D'altra parte sembra ci sia un tentativo di farlo slittare all'indietro” (PNDR 528).
41 “Credo tuttavia che il post-moderno non sia una tendenza circoscritta cronologicamente, ma una categoria spirituale, o meglio, una Kuntswollen, un modo di operare. Potremmo dire che ogni epoca ha il proprio postmodernismo, così come ogni epoca avrebbe il proprio manierismo” (PNDR 528).
42 “La risposta post-moderna al moderno consiste nel riconoscere che il passato, visto che non può essere distrutto, perché la sua distruzione porta al silenzio, deve essere rivisitato: con ironia in modo non innocente” (PNDR 529).
Eco's concept of irony has an appropriately playful quality: “Irony, metalinguistic play, enunciation squared. Thus, with the modern, anyone who does not understand the game can only reject it, but with the postmodern, it is possible not to understand the game and yet to take it seriously. Which is, after all, the quality (the risk) of irony. There is always someone who takes ironic discourse seriously” (PNOR 531). Which is to say that ironic discourse should not be taken seriously. Eco's library and the concept of irony are irrevocably linked since both speak in terms of the possibility of enjoyable experiences. The library in *Il nome della rosa* is destroyed precisely because it is taken too seriously. It is worth reminding ourselves that the murders that occur in the abbey are as a result of the attempts of Jorge of Burgos's, the blind librarian (also based on Borges), to conceal Aristotle's lost book on laughter, a topic up for debate throughout the novel. Laughter is that humanizing quality that the abbey lacks and that the monks pursue. The library's fate in *Il nome della rosa* is ironic in another way since, though it functions to ensure that all human knowledge is preserved, it is only when it is burned down and the story retold by Adso that the library and its knowledge become truly accessible. In this way, the library becomes mythologized, legendary, or, according to Ward, “a metaphor” (171). It is given a narrative quality and becomes a way in which the structure of the library can be read.

In his *The History of Postmodern Architecture* (1988), Heinrich Klotz describes postmodern architecture as a lament for lost truths: “[a]long with the advent of

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43 “Ironia, gioco metalinguistico, enunciazione al quadrato. Per cui se, col moderno, chi non capisce il gioco non può che rifiutarlo, col post-moderno è anche possibile non capire il gioco e prendere le cose sul serio. Che è poi la qualità (il rischio) del’ironia” (PNDR 529).
postmodernism comes the demise of truth. All at once everything seems lost – modern architecture, humanity, democracy and morals” (101). His is the popular apocalyptic point of view on postmodernism. We can see in Eco’s works especially the more positive possibility of a kind of truth--as long as it is based on an all-inclusive kind of knowledge. Likewise, in order to add vitality to architecture, Klotz argues the need to rediscover a sense of beauty rather than function in architecture. In a way, he proposes that architectural forms be viewed as iconic images: “all that deserves our interest is the high quality of the individual building, which is predicated on the architect’s ability to breathe new life into the vocabularies he encounters, be they modernist or historicized. I call the method from which this vitalization process draws its potential force the *fictionalization of architecture*” (3). Klotz’s focus is on the architect’s ability to breathe new life into ‘old art forms,’ much like what an author like Eco can do in a written text. According to Klotz, architecture (again like postmodern fiction) has to be able to narrate:

> the characteristic objective of postmodernism – to create an architecture of ‘narrative contents’ can be achieved. To the bare realization of the demands of utility are added ‘border-violating’ contents, which lift architecture out of its primary subservience to function and which use it as a medium extending beyond functionality and serving to represent an ‘imaginary world’ – that is as a means of fiction […] . Only after a building is no longer bound up solely with itself, only when the stereometric autonomy of perfect volumetric wholes is destroyed and allusions and associations are permitted that go beyond the building itself, is there a possibility for creating architectonic fiction (128).

By analogy, when Eco constructs the abbey in *Il nome della rosa*, the descriptions of its construction form a communicative architecture through words rather than physical form.

Recently, Eco has begun redefining and clarifying terms from his older treatises so as to include a consideration of our new hypertextual era. In his essay “Su alcune funzioni della letteratura” (“On Some Functions of Literature”) (2000), the relationship between architecture
and literature is, even if indirectly, revisited. The functions Eco assigns to literature closely resemble the functions Salvadori had assigned to architecture in 1974. Among the functions of literature Eco maintains that it “keeps language alive by our collective heritage” (OL 2), and by so doing it also enables the creation of a “sense of identity and community” (OL 3). Eco’s literature, like Borromini’s architecture as described by Portoghesi, encompasses the complexity of the human experience and as such offers “a model for truth” (OL 7). In an almost simultaneous process, the functions of architecture are once again reconsidered along with the functions of literature. James F. O’Gorman, in *ABC of Architecture* (1998), revisits the notion of architecture as a communicative tool: “architecture is a form of language, of communication. It speaks. It can convey through its design its place in society, its content” (89), that must work in conjunction with history. And since architecture can be, for Eco, a metaphor for texts, it must work also in conjunction with textuality and intertextuality. In this way, O’Gorman alludes to the inherent readability of architecture:

Buildings, like other forms of communication, take on or deepen their meaning through quotation. Just as allusions to Shakespeare or the Bible may reverberate through a novel, a poem or an essay, giving it a depth not otherwise attainable, so quotations from celebrated past architectural monuments or eras can enhance our reading of a building by assuming something of their aura (91).

In other words, the Vitruvian definition of the architect and the extent of his or her knowledge base are once again pertinent. In order for the architect to convey meaning through his or her

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44 “La letteratura tiene anzitutto in esercizio la lingua come patrimonio collettivo” (SL 9).
45 “La letteratura, contribuendo a formare lingua, crea identità e comunità” (SL 10).
46 “Il mondo della letteratura [...] ci offre quindi un modello [...] di verità” (SL 14).
architecture and in order for that architecture to communicate, the structure must have
historical foundations:

Architecture is more broadly communicative by association, by the appropriation
of the accumulated meanings that have adhered to various styles throughout
history. By association with particular uses in the past, specific architectural
forms have come to embody meaning just as words convey meaning. The
appropriate form, like the appropriate word, is necessary if the architect is to get
his or her message across. The architect must know history if he or she wishes to
speak clearly through buildings. The critic must know history if he or she wants
to understand what is being communicated (91).

Architecture’s historical ties lead Leland M. Roth in Understanding Architecture: Its Elements,
History, And Meaning (2007) to consider it as “arguably the most accurate, the most truly
suggests that contemporary architecture can only be successful when connected with the past:
“But as in any creative discipline, the adventure of architecture can be informed by looking at
what others have done and through analyzing their work, trying to understand the ways they
have met the challenges” (9). The functions of literature and those of architecture have several
of the same goals in mind when it comes to creating a sense of identity and community and
when they seek to communicate human experience, but this is no way diminishes the
architect’s authority over his or her structure. Rather, the implication is that, as in writing,
architecture is also influenced by the architect's experiences, particularly his or her reading
experiences, and through the structure, the story of the architect/author can be found.

Eco’s own reading experiences shape his work so that his notion of postmodernism
revisits the more general past as well as his own personal past. This is especially evident in Eco’s
penultimate novel, La misteriosa fiamma della regina Loana. In the example of Il nome della
rosa, it is clear that Eco’s reading experiences not only directly aided him in constructing the abbey, but by revisiting the medieval world and its inherent allegories, they also attached to it several layers of meaning. Eco’s architectural construction, though destroyed in the end, is an inclusive structure insofar as it is able to facilitate multiple meanings – it is an active architecture, to use Eco’s own terms, an “opera in movimento.” Eco reminds us that this inclusiveness is not lessened by the fire; rather, the building exemplifies Eco’s notion that the past is not dead. Though the structure is destroyed, it continues to live on in Adso’s writing, where it awaits other interpretations. Where postmodern and poststructural criticism declares the death of the author and the birth of a double-coded relationship between text and reader, Eco, in Il nome della rosa, is advocating a triple-coded relationship among author, reader and text; it is the author, after all, who offers the structure for the reader to interpret. In the case of the library, Adso’s writing ensures its survival in those who read and interpret what he has written. Fittingly, much of what Adso has written is based on his own reading and life experiences. Without Eco’s accurate design of the abbey, together with the labyrinthine library in Il nome della rosa, the novel’s outcome could not have had the effect it had on its reader. Eco’s architectural design communicates to the reader not only the necessity of both structure and interpretation but also the apocalyptic dangers of the wrong kinds of both. But while with il nome della rosa Eco uses his investigations to construct actual structures--the abbey, the library--with Baudolino, Eco allows himself to redesign and reconstruct both a world which did exist, the fictional version of the city of Alessandria, and a world only fabled to have existed, the realm of Prester John.
B. **Self-reflexive intertextual cities: *Baudolino***

In 2005, Eco provided (in English) a Foreword to a Hesperus edition of Edmondo De Amicis’s *Constantinople*. It is a shortened version of the article: “Istanbul as Unity and Trinity” (2004), in which he describes his own voyage to the city and his experiences with De Amicis’s book in hand. He begins the article with a reference to Borges’s “Historia del guerrero y de la cautiva” (“The Story of the Barbarian and the Prisoner”) about a Lombard barbarian who arrives, with his tribe, outside the walls of Ravenna. Never having seen a city, he has plans to conquer it that quickly dissipate as he takes in the things he has never seen before:

> Borges describes it for us: he sees the cypresses and marble monuments, a diverse yet not disorderly whole, an organism made of statues, temples and gardens, columns and capitals, measured and open spaces. He sees a kind of complex mechanism: he doesn’t yet understand its purpose, but he senses an immortal intelligence at work in its design. It is at this point that [he] kneels down, vanquished by the very thing he had come to conquer and destroy (Foreword, De Amicis vii).

His intentions are quickly changed, Eco states, as “the vision of the city amazes and changes him: he abandons his own people to fight (and eventually die) for Ravenna” (vii). Why is Borges’s story of importance to Eco? The Lombard in this story, it would seem, follows a long line of characters who are enchanted by the images of cities they encounter amid their travels. During his own literary travels, Eco attempts to ‘conquer’ the captivating city of Constantinople: “I went on dreaming about it, with the help of photographs and engravings, paintings and stories, and even old maps of the place. There are cities you find yourself in by chance and others which you prepare to visit over a long time, mixing fantasy and erudition” (viii). In this way, Eco’s protagonist, Baudolino, mirrors Eco’s own studious mannerisms: before he goes off to the land of Prester John, he studies the maps and stories that are associated with the city. As
a result, when both author and protagonist arrive at the city they arrive “perhaps,” as Eco puts it in the Hesperus Foreword, “knowing too much, so that, in order to discover the real city which lay under the highly personal image I had created for my own use and enjoyment, I had to dig like an archeologist” (viii). But to create the world he wanted to construct in his novel, he had to also build like a Vitruvian architect.

In 1960, Kevin Lynch applied Le Corbusier’s notion of a ‘legible’ architecture to a concept of the city. In his treatise on The Image of the City, Lynch, like Le Corbusier, considers the relationships of not only the raw materials that make up a city but the inhabitants that move about it and participate in its making. For Lynch, the citizens, both as individuals and as a collective, are an integral part of a city: “every citizen has had long associations with some part of his city, and his image is soaked in memories and meanings” (Lynch 1). The city, according to Lynch, is moveable, in the sense that it is constantly in transition, and made up of many, often contradictory parts: “most often our perception of the city is not sustained, but rather partial, fragmentary, mixed with other concerns. Nearly every sense is in operation, and the image is the composite of them all […]. There is no final result, only a continuous succession of phases” (2). Though the city is in constant flux, Lynch maintains that the cityscape should remain ‘clear’ and ‘legible’ for “just as this printed page, if it is legible, can be visually grasped as a related pattern of recognizable symbols, so the legible city would be one whose districts or landmarks or pathways are easily identifiable and are easily grasped into an over-all pattern” (3). In this manner, Lynch’s notion of a legible city practically predicts a theory of a semiotics of architecture and corresponds with budding theories of literature and art being posited in Italy and France at the time.
According to Eugene Raskin, “language, as we know it, consists of symbols – words, sentences, gestures, forms – anything that may be put together in order to communicate. In architecture,” he continues, “the symbols are walls, roofs, doors, windows, steps, spires, and so on – the elements of which buildings are made” (Raskin 84). Like Eco conceiving of the “open work,” Raskin acknowledges that each object of architecture “can be designed in an infinite number of ways and then put together in innumerable variations. Thus the final meaning is an indeterminate intangible which depends, just as does music or poetry, on the creative and expressive power of the creator and the interpretive and receptive capacity of those who respond” (84). Here, the line linking author and architect is clear, since Eco possesses so many of an architect’s qualities and vice versa. Furthermore, Eco seems to designs his novels as an architect would a building or city. And what does an architect do but either design and construct a world that previously did not exist and so is based on imagination, or redesign or reconstruct one that once did?

Considering the city and its architecture as symbolic and communicative forms is not a novel idea. Joseph Rykwert, in his *Idea of Town*, maintains that to the ancients the very idea of a plurality of meanings in a city was already ingrained: “But in antiquity the idea that everything means itself and something else as well, was general and ingrained: it was taken for granted” (27). Today, city planners and architects are consciously assigning meaning to their works, just as authors do to their texts. Interestingly enough, ancient architecture and city planning were based more on ritual than on logical patterns. Quoting Thomas Hobbes’s translation of *Thucydides*, Rykwert asserts that when designing the ancient city, the planner had its inhabitants at the forefront of his design: “. . .‘It is men that make the city, not the walls and
ships without them” (23). Since its inception, the concept of the city has been cause for much anthropological, historical, philosophical, and literary debate. One thing on which these theoretical fields can agree is the notion that the founding of a city usually delineates a desire to seek refuge and to commemorate something that has been lost. Thus, the basis of a city’s foundation is largely a symbolic act. St. Augustine’s literary description of a city in 410 A.D. divides the notion of city into representations of the earthly and heavenly worlds. In *De civitate dei (The City of God)*, Augustine describes the earthly city as a commemoration of “the love of self, even to the contempt of God,” and the heavenly city as a commemoration of “the love of God, even to the contempt of self” (*The City of God* 593).47 The first represents the city of men and the other the city of God. Augustine maintains that since the first human beings, made in God’s image, were born into paradise, it is evident that at their expulsion, these first parents would give birth to children who would come to represent this earthly and heavenly division:

Cain was the first-born and he belonged to the city of men, after him was born Abel, who belonged to the city of God […]. But the first vessel to dishonor was made, and after it another to honor. For in each individual [...] there is first of all this which is reprobate, that from which we must begin, but in which we need not necessarily remain; afterwards is that which is well-approved, to which we may by advancing attain, and in which, when we have reached it we may abide (*The City of God* 596).48

The first city was thus founded on these seminal distinctions. Cain, the first-born and reprobate, murders his brother Abel, the second and honorable sibling, out of jealousy. As a result, Cain is

47“Fecerunt itaque ciuitates duas amores duo, terrenam scilicet amor sui usque ad contemptum Dei, caelestem uero amor Dei usque ad contemptum sui.”
48“Natus est igitur prior Cain ex illis duobus generis humani parentibus, pertinens ad hominum ciuitatem, posterior Abel, ad ciuitatem Dei […] prius autem factum est usus in contumeliam, post uero alterum in honorem, quia et in ipso uno, sicut iam dixi, homine prius est reprobum, unde necesse est incipiamus et ubi non est necesse ut remaneamus, posterius uero probum, quo proficientes ueniamus et quo peruenientes maneamus.”
exiled and forced into a life of aimless wandering. At some point, however, in an attempt to seek refuge from his roving, Cain begins to build a space in which he and his family might settle; his is the first city. Augustine affirms that Cain’s crime of fratricide becomes the archetypal act on which subsequent cities are founded, more specifically that of Rome.

What is most notable about Augustine’s interpretation of the biblical story is the significance he attaches to the idea of self, both an earthly self and a godly one. With the city’s founding we have the first instance of an attempt to reconcile the two. In their *Commentary of the Old Testament*, Karl Keil and Franz Delitzsch describe Cain’s plight after his banishment as a process of reconciliation: “we cannot fail to detect the desire to neutralize the curse of banishment, and create for his family a point of unity, as a compensation for the loss of unity in fellowship with God” (117). Cain’s city is the first city where humanity is able to realize its desires and their ultimate consequences, illustrated through the city’s founding. In the city, humanity is obligated to create an identity separate from God’s, so that in some way, while creating the city, Cain/humanity must also be creating a self. Cain becomes, according to Riccardo Mariani’s *Il libro della città*, the first human creator, the first artist, the first city builder and the first architect (6). This first city must, by necessity, serve as the template for all subsequent literary cities created thereafter. Cain’s city is the first possible world created by man; his first city, to paraphrase H.J. Ross, is the “first book of man” (6). As a consequence, literature, city planning and architecture become irrevocably linked throughout the course of their history. Cain’s city is the original that architects and writers alike will attempt to recreate, renovate and reconstruct.
Architects, as Vitruvius points out, must be well versed in all fields of study, including geography and astronomy. It is not surprising that Eco, as architect of the world he constructs in *Baudolino*, is not only well versed in both geography and astronomy but in the history of false geography and astronomy as well. In his essay “Le belle mappe: viaggi immaginari fra cielo e terra” (“Beautiful Maps: Imaginary Voyages Between Heaven and Earth”), Eco confesses to owning a collection of books strictly on all things false: “I consoled myself with my collection of antique books that I call: the semiological, peculiar, strange, magical and pneumatic library, which is comprised of books that speak only of things false.” Some of these texts, he states, contain early depictions of the structure, both cosmological and geographical, of the world. The antiquated debate about a flat or spherical world, he states in this article, came to a head when a Christian author in the fourth century developed the theory that the world is actually rectangular, following the tradition in the scriptures which saw the world as a tabernacle:

The fact was exploited that a Christian author of the sixth century, like Lactantius (in his *Institutiones divinae*), since in the Bible the universe is described on the model of the tabernacle, and therefore in a quadrangular shape, opposed the pagan theories of the spherical shape of the earth, also because he couldn’t accept the idea that there existed Antipodes where men would have to walk with their heads upside down.

In *Baudolino*, the protagonist goes in search of this very map in the belief that it will lead him to Prester John.

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49My translation. “Mi sono consolato con la mia collezione di libri antichi, che si chiama Biblioteca semiologica, curiosa, lunatica, magica et pneumatica, e comprende solo libri che parlino di cose false” (*Golem Indispensabile*).

50My translation. “Si è quindi sfruttato il fatto che un autore cristiano del IV secolo come Lattanzio (nel suo *Institutiones divinae*), siccome nella Bibbia l’universo viene descritto sul modello del Tabernacolo, e quindi in forma quadrangolare, si opponeva alle teorie pagane della rotondità della terra, anche perché non poteva accettare l’idea che esistessero degli Antipodi dove gli uomini avrebbero dovuto camminare con la testa all’ingiù” (*Golem Indispensabile*).
The map of Cosmas from the sixth century is a clear drawing that depicts the world as Lactantius saw it: a tabernacle:

Finally it was discovered that Cosmas Indicopleuste, a Byzantine geographer from the 6th century, in one of his Christian Topographies, always keeping the biblical tabernacle in mind, had claimed that the cosmos was rectangular, with an arch that hung over the flat floor of the Earth [...]. The curved vault remains hidden from our eyes by the stereoma, or rather by the cover of the heavens. Underneath extends l’ecumene, or rather all of the earth on which we live, which rests upon the Ocean and rises along an imperceptible slope and continues towards the north-west, where there soars a mountain so high that its presence escapes our eye and its peak merges with the clouds. The sun, moved by the angels – to whom must also be attributed the rain, earthquakes and all other atmospheric phenomena – passes through the morning from the east towards the south, in front of the mountain, and illuminates the world, and at night rises again towards the west and disappears behind the mountain. The inverse cycle is accomplished by the moon and the stars.51

In Baudolino, Zosimo describes the same set of details:

'Now listen carefully to what I say: in the lower part of the tabernacle there was a table with twelve loaves of bread and twelve fruits, one for each month of the year; all around the table ran a plinth that depicted the Ocean, and around the plinth there was a frame one palm wide the depicted the land of the beyond, where to the East the Earthly Paradise is situated. The sky was represented by the vault, which rested entirely on the extremities of the earth, but between the vault and the base extended the veil of the firmament, beyond which lies the celestial world that only one day we will see face to face [...].' It showed the form of the universe, exactly like a temple, with its curving vault, whose upper part remained concealed from our eyes by the veil of the firmament. 'Below the ecumen extends, that is, all the inhabited earth, which, however, is not flat but rests on the Ocean, which surrounds it, and rises through an imperceptible and continuous slope towards the extreme north and towards the west, where

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51My translation. “Infine era stato scoperto che un geografo bizantino del VI secolo, Cosma Indicopleuste, in una sua Topografia Cristiana, sempre pensando al tabernacolo biblico, aveva sostenuto che il cosmo fosse rettangolare, con un arco che sovrastava il pavimento piatto della Terra [...] La volta ricurva rimane celata ai nostri occhi dallo stereoma, ovvero dal velo del firmamento. Sotto si stende l’ecumene, ovvero tutta la terra sui cui abitiamo, che poggia sull’Oceano e monta per un declivio impercettibile e continuo verso nord-ovest, dove si erge una montagna talmente alta che la sua presenza sfugge al nostro occhio e la sua cima si confonde con le nubi. Il sole, mosso dagli angeli - a cui si debbono anche le piogge, i terremoti e tutti gli altri fenomeni atmosferici - passa al mattino da oriente verso il meridione, davanti alla montagna, e illumina il mondo, e alla sera risale a occidente e scompare dietro la montagna. Il ciclo inverso viene compiuto dalla luna e dalle stelle” (Golem).
mountain stands so high that its presence escapes our eye and its peak is lost in the clouds. The sun and the moon, moved by the angels – to whom we owe also rain, earthquake, and all other atmospheric phenomena – pass in the morning from east towards the south, in front of the mountain, and illuminate the world, and in the evening they reascend towards the west and disappear behind the mountain, giving us the impression of sunset [...] because the mountain on the other side is desert, and no one has ever been there’ (BE 257).

But as the map does not articulate what is on the other side of the mountain, which is Baudolino’s main concern, Cosmas, as if in anticipation of being discredited, also provided an aerial view of the world, which Zosimos also explains:

‘Considering that, to depict the tabernacle as it is, our art is incapable of showing everything that remains covered by its walls and by the mountain, Cosmas drew another map, which shows the earth as if we were looking down on it from above, flying in the firmament as the angels see it. This map [...] shows the position of the lands that we know, included within the frame of the Ocean, and beyond the Ocean, the lands inhabited by man before the Flood, where, after Noah, no one has ever set foot’ (BE 258).

Baudolino utilizes these imagined maps as the means by which he and his companions are to find the land of Prester John.

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52 “Nelle parte inferiore del tabernacolo c’era una tavola con dodici pani e dodici frutti, ciascuno per uno dei mesi dell’anno, tutto intorno alla tavola stava uno zoccolo che raffigurava l’Oceano, e intorno allo zoccolo v’era una cornice larga un palmo che rappresentava la terra dell’al di là, dove a oriente si trova il Paradiso Terrestre. Il cielo era rappresentato dalla volta, che si appoggiava interamente sulle estremità della terra. Ma tra la volta e la base era steso il velo del firmamento, al di là del quale sta il mondo celeste che noi solo un giorno vedremo faccia a faccia [...]’ Esso mostrava le forma dell’universo esattamente come un tempio, con la sua volta ricurva, la cui parte superiore rimane celata ai nostri occhi dal velo del firmamento. ‘Sotto si stende l’ecumene, ovvero tutta la terra su cui abitiamo, che però non è piatta, ma poggia sull’Oceano, che la circonda, e monta per un declivio impercettibile e continuo verso l’estremo settentrione e verso occidente, dove si erge una montagna talmente alta che la sua presenza sfuge al nostro occhio e la sua cima si confonde con le nubi. Il sole e la luna – mossi dagli angeli – a cui si debbono anche le piogge, i terremoti e tutti gli altri fenomeni atmosferici – passano al mattino da oriente verso il meridione, davanti alla montagna e illuminano il mondo [...] Così, mentre da noi cala la notte, dall’altra parte della montagna è giorno, ma questo giorno nessuno lo vede [...] e nessuno vi è mai stato’” (BI 262-263).

53 “Siccome a rappresentare il tabernacolo così com’è, la nostra arte è incapace di fare vedere tutto quello che rimane coperto dalle sue pareti e dalla montagna, Cosma ha disegnato un’altra mappa, che mostra la terra come se la guardassimo dall’alto, volando nel firmamento, o come forse la vedono gli angeli. Questa mappa [...] mostra la posizione delle terre che conosciamo, comprese entro la cornice dell’Oceano, e al di là dell’Oceano, le terre dove gli uomini hanno abitato prima del diluvio, ma dopo Noe nessune ci è mai piu andato” (BI 264).
Eco relates in this article on “Beautiful Maps” (as in Baudolino) how this fictionalized and imagined geography and astronomy actually helped in the discovery of the world:

To conclude, some final words of comprehension with regards to imaginary astronomies and geographies. As some of you may know, I am suddenly fascinated by the letter of Prester John that in the XII-century described an nonexistent country first in the Far East and then in Africa, and that persuaded Marco Polo to travel towards China and the Portuguese navigators to conduct an exploration of Africa. I would like to finish with a note on Ortelius’s XVI-century text Typus Orbis Terrarum. Ortelius had already represented for us the American continent with notable precision, but he still thought, like many others before him, that there existed a Terra Australis, an immense spheroidal vault that incorporated the entire Antarctic part of the planet. And to find this nonexistent Terra Australe, tireless navigators, from Medana to Bougainville, from Tasman to Cook, took to exploring the Pacific. As a result of an imagined cartography, the real Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand were finally discovered. Pity on those, then, who fought and are fighting on the frontiers of the immeasurable and of the future. Mercy for greatness, fruitful errors, and the promises not yet kept of every imaginary geography and astronomy.  

Imagined astronomy leads to a fictionalized geography which leads others to attempt to discover these invented places, which inevitably leads to the discovery of new parts of the real world. Though in Baudolino it is the protagonist who is both inventor and explorer, it is clear that, like his author, Baudolino must pay close attention to the geography that these maps expound in order to find or pretend to find what he has invented.

54 My translation. “Per finire, qualche parola di comprensione nei confronti delle astronomie e geografie immaginarie. Come forse qualcuno sa, ho subito la fascinazione di quella lettera del Prete Gianni che nel XII secolo descriveva un paese inesistente prima nel lontano oriente e poi in Africa, e che ha indotto Marco Polo a viaggiare verso la Cina e i navigatori Portoghesi a condurre l’esplorazione dell’Africa. Vorrei finire con questo Typus Orbis Terrarum di Ortelius, del XVI secolo. Ortelius ci rappresentava già il continente americano con notevole precisione, ma pensava ancora, come molti prima di lui, che esistesse una Terra Australis, una immensa calotta che avvolgeva tutta la parte antartica del pianeta. E per trovare questa inesistente Terra Australe che navigatori instancabili, da Mendana a Bougainville, da Tasman a Cook, hanno esplorato il Pacifico. Per merito di una cartografia immaginaria sono state finalmente scoperte la vera Australia, la Tasmania, la Nuova Zelanda. Pietà dunque per chi ha combattuto e combatte alle frontiere dell’illimitato e dell’avvenire. Pietà per le grandezze, gli errori fecondi, e le promesse non ancora mantenute di ogni geografia e astronomia immaginaria.”
The creation of the letter of Prester John for both author and protagonist is marked with problems, specifically in terms of geography and architecture. As author, Eco is confronted with several conflicting sources regarding this personage and his whereabouts, and he uses his protagonist to epitomize this conflict. As a result, Baudolino’s conception of the land of Prester John is an amalgamation of several traditions. One of the major sources of Baudolino’s “imagined” model is the very book he has erased: Otto of Freising’s *Historia de duabus civitatibus* (otherwise known as the *Chronicon* or the *History of Two Cities*). When Baudolino goes on to create the letter which feeds on the legend of Prester John, his only frame of reference is Bishop Otto’s text, which is a detailed history of the world from its creation to the year 1146. The two cities of which Otto speaks in his title are Jerusalem and Babylon; the first he describes as the City of God, the latter he defines as the City of the Devil. In his work, he interprets “all the events of history as stages in the conflict between the heavenly powers and those of the inferno, and [he] believed that the 12th-century world was on the verge of an apocalyptic era in which the antichrist would appear on earth” (Silverberg 6). Bishop Otto’s text becomes the vehicle by which the tale of Prester John is first made known in Europe.

In reconstructing the land of Prester John, Baudolino is confronted with the problem of location. Geographically situating this personality is especially difficult since the only knowledge Baudolino has of him comes from Otto’s account, which, unfortunately, he admits to having erased. In the novel, Boron fittingly suggests that there is a model to follow -- “il modello c’è” (128) -- with which to construct this kingdom. Of course, Eco begins with Otto’s manuscript. Otto’s own account is, as Robert Silverberg explains in *The Realm of Prester John*, secondhand since it comes from a meeting with Hugh, Bishop of Jabala, Syria, at the court of Pope Eugene III.
in Viterbo. It is Hugh who tells Otto, “that Prester John, a Nestorian Christian who served in the dual position of priest and king, had regained the city of Ecbatana from the brother monarchs of Media and Persia, the Samiardi, in a great battle ‘not many years ago’” (Silverberg 7). Otto’s relaying of the story places Prester John beyond Persia and Armenia:

We also saw there at that time [Dec 1145] the aforesaid Bishop of Jabala in Syria.... He said, indeed, that not many years since, one John, a king and priest living in the Far East, beyond Persia and Armenia, and who, with his people, is a Christian, but a Nestorian, had warred upon the so-called Samiards, the brother kings of the Medes and Persians (334-35).

Otto’s own geographical setting for Prester John is itself vague since beyond Persia and Armenia, in the Far East, exist a number of countries, namely India and China, where other travelers have supposedly spotted him. Otto’s depiction of this character is further compounded:

At length, Prester John so he is usually called put the Persians to flight and emerged from the dreadful slaughter as victor. The Bishop said that the aforesaid John moved his army to aid the church of Jerusalem, but that when he came to the Tigris and was unable to take his army across it by any means, be turned aside to the north, where he had been informed that the stream was frozen solid during the winter. There he awaited the ice for several years, but saw none because of the temperate weather. His army lost many men on account of the weather to which they were unaccustomed and he was compelled to return home (Medieval Sourcebook).

Prester John is, furthermore, claimed by Bishop Hugh to be a descendent of the Magi, thereby being indirectly christianized. It is Hugh’s report about the defeat of the Turks in Persia that sparks the Second Crusade. It is suggested that Otto’s recording of this account served as a tool to prevent complacency in the Crusade’s European supporters and as such inspired crusaders to travel East (Silverberg 8).
Not much is known about the character and whereabouts of Prester John after this initial citation until 1165 when Emperor Manuel Comnenus I of Byzantium allegedly receives a letter from him in which he describes his vast kingdom. The letter places Prester John in India:

I, Presbyter Johannes, the Lord of Lords, surpass all under heaven in virtue, in riches, and in power; seventy-two kings pay us tribute.... In the three Indies our Magnificence rules, and our land extends beyond India, where rests the body of the holy apostle Thomas [Judas the Twin]; it reaches towards the sunrise over the wastes, and it trends toward deserted Babylon near the Tower of Babel. Seventy-two provinces, of which only a few are Christian, serve us. Each has its own king, but all are tributary to us (Baring-Gould 22).

This letter generates a host of letters that situate Prester John anywhere from the three Indias to Africa. According to Manuel Joao Ramos, in his Essays in Christian Mythology: The Metamorphosis of Prester John, this first letter to Manuel Comnenus sets up a model from which subsequent letters follow, with various interpolations:

This is thus the model of exposition of the Letter, which presents a morphological structure common to all versions: the presentation of Prester John, with a salutation and invitation to the recipient; a statement of intentions, concerning a proposed military expedition; geographical, geological, zoological, botanical, mineralogical, sociological and ethical description over which he exerts his sovereignty; a description of the palace and of everyday life at court; and finally, information outlining the nature of his title (Ramos 31).

Though the authorship of the ‘original’ letter is unknown, it is clear that whoever wrote the text had clear knowledge of the Romance of Alexander since much of the geographical, geological, zoological, sociological and ethical characteristics find their parallels there. Meir Bar-Ilan, in his essay “Prester John: Fiction and History,” supports the claims of Prester John’s residence in India: “connecting Prester John with India is inevitable [...]. First of all, India is mentioned

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55 For the full letter, see Baring-Gould.
several times in these letters [;] the author knew that St. Thomas was buried in India, a belief held by the Christians of southern India [;] the author of the letters mentioned that pepper grew in his land” (Bar-Ilan), claiming that there is no evidence in the letter that connects Prester John with Ethiopia, as some sources would have us believe.

Though the Letter is historically anonymous, Eco makes Baudolino the author of this forgery. Baudolino’s letter, however, follows the historical one almost to the letter, but Eco allows Baudolino and his companions the freedom to process and put together the various knowledge each of them has on the subject. In the end, Baudolino’s geography compliments that of the anonymous letter quoted above:

Indeed. Baudolino had no qualms, and he dictated. That dominus dominatium surpassed in power all the kings of the earth, and his wealth was infinite, seventy-two kings paid him tribute, seventy-two provinces obeyed him, even if not all were Christian – and so Rabbi Solomon was satisfied, as they placed in the kingdom also the lost tribes of Israel. His sovereignty extended over the three Indias, his territories reached the most remote deserts, as far as the Tower of Babel” (BE 139).

In striving for ideas on how to populate the land of Prester John, Eco, again, uses the historical letter as his main source. The letter addressed to Manuel Comnenus describes the land as populated with various species of animals and beasts:

Our land is the home of elephants, dromedaries, camels, crocodiles, metacollinarum, cametennus, tensevetes, wild asses, white and red lions, white bears, white merules, crickets, griffins, tigers, lamias, hyenas, wild horses, wild oxen, and wild men -- men with horns, one-eyed men, men with eyes before and behind, centaurs, fauns, satyrs, pygmies, forty-eell high giants, cyclopses, and

56 “Baudolino non ebbe alcuna remora, e dettò. Quel dominus dominatium superava in potere tutti i re della terra e le sue richezze erano infinite, settantadue re gli pagavano tributo, settantadue province lo obbedivano, anche se non tutte cristiane – ed ecco accontentato Rabbi Solomon, collocandogli nel regno anche le tribù disperse di Israele. La sua sovranità si estendeva sulle tre Indie, i suoi territori raggiungevano i deserti più lontani, sino alla torre di Babele” (BI 147).
similar women. It is the home, too, of the phoenix and of nearly all living animals (Baring-Gould 22).

Baudolino, the architect of the letter, asks his companions for ideas on how to populate the land:

‘Now give me some ideas about populating the kingdom,’ Baudolino said. ‘It has to have elephants, dromedaries, camels, hippopotamuses, panthers, onagers, white and red lions, mute cicadas, griffons, tigers, llamas, hyenas, all the things we never see in our countries, and whose remains are precious for those who decide to go and hunt down there. And also men never seen, but spoken of in books of the nature of things and of the universe . . .’ ‘Centaurs, horned men, fauns, satyrs, pygmies, cinocephali, giants forty cubits tall, one eyed men,’ Kyot suggested” (BE 140).57

Eco allows his characters, Baudolino and his companions, to continue to incorporate geographical elements into the letter that exist in the original forgery. The land of Prester John is created almost word for word from the original letter, particularly in its characterization as a land that is full of “honey and is overflowing with milk” (Baring-Gould): “the land of Prester John dripped honey and was brimming with milk” (BE 140).58 Special attention is given in the letter to the fact that the land did not have any poor people, thieves or robbers, any avaricious people, adulterers and liars: “All riches, such as are upon the world, our Magnificence possesses in superabundance. With us, no one lies, for he who speaks a lie is thenceforth regarded as dead -- he is no more thought of or honored by us. No vice is tolerated by us’ (Baring-Gould 43). Similarly, in Baudolino: “the letter continued, insisting for a while on the virtue that reigned

57 ‘Ora datemi idee per popolare il regno,’ disse Baudolino. ‘Debbono viverci elefanti, dromedari, cammelli, ippopotami, pantere, onagri, leoni bianchi e rossi, cicale mute, grifoni, tigri, lamie, ione, tutte le cose che da noi non si vedono mai, e le cui spoglie siano preziose per chi decida di andare a caccia laggiù. E poi uomini mai visti, ma di cui parlano i libri sulla natura delle cose e dell’universo...’ ‘Sagittari, uomini cornuti, fauni, satiri, pigmei, cinocephali, giganti alti quaranta cubiti, uomini moncoli,’ suggeriva Kyot” (BI 147).

58 ‘La terra del Prete stillava di miele ed era ricolma di latte’ (BI 148).
in those lands, where every pilgrim was welcomed with charity, no one was poor, there were no thieves, predators, misers or flatterers” (BE 141). Furthermore, in the final edition of the letter, Baudolino adds that the Prester’s territory, seen from one side, is equivalent to four month’s travel in length, whereas no one has ever discovered what lies on the other: “For the moment, suffice it for you to know that our territory extends in one direction a distance of four months’ march, whereas in the other direction no one knows how far it reaches. If you could number the stars of the sky and the sands of the sea, then you could measure our possessions and our power” (BE 143), affirming that only when one can count all the stars in the sky and the sand in the sea, can one measure the value of the lands’ possessions and its power.

The historical letter incited much travel, and the image of Prester John was subsequently transformed as a result of the tales of those travelers. Ramos maintains that “the image of Prester John underwent various transformations over a period of five centuries, due to a continuous process of accumulation of both geographical and ethnographical information” (76). This, however, did not mean that the initial literary image of Prester John as sovereign and priest was rejected. Rather, Ramos affirms that the result was a “careful readjustment within a sociological perspective where savagery (Man minus his rational side) related to Utopia (Man minus his animal side)” (76). ‘Realistic’ tales of travelers such as Marco Polo or Giovanni da Pian del Carpini describe a “transformation process,” which lead to “the characterization of an ‘African’ Prester John,” whereas in the ‘fantastic’ descriptions “the totalizing nature of the

59 “La lettera insisteva ancora per un poco sulla virtù che regnava in quelle terre, dove ogni pellegrino veniva accolto con carità, non esisteva alcun povero, non vi erano ladri, predoni, avari, adulatori” (BI 148).
60 “Per il momento ti basta sapere che il nostro territorio si estende da una parte per quattro mesi di cammino, mentre dall’altra nessuna sa sino a dove arrivi. Potessi tu numerare le stele del cielo e la sabbia del mare, allora potresti misurare i nostri possedimenti e la nostra potenza” (BI 150).
‘Indian’ Prester John was slowly dismantled” (77). Ramos asserts that “the images brought forth appear on two extremes, like two faces of a coin, on the one had the image of a sovereign that is a human metaphor of Christ as Pantocrator, ruling over a perfect society, on the other the image of a tyrant, ruling over a heretical, degenerate and barbarous people” (77). Marco Polo’s account has Prester John in battle with Genghis Khan. In relating his travels, Polo describes Prester John, also known as Ung Khan, as being paid tribute by the Tartars in the northern regions of Ethiopia, where there were no fortified towns or settlements but vast plains and plenty of water (Polo 72). Polo describes him as an oppressive ruler:

In time the tribe multiplied so exceedingly that Ung Khan, that is Prester John, becoming fearful, conceived the plan of dividing them up into groups and having each group live in a different area [...] At length the Tartars, becoming aware that he was trying to reduce them to slavery, resolved to band together, and seeing that their complete ruin was being planned, decided to move from the areas they had inhabited (72).

It is Genghis Khan, in Polo’s narrative, who is described as being a ruler of “proved integrity, great wisdom, commanding eloquence, and celebrated valor” (73). Polo’s story has Genghis Khan asking for the hand of Prester John’s daughter in marriage. Prester John refuses the request and a battle ensues wherein Prester John is killed. No geographical information is given in this account about Prester John’s residence, though we know for certain that he is in China. It is not until the book, *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* (c1356), surfaces that detailed geographical information about Prester John becomes available again. This book, as Ramos affirms, “was one of the most divulged works of geographical information and of popular reading throughout 14th-and 15th-century Europe. It describes both the voyages of the narrator to the Holy Land and to the Great Asian kingdoms, as well as to an extensive number
of islands [...] inhabited by all kinds of savage or monstrous people” (Ramos 77). It is Mandeville’s text that will act as the sourcebook for Eco’s own reconstruction of Prester John’s land, as it will be for Baudolino’s visions when writing the letter and recounting his discoveries (though they predate Mandeville) when he travels in search of Prester John.

Eco’s fascination with Mandeville is not difficult to understand. Mandeville’s text provides an easy-to-read format in which he makes available the discoveries of the ‘wonders of the East,’ and “plentifully supplied with fable, it is satisfying without wearying both the seeker of knowledge and the lover of marvels” (Seymour xiv). Hence, these travels act as a sourcebook of information for both historians and poets. As is the case in Baudolino, a large portion of Mandeville’s text is a description of the Holy Land. It is a description that many had taken to heart: “for some the book was a fascinating storehouse of fable, for others an apparently genuine guide to the Holy Land, and for others a theme for moral exhortation” (Seymour xiv). Thus, many mistook the book as honest proof of a knight who had seen and experienced wonders in a far off land. Mandeville’s work, according to Ramos, is actually, “an orderly compilation of a vast amount of miscellaneous treaties, itineraries and chronicles that circulated throughout Europe in the 13th and 14th centuries, where the collected information was carefully altered to shape a coherent image of the ‘known’ and imagined world of the East”(77). Ramos reminds us that Mandeville was not only a traveler but a writer as well, and in this sense it is easier to comprehend what sources shaped his theological and sociological view of the world, especially when we consider the number of texts that preceded his: “Haiton of Armenia and Odoric of Pordenone [...] for instance, are literary sources manipulated by Mandeville, woven together in a continuous narrative, with the visible intention of giving
geographical and cosmographic order to the places described” (77). Though the visions of Baudolino and his companions predate Mandeville’s travels, it is clear that Baudolino and the group are describing the realm of Prester John that their creator, Eco, had read in Mandeville’s Travels.

Having clarified the problem of geography, and finally settling on situating Prester John in India, Eco then had to provide the structure in order to make his world architecturally sound. Baudolino and his team of engineers, to keep this architectural theme going, are clear in their intent to supply Prester John with a praiseworthy kingdom: As king of kings, he had to have a palace compared to which those of the Christian sovereigns, including the basileus of the Constantinople schismatics, would seem hovels and as priest he had to have a temple compared to which the churches of the pope were shacks. He had to be given a worthy palace (BE 121).

They begin by working with pre-existing models, but the model, taken from Ezekiel’s vision, is insufficient and, from a physical standpoint, is impossible to build. With the failure of Ezekiel’s model, the group looks to other avenues of inspiration. There is an inherent irony here between Eco’s own construction of Prester John’s palace and Baudolino’s: Eco’s is based on carefully chosen intertexts, mainly those of Otto of Freising and Sir John Mandeville, whereas Baudolino and his companions have to resort to visions conjured up by a stimulant (green honey) to construct a palace just as impossible to build as Ezekiel’s. Eco’s has a literary, even historical basis, whereas Baudolino’s as totally imaginary. Both, however, are created by the author’s and protagonists’ reading experiences. Problems arise in designing the letter, however,

61 “Come re dei re doveva avere una reggia rispetto alla quale quelli dei sovrani cristiani, comprese il basileuo degli scismatici di Constantinopoli, sembrassero casupole, e come sacerdote doveva avere un tempio rispetto a cui le chiese del papa fossero stamberghe. Occorreva dargli un palazzo degno di lui” (BI 128).
when Baudolino and his companions cannot agree on how architecturally to construct his palace. The vision summoned is on a par with that of Mandeville’s description:

He dwelleth commonly in the city of Susa. And there is his principal palace, that is so rich and so noble, that no man will trow it by estimation, but he had seen it. And above the chief tower of the palace be two round pommels of gold, and in every of them be two carbuncles great and large, that shine full bright upon the night. And the principal gates of his palace be of precious stone that men clepe sardonyx, and the border and the bars be of ivory. And the windows of the halls and chambers be of crystal. And the tables whereon men eat, some be of emeralds, some of amethyst, and some of gold, full of precious stones; and the pillars that bear up the tables be of the same precious stones. And the degrees to go up to his throne, where he sitteth at the meat, one is of onyx, another is of crystal, and another of jasper green, another of amethyst, another of sardine, another of cornelian, and the seventh, that he setteth on his feet, is of chrysolite. And all these degrees be bordered with fine gold, with the other precious stones, set with great pearls orient. And the sides of the siege of his throne be of emeralds, and bordered with gold full nobly, and dubbed with other precious stones and great pearls. And all the pillars in his chamber be of fine gold with precious stones, and with many carbuncles, that give great light upon the night to all people. And albeit that the carbuncles give light right enough, natheles, at all times burneth a vessel of crystal full of balm, for to give good smell and odour to the emperor, and to void away all wicked airs and corruptions. And the form of his bed is of fine sapphires, bended with gold, for to make him sleep well and to refrain him from lechery; for he will not lie with his wives, but four sithes in the year, after the four seasons, and that is only for to engender children (Mandeville XXX).

Baudolino’s vision compares well:

The palace stands on a mountain that is made of onyx, with a peak so smooth that it shines like the moon. The temple is round, its dome is of gold, encrusted with gems so ritulant that they produce warmth in the winter and coolness in the summer. The ceiling is encrusted with sapphires that represent the sky and carbuncles that represent the stars. A gilded sun and silvered moon – these are the automata – travel through the heavenly vault, and mechanical birds sing everyday, while at the corners four bronze angels accompany them with their trumpets. The palace rises over a hidden well, in which teams of horses move a grindstone, making it turn according to the changes of the seasons, so that it
becomes the image of the cosmos. Beneath the crystal floor swim fish, and fabulous marine creatures (BE 129).\textsuperscript{62}

There are two reasons why Eco fuses Ezekiel’s temple with that of Baudolino: both are based on pre-existing structures and both structures come to them in a vision while in a state of exile.

Though several architects have attempted to recreate the temple of Ezekiel’s vision, none have succeeded. Historians, like Bennett and Mandelbrote, suggest that this has much to do with the problem of measurement: “these dimensions, reiterated with such deliberation in the scriptural accounts, must hold the key to divine geometry.” This forces us to consider other avenues of interpretation, mainly those of metaphor and language.

Ezekiel’s temple has obvious spiritual correlations, and we must consider that the reason for the inability to recreate the temple physically is a result of the problem of the enigmatic language of mathematics: measurements and numbers. Bennett and Mandelbrote, in *The Garden, the Ark, the Tower, the Temple: Biblical Metaphors of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe*, maintain that “just as languages had multiplied after Babel, so did measures. Now every city and province had individual standards, and even different ones for different goods” (137). Consequently, this makes it virtually impossible to reconstruct Ezekiel’s temple since we can never know which system of “language” to follow. In contradiction to Eco’s view of numbers in his essay “The Language of the Austral Land” (in *Serendipities* 1993), Ruggero

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{62} Il palazzo sta su una montagna, ed è la montagna che è fatta di onice, con una vetta tanto levigata che splende come la luna. Il tempio è rotondo, ha la cupola d’oro, e d’oro sono le pareti, incrostate di gemme così rutilanti di luce da produrre caldo d’inverno e fresco d’estate. Il soffitto è incrostatò di zaffiri che rappresentano il cielo, ed i carbonchi che rappresentano le stelle. Un sole dorato e una luna d’argento, ecco gli automi, percorrono la volta celeste, e uccelli mecanici cantano ogni giorno, mentre agli angoli quattro angeli di bronzo dorato gli accompagnano con le loro trombe. Il palazzo si erge su un pozzo nascosto, in cui pariglie cavalli muovono una mola facendolo ruotare secondo il variare delle stagioni, così che esso diventa l’immagine del cosmo. Sotto il pavimento di cristallo nuotano pesci e favolose creature marine” (\textit{BI} 136-137).
\end{flushright}
Pierantoni supports the idea that mathematics should be considered a language, with all its challenges, in its own right.⁶³ Eco believes in the universality of numbers: “[b]ut numbers possessed another attractive aspect: independently of the variety of languages, all peoples (or very many of them) indicated them with the same cipher or character” (78); however, Pierantoni affirms that to construct the tower of Babel, each of the ‘peoples’ was bringing its own system of measurements, each of which was dialectic in origin. In this vein, Ezekiel’s vision is a perfect example of our infatuation with numbers and measurements, and our tendency to give them philosophical weight since, as Pierantoni explains, to measure something is to represent it. Numbers (independent of measurements), he says, have their own ideas, structure and autonomous nature. In representing something, you are forced to choose which numbers, which measurement, and which language. In doing so, you are attempting to articulate a truth, and this truth will inevitably differ in every language. As such, Eco’s incorporation of Ezekiel’s vision is an implicit comment on the value of truth. Baudolino’s vision, like Ezekiel’s, can never be realized, and what’s more, he admits that he lies through the entirety of Prester John’s letter. Moreover, the primary source of Eco’s description of Prester John’s palace comes from Mandeville, another questionable source, as we have seen. Stanley Tigerman, in his book The Architecture of Exile, compares Ezekiel’s vision to a text: “Ezekiel’s construct is like a text that is ‘in the process of becoming’” (96), and as such characterizes it as an ‘open work,’ since this process is infinite. In this manner, Ezekiel’s vision can be linked with the aesthetics of postmodern architecture, not to mention Eco’s own textual theories.

The writing of Prester John’s letter, with Ezekiel’s vision as a model, serves as a precursor for what follows in the next sequence of Eco’s novel. Aptly titled “Baudolino vede nascere una nuova città” (“Baudolino sees the birth of a new city”), this chapter puts this city into stark contradiction with the one he has just finished creating; this city is not an imaginary one, but an actual, physically constructed one, Eco’s own native city. At the beginning of the chapter, Eco has Baudolino describe a sense of dissatisfaction upon completing the letter: “he consoled himself with the thought that studying in Paris had in itself been a great fest, considering that he had been born among the cows […]. In short, he didn't feel entirely satisfied” (145).

Baudolino begins to feel a need to return home: “One day, Baudolino realized that in a month or so he would be twenty-six […]. He sensed something that he would call homesickness for his native land, only he, who had never experienced it, did not know what it was” (145). Not understanding this nostalgic feeling, Baudolino returns to his adoptive father and court instead. It is here that he learns that his native town has joined the Lombard League and as a result is causing Frederick much strife. It is, in the end, Frederick, Baudolino’s adoptive father, who sends him back to his native home. Ordered to spy on his town’s progress, Baudolino is paradoxically anxious to leave the court – even though he had wanted to return – to avoid an embarrassing situation as a result of his love for Beatrice (Frederick’s wife), but is also curious to see how his town is faring and if his parents and friends are still living:

“Baudolino liked the idea of escaping the embarrassment he felt at court, but a moment later

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64 “Si consolava pensando che era gia una bella impresa studiare a Parigi, se si pensava che era nato tra le vacche […]. Insomma, non si sentiva del tutto soddisfatto” (152).

65 “Un giorno si è reso conto che mese più mese meno avrebbe dovuto avere ventisei anni […]. Avverti qualcosa che definiremmo nostalgia del paese natale, salvo che lui, che non l’aveva mai provata, non sapeva che cosa fosse” (152).
he felt something else. He felt extraordinarily moved by the idea of seeing his old places, and he realized finally that this was the reason he had undertaken his journey” (BE 148). He is overwhelmed by the idea of returning home, not expecting that much has changed since his departure thirteen years before. His is still an idealistic view of his town based on childhood experiences. Disguising himself as a merchant on a donkey, Baudolino travels through the Frescheta woods in a ‘foggy’ state where everything he sees reminds him of his childhood, especially the landscape. Baudolino is brought down to reality when he realizes that his town has expanded and had become quite the urban centre. As he was building an imaginary city, the Frescheta people have been busy building a real one:

From the smoke and fires, Baudolino now understood that, in the plain beyond the river, around what had once been Roboreto, the town had overflowed into the countryside, and everywhere there was a sprouting, mushroomlike, of new houses, some of stone, others of wood, many still only half built, and to the west you could make out the beginning of a girdle of walls, such as there had never been in those parts […]. Baudolino had seen the beginning of the construction of the new cathedral in Paris, on the island in the middle of the river, and now he recognized the machines and the scaffoldings that master masons use: judging by what he knew of cities, he realized that over there people were about to bring one into existence from nothing (BE 150).

Immediately, Baudolino distinguishes the differences between a city produced by research and planning (Paris and the land of Prester John), and one built by an uneducated group of people.

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66“A Baudolino piacque l’idea di sottrarsi all’imbarazzo che provava a corte, ma subito dopo provo un altro sentimento: si senti straordinariamente commosso all’idea di rivedere I suoi luoghi, e comprese finalmente che era per quello che si era messo in viaggio” (BI 155).
67”Tra fiume e fuochi, Baudolino ora capiva che, nella piana oltre fiume, intorno a quello che era un tempo Roboreto, il borgo era stariipato sulla campagna, e dappertutto era fungaia di nuove case, alcune in muratura e altre in legno, molte ancora a mezzo, e verso ponente si poteva scorgere anche l’inizio di una cinta muraria, come da quelle parti non ve n’erano mai state […]. Insomma, Baudolino aveva visto iniziare la costruzione della nuova cattedrale a Parigi […] e conosceva tutti quei macchinari e quelle incastellature che usano i maestri muratori: per quello che sapeva di una città, laggiù la gente stava finendo di farne sorgere una dal niente”(BI 157).
Coming from that ideal setting in Paris, Baudolino can only find fault in the craftsmanship in the Frascheta valley:

But it was a winch only after a manner of speaking, for a more crude contraption could hardly be imagined: made of withes instead of sturdy stakes, it swayed constantly [...]. He saw a bit farther on, another group, supposedly constructing a loggetta, with crudely hewn stones, beams clumsily finished and capitals that seemed shaped by an animal. To hoist the construction material they had rigged up a kind of pulley, and Baudolino realized that, compared with this bunch, the men at the little wall were masters worthy of Como. He then stopped making comparisons as, proceeding a little farther, he saw others building the way children do when they play with mud, and they were putting the finishing touches, the last licks, you might say, on a construction similar to three others near it, made of mud and shapeless stones, with roofs of straw carelessly packed: thus a sort of street was being born of hovels very ill-made, as if the workers were competing to see who could finish first before the holiday, with no regard for the rules of the art” (*BE* 150-151).

This process he is trying to make sense of becomes more confusing when he discovers that just as there are a multitude of bad building techniques, the process is rendered more difficult because there are also a multitude of dialects at work, making it impossible for people to understand each other. He likens the presence of these various dialects to the tower of Babel:

“Have I fallen into the midst of the construction of the tower of Babel? [...] But here they no longer speak the language of Adam and, though altogether they speak seventy-two languages, men of such different breeds, who as a rule would be hitting one another, they are all mixing in

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68 “Ma verricello era per modo di dire, che piu selvaggio non si poteva concepirlo, fatto di pertiche tosto che di pali robusti, che trabalava ad ogni momento [...]. Ma poi aveva visto un poco piu in la un altro gruppo che pretendeva di edificare una loggetta, con le pietre mal tagliate, travi mal rifinite, e capitelli che sembravano sagomati da una bestia [...] procedendo per un poco, vide altri che costruivano come fanno bambini quando giocano con la terra bagnata, e stavano dando gli ultimi colpi di piede, si sarebbe detto, a una costruzione, uguale ad altre tre che la stavano accanto, fatta di fangoe pietre informi, con i tetti di paglia malamente compressa: così che stava nascendo una sorta di di casupolacce molto mal fatte, come se gli operai facessero a gara a chi finiva prima per le feste, senza alcun riguardo per le regole del mestiere” (*BE* 158).
loving harmony!” (*BE* 151). It is, however, amidst this confusion that Baudolino is reunited with his father, Gagliaudo, and several of his childhood friends (and enemies). It is also within this disorder that Baudolino is confronted with various perspectives on what a city should be. Trotti explains that the purpose of this city is mainly warfare: “‘a city must resist the enemy, prevent him from scaling the walls, but if unfortunately he does scale them, the city must still be ready to stand up to him, and break his neck’” (*BE* 157). Moreover, Trotti explains the reasons for the city’s bad design as a way of deceiving the enemy: “‘Because with a straight street the enemy always knows what’s awaiting him, but not if the streets are full of corners, or elbows, if you like [...]. Therefore a good city must have its houses badly arranged, like a crone’s teeth, which seems ugly but is what’s really beautiful’” (*BE* 157-158). It is clear that the good qualities of this city coexist with the bad. Ghini, on the other hand, maintains that the purpose of the city’s construction is for political and economical gain that will not only serve the upper class but people like Baudolino’s father, as well:

‘You see what a city is? [...] And if it’s like this before it’s even finished, imagine what will happen afterwards: it’s another life. Everyday you see new people – for the merchants, just think, it’s like having the Heavenly Jerusalem; for the knights, since the emperor forbade them to sell lands so as not to divide the fief, and they were bored to death in the countryside, now they command companies of bowman, they ride out in parades, they give orders left and right. But things don’t prosper just for the gentry and the merchants: it’s a providence also for man like your father, who doesn’t have much land but has some livestock, and people arrive in the city and ask him for stock and pay cash; they’re beginning to

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69 “Che sia capitato nel bel mezzo della costruzione di Babele? [...] Pero, qui la lingua di Adamo non la parlano ancora e, malgrado parlino tutti insieme settantadue lingue, uomini di razze così diverse, che di solito si frombolerebbero gli uni con gli altri, stanno pasticciando d’amore e d’accordo!” (*BI* 158).

70 “‘Una città deve resistere al nemico in modo che non scali le mura, ma se per disgrazia la scala, la città deve essere ancora in grado di tenergli testa, e rompergli il groppone’” (*BI* 164).

71 “‘Perché con una strada dritta il nemico sa sempre che cosa lo aspetta davanti a se, mentre le strade debbono essere piene d’angoli, o di gomiti che dir si voglia [...]. Quindi una buona città deve avere le case messe male, come i denti di una vecchia, che sembra brutto ma è invece, li il suo buono’”(*BI* 165).
sell through ready money and not through barter [...]. Besides, it's happened in Milan and in Lodi and Pavia, and it will also happen here with us: it's not that the Ghinis or the Aularis have to keep their mouths shut and only the Guascos and the Trottis give the orders. We're all part of those who make the decisions; you can become important even if you're not noble' (BE 162-163).

This is a significant moment in the chapter, as Baudolino becomes aware that a city is more than just its architecture. It must, by necessity, incorporate the lives of the people who live within it. Ghini’s is a democratic view of the city that has every one of its inhabitants participate in some way in both its construction and continuance.

The chapters that focus on city building, from the creation of Prester John’s letter to the construction of the city of Alessandria, are laced with deceptions that have historical outcomes. Eco is clearly not only commenting on falsities found in encyclopedic and historical works, but in the founding of cities as well. Eco has Baudolino playing both sides of the conflict between Frederick and Alessandria. It is only through deception and lies that Baudolino is able to maintain this duplicity. On the surface, this seems to add more confusion to the story, but we must remember that Eco is building a story that is multi-faceted, and as such, the worlds and structures he builds here must, as a result, be multi-faceted as well. When recreating the Letter of Prester John, Eco draws from a series of reading experiences, specifically from myths,

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72 ‘Vedi che cosa è una citta? [...] E se è già così quando non è nemmeno finita, immaginiamoci dopo: è unaltro vivere. Ogni giorno vedi gente nuova – per i mercanti, figurati, è come avere il Gerusalemme Celeste, e quanto ai cavalieri l’imperatore gli proibiva di vendere le terre per non dividere il feudo, e morivano d’inedia in campagna, invece ora compagnie di arcieri, escono a cavallo in parata, danno ordini di qui e di là. Ma non è che va bene solo per i signori e i mercanti, è una provvidenza anche per la gente come tuo padre, che non avrà gran che di terra ma ha un poco di bestiame, e in città arriva gente che lo chiede e paga in monete, si principia a vendere per metallo sonante e non per altra merce in cambio [...]. E poi, è accaduto a Milano come a Lodi o a Pavia, e accadrà anche qui da noi: non è che i Ghini o gli Aulari debbano star zitti, e come comando solo i Guasco o i Trotti, facciamo tutti parte di chi prende le decisioni, qui potrai diventare importante anche se non sei nobile, è questo è il bello di una città, ed e bello specialmente per chi non è [...]’ (BI 169).
legends, and medieval encyclopedias. Using this combination of experiences, Eco is able to (re)create an imaginary city. This same formula, however, works to recreate the story of an existing city, Alessandria, as well. Having already provided the factual, historical background, Eco feels it is also pertinent to explore the myths and legends that were the city’s foundations. These are stories that Eco would have heard and celebrated as a child coming from this town. He not only retells these stories in the novel, but he allows his protagonist to be responsible for them. The presence of these legends in the novel is directed towards misleading Frederick and his army. It is Baudolino’s idea, for instance, to bring into motion Trotti’s false tunnel and provide the false miracle of St. Peter:

'If it’s only to hit them on the head. But listen to the scene I can almost see with these eyes of mine: the moment the men come in, a blast of trumpets sounds and, in the light of ten torches, from that corner appears a man with a long white beard and a white cloak, on white horse with a white cross in his hand, and he shouts: Citizens, citizens, wake up, the enemy is here [...]. Our people appear at the windows and on the rooftops. And after the enemies are captured, our people sink to their knees and cry that the man in white is Saint Peter, who is protecting the city, and they push the imperials back into the tunnel, saying, Thank God that we’re sparing your lives; go to the camp of your Barbarossa and tell them that the New City of Pope Alexander is protected by Saint Peter in person...' (BE 180-181).

It is also Baudolino’s idea to use Gagliaudo’s cow, Rosina, to deceive the emperor: “Not because this man’s my father, but the idea doesn’t seem to me something to be disregarded

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73 “Se è per dargli un colpo in testa. Ma adesso senti la scena che mi pare di vedere con questi miei occhi: appena quelli sono entrati, si sentono suonare delle trombe e, tra le luci di dieci fiamme, da quel’angolo spunta un uomo dalla gran barba bianca e dal mantello bianco, su un cavallo bianco con una gran croce bianca in pugno e grida: cittadini cittadini, sveglia che c’è il nemico, e al quel punto [...] vengono fuori i nostri dalle finestre e dai tetti come dicevi tu. E, dopo averli catturati, tutti i nostri si mettono in ginocchio e gridano che quel uomo era San Piero che proteggeva la città, e rificcano gli imperials in galleria dicendo ringraziate Iddio che vi facciamo grazia della vita, andate e raccontate al campo del vostro Barbarossa che la Città Nuova del papa Alessandro è protetta da San Pietro in persona” (BI 187).
[...]. Maybe you've forgotten, but there is one cow left, and it's Gagliaudo's very own Rosina” (188).\(^{74}\) As a consequence, Eco deprives the story of the foundations of the city of its mysticism, downgrading them all to a level of deception rather than miraculous events; yet the pro loco of Alessandria maintains the original legends.\(^{75}\)

Having founded a city, Baudolino feels the need to plant his roots. Tired of living a life of deception, he decides he should try to change his ways. He falls in love and marries Colandrina. For a while he lives a comfortable life free from deceitfulness, but when Colandrina dies as a result of a miscarriage, Baudolino comes to understand that being inventive is his way of life, since he is in control at least of his imagination:

‘I decided that this was my fate, it was useless for me to try to become like other men. I was by now consecrated to falsehood. It is hard to explain what was going through my head. I said to myself: All the time that you are inventing, you invented things that were not true, but then became true [...]. But the one time you wanted to do something true, with the most sincere of women, you failed, you produced something no one can believe in or desire to exist. So it is best for you to withdraw into the world of your portents, for there at least you can decide yourself how portentous they are’ (BE 232).\(^{76}\)

Baudolino is unable to live in the ‘real’ city. It is soon after the death of his wife, child and father that he begins the journey to the land of his imagination. Since it has been several years since

\(^{74}\) ‘Non perché questo qui sia mio padre, ma l’idea non mi pare mica da tirar via [...]. Forse ve lo siete dimenticato ma una vacca c’è ancora, ed è propria la Rosina di Gagliaudo’ (Bl 194).

\(^{75}\) For the founding legends of Alessandria, see: www.piemondo.it/cultura/leggende/gagliaudo.htm

\(^{76}\) ‘Ho deciso che se quello era la mia sorte, era inutile che provassi a diventare come gli altri. Ero ormai consacrato alla menzogna. È difficile speigare quello che mi stava passando per la testa. Mi dicevo: sino a che inventavi, inventavi cose che non erano vere, ma lo diventavano [...]. E invece l’unica volta che hai voluto fare una cosa vera con una donna più sincera non si può, hai fallito: hai prodotto qualcosa che nessuno può credere e desiderare che sia. Dunque è meglio che ti ritiri nel mondo dei tuoi portenti, che in quello almeno puoi decidere quanto siano, appunto, portentosi’ (Bl 239).
he wrote the famous letter, Baudolino embarks on this journey a more experienced person; he travels with these experiences in hand. In essence, the city has scarred him.

The city in *Baudolino* is like the library in *Il nome della rosa*. The city, which houses the memory of its society throughout the ages through its structures (the library, for example), is not meant to have all its secrets or truths uncovered; once they are revealed, the city, like the library, loses its purpose and so becomes an idealized version of it. Following Daniel Willis's article, “The Emerald City,” Baudolino’s city has this same Oz effect. In this article, Willis explains that the Emerald City is the most “improbable city in cinema” (89):

> It is improbable because it is nearly perfect. The Emerald City is magically ruled, not by a common mayor, but by a wizard. In it, dreams come true for those who have endured the trials of the Yellow Brick Road (YBR). The Emerald City is foremost a refuge, an asylum for fugitives and misfits. It shows us, contrary to our present experience with crime infested cities, that cities may be places to enhance or restore the quality of human lives [...] it is the forest – nature – that is dangerous, populated by lions, tigers and bears. Only in the city can one be safe from wickedness (89).

A connection can be made between Prester John’s city in *Baudolino* and the Emerald City in *The Wizard of Oz*: Eco, through his own text was, himself, attempting to create one of the most improbable cities in history. As Baudolino and his companions create, then go in search of, the city of Prester John, their journey is much like the one we have all been privy to as children in that fantastical movie of witches and flying monkeys; Baudolino’s journey to the fantastic city of Prester John is akin to the one Dorothy and her group of friends experience along the Yellow Brick Road. For Baudolino, to get to that city means the realization of a goal. But what happens after that goal is achieved? This is not unlike the situation Eco writes for his protagonists in *Il nome della rosa*, where William and Adso attempt to conquer the labyrinthine library in order
to uncover the truth of it. Willis explains: “the city is always a goal, particularly appealing to young adults or to those starting over. It is the end of a journey, the realization of a fondest hope, the place to make it big” (90). Baudolino almost achieves his goal, but he never makes it to that magical city. Pndapetezim, where Baudolino and his companions await permission to proceed towards Prester John’s kingdom, is ideal enough, since many fantastic events occur here. This city is virtually a utopia: Baudolino finds various monstrous species cohabitating peacefully despite their religious differences, he discovers a sense of sincere brotherhood with the chancellor, and he attains undeniable love with Hypatia, who is, herself, half goat. And he dreams, as in any improbable city, that these ideal things he finds will persist, would be even more idyllic in Prester John’s kingdom, but Baudolino brings something with him on the journey towards this city, and that is the consciousness of war, the knowledge of difference, and the weight of his lies. He destroys his own ideals, and the improbable city becomes more and more a probable one. Eco is clearly replacing the fantasy of Prester John’s city with the reality of his own. In Willis’s view:

Those who tried to design ideal cities have ignored the impossibility of solving this ambiguous question with finality. The weight of the city comes not just from the mass of its structures, but from the imaginative reading of its substance; not only from its truths but by the convincing lies (like the myth of its founding) it articulately expresses about itself [...]. Too perfect a city that was complete or always truthful [...] cannot offer refuge. This is not to suggest that architects and planners ought to abandon the task of improving cities, only that they should reconcile themselves to the necessity that a living city must contain contradiction (98).

So that this is what Eco does with Pndapetezim: by bringing to light its contradictions, it becomes, in Willis’s term, “livable.”
In an effort to make the city of Prester John more 'livable,' to use Willis's terminology, Eco reverts to using a narrative element. That is to say that just as in *Il nome della rosa*, Eco distinguished between good and bad architecture through his (re)constructions of the abbey and the library (the former based on architecturally sound intertexts and the latter on more literary ones), with *Baudolino* Eco distinguishes between good and bad cities in much the same way. It is almost as if Eco is testing the compatibility of these ideal spaces through his own narratives. Borges's ideal library is proven to be insufficient in *Il nome della rosa* because of, as Eco puts in “De biblioteca,” a lack of the human element; with *Baudolino* Eco is putting Italo Calvino's *Città invisibili* (1972) to the test as well.

Calvino's cities, however, are not all ideal. Ranging from descriptions of cities of memory to those of death, they are created by an intricate writing process that includes the author's own experiences. In the “Presentazione” of the 1993 Mondadori edition, an excerpt taken from a series of interviews and lectures between 1972 and 1983, Calvino describes how the book was written – a sort of “Come scrivo” that predates Eco’s essay of 2000. *Città invisibili* was written a piece at a time, at long intervals at times, like poems that I put on paper, following the most varied of inspirations. In writing I follow a sequence: I have a lot of files where I put the pages that I happen to write, according to the ideas that float around in my head, or even just notes of things I would like to write [...]. In one I collect pages on cities and landscapes of my life and in other imaginary cities, outside of space and time. When the file begins to become full of pages, I start to think of the book that I can pull out of it (v-vi).77

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77 My translation. “Il libro è nato un pezzetto alla volta, a intervalli anche lunghi, come poesie che mettevo sulla carta, seguendo le più varie ispirazioni. Io nello scrivere vado a serie: tengo tante cartelle dove metto le pagine che mi capita di scrivere, secondo le idee che mi girano per la testa, oppure soltanto appunti di cose che vorrei scrivere [...]. in una raccolgo pagine sulle città e i paesaggi della mia vita e in un’altra città immaginarie, fuori dallo spazio e dal tempo. Quando una cartella comincia a riempirsi di fogli, comincio a pensare al libro che ne posso tirare fuori.”
In this way, Calvino's cities are at one and the same time self-reflexive and intertextual, written in such a way that they seem to come from the diary of a traveler who is just passing through:

there was a period in which I compared cities to a starry sky, and in another period it always came to me, instead, to speak of the garbage that flooded out of cities everyday. It had become a little like a diary that followed my mood and my reflections; everything ended up transforming itself into images of the city: books that I read, the art expositions that I visited, the discussions with friends (vi).78

Unlike Borges's library in which the library-goer loses him- or herself within its labyrinthine structure, Calvino defines his book as labyrinthine to a certain extent, as at some point the reader has to find a way, or several possible ways, out of it:

But all these pages together did not yet form a book: a book (I believe) is something with a beginning and an end (even if it is not a novel in the strictest sense), it is a space in which the reader has to enter, wander through, even lose him or herself, but at a certain point find an exit, or even several exits, the possibility of opening for him or herself a way to exit (vi).79

Though Calvino's book is not a novel in the traditional sense, it is still constructed like one:

“even a book like this [...] has to have a construction, that is we must be able to discover a plot, an itinerary, and a solution” (vi).80 In this way, Calvino's cities, and to a greater extent, his novels, share the same sense of inclusiveness as Eco's, and even Portoghesi's, concept of architecture.

78 My translation. “c'è stato un periodo in cui paragonavo le città al cielo stellato, e in un altro periodo invece mi veniva sempre di parlare della spazzatura che dilaga fuori dalle città ogni giorno. Era diventato un po' come un diario che seguiva i miei umori e le mie riflessioni; tutto finiva per trasformarsi in immagini della città: i libri che leggevo, le esposizioni d'arte che visitavo, le discussioni con gli amici.”

79 My translation. “Ma tutte queste pagine insieme non facevano ancora un libro: un libro (io credo) è qualcosa con un principio e una fine (anche se non è un romanzo in senso stretto), è un spazio in cui il lettore deve entrare, girare, magari perdersi, ma a un certo punto tovare un’uscita, o magari parecchie uscite, la possibilità d’aprirsi una strada per venirne fuori.”

80 My translation. “anche un libro così [...] deve avere una costruzione, cioè vi si deve poter scoprire un intreccio, un itinerario, una soluzione.”
That Calvino's and Eco's works should intersect in some way is an inevitability, since both authors were actively participating in redefining the tenets of literature and art in the sixties: Calvino with *Oulipo* and Eco with *il Gruppo 63*. Not only does their work intersect, but they also share the same concerns with cultural shifts occurring at the time: Eco with changes in architecture and Calvino with the increasing urbanization of the cities. Neither sees these as negative changes, as long as in their transitions a sense of inclusiveness remains: that is to say, as long as those historical elements persist and that the 'livable,' human element is taken under consideration. According to Calvino, *Città invisibili* presents cities in constant movement:

I believe that the book evokes not only an atemporal idea of the city, but one that unwinds, at one time implicit and at another explicit, a discussion on the modern city. From an urban planner friend I hear that the book touches on various points of their problematic [...]. And it is not only towards the end that the metropolis of the 'big numbers' appears in my book; also that which seems an evocation of an archaic city makes sense only because it is thought of and written with today's city before one's eyes (ix).  

In this way, Calvino's cities follow what Eco considered an “opera in movimento” in *L'opera aperta*. The city is a major concern for Calvino, whose fear of the death of the city --“I think that I have written something like a last love poem to cities, in the moment in which it becomes always more difficult to live in them as cities” (ix) -- is mirrored in the last discussion of his protagonists, Marco Polo and Kublai Khan. Here, the Dantean metaphor of the spiral is once again evoked: “[Khan] says: - everything is useless, if the last landing place cannot be but the
infernal city, and it is there at the bottom that, in an ever tightening spiral, the current pulls us under."\(^83\) Polo replies that there are two ways in which to not suffer that fate: “the first is easy for many: accept the inferno and become such a part of it that you can no longer see it. The second is risky and demands constant vigilance and apprehension: seek and learn to recognize who and what in the midst of the inferno, are not inferno, then make them endure, give them space.”\(^84\) The spiral, a recurring symbol in Borges, Calvino and Eco, can have negative, infernal connotations in narrative, but when it becomes a model for writing, particularly in Eco’s case, it implies a revisiting, an inclusiveness of elements past and present, personal and cultural.

Calvino’s cities are a lot like his books or novels: “cities are a mass of many things: of memory, of desires, of signs of a language; cities are places of trade, as the books of the history of the economy explain, but these trades are not only an exchange of merchandise, they are exchanges of words, of desires, of memories. My book opens and closes with images of happy cities that continuously take form and vanish, hidden in the unhappy cities” (ix-x).\(^85\) So that even in the unhappy cities lies the possibility of what a good city could be. In this way, Calvino distinguishes between two types of cities: the utopian and the infernal, both of which cannot be successfully conquered in his book. It is the ideal city that is invisible in Calvino’s work, hidden, as he says, within the unhappy city, but the fact that the cities that Calvino creates are

\(^83\) “Dice: - Tutto è inutile, se l’ultimo approdo può essere che la città infernale, ed è là in fondo che, in una spirale sempre più stretta, ci risucchia la corrente” (163-164).

\(^84\) “Il primo riesce facile a molti: accettare l’inferno e diventarne parte fino al punto di non vederlo più. Il secondo è rischioso ed esige attenzione e apprendimento continuo: cercare a saper riconoscere chi e cosa, in mezzo all’inferno, non è inferno, e farlo durare, e dar gli spazio” (164).

\(^85\) My translation. “Le città sono un insieme di tante cose: di memoria, di desideri, di segni d’un linguaggio; le città sono luoghi di scambio, come spiegano tutti i libri dell’economia, ma questi scambi non sono soltanto scambi di merci, sono scambi di parole, di desideri, di ricordi. Il mio libro s’apre e si chiude si immagini di città felici che continuamente prendono forma e svasiscono , nascoste nelle città infelici.”
based on very real experiences renders these cities very much visible. The cities of Prester John and Alessandria in Baudolino are constructed in much the same way as are Calvino's cities: through exchanges of words, desires, knowledge, and memory. The city of Prester John is for Baudolino the ideal city hidden within Alessandria.

The imaginative city that Baudolino creates crumbles under the weight of contradictions. As a result, he suffers several losses: several of his companions do not make the trip back home; Hypatia and his child are one the run; the grail is misplaced; his adoptive father dies and, at one point, his own freedom is compromised. He is confronted with a series of life-altering truths (one of which is that he is responsible for Frederick’s death), and, as a result, and for the first time, he is forced to face the reality of his actions. He is forced to leave the realm of fantasy and come to terms with the truths of reality. When he resigns himself to living atop a balcony, he uses the time to pray and meditate:

‘Now my expiation begins. I will pray. I will meditate. I will annihilate myself in silence. I will try to achieve a solitary distance from every opinion and imagination, to feel neither wrath or desire, nor even reasoning or thought, to free myself from every bond, to return to the absolutely simple so as no longer to see anything, except the glory of darkness. I will drain soul and intellect, I will arrive beyond the kingdom of the mind; in the dark I will complete my journey along paths of fire’ (BE 513).

Baudolino returns “home.” But this home goes beyond that of Alessandria; it is a primordial home where he is awaiting a new beginning, a re-genesis. The city in Baudolino, like the library in Il nome della rosa, is more than just a city. It, too, is a metaphor. There is humor here in how

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86 ‘Ora incomincia la mia espiazione. Pregherò, mediterò, mi annullerò nel silenzio. Cercherò di raggiungere la solitudine remota di fronte a ogni opinione e immaginazione, di non provare più né ira né desiderio, e neppure ragionamento e pensiero, di sciogliermi da ogni legame, di tornare all'assolutamente semplice per non vedere più nulla, se non la gloria dell'oscurità. Mi svuotò d'anima e d'intelletto, giunsero oltre il regno della mente, nel buio compirò il mio tragitto per vie di fuoco...’ (Bi 518).
this return (and even resurrection) occurs, since it is based on the legend of the patron saint of Alessandria: San Baudolino. Baudolino, like the saint, is considered a mystic for his uncanny ability for stating the obvious (as Eco tells this story in “How to Travel with a Salmon”). Baudolino, in the end, becomes the personification of the “livable city,” a contradiction between truth and fantasy: truth, because that is what he is expounding up on that balcony, and fantasy, because through the legend of the saint, Eco allows his protagonist to pursue yet another journey. So that the self is like the city: only when it crumbles can it be rebuilt, and in a totally different way.

The self is like the livable city: a mix of personal and collective histories, personal and external influences, an individual mythology (based on personal experiences with an individual goal in mind) and a collective mythology (based on founding legends with specific societal goals in mind). In creating and recreating cities in order for them to be read, Eco allows us to read himself; from his works, and specifically from Baudolino, we come to a clearer knowledge of the foundations or building blocks used by this otherwise seemingly elusive author. In the end, when Eco utilizes Baudolino to describe the city, he is describing himself and the way in which he writes or builds his novels. For Eco, architecture and cities are not only models for him to build and create his novels; architecture and cities become metaphors for Eco's novels and at the same time, Eco's memories.
Chapter Four  
**Phase III: Narrative Memory**

In the description of his writing phases in “Come scrivo” (“How I Write”),¹ Eco explains that the final phase of his writing process, determining the style of the narration of his novels, is contingent on the previous step, determining the construction of the worlds of his novels. In this way, Eco’s writing phases are like building blocks, each phase reliant on the other in order to ensure a sound structure, the finished text. That Eco has been following this methodology since the beginning of his novel writing suggests not only that the architectural metaphor is implied in all his novels, but that, from the start, architecture has always been a part of his experience. Since architecture, as we have seen, becomes the visible structural memory of society through all its experiences and transitions, Eco’s novels, which are constructed according to an architectural metaphor, become the narrative memory not only of collective (historical) experiences but of his own individual experiences as well. A concept of self-reflexive intertextuality is dependent on the author’s memory, especially since the theory of intertextuality involves looking back. The process of intertextuality is the equivalent of performing an act of memory, since intertextuality revisits, recollects, and remembers past texts. Self-reflexive intertextuality incorporates the author’s personal (especially reading) and cultural experiences. As a result, whatever the author reads and experiences becomes a product of memory and subsequently a product of narrative. From Il nome della rosa (1980) to Il cimitero di Praga (2010), Eco evokes memory as the style for the narration of his novel: “Let

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¹ See *Sulla letteratura* (*On Literature*).
us proceed in an ordered way, that is, according to my narrative custom, by taking a step back” (171).2 Lost manuscripts, lost letters, lost journals, and lost memories each lead to Eco’s protagonists, and Eco as well since these are also the forms of his reading materials, looking back to his experiences, all revisited in a narrative form.

During a question and answer period at a recent Toronto Public Library appearance to promote the English translation of *Il cimitero di Praga*, Eco explained that the structure of his narration is inspired by the works of Gérard de Nerval, *Sylvie* in particular, and its appeal to memory (Nov 16, 2011).3 That Eco evokes memory as the form of narration for his novels is fitting since his narratives are always looking back, “a passo di gambero,” to how the writing process began—to the “initial idea” (*OL* 308).4 According to Capozzi in his essay, “Interpretation and Overinterpretation: The Rights of Texts, Readers and Implied Authors”:

> Anyone who has worked on Eco has quickly learned that it is almost impossible to discuss his writings without also mentioning how the author has already commented on the same issues. This is because Eco has an uncontrollable temptation in wanting to expound […] on everything he writes. Consequently he often reveals some of the intertextual references in his writings and at times even responds to a few controversial reactions coming from his critics (Capozzi 224).

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2 This particular translation of the essay “Come scrivo” can be found in the anthology *Illuminating Eco: On the Boundaries of Interpretation*, edited by Charlotte Ross and Rochelle Sibley in 2004. In a footnote at the beginning of the essay, Eco explains that the original version of this text was written for Maria Teresa Serafini’s *Come si scrive un romanzo* (1996), based on a series of questions the editor asked a select group of authors. Recent versions of the essay include excerpts from his fourth novel, *Baudolino*. I chose Ross’s translation here instead of McLaughlin’s translation in *On Literature*: “Let us proceed in the proper order, namely as is wont in my novels, by going back in time” (*OL* 302), because she makes the relationship between memory and narration explicit.

3 Eco’s (official or unofficial) twitter account posts a link to the proceeding: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yY5vY1uWdtI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yY5vY1uWdtI)

4 “L’idea iniziale” (*SL* 330).
The process of looking back in Eco’s novels is twofold: on the one hand, his protagonists are constantly revisiting their past experiences, both personal and cultural, in order to recreate them narratively, and, on the other, Eco’s novels, as we have seen, revisit his own experiences, especially with reading and writing:

Eco’s novels are, as they should be, autonomous and ‘self-sufficient’ (Riffaterre) ‘possible worlds.’ However, the nature of his fiction is such that readers will certainly appreciate the novels much better if they make some conjectures about the empirical author Umberto Eco – or of his persona which is often easily recognizable in his novels. As we know, his ironic and parodic postmodern metafictions make extensive and explicit use of intertextual references not only to numerous authors, but also, through intratextual and self-referential allusions, to most of his own theoretical studies (Capozzi 226).

By revisiting many of his own experiences, Eco’s memories become part of the narratives of his novels as well. By the time Eco published his first novel, *Il nome della rosa* (1980), he had already spent the previous twenty odd years laying down a theoretical foundation for the creation of his text. The novel can be read without the knowledge of these earlier writings, but such a reading lacks a certain substance, especially when much of the meaning of the novel is derived from Eco’s past work. *Il nome della rosa* is, more than anything else, an exercise of memory. Memory drives the narrative of the novel precisely because it also the driving force behind his previous theoretical writings.

Eco, as was previously discussed in chapter one, places great emphasis on the past in both his non-fiction and fictional works. Eco’s vision of the end of the world (“Un sogno”), as we have seen, recaptures the authorial debates of the 1960s where theorists claimed the author was an insignificant presence in the interpretation of texts. Eco’s theoretical works at the time, from *Il problema estetico in Tommaso d’Aquino* [PETA] (1956) to *Lector in fabula* [LF] (1979),
actually encourage the necessity of the author in the process of interpretation. In the dream, Eco describes how he must take it upon himself to educate those around him, namely the children, and as most books and other forms of knowledge are lost, everything Eco retells, narrates and teaches, must, by necessity, develop from a process of memory: a combination of intertextual elements (texts he has read and remembers) and self-reflexive allusions (things he has experienced). This is a perfect scenario for Eco and one he is totally prepared for. Since his works continuously make reference to past works (intertextually and intratextually), the past is no stranger to him. In this way, Eco’s writing process, which he admits is always looking back, becomes a sort of mnemonic device.

Throughout his early theoretical work, Eco explores many types of mnemonic devices, from image (Il problema estetico in Tommaso d’Aquino and Opera aperta) to language (Lector in fabula). In Il problema estetico in Tommaso d’Aquino, for example, Eco examines the role aesthetics comes to play on experience. Though he does not directly treat the relationship between aesthetics and memory, in this first publication Eco establishes a metaphor for memory (architecture) that he not only revisits in future theoretical writings (Apocalittici e integrati and La struttura assente) but in his first novel as well. When Eco describes the trend of medieval church architecture to veer towards a more ornamental style, he sets up the debate between St. Bernard of Clairvaux and Abbot Suger of St. Denis on the function of images. St. Bernard believed that such ornaments were “excesses [that] interfered with the concentration of the faithful” (AOTA 7), and that the appeal of such images “are judged to be dangerous”

5 “Le superfluitates che impediscono la concentrazione del fedele” (PETA 23).
Eco explains that such ornamentation was seen to be, particularly by St. Bernard, “a kind of trap designed to attract generous donations” and to “manipulate the emotions” (AOTA 7). Abbot Suger, however, advocates ornamentation and encourages it in his own church to purposefully provoke and incite emotional responses. While St. Bernard denounces this pleasure, Suger embraces it. Each agree that images have the potential to become part of a cognitive process: we gaze upon an image, we have an emotional or even intellectual response to it, as such it becomes a part of experience and consequently of memory. Eco states in a later work on “Architecture and Memory” that “if we see something we remember it better” (VIA 91). St. Bernard rejects these emotional reactions but Suger can see where an interpretation of an image can go beyond an emotional or intellectual response. In Eco’s next publication, such responses actually enrich the meaning of the work.

With Opera aperta (1962), the success of what Eco calls an “opera in movimento” (“a work in movement”) is, as was discussed in chapter one, not only reliant on the constant interplay between author/artist, text/work and reader/viewer, but also on “the possibility of numerous different personal interventions” (OW 19) that allow the “opera in movimento” to convey meaning. In his “Analysis of Poetic Language,” Eco begins an examination of language and its association with the process of memory. He poses the question: “How does one bring the memory of past experiences to bear on a present experience? And how can this same process be translated into an act of communication between a verbal message and its

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6 “la bellezza viene […] rifiutata proprio perché le sue attrative sono giudicate pericolose” (PETA 23).
7 “perversa” (PETA 23).
8 “disposti per favorire le generose donazioni […] il piacere estetico a fini di controllo delle emozioni” (PETA 24).
9 “possibilità di una molteplicità di interventi personali” (OA 19).
recipient?” (OW 28). Language, according to Eco, “is not an organization of natural stimuli, like a beam of photons; it is an organization of stimuli realized by man, and, as such, an artifact like any other art form” (OW 28). A linguistic message can, thus, according to Eco, have a “referential function (pointing to something well defined and, if necessary, verifiable)” (OW 29), and an “emotive function (aiming at provoking certain reactions in the recipient, stimulating associations, and promoting response behaviors that go well beyond the mere recognition of the referent)” (OW 29). Both the referential and emotive function of language are dependent on the collaboration of the sender of the message and its recipient. If this collaboration does not exist, there is a danger of over-interpretation. In terms of a referential message “the addressee will automatically [...] personalize his or her understanding of a strictly referential proposition with a variety of conceptual and emotive references culled from his or her previous experience” (OW 30), and the vagueness of an emotive proposition runs the risk of becoming “a series of connotations that go far beyond its most immediate denotations” (OW 30). The author of the message, or the sender, and its recipient must work in collusion in order to avoid an interpretation of the message that cannot be supported by the text.

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10 “Cosa significa convogliare in una esperienza il ricordo di esperienze passate? E come si attua questa situazione nel rapporto comunicativo che si stabilisce tra un messaggio verbale e il suo ricettore?” (OA 72)
11 “non è una organizzazione di stimoli naturali come può esserlo il fascio di foroni che ci colpisce in quanto stimolo luminoso; è organizzazione di stimoli attuata dall’uomo, fatto artificiale, come fatto artificiale è la forma artistica” (OA 71).
12 “una funzione referenziale (il messaggio indica qualcosa di univocamente definite e – all’occorenza – verificabile)” (OA 72).
13 “a funzione emotive (il messaggio mira a suscitare reazioni nel ricettore, a stimolare associazioni, a promuovere comportamenti di risposta che vadano al di là del semplice riconoscimento della cosa indicate)” (OA 72).
14 “Ciascuno dunque, di fronte a una espressione rigorosamente referenziale che esige uno schema di comprensione di riferimenti concettuali o emotive che personalizzano lo schema e gli conferiscono un colore particolare” (OA 75).
15 “Il messaggio (la frase) si apre a una serie di connotazioni che vanno molto al di là di ciò che esso denota” (OA 77).
To avoid this risk, Eco suggests the emphatic suggestion, or the double organization of the aesthetic object (la suggestione orientata). This proposition is in keeping with the continuous interplay between author, text and reader that Eco advocates throughout his work.

The role of the author or sender is to supply the suggestions that are intentional, provoked, and explicitly reiterated, but always within the limits fixed by the author, or, better, by the aesthetic machine that he has set in motion. The aesthetic machine does not ignore the audience’s capacities for response; on the contrary, it brings them into play and turns them into the necessary condition for its subsistence and its success, while directing them and controlling them (OW 35).  

These suggestions are at once a part of the author/sender’s past experiences and the reader/recipient’s. The recipient employs his or her experiences in order to interpret the message but only those experiences that can relate to and enrich the author’s suggestion. Such a discussion clearly prefigures Eco’s future works, particularly Lector in fabula, I limiti dell’interpretazione and Interpretation and Overinterpretation, in which he must reiterate (and almost defend) the role of the author and the role of the reader in the interpretation of texts.

Eco includes the process of memory in his conception of the “opera in movimento” because he believes that past experiences can serve as crucial material to the interpretation of an open work. Language works doubly, both referentially and emotionally, to communicate the message.

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16 “Le suggestioni sono volute, stimolate, richiamate esplicitamente, ma entro i limiti preordinati dall’autore, o meglio dalla macchina estetica che egli ha messo in moto. La macchina estetica non ignora le capacità personali di reazione degli spettatori, anzi le chiama in gioco e ne da condizione necessaria della sua sussistenza e del suo successo; ma le indirizza e signoreggia” (OA 82).
The process of memory is also crucial to Eco’s cultural theory in *Apocalittici e integrati* (1964). He continues to explore the question asked in *Opera aperta* about how to bring past experiences to bear on a present one by integrating his previous concepts of aesthetics to bear on a more contemporary theory of culture and mass media. The work itself provides a model for answering such questions, as he, again, revisits not only past texts, but his own previous writing as well. Eco’s “l’uomo di cultura,” as we have seen, must be able to move freely between high, middle and low levels of culture. In order to do so, he must bring with him the experiences gained from level to level: experiences in one level can be relevant in another and so on; such a process almost eliminates the distinctions between levels of culture. In this way, the process of memory is always a part of a cultural movement. Eco is the exemplar of “l’uomo di cultura” because in his works, *Apocalittici e integrati* included, he is always transitioning from one level of culture to another, using personal and cultural memories to enrich the process. This process, he points out, has a medieval model, and thus he revisits his first publication.

Revisiting the debate from *Il problema estetico in Tommaso d’Aquino* between St. Bernard of Clairvaux and Abbot Suger on the ornamentation of medieval church architecture helps to establish, according to Eco, a “medieval cultural model” (*AI* 18) that proves to be relevant to describe the reality of the culture at the time of *Apocalittici e integrati*’s publication. Following a discussion of Gunther Anders’s criticism that television “reduces the world to phantasm” (*AI* 16), Eco explains that Anders’s apocalyptic critique of television, a new form of media, mirrors St. Bernard’s criticism on the use of images in the church to educate the masses.

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17 My translation. “Il modello culturale medievale.”
18 My translation. “riduce il mondo a fantasma.”
Whereas St. Bernard and Anders were weary of society being consumed by and consuming images, Abbot Suger believed that such a focus could unite the social classes into “one unique cultural model” (AI 19). Michael Caesar notes, in Umberto Eco: Philosophy, Semiotics and the Work of Fiction, that Eco draws “on a medieval parallel to illustrate the conflict between the apocalyptics and the integrated, telling the story of the battle between Abbot Suger of St. Denis and St. Bernard of Clairvaux over the appropriateness of frescoing the walls of churches with religious paintings [...] the principle of which St. Bernard rejected in the name of mystic concentration (the story is repeated [again] in The Name of the Rose)” (Caesar 43). Suger and Bernard not only become representations of Eco’s distinction between apocalyptic and integrated intellectuals (“the apocalypse is a preoccupation of the dissenter; integration is the concrete reality of non-dissenters. The image of the Apocalypse is evoked in texts on mass culture, while the image of integration emerges in texts which belong to mass culture” [AI 4]), but also, as Caesar points out, of Eco’s own role as an intellectual of culture:

the notion of integration is more difficult to pin down because, as he himself is well aware, Eco is himself closer in practice to the integrated than to the apocalyptic position. His opposition to theories of catastrophe, apocalypse, the death of culture, is deep-rooted [...] But by the same token, Eco is disinclined to see change, the new, as something that is visited on a culture from the outside [...]. The Eco of 1964, in that apparent dilemma between ‘for’ and ‘against,’ is ‘for,’ but he wants his ‘for’ to be more nuanced, and obviously more theorized (Caesar 38-39).

This is where “l’uomo di cultura” and memory come into play.

According to Rhonda Hammer and Douglas Kellner in the introduction to Media/Cultural Studies:

The rise of mass media, ranging from film to broadcasting, was one of the major phenomena of the twentieth century and [...] a variety of academic approaches
and disciplines emerged to engage the increasing importance of media culture. In the post-World War II era of prosperity and increased consumption, it was perceived by many that a new consumer society was proliferating and the study of consumption and commodities became a major feature of cultural studies in the second half of the twentieth century (Hammer and Kellner ix).

To make the connection to Italy in the post-war period, as Norma Bouchard in *Risorgimento in Modern Italian Culture: Revisiting the Nineteenth Century* explains, Italy “evolves from a mostly rural to an industrial and post-industrial society. With the economic boom of the 1950s and 1960s, the phenomena of urbanization, rural exodus, mass consumption and secularization modified the collective models of integration upon which traditional Italian society rested” (Bouchard 11). Because of this, according to Cristina Farronato, in *Eco’s Chaosmos: From the Middle Ages to Postmodernity*, “the most lively debates in the 1960s were those concerning the role of the arts and of the intellectual, in a world that had been changed by the advent of the media and by a continuous permutation of society, a world in which the masses more and more were dictating the cultural path” (Farronato 47). As Farronato points out, Eco, a vital participant in these cultural debates taking place in Italy even before *Apocalittici e integrati* was published, was already arguing for an integrated view of culture that did not dismiss the past: “In *Il Verri*, Eco published a series of essays on the advent of the new medium [television], which were later published in *Diario minimo* (1963). It is clear in these essays that the lesson of the past is not forgotten and that the contemporary media phenomenon is being intelligently and wittily related to the events of classical and medieval history” (Farronato 46). In order, however, for “l’uomo di cultura” to be fully integrated within all levels of culture, a relationship with only the historical past is not sufficient.
As Francesca Pansa and Anna Vinci in *Effetto Eco*, and Farronato, remind us, after the completion of his doctoral thesis, Eco works for *RAI* (Radiotelevisione italiana) for several years and while there publishes some critical essays on the topic of television. Eco’s essay, “La fenomenologia di Mike Bongiorno,” for example, was first published “in the *Pirelli* magazine (now in *Diario minimo*); it was the first analysis in Italy of a television character by a philosopher” (Farronato 46). In “Umberto Eco: a scuola con Topo Gigio,” also published at this time, Eco was already discussing the way in which new media products, television in particular, could evoke interior responses on the part of the viewer: “The idea seemed sublime: television was considered as an open window to the world and also as an interior and unreal thing like poetry had to cling to external reality” (42).

19 The experiences of Eco as “uomo di cultura” with the television medium might have helped to shape his views on mass culture and media. This, together with his theories on art and language, provide further proof that an integrated model of culture, as well as art and text, is reliant on memory, both personal and historical.

Memory is necessary in order to speak (and write) about experiences with(in) a new media culture, and it changes the way “l’uomo di cultura” interacts with said culture. Robert Phillip Kolker, in *Media Studies: An Introduction*, argues that

as far back as the advent of books in the Renaissance, or as close as the invention of movies at the turn of the twentieth century, the popularity of radio in the 1920s, television in the early 1950s, and the Internet at the end of the twentieth century, media have made and remade society in important and lasting ways. We are changed individually and collectively, by the history of media, by the introduction of new media, and by the variety of ways we interact with it all (Kolker 1).  

19 My translation. “L’idea parve sublime: la televisione si considerava allora una finestra aperta sul mondo e anche una cosa interior e irreale come la poesia doveva ancorarsi alla realtà esterna” (Pansa, Vinci).
Kolker, like Eco, envisions an integrated system where “media involve not only a delivery system and an individual participant – a viewer, reader, listener, websurfer – but the entire complex of social, cultural, and economic events that are generated by and around the media themselves” (2). Eco defines this process as integration; similarly Kolker believes “convergence is a key concept. As viewers, readers or listeners we interact with the media, the media with us, and all with the culture we are a part of [...]. Together they form a complex of objective entities, technological, economic, even political, events, and imaginative creations” (2). Memory is the reason why “despite social differences, cultural issues seem to recur throughout history, which is why Eco can quickly juxtapose fourth-century Athens, twelfth-century Europe, and the twentieth-century West” (Farronato 48). Cultural issues, however, are not the only issues that recur in Eco’s work; his own personal work recurs as well. In other words, like his theory of “opera aperta,” Eco’s theory of culture is reliant on the integration or, to use Kolker’s term, the convergence of all elements that make up that culture – historical and personal memories included. Since Eco’s subsequent theories on semiotics have, according to Allen Ruch,

undergone many metamorphoses, this text [Theory of Semiotics] has its origins in a 1967 piece called Appunti per una semiologia delle comunicazioni visive, which was expanded into a work titled La struttura assente (The Absent Structure) in 1968. After a few translations into other languages, Eco again revised and expanded the work, giving it the new name of Le forme del contenuto in 1971. Then after several unsatisfactory translations into English, Eco, with the help of David Osmond-Smith, finally decided to completely revise and rewrite the entire work directly into English in 1973.20

20 See: www.themodernworld.com/eco.html
The difficulty of the transmission of Eco’s semiotic theory is, I feel, resolved through his narratives. His novels, which are replete with all the issues Eco is concerned with in his theoretical work (image, language, culture, etc.), are fictionalized versions of said work. The act of writing narratives becomes a process of memory which revisits and recollects both the author’s personal (reading) and cultural experiences.

In her essay “The Literary Representation of Memory,” Birgit Neumann describes memory and remembering as having always been an important, indeed a dominant, topic in literature. Numerous texts portray how individuals and groups remember their past and how they construct identities on the basis of recollected memories. They are concerned with the mnemonic presence of the past in the present, they re-examine the relationship between the past and the present, and they illuminate the manifold functions that memories fulfill for the constitution of identity. Such texts highlight that our memories are highly selective, and that the rendering of memories potentially tells more about the rememberer’s present, his or her desire and denial, than about the actual past events (Neumann 334).

In Eco’s novels, however, the problem of memory is made more complicated because there are two “rememberers”: the protagonist, the voice of the narration, and the author, the voice of the text. Often, as we have seen, these memories not only intersect but are also the same. They also intersect in the way that a “fiction of memory” (Neumann 335) can also teach memory techniques:

The term ‘fictions of memory’ deliberately alludes to the double meaning of fiction. First, the phrase refers to literary, non-referential narratives that depict the workings of memory. Second, in a broader sense, the term ‘fictions of memory’ refers to the stories that individuals or cultures tell about their past to answer the question ‘who am I?’, or, collectively, ‘who are we?’ (335).
These are questions people spend their lives trying to answer, and often the answer comes in no real tangible form. Authors, like Eco, attempt to answer these questions through their writing, structuring their memories in a narrative form.

Renate Lachmann, in her essay: “Mnemonic and Intertextual Aspects of Literature,” describes both literature and writing as processes of memory:

When literature is considered in the light of memory, it appears as the mnemonic par excellence. Literature is culture’s memory, not as a simple recording device but as a body of commemorative actions that include the knowledge stored by a culture, and virtually all texts a culture has produced and by which a culture is constituted. Writing is both an act of memory and a new interpretation, by which every new text is etched into memory space (Lachmann 302).

Lachmann considers writing an intertextual process where “authors of texts draw on other texts, both ancient and recent, belonging to their own or another culture and refer to them in various ways. They allude to them, they quote and paraphrase them, they incorporate them” (302). But she makes no comment on how authors, as we have seen with Eco, draw from their own texts and their individual experiences within their own culture as well. Such an inclusion broadens the definition of intertextuality and enables connections to be made with the author’s previous work – both non-fiction and fiction. These memories clearly become material for “fictions of memory,” and, to continue the architectural metaphor, they are placed in a memory space.

The writing process can, thus, be considered a way in which to make memories tangible. The writing process organizes memories within the space of the text. Lina Bolzoni, in The Gallery of Memory: Literary and Iconographical Models in the Age of the Printing Press, supports this lining of writing, memory, and text, by associating texts with architecture:
In the age of the printing press – more so than during the age of writing – the text is perceived as a set of places, as something that is positioned in space. The human faculties that generate the text (that is, the mind, memory) are perceived in an analogous fashion. It is easy to understand, therefore, how the term *luogo* acquires multiple meanings. The text is constructed (and read) in the space of the book in the same way that one constructs in the spaces of memory a set of places to which images are assigned, and in the same way an architect erects a building in a physical space. Indeed, the building is one of the classical models for systems of memory [...]. We can distinguish two models for this kind of thinking: the first encompasses various forms in which the text is compared to a building, and the work of the writer to that of the architect; in the second the influence of topics is stronger, and the places of the text and its different parts are compared to the places and different components of a building (Bolzoni 191).

Mary Carruthers and Jan Ziolkowski, in the introduction to *The Medieval Craft of Memory: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*, also consider memory in terms of architectural space:

In one common meaning of the word, ‘memory’ specifically connotes ‘storage,’ a treasure house both of experiences and facts. We can think of our memories as being like valuables in a bank vault, just sitting in our brains, collecting dust and grime [...] until oblivion overtakes them. This is a curious intellectual model, for it suggests that memories are essentially passive impressions of experiences we have had that can be taken out whole and unchanged whenever we need them [...]. Yet it is also true that to make use of memories - indeed to know they are there in our minds at all – we must recall them to our active awareness, our knowing. Recollection is not passive, but rather an activity involving human will and thought; it is often defined as a form of reasoning. One may conveniently think of this activity in spatial terms as if memories have been stored in a variety of places and must be called together in a common place where we can become aware of them, where we can ‘see’ them again and know them in the present (1).

Memories, therefore, find a common place within a narrative work and are made active within a text and, in a way, they are repaired.
Most modern theorists and historians of the art of memory, Eco included, consider the relationship between architecture and memory an ancient one. Works on memory, like those from Paolo Rossi and Frances Yates, trace this relationship back to Cicero’s (then Quintilian’s) account of the poet Siminodes who is the sole survivor of a building collapse. The tale describes how Siminodes recalls the details of the event and the location of its victims by remembering them in the architectural space they had been occupying. In his essay on “Architecture and Memory,” Eco revisits the story, found in Plato’s Phaedrus, of the Egyptian god, Theuth, who offers the invention of writing to the pharaoh. The pharaoh rejects the gift believing that memory alone is man’s most precious commodity and that writing could render it obsolete. Whereas the tale of Siminodes makes explicit only the relationship between architecture and memory, Eco’s Platonic example links the process of writing with architecture and memory:

The pharaoh was mistaken. He was mistaken because, as we know, the practice of writing has not killed memory, but has actually made it more efficient. And he was mistaken because, since the most ancient times, space and memory have been very closely linked: the metaphor of space is so basic in describing memory processes that even contemporary psychology, describing the behavior of our brain in building and retrieving memories, uses spatial metaphors (VIA 89).

For Eco, “remembering is like constructing” (89), and architecture, from its beginnings, has been one of the ways to fix memories. To recall events, we build monuments; exploits are recorded on stones, plaques, steles, obelisks, columns [...]. And in modern times (as in ancient times) architecture superintends the construction of containers for the documents that represent the memory of a civilization: the library, the archive, the museum (89).

21 See Rossi and Yates.
In this manner, through the writing process, Eco constructs texts that simultaneously recall both historical and personal memories. The text, like an architectural structure, is the space where these memories are organized, or, to use Carruther’s term, where they become “active.” Not coincidentally, the containers that Eco explains retain the memory of civilization: the library, the archive, and the museum, all figure greatly as representations of memory in his novels.

The form of the narration that Eco adopts for his novels is, as we have seen, a continuous looking back; a process of memory. According to Franco Forchetti in *Il segno e la rosa*, “the memory of the characters in Eco’s novels represent the precondition of the narrations. Through the technique of flashback, Adso, Casaubon and Roberto tell their story” (Forchetti 291). Memory is, therefore, an integral part of Eco’s novels. In *Il nome della rosa*, not only does Adso’s narrative depend on his own memory in order for him to write his manuscript, but memory also plays an essential role in the lives of the monks whose stories are being retold by him. According to Brendan P. Newlan, in his essay “Beasts and Buildings – Religious Symbolism and Medieval Memory,” memory is so ingrained in Eco’s novel that it is not difficult to take it for granted when a monk quotes a [small] passage from scripture, but attention is deserved when they can quote [by heart] huge passages of scripture and a seemingly endless supply of writings from religious commentators, philosophers, theologians and others […]. In fact, Eco gives the impression that most of the monks in his [novel] are similarly endowed with incredible memories” (Newlon 1).

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What Newlon fails to consider is how these passages, small and large, quoted by the characters in the novel, not only reveal the extent of the monks’ abilities to memorize but illustrate the extent of Eco’s memory as well. These passages are, after all, present in the novel as a direct result both of Eco’s (reading) experiences – or what I am calling a self-reflexive intertextuality – and of the very personal writing process that organizes them within the space of the text. This writing process, which goes from initial idea to narrative form, is subsequently represented in *Il nome della rosa*, through Adso’s narrative.

Eco’s writing process, in which the final step is deciding the style or form of the narration of his novel, uses memory in order to revisit earlier seminal ideas. His writing process describes a cyclical pattern that constantly revisits itself. Each new revisiting is influenced by the experiences that take place in the interim. In this way, narrating memory is a challenge, especially when time and experience can help to facilitate the process of forgetting. Mark Freeman, in “Telling Stories: Memory and Narrative,” explains that we should consider in this context the fact that much of what we remember about the personal past is suffused with others’ memories – which are themselves suffused with other others’ memories. Consider as well the fact that much of what we remember is also suffused with stories we have read and images we have seen, in books and movies and beyond. And, not least, consider the fact that all of this extraneous ‘secondhand’ material will be folded into whatever ‘firsthand’ material there may be through the process of narrativization, that is, a quite spontaneous process of transforming memory into narrative (263).

Adso’s narrative in *Il nome della rosa* starts “in the beginning” (*NOR* 11)\(^23\) with a biblical passage that reminds us that memories are often unclear: “but we see through a glass darkly, and the truth, before it is revealed to all, face to face, we see in fragments (alas, how illegible) in the

\(^{23}\) “In principio” (*NDR* 19).
error of the world, so we must spell out its faithful signals even when they seem obscure to us” (NOR 11).
Notwithstanding the sometimes illegible fragments of the truth of his memories, Adso, “having reached the end of my poor sinner’s life, my hair now white, I grow old as the world does, waiting to be lost in the bottomless pit of silent and deserted divinity, sharing the light is angelic intelligences; confined now with my heavy, ailing body in this cell in the dear monastery of Melk” (NOR 11), endeavours at the end of his life to clear the fog of his memories by writing about his youth. He begins his narrative by looking back, preparing “to leave on this parchment my testimony as to the wondrous and terrible events that I happened to observe in my youth, repeating verbatim all I saw and heard” (NOR 11).
At the same time, however, that he promises to retell these events accurately, he admits he is confused by them: “Perhaps, to make more comprehensible the events in which I found myself involved, I should recall what was happening in those last years of the century, as I understood it then, living through it, and as I remember it now, complemented by other stories I heard afterward – if my memory still proves capable of connecting the threads of happenings so many and confused” (NOR 12).
Through time, Adso’s memories have converged with other memories of other events, transforming the initial memory so that it can bear meaning on a present experience,
which, for Adso is his first (and last) venture with writing. (This is the very act of communication Eco describes, as we have seen, in *Opera aperta.*) As many of these have become confused in his memory, Adso must utilize mnemonic techniques, mainly architecture, in order to organize them.

As was discussed in the previous chapter, the construction of the abbey and the library in *Il nome della rosa* is a combination of Eco’s theories of architecture, specifically from *La struttura assente*, and a direct result of his (reading) experiences – all elements which support a concept of self-reflexive intertextuality. For Eco, as we have seen, architecture serves as metaphor for writing, but by utilizing architecture as a mnemonic device with which to structure his writing, architecture also becomes a metaphor for memory. In fact, the most vivid memories in *Il nome della rosa* are those that involve experiences with architecture. Adso’s “moment of upheaval” at the door of the abbey, for example, is, as was previously discussed, a multifaceted experience that is simultaneously intertextual (it revisits medieval models of architecture and memory undoubtedly researched by Eco); intratextual (it revisits Eco’s own work, specifically the debate between St. Bernard of Clairvaux and Abbot Suger on the ornamentation of church architecture discussed in *PETA*); and self-reflexive (in “Come scrivo” Eco describes a personal moment of upheaval when, at sixteen, he goes on retreat to a Benedictine monastery). According to Evelyn Ender in *Architexsts of Memory: Literature, Science and Autobiography,*

[w]riters are the exemplary architects of mnemonic scenes. Through their detailed descriptions of mnemonic processes, they reveal the artifices of the imagination and rhetoric that bring the past to life […]. The writers who have a vocation for remembrance have long known about its subtle complexities. In
trying to shape mnemonic scenes, they have learned that memories are constructions (Enders 5).

Eco’s experience with architecture helps him to construct the world of his novel and subsequently helps him to narrate it. Eco maintains the architectural metaphor in order to write a structurally sound text; he needs it in order to organize memories and experiences within the text. In this way, Eco irrevocably links architecture with writing and memory.

The structure in Il nome della rosa that best embodies the relationship between architecture, writing and memory is the library. The library adheres to, what Eco later explains in “Architecture and Memory,” Aristotle’s example in De memoria of assigning memories to spaces:

Anyone familiar with ancient logic knows that, in order to reason, you must choose arguments, and these arguments are called places (topoi in Greek; locoi in Latin). This terminology originates with Aristotle, in his works on Logic; but its explanation is found in De memoria: to remember we must bear images in mind and these images must be organized with order and regularity and the human product in which order and regularity appear best in architecture. All classical treatises on memory tell us, then, that, if you want to remember something […] you must associate each entry in this imaginary encyclopedia with an architectonic space (VIA 91).

Every volume in the library can be found through a similar system of association:

Malachi showed him some annotations beside each title […]. I understood that the first number indicated the position of the book on the shelf or gradus, which is in turn indicated by the second number; while the case was indicated by the third number; and I understood also that the other phrases designated a room or a corridor of the library, and I made bold to ask further information about these last distinctions Malachi looked at me sternly: ‘Perhaps you do not know, or have forgotten, that only the librarian is allowed access to the library’ (NOR 75).28

28 “Malachia gli mostrò delle annotazioni che fiancheggiavano ciascun titolo […]. Capii che il primo numero indicava la posizione del libro nello scaffale o gradus, indicato dal secondo numero, l’armadio essendo indicato dal terzo numero, e capii pure che le altre espressioni designavano una stanza o corridoio della biblioteca, e ardi chiedere maggiori notizie su queste ultime distinzioni. Malachia mi guardò severamente : ‘Forse non sapete, o avete dimenticato, che l’accesso alla biblioteca è consentito solo al bibliotecario’ (NDR 83).
Later, William discovers that to find the correct room where a book being sought is shelved, a series of letter indications needed to be deciphered. Each would spell out a keyword associated with the subject matter of the book. The correct room is the room marked by the last letter of the keyword. Adso describes the system of words as: “Eccentric. At times it proceeded in a single direction, at other times it went backward, at still others, in a circle; often, as I said before, the same letter served to compose two different words [...]. But obviously there was no point looking for the golden rule in this arrangement. It was purely a mnemonic device to allow the librarian to find a given work” (NOR 320). This mnemonic system is devised solely by and for the librarian.

In fact, a great part of the monks’ lives is dependent on the librarian’s (Jorge de Burgos) memory. The library, according to Forchetti, “represents the memory of knowledge [...]. A memory that wants to protect itself from oblivion [...]. It is a closed memory, organized like a labyrinth that discourages free exploration, governed by a librarian-minotaur who is its custodian” (Forchetti 295). Jorge is “he who fights against the forces of oblivion, he is the library in flesh and bone because he knows every volume by heart” (295). Though Jorge is the embodiment of memory in the novel, old and blind, it is the accuracy of his memory that is
often questioned throughout the text. Such questioning is reprimanded: “Venantius’s reaction was unusual. He gave Berengar a look that made him lower his eyes. ‘Very well, Brother,’ he said, ‘if memory is a gift from God, then the ability to forget can also be good, and must be respected’” (82).32 The dissemination of knowledge in the abbey and the survival of the library, which holds all the memory of the world and requires memory to successfully navigate, are dependent on the one man whose memories, in his advanced age, are the most muddled: “‘The library dates back to the earliest times,’ Malachi said, ‘and the books are registered in order of their acquisition, donation, or entrance within our walls.’ ‘They are difficult to find, then,’ William observed. ‘It is enough for the librarian to know them by heart and know when each book here. As for the other monks, they can rely on his memory’” (NOR 75).33 Jorge’s memory actually contributes to the oblivion he must fight against.

Forchetti acknowledges that the library is “microcosm of knowledge that reproduces the terrestrial world: in it is fulfilled a geography of the book, a map of the world that places the books in their form of origin. Place of collective memory by definition, anti-oblivion par excellence, has as custodian Jorge who, nevertheless, wants to maintain in oblivion and forgetfulness the Poetics of Aristotle” (Forchetti 297).34 As it happens, theories of memory,

33 "La biblioteca affonda la sua origine nel profondo dei tempi,’ disse Malachia, ‘e I libri sono registrati secondo l’ordine delle acquisizioni, delle donazioni, del loro ingresso nelle nostre mura.’ ‘Difficile da trovare,’ osservò Guglielmo.’ Basta che il bibliotecario li conosca a memoria e sappia per ogni libro il tempo in cui arrivò. Quanto agli altri monaci possono fidarsi della sua memoria’” (NDR 83).
34 “La biblioteca è un microcosmo del sapere che riproduce il globo teraquo : in essa si compie una geografia del libro, una mappa del mondo che colloca libri nelle loro plaghe d’origine. Luogo della memoria collettiva per definizione, anti-oblio per antonomasia, ha come custode Jorge che, tuttavia, vuol mantenere in oblio e nella dimenticanza la Poetica di Aristotele.”
especially those from Aristotle and Aquinas, which would have been introduced in the Middle Ages through the commentaries of several classical texts that considered memory a part of rhetoric (and no doubt read by Eco in his extensive research on the Middle Ages), are mysteriously absent. Rather, these works are largely associated with forgetting. Aristotle’s second book of his Poetics, supposedly on laughter, is never quoted as other great passages are in the novel, and its contents are always hypothesized. Anyone who comes in contact with the text is murdered, the killer ensuring that it can never be committed to memory. Furthermore, each time Aristotle is mentioned to Jorge, a man whom Adso admires for having a “vivid memory” (NOR 81), and who “was in, other words, the library’s memory and the soul of the scriptorium” (NOR 130), he seemingly suffers a bout of memory loss: “In other words, that day we were discussing the question of understanding how the truth can be revealed through surprising expressions, both shrewd and enigmatic. And I reminded him that in the work of the great Aristotle I found very clear words on this score…’ ‘I do not remember,’ Jorge interrupted sharply, ‘I am very old and I do not remember’” (NOR 82). When it comes to Aquinas, whose teacher Adso refers to as a “lofty authority” (NOR 61), Jorge acknowledges Aquinas’s praise for baths: “‘Baths are a good thing’ Jorge said ‘and Aquinas himself advises them for dispelling sadness, which can be a bad passion when it is not addressed to an evil that can be dispelled

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35“la vivida memoria” (NDR 88).
36 “Egli era insomma la memoria stessa della biblioteca e l’anima dello scriptorium” (NDR 136-7).
38“altissima autorità” (NDR 89).
through boldness. Baths restore the balance of the humors“” (131). 39 Though the works of Aristotle and Aquinas function as intertexts in the novel, their indirectness only serves to obfuscate the truth.

A clear intertext is the connection Eco makes between his character Jorge de Burgos and the author Jorge Luis Borges. Joseph Rosenblum, in his “Essay on The Name of the Rose,” supports this connection, affirming that Burgos “bears the features of the Argentine writer […] who also creates labyrinths and imaginary libraries.” 40 Beyond the physical characteristics, Eco’s character exemplifies the eidetic memory Borges describes in “Funes el Memorioso.” Borges’s short story tells the tale of Ireneo Funes, a young boy who is thrown from a horse and consequently paralyzed. The accident activates in him an eidetic memory. The narrator’s memory, that drives the story (“I remember” is repeated several times within the first paragraph), has the ability to evolve with time and experience and is immediately juxtaposed with Funes’s absolute memory that is fixed in time as a result of a lack of experience, since his paralysis confines him to a small room. Paul Kong, in Raiders and Writers of Cervantes’ Archive: Borges, Puig and García Márquez, suggests that Funes’s memory, though absolute, actually limits his way of thinking:

The repression of Funes’ body comes in the form of paralysis, a deprival of physical, bodily mobility, which comes with this gift of absolute memory after his fall from a half-tamed horse. The gift of his extraordinary, absolute memory comes at the expense of his physical mobility, of the deprival of his bodily movement. Because of this he becomes a ‘perpetual prisoner,’ confined in a little dark room, which is his archive, abounding not only in manuscripts or

39 “‘I bagni sono cosa buona,’ disse Jorge, ‘e lo stesso Aquinate li consiglia per rimuovere la tristezza, che può essere passione cattiva quando non si rivolga a un male che possa essere rimosso attraverso l’audacia. I bagni restituiscono l’equilibrio degli umori’” (NDR 137-8).
40 See http://www.themodernword.com/eco/eco_rose_essay.html
parchments, but also in memories. In this little dark room, his memory cannot stop working and his faculty of perception takes away his subjectivity [...]. What is being repressed besides his physical mobility is his ability to forget, to generalize, to make abstraction, and above all, to think (Pong 68-70).

Funes is not capable of abstract thought, especially since induction and deduction rely on this ability. Eco’s librarian is also incapable of abstraction, doing everything possible to prevent William and Adso’s inductive and deductive modes of thinking. His memory is juxtaposed with that of the other monks: “Jorge is blind; he makes the monks read the volumes to him: he hears the texts and he picks up the whispers of knowledge. He is the defender of Logos, and it is known that logos is verbum, word, and therefore also sound. He receives the sound from books; his auditory memory is put in contrast to the visual memory of the other monks who read the letters of texts” (Forchetti 296).41 Burgos’s physical limitations, like Funes’s, restrict his thinking process. Both physical representations of memory and the libraries they inhabit, Burgos and Funes are “actually like a computer that only records and stores data, but can never make a generalization out of them” (Pong 70). Pong describes the inactive state of these characters as being consumed by memories that can never go anywhere: “these characters are inflicted with the evil of the archive, manifested in the form of violence and trauma. This evil of the archive destroys them during the process of its self-destruction” (Pong 86). Both stories end with the death of this type of absolute memory: Funes dies of lung congestion and Burgos

41 My translation. “Jorge è cieco, si fa leggere i volume dagli altri monaci: egli ascolta I testi e capta il sussurro della sapienza. È il difensore del Logos, e si sa che il logos è verbum, parola, e quindi anche suono. Egli riceve il suono dei libri; la sua memoria auditiva si ponte in contrasto con la memoria visiva degli altri monaci che leggono le lettere dei testi.”
ingests the very book that he has poisoned, that leaves no hope for what Eco calls “works in movement.”

However, the ending of Adso’s narrative, and thus the ending of Eco’s novel, reaffirms the consideration of an “opera in movimento.” In a significant passage at the end of the novel, Adso describes his return to the abbey several years after its destruction:

Poking out from the rubble, I found at times scraps of parchment that had drifted down from the scriptorium and the library and had survived like treasures beneath the earth; I began to collect them, as if I were going to piece together the torn pages of a book [...]. Mine was a poor harvest, but I spent a whole day reaping it, as if from those disiecta membra of the library a message might reach me [...]. Along the return journey and afterward at Melk, I spent many, many hours trying to decipher those remains. Often from a word or a surviving image I could recognize what the work had been. When I found, in time, other copies of those books, I studied them with love, as if destiny had left me this bequest, as if having identified the destroyed copy were a clear sign from heaven that said to me: Tolle et lege [...]. The more I reread this list the more I am convinced it is the result of chance and contains no message [...] and I have almost had the impression that what I have written on these pages, which you will now read, unknown reader, is only a cento, a figured hymn, an immense acrostic that says and repeats nothing but what those fragments have suggested to me, nor do I know whether thus far I have been speaking of them or they have spoken through my mouth. But whichever of the two possibilities may be correct, the more I repeat to myself the story that has emerged from them, the less I manage to understand whether in it there is a design that goes beyond the natural sequence of the events and the times that connect them. And it is a hard thing for this old monk, on the threshold of death, not to know whether the letter he has written contains some hidden meaning, or more than one, or many, or none at all (NOR 500-501).42

42“Rovistando tra le macerie trovavo a tratti brandelli di pergamena, precipitate dallo scriptorium e dalla biblioteca e sopravvissuti come tesori sepolti nella terra; e incominciai a raccoglierli, come se dovesse ricomporre i fogli di un libro [...]. Povere messe fu la mia, ma passai una intera giornata a raccoglierla, come se da quella disiecta membra della biblioteca dovesse pervenirmi un messaggio [...]. Lungo il viaggio di ritorno e poi a Melk passai molte e molte ore a tentar di decifrare quella vestigia. Spesso riconobbi da una parola o da un immagine residua di quale opera si trattasse. Quando ritrova nel tempo altre copie di quei libri, li studiai con amore, come se il fatto mi avesse lasciato quel legato, come se l’averne individuato la copia distrutta fosse stato un segno chiaro del cielo che diceva tolle et lege [...]. Piú rileggo questo elenco piú mi convinco che esso è effetto del caso e non contiene alcun messaggio [...] e ho quasi l’impressione che quanto ho scritto su questi fogli, che tu ora leggerai, ignoto lettore, altro non si anche un centone, un carme a figura, un immenso acrostico che non dice e non ripete altro che ciò che quei frammenti mi hanno suggerito, né so piú se io abbia sinora parlato di essi o essi abbiano parlato per bocca.
Adso reconstructs the events through a process of memory. He arranges the texts he finds from within the rubble in his manuscript through a process of memory, both personal and cultural. He writes the manuscript in the hope that someone might find it and read it, and, through reading it, might revisit his life and the events (and texts) described within it. The reader of the manuscript subsequently incorporates it into his or her memory and so on, with each reading being a new interpretation. The ending of the novel, thus, brings the reader back to the beginning: “Il nome della rosa begins with the final point of the tale, in ultima res, when Adso is already an old monk in the abbey of Melk [...] completes a voyage a rebours in memory, thus giving a start to its re-evocation” (Forchetti 291). The final point of the novel brings the reader back to the initial point, to the unknown reader/writer and discoverer of Adso’s manuscript: “I leave this manuscript, I do not know for whom; I no longer know what it is about: stat rosa pristina nomine, nomine nuda tenebus” (NOR 502). There is, however, a distinction between the two reader/writers: the unknown reader/writer “happily writes for the pure love of writing” (NOR 5), while Adso writes in fear of forgetting and being forgotten. The former is witness to the emergence of many new libraries, while the latter is witness to the destruction of one. Though the library is destroyed, memory is not since it survives through

43 My translation. “Il nome della rosa inizia nel punto finale della fabula, in ultima res, quando Adso è ormai un monaco anziano nell’abbazia de Melk [...] compie un viaggio a rebours nella memoria, dando così inizio alla sua rievocazione.”

44 “Lascio questa scrittura, non so per chi, non so più intorno a che cosa: stat rosa pristina nomine, nomine nuda tenemus” (NDR 503).

45“che si possa scrivere per puro amor di scrittura” (NDR 15).
Adso’s writing process. It is through this process that the architecture of the abbey and the library survive as well. In this way, Adso’s final words uphold the relationship between architecture, memory and writing. The passage both affirms Eco’s cyclical mode of writing by bringing the reader back to the beginning of the novel and makes a comment on the process of writing as irrevocably intertextual and inevitably self-reflexive.

Before the publication of his second novel, Il pendolo di Foucault (1989), Eco released translations of two essays on memory: “Architecture and Memory” in 1986 and “An Ars Oblivionalis? Forget It!” in 1988. Both essays recapture the concern with memory and forgetting described in Il nome della rosa, particularly, as in Jorge’s case, asking whether an absolute memory can lead to oblivion. “Architecture and Memory” maintains, as we have seen, the connection between architecture and writing and their convergence into an art of memory while, in “An Ars Oblivionalis?,” Eco posits its opposite, an art of forgetting:

Once, as a joke, some friends and I invented advertisements for university positions in nonexistent disciplines. We divided these disciplines into four departments: adynata or impossibilia, containing sciences that were historically impossible [...]; oxymoronica, containing sciences that were self-contradictory and analytically impossible [...]; byzantanica, containing sciences of utter uselessness [...]; and tetrapiloctomia, or the art of quartering a hair [...]. One of the most interesting subjects was the ars oblivionalis, as opposed to the mnemonic arts (PMLA 254).

An ars oblivionalis, according to Eco, was not posited in order to determine the (natural) causes of forgetfulness, but, by using the model of mnemonic techniques, elaborated in texts from Aristotle to Rossi, “was to elaborate techniques for forgetting” (254) and produce an artificial

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46 This essay was first presented at the Symposium on Semiotics and Memory at the Centro di Semiotica in Urbino, Italy in July 1966. Not coincidentally, this essay on the issue of excessive semiotics pre-dates Eco’s first work of semiotics and its translation prefigures his first work on the limits of interpretation.
forgetting. This was not to be discussed in terms of neurophysiology and psychology, but in semiotic terms:

I examine two problems: (a) to what extent a mnemotechnics is a semiotics and (b) why a semiotics, and therefore a mnemotechnics, is an apparatus inherently ill-suited to stimulate forgetfulness. Finally, even if in a tentative and less satisfactory manner, I examine the way in which a semiotics can be used, if not to forget, at least to render recall more difficult” (255).

In recounting the various treatises on the art of memory, Eco comes to the conclusion that “if an art of memory is a semiotics, then we can understand why it is not possible to construct an *ars oblivionalis* on the model of the art of memory. If one did, the *ars oblivionalis* would also be a semiotics, and it is proper to a semiotics to make present something absent” (258). Semiotics can, however, be used “to confuse memories” (259). People with excessive or eidetic memories, as is the case with Jorge and will be the case for the protagonists in *Il pendolo di Foucault*, or people who practice an excessive semiotics “forget not by cancellation but by superimposition, not by producing absence but by multiplying presences. And this is why the authors of treatises on memory feared that one might remember so much as to confuse one’s ideas and, therefore, for all practical purposes, to forget” (260). It is no coincidence that Eco’s essay on “An Ars Oblivionalis” should make a reappearance at this point in time, as it coincides with both the publication of *Meaning and Mental Representations* (1988), where he is both an editor, along with Patrizia Violi and Marco Santambrogio, and contributor, and the release of *Il pendolo di Foucault*.

In “On Truth: A Fiction,” first published in *Meaning and Mental Representations*, then republished in *Limits of Interpretation* (1990), Eco tells the tale of several expeditions to Twin Earth and the failure of the *Terrestrials* to communicate with the *Antipodeans*. Finally, after
several attempts, \( T1 \) and \( T2 \) discover that the Antipodeans “store propositions, inferences, and so on, in a Third World, which is neither physical nor psychical” (42). This storage container is, in actual fact, the computer. What follows is a discussion between \( T1 \) disguised as Dr. Smith, and Charles Sanders Personal [CSP], Antipodean Computer, about the role of memory, or the encyclopedia, in interpretation:

\[
\text{CSP: I have extensive instructions in my memory about the possible interpretation of the words you used. As far as I can reasonably interpret them, according to you I identify my memory with only the real world and I maintain that there is no external world... Not at all. In your terms, I should rather be defined as a paramount instance of objective communitarianism. I keep in my memory the sum of a collective history, the whole amount of all the relevant assertions my masters have ever made about their external world, as well as about their languages, and about the way they use language in order to produce images of the external world. My problem is that I am obliged to record contrasting images, but I am also instructed to recognize those that prove the most efficient in promoting a good Antipodean-world interaction...I am not a subject, I am the collective cultural memory of Antipodeans. I am not Myself, I am That (53).}
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\( CSP \) affirms that it can only form interpretations based on the information its masters have put into it. In this way, there are, using Eco’s future designation, limits to an interpretation. Interpretations must be “reasonable” and make sense in context, that is, in accord with the information given. This “semiotic machine” (51), that Eco’s computer describes as being named after Charles Sanders Peirce, father of semiotics, as we know, is in direct contrast to the computer, Abulafia, that Eco describes in his subsequent novel, \( \text{Il pendolo di Foucault} \). “On Truth: A Fiction,” sets up, in way, the relevant definitions of interpretation and over interpretation, the title of another future publication, that can aid in the reader in interpreting the novel. Eco’s Model Reader can further make the connection between the library in \( \text{Il nome} \)
*della rosa* and Abulafia in *Il pendolo di Foucault*, who, as representations of excessive memory, are examples of archives that have gone incredibly wrong.

*Il pendolo di Foucault*, like *Il nome delle rosa*, begins as an act of memory that occurs in what Eco has termed “a container of memory”: The Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers in Paris. At the outset Eco makes a distinction between two types of memory: the one that allows a “work to move” and the one that is absolute. Forchetti aptly calls this “a war between worlds of memory” (Forchetti 302).⁴⁷ Casaubon’s narrative begins with the description of the pendulum:

The sphere, hanging from a long wire set into the ceiling of the choir, swayed back in forth with isochronal majesty. I knew – but anyone could have sensed it in the magic of that serene breathing – that the period was governed by the square root of the length of the wire and by $\pi$, that number which, however irrational to sublunar minds, through a higher rationality binds the circumference and diameter of all possible circles […]. I also knew that a magnetic device centered in the floor beneath issued its command to a cylinder hidden in the heart of the sphere, thus assuring continual motion […] oscillating for eternity (FP 3).⁴⁸

The back and forth movement of the pendulum, a representation of the world, also becomes a metaphor for memory and narration:

Each swing of the pendulum would make a light furrow, and the furrows, changing direction imperceptibly, would widen to form a breach, a groove with radical symmetry – like the outline of a mandala or a pentaculum, a star, a mystic rose. No, more a tale recorded on an expanse of desert, in tracks left by countless caravans of nomads, a story of slow millennial migrations […]. The tip

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⁴⁷ “La guerra tra mondi di memoria.”
⁴⁸ “La sfera, mobile all’estremità di un lungo filo fissato alla volta del coro, descriveva le sue ampie oscillazioni con isocrona maestà. Io sapevo – ma chiunque avrebbe dovuto avvertire nell’incanto di quel placido respiro – che il periodo era regolato dal rapporto tra la radice quadrata della lunghezza del filo e quel numero di $\pi$ che, irrazionale alle menti sublunari, per divina ragione lega necessariamente la circonferenza al diametro di tutti i cerchi possibili […]. Ancora sapevo che sulla verticale del punto di sospensione, alle base, un dispositivo magnetico, comunicando il suo richiamo a un cilindro nascosto nel cuore della sfera, garantiva la costanza del moto […] avrebbe oscillato in modo regolare per l’eternità” (*PDF 9*).
retraced, narrating anew in compressed time what they had done between one ice age and another, and perhaps were doing still, those couriers of the Masters (FP 4).49

Memory is, thus, the driving force of Casaubon’s own narrative, oscillating back and forth, as it does, between memory and his present reality. Notwithstanding the fact that memory moves Casaubon’s narrative, he is trapped in a place of memory (museum of technology) where things that should and once moved can no longer, “symbols [now] not instruments” (FP 13). The sequence of machines and museum oddities Casaubon observes from his hiding place in the periscope is spouted off in list form and at a frantic rate, as if they have the ability to drive him mad:

> The only thing you can rely on at a time like this is the laundry list. Stick to facts, causes, effects. I am here for this reason, and also for this reason and this ... Memories, distinct, precise, orderly. Of the past three frantic days, of the past two years, and the forty-year-old memories I found when I broke into Jacopo Belbo’s electronic brain. I am remembering now (as I remembered then) in order to make sense out of the chaos of that misguided creation of ours. Now (as then, while I waited in the periscope) I shrink into one remote corner of the mind, to draw from it a story (FP 15-16).50

This “war of the memories,” to use Forchetti’s phrase, in Eco’s novel, becomes more complex when we consider, as JoAnn Cannon does in her essay on “The Imaginary Universe of Umberto

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49“il pavimento del coro avrebbe disegnato a ogni oscillazione un solco leggero sul suolo, e il solco, mutando infinitesimalmente di direzione ad ogni istante, si sarebbe allargato sempre più in forma di breccia, di vallo, lasciando indovinare una simmetria raggianta – come lo scheletro di un mandala, la struttura invisibile di un pentaculum, una stella, una mistica rosa. No, piuttosto una vicenda, registrata sulla distesa di un deserto, di tracce lasciate da infinite erratiche carovane. Una storia di lente e millenarie migrazioni [...]. La punta ripeteva, narrava di nuovo in un tempo assai contratto, quello che essi avevano fatto dall’una all’altra glaciazione, e forse facevano ancora, ormai corrieri dei Signori” (PDF 10).

50 L’unica cosa che in quei momenti non ti tradisce è la lista della lavandaia. Riandare ai fatti, elencarli, individuarne le cause, gli effetti. Sono arrivato a questo punto per questo, e per quest’altro motivo...Sopravvennero i ricordi, nitidi, precisi, ordinati. I ricordi degli ultimi freneticì tre giorni, poi degli ultimi due anni, confuse con i ricordi di quarant’anni prima, come li avevo ritrovati violando il cervello elettronico di Jacopo Belbo. Ricordo (e ricordavo), per dare un senso al disordine della nostra creazione sbagliata. Ora, come l’altra sera nel periscopio, mi contraggo in un punto remoto della mente per emanarne una storia” (PDF 25-26).
Eco: A Reading of *Foucault’s Pendulum,*” the memory of the author. Cannon ponders whether it is “the critic’s job to reconstruct the references on which this compendium of arcane knowledge is based? Should one read the novel as an autobiographical projection of the author’s theories?” (Cannon 56). Cannon takes a “hybrid approach” (56), believing that both elements: autobiographical and theoretical, are helpful in interpreting Eco’s second novel.

Model Readers of Eco’s works would undoubtedly respond affirmatively to Cannon’s question and several critics of the novel (Capozzi, Cotroneo, to name a few) support this intratextual level of reading, as well as the intertextual and self-reflexive. Cannon’s offer of a “hybrid approach,” to her interpretation of the novel incorporates both Eco’s previous theoretical work and allusions to Eco himself. She situates the novel in the “sociopolitical climate” of Italy “of the last decades” (56), in which Eco was no doubt involved, and aptly points to shared characteristics between Belbo and the author himself: “the vicissitudes of Italy are filtered through the consciousness of a disenchanted individual, Jacopo Belbo, who sports the same birthdate and vital statistics as Umberto Eco” (56). Capozzi, similarly, in “Il pendolo di *Foucault:* kitsch o neo-/postmodernismo,” notes the novel’s hybrid intertextual elements:

The *Pendulum* intends to be a text in which [...] come together, collide, and merge myths and history, high culture and *pop* culture, science and mysticism, philosophical notions and banal information. Therefore, Eco’s novel presents itself like a *databank* of memory, or better as an orgy of information that goes from those that are socio-historical and literary to those perhaps more banal of our popular culture – all useful information with which to display an encyclopedic baggage (Capozzi 229).51

51 My translation. “Il *pendolo* intende essere un testo in cui [...] si incontrano, si scontrano e si fondono miti e Storia, cultura alta e cultura *pop,* scienza e misticismo, nozioni filosofiche e informazioni banali. Quindi, il romanzo di Eco si presenta come una *databank* di memoria, o meglio un’orgia di informazioni che vanno da quelle socio-storiche e letterarie fino a quelle forse più banali della nostra cultura popolare – informazioni tutte utili per sfoggiare il proprio bagaglio enciclopedico.”
as well as its intratextual aspects:

however, *Il pendolo*, other than being intertextual, is also very narcissistically intratextual for its numerous references to Eco’s essays and literary articles collected in volumes that go from *Diario minimo* (1963) and *Apocalittici e integrati* (1964) to *Sugli specchi e altri saggi* (1985) to theoretical works like *Opera aperta* (1962), *Le poetiche di Joyce* (1966), *Lector in fabula* (1979), *Semiotica e filosofia del linguaggio* (1984) and *Arte e bellezza nell’estetica medievale* (1987) (230).  

Cotroneo maintains that *Il pendolo di Foucault* is one of Eco’s most autobiographical novels:

In *Pendulum*, all the characters are autobiographical, Casaubon is, Belbo is, and Belbo still when he writes at the computer, and Aglié when he recounts his esoteric studies […]. Eco, therefore, did not preoccupy himself with the autobiographical traces left in the novel; on the contrary […] he will admit them explicitly. And while in *Nome della rosa*, autobiography was of the second level […] in the *Pendulum* the author risks more, he does not hide and concedes to the reader the possibility of finding him between the pages […] the author enters the scene (Cotroneo 46-7).  

Eco is present within the pages of his novel as a result of a process of looking back, a process mirrored by his characters, whereby he offers the reader a narrative version of specific personal memories. There is an element in the novel that always takes the reader back to childhood memories. Abulafia, in a way, becomes a cautionary tale, like many children’s stories, about right and wrong or, in this case, about the dangers of overinterpretation. The novel itself ends with Casaubon remembering his childhood, “in the midst of the rows – but you have to walk barefoot – with your heels callused, from childhood, there are peach trees” (*FP* 532), and his

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53 My translation. “Nel *Pendolo* tutti i personaggi sono autobiografici, lo è Casaubon, lo è Belbo, lo è ancora Belbo quando scrive sul computer, e lo è Aglié quando racconta i suoi studi esoterici […].”
own child with Lia, and then nothing – oblivion. The author, however, does not fade into oblivion, as Casaubon does at the end of the novel, rather, it is the author’s personal memories that survive the overinterpretation of the contents of Abulafia.

In his conclusion to Death and Drama in Renaissance England: Shades of Memory, William E. Engel maintains that the fear of “Oblivion motivates our recreations of Memory” (174). In Il pendolo di Foucault, Abulafia, a modern receptacle for memory (both personal and cultural), threatens oblivion because its contents are consistently misinterpreted or overinterpreted. In this way, Eco’s super computer continues the trend, started in “On Truth: A Fiction,” of warning against superfluous interpretations. It is no coincidence, therefore, that following the publication of his second novel Eco releases a collection of essays aptly titled I limiti dell’interpretazione (The Limits of Interpretation). Eco’s following statement in reference to this publication is available only in the English translation (though he repeats it in Interpretation and Overinterpretation):

It is neither accidental nor irrelevant that these essays [also] follow my previous writings (A Theory of Semiotics, The Role of the Reader, Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language) in which I elaborated on the Peircean idea of unlimited semiosis. I hope that the essays in this book […] will make clear that the notion of unlimited semiosis does not lead to the conclusion that interpretation has no criteria. To say that interpretation […] is potentially unlimited does not mean that interpretation has no object and that it ‘riverruns’ for the mere sake of itself. To say that a text potentially has no end does not mean that every act of interpretation has a happy ending (6).

The timing of this collection of essays is also no coincidence. It comes almost immediately after the first English translation of Opera aperta. What follows in I limiti dell’interpretazione (1990), Interpretation and Overinterpretation (1992), and Sei passeggiate nei boschi narrativi (Six Walks in the Fictional Woods) (1994), is Eco’s consistent defense of his early work. As was already
discussed in chapter one, he sets out, appropriately, to clarify the overinterpretation that his concept of the “open work” implies that a text is ‘open’ to unlimited interpretations:

When those pages were written, my readers mainly focused on the open side of the whole business, underestimating the fact that the open-ended reading I was supporting was an activity elicited by (and aiming at interpreting) a work. In other words, I was studying the dialectics between the rights of texts and the rights of their interpreters. I have the impression that, in the course of the last decades, the rights of the interpreters have been overstressed (IOI 23).

Critics failed to note, as was previously mentioned in chapter one, that Opera aperta is a natural progression of Eco’s studies with Pareyson, and even of his doctoral thesis on Thomas Aquinas. These intratextual links ignored, critics also failed to see that Eco’s theoretical work, like his novels, is characterized by a series of revisitations and recollections of both a historical/cultural and personal past.

That Eco’s experiences, with reading, writing, and within culture, become materials used to construct the world of his novels is proof positive that his narratives are at one and the same time self-reflexive and intertextual. That Eco must refer to past works in order to defend or clarify present ones verifies that, for Eco, memory is necessary, as was previously argued, in order for a work to move (opera in movimento). Eco’s works continuously move from past to present; every theoretical treatise and novel become an accumulation of experience: “when I write a theoretical text I try to reach, from a disconnected lump of experiences, a coherent conclusion [...]. When I write a novel, on the contrary, even though starting (probably) from the same lump of experiences, I realize that I am not trying to impress a conclusion: I stage a contradiction” (IOI 140). Taken as whole, then, Eco’s works become an archive of memory or experiences both personal and cultural.
Pierre Nora in his essay “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire” maintains that “modern memory is, above all, archival” (13). He goes on to say that:

What we call memory is in fact a gigantic and breathtaking storehouse of a material stock of what it would be impossible for us to remember, an unlimited repertoire of what might need to be recalled. Leibnitz’s ‘paper memory’ has become an autonomous institution of museums, libraries, depositories, centers of documentation, and data banks (13).

Within his novels, Eco explores several of these institutions of memories: the library in Il nome della rosa, the museum and the computer in Il pendolo di Foucault, and even the attic in La misteriosa fiamma della regina Loana. He also includes the writing process as material for memory archives: Adso’s manuscript, Roberto’s diary, Baudolino’s parchments, all which revisit and reconstruct individual and collective past experiences.

Eco’s final phase of his writing process is such that both storehouses of memory and written manifestations of memory are assembled in his novels in order to create, what Nora calls, following Leibnitz’s example of ‘paper memory,’ an “archival memory.” At a conference in Milano in November 1991 Eco was already considering various types of memory: organic, mineral, and vegetal:

Organic memory that registered and administered by our brain. But with the invention of writing we assist in the birth of a mineral memory. I say mineral because the first signs are engraved on clay tablets, carved by rock; because architecture is also part of a mineral memory […]. And if the first ideograms had a mineral support […], the most up-to-date have a mineral support as well, that of computers whose primary material is silicon […]. But with the invention of writing was born little by little the third type of memory that I have decided to call vegetal because […] vegetal was the papyrus and with the advent of paper

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54 The proceeds of this lecture were published in Edizioni Rovello 1992. In 2003, at a conference in Alexandria, Eco gave a lecture, in English, revisiting this theme. La memoria vegetale ed altri scritti di bibliofilia, becomes Eco’s treatise on memory, published in 2006, almost coinciding with the publication of La misteriosa fiamma della regina Loana, a novel about memory and memory loss.
(since the XII century) books are produced with linen cloth, hemp, and canvas – and finally the etymology both of biblos and liber refers to the bark of the tree (MVASB 14-16).\(^{55}\)

In this manner, books become the epitome of paper or vegetal memory. Eco places special emphasis on books (perhaps because he is a writer himself) and their ability to not only provide documentation of cultural history, but their potential to provide personal histories as well: “the book, in whatever form, has allowed writing to personalize itself: it represented a portion of memory, also collective, but selected according to a personal perspective” (16).\(^{56}\) With books there is a continuous interplay between cultural and personal memory which is drawn together by the act of reading. As was previously mentioned, an author must by necessity be a reader in order to write. What he or she writes is not only an accumulation of those (personal) reading experiences, but of cultural experiences as well. A reader’s (and writer’s) relationship with books is always personal. We are drawn and attracted to certain books, we pick them up, leaf through their pages, and, when we are ready, we read through its contents, form opinions and make interpretations: “In the face of books we seek, however, a persona, an individual way of seeing things. We do not seek only to decipher, but we also try to interpret a thought, an intention” (16-17).\(^{57}\) An author, like Eco, is able to provide a narrativized version of these

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\(^{55}\) My translation. “La memoria organica, quella registrata e amministrata dal nostro cervello. Ma con l’invenzione della scrittura assistiamo alla nascita di una memoria minerale. Dico minerale perché i primi segni vengono incise su tavolette d’argilla, scolpiti di pietra; perché fa parte della memoria minerale anche l’architettura […]. E se un supporto minerale avevano i primi ideogrammi […], un supporto minerale ha anche la più attuale delle memorie, quella dei computer, la cui material primo è il silic […] Ma con l’invenzione della scrittura è nato a poco a poco il terzo tipo di memoria che ho deciso di chiamare vegetale perché […] vegetale era il papiro e con l’avvento della carta )sin dal XII secolo) si producono libri con stracci di lino, canapa e tela – e infine l’etimologia sia di biblos che di liber rinvia alla scorza dell’albero.”

\(^{56}\) My translation. “Il libro, in qualsiasi forma, ha permesso alla scrittura di personalizzarsi: rappresentava una porzione di memoria, anche collettiva, ma selezionata secondo una prospettiva personale.”

\(^{57}\) My translation. “Di fronte al libro cerchiamo invece una persona, un modo individuale di vedere le cose. Non cerchiamo solo di decifrare, ma cerchiamo anche di interpretare un pensiero, un’intenzione.”
opinions and interpretations in a way that incorporates seamlessly this cultural and personal relationship with books. Eco’s fifth novel, *La misteriosa fiamma della regina Loana*, finds its main protagonist, Yambo, deprived of his personal memory. His reading memory still intact, Eco has Yambo retrace his personal memory, appropriately, through the process of reading – in other words, through his paper (vegetal) memory.

*La misteriosa fiamma della regina Loana* is, above all, a novel about memory and its various types. Through his character of doctor Gratarolo, Eco re-examines his previous categories of memory:

We have different types of memory. One is called implicit, and it allows us to do with ease various things we’ve learned, like brushing our teeth, turning on the radio, or tying a tie […]. When our implicit memory is assisting us, we’re not even conscious of remembering, we act automatically. And then there’s something called explicit memory, by which we remember things and know we’re remembering them. But this explicit memory is twofold. One part tends nowadays to be called semantic memory, or public memory—the one that tells us a swallow is a kind of bird, and that birds fly and have feathers, but also that Napoleon died in … whenever you said. And this type seems to be working fine in your case […]. But this is the first type to form even in children […]. It takes the child longer, however, to develop the second type of explicit memory, which we call episodic, or autobiographical. He isn’t immediately capable of remembering, when he sees a dog, say, that a month earlier he saw a dog in his grandmother’s yard, and that he’s the person who has had both experiences. It’s episodic memory that establishes a link between who we are today and who we have been, and without it, when we say *I*, we’re referring only to what we’re feeling now, not to what we felt before, which gets lost, as you say, in the fog (*MFQL* 12).58

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58 “Noi abbiamo diversi tipi di memoria. Una si chiama implicita e ci permette di eseguire senza sforzo una serie di cose come lavarsi i denti, accendere la radio o annodarsi la cravatta […]. Quando ci aiuta la memoria implicita, non siamo neppure consci di ricordare, agiamo automaticamente. Poi c’è una memoria esplicita, quella per cui ricordiamo e sappiamo che stiamo ricordando. Ma questa memoria esplicita è duplice. Una è quella che ora si tende a chiamare memoria semantica, una memoria pubblica, quella per cui si sa che una rondine è un Uccello, e che i uccelli volano e hanno le piume, ma anche che Napoleone è morto quando … quando ha detto lei. E questa mi pare che lei ce l’abbia in ordine […]. Ma questa è la prima che si forma anche nel bambino […]. Invece il bambino ci mette più tempo ad elaborare il secondo tipo di memoria esplicita, che chiamiamo
Eco’s description of explicit memory, or autobiographical memory, re-establishes the importance of revisiting past experiences in order for present experiences to have meaning. In his essay “Double coding memorabilia in The Mysterious Flame of the Queen Loana,” Capozzi supports this claim, asserting that:

> What is most impressive in Eco’s novels is the way the author integrates important texts, events, and ideas from the past within stories that are concerned with critical issues of our times. In Eco’s paradigmatic vision of history and culture (both visual and textual), readers have in fact become accustomed to looking for revealing analogies and associations that bounce back and forth between the Middle Ages, the age of the Baroque, and our own times (129).

In order for Yambo to recover his personal memory in the present he must revisit his past. He does so by reacquainting himself with his personal archive. Yambo’s personal archive, a collection of comics, books, and illustrations from his youth, coincides with what Eco categorized as a vegetal or paper memory. It is explicitly this type of memory that allows Yambo to reconstruct the memories of his personal experiences. In fact, Yambo equates paper memory with identity. Before the second part of the novel dedicated to paper memory, Yambo considers Zasetskij’s method for remembering: “Paper, paper, like all the books in this apartment or those in my studio. My memory is made of paper […]. And thus, on paper, he gradually rediscovered himself. You’re not him, but what struck me is that he reconstructed for episodica o autobiografica. Non è subito capace di ricordare, magari vedendo un cane, che il mese primo era stato nel giardino della nonna e aveva visto un cane, e che è sempre lui che ha avuto le due esperienze. È la memoria episodica a stabilire un nesso tra quello che siamo oggi o quello che siamo stati, altrimenti quando diciamo io ci riferiamo solo a quello che sentiamo adesso, non a quello che sentivamo prima, che si perde appunto nella nebbia” (MFDRL 16).
himself a memory made of paper" (MFQL 72-73). The fact that the archive that Yambo employs to reconstruct his personal memories is the same as Eco’s own personal archive again supports the argument that an author’s use of intertextuality is self-reflexive: “Since I tell about the thirties and the forties of the last century, I am remembering the period of my childhood and adolescence. It is obvious that the majority of the memories of those times are my personal memories, and that all the images of magazines, disks, and comic books are the images of my personal memorabilia” (Harcourt 2005). At the same time that Eco provides a narrative of his own personal experiences in the novel, he also provides a narrative of cultural experiences given that one of his intentions was to write “a biography of a generation” (ibid). La misteriosa fiamma della regina Loana works as the perfect self-reflexive intertextual novel since it is the seamless merging of intertexts and intratexts; personal and cultural memory and experiences. In a way, the final chapter of this dissertation required a revisiting of paper memory much like Yambo’s: while revisiting the archive of Eco’s works, the figure of the author came to light.

59 “Carta, carta, come tutti i libri in questo appartamento, e quelli dello studio. Ho una memoria di carta [...] Così, sulla carta si è ritrovato, a poco a poco. Tu non sei lui, ma quello che mi ha colpito è che lui si è rifatto una memoria di carta” (MFDR 74).
Conclusion: l’effetto-nebbia

There is a scene in Federico Fellini’s Amarcord that Eco says influenced the writing of his fourth novel, Baudolino, where at one and the same time a young boy, about the same age as Eco’s protagonist, is lost in the fog where he sees a strange animal, while other boys are reimagining a scene from Grand Hotel, pretending to play instruments and dancing within the mist. What makes Fellini’s influence especially relevant to Eco’s work is its connection to memory. In an essay included in Fellini della memoria, “Theut, Fellini e il Faraone,” Eco maintains that:

Fellini is here with all his films, from the first to the last, with his best and those less-liked, when he invents and when he repeats, to tell us that the film (ambiguously anchored to external reality) is an art of memory, with which you can recount only and always your own memories, your own fantasies, your own obsessions (9).

In this manner, Eco views the whole corpus of Fellini’s films in much the same way this dissertation views the compendium of Eco’s works. Since both his fiction and non-fictional writing is constantly remembering or looking back to past texts and experiences, Eco’s works at once fulfill a definition of self-reflexive intertextuality and, through his writing process, provide an art of memory.

It is fitting that Fellini’s fog influences Eco’s writing as fog is the most self-reflexive and intertextual element of his novels, from Il nome della rosa to Il cimitero di Praga. In Il secondo

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1 Personal communication October 2009.
2 My translation. “Fellini è qui, con tutti i suoi film, dal primo all’ultimo, coi i suoi migliori e con quelli che meno ci sono piaciuti, quando si inventa e quando si ripete, a dirsi che il film (ambiguamente ancorato alla realtà esterna) è un’arte della memoria, con la quale si può raccontare solo e sempre i propri ricordi, le proprie fantasie, le proprie ossessioni”
diario minimo (translated into English in How to Travel with a Salmon) Eco recalls the fog of his native city, Alessandria, and maintains that:

Fog is good and loyally rewards those who know it and love it. Walking in fog is better than walking in snow, tramping it down with hobnailed boots, because the fog comforts you not only from below but also from above, you don’t soil it, you don’t destroy it, it enfolds you affectionately and resumes its form after you’ve passed. It fills your lungs like a good tobacco; it has a strong and healthy aroma; it strokes your cheeks and slips between your lapels and your chin, tickling your neck, it allows to glimpse from the distance ghosts that dissolve as you move closer, or it lets you suddenly discern in front of you forms, perhaps real, that dodge you and disappear into the emptiness [...]. In the fog you are sheltered against the outside world, face to face with your inner self. Nebulat ergo cogito (Eco 246).³

Eco’s fog is all-encompassing. It blurs the line between fiction and reality; past and present. You can be lost in the fog and at the same time find yourself within its depths. The fog reveals even as it conceals. When considered in combination with a conception of self-reflexive intertextuality, the fog, which permeates Eco’s works (both fiction and non-fiction), exposes details about the author which were at one time difficult to decipher. He writes in Nebbia (2009), an anthology of works about fog throughout literature, that,

It is necessary to pay all debts, at least for what pertains to me. That I had, I won’t say an interest in fog but a cult of fog was a sign of destiny, since I was born in Alessandria [...]. I happened perchance to write every now and then of fog (starting with a horrible poem written at the age of sixteen) and, when I started writing novels, I added a little fog each time that I could (vii).⁴

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³ “La nebbia è buona e ripaga fedelmente chi la conosce e la ama. Camminare nella nebbia è più bello che camminare nella neve calpestandola con gli scarponi, perché la nebbia non ti conforta solo dal basso ma anche dall’alto, non la insudici, non la distruggi, ti scivola affetuosa d’intorno e si ricompone dopo il tup passaggio, ti riempie i polmoni come un buon tabacco, ha un profumo forte e sano, ti accarezza la guance e si infila tra il bavero e il mento punzecchiandoti il collo, ti fa scorgere da lontano dei fantasmi che si dissolvono quando ti avvicini, o sorgere all’improvviso di fronte delle figure forse reali, che ti scansano e scompaiono nel nulla [...]. Nella nebbia sei al riparo del mondo esterno, a tu per tu con la tua interiorità. Nebulat ergo cogito (Il secondo diario minimo 338).

⁴ My translation. “Bisogna pagare tutti I debiti, almeno per quello che mi riguarda. Che io avessi non dico interessi per la nebbia ma un culto della nebbia era segno del destino, essendo nato ad Alessandria [...]. Mi è capitato pertanto di scrivere ogni tanto della nebbia (a iniziare da una orribile poesia scritta all’età di sedici anni) e, non appena ho iniziato a scrivere romanzi, un po’ di nebbia ne ho messa ogni volta che ho potuto.”
As such, Eco connects memory with the process of writing. His memories, a combination of personal, cultural, as well as reading experiences, provide the material for his novels and, as a result, become narrativized within his work.

As was discussed throughout this dissertation, Eco is constantly looking back, both intertextually and intratextually, but it is the element of fog in Eco’s works that best represents the act of remembering or the desire to return to a past state:

The fog is uterine. It protects you. Legions of human beings would love to return to the uterus [...]. The fog realizes this impossible dream for you. It gives you an amniotic happiness. You have the sensation that maybe one day you will come out of the vagina and you will have to face the world, but for the moment you’re safe. And since birth is the beginning of the path which will guide you relentlessly towards death, fog is the guarantee (alas virtual) that at the moment of death perhaps you won’t perish (*Nebbia* x).  

Fog is also the image that best connects the author with his characters who constantly refer to the fog in their narratives. Though in the *Nebbia* anthology Eco maintains that “he is not the protagonists of his novels” (xii),  

when asked in an interview by Lila Azam Zanganeh for *The Paris Review* (2008) to what extent his novels are autobiographical, Eco responds:

In some way I think every novel is. When you imagine a character, you lend him or her some of your personal memories. You give part of yourself to character number one and another part to character number two. In this sense, I am not writing any sort of autobiography, but the novels are my autobiography. There’s a difference.

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5 My translation. “Le nebbia è uterine. Ti protegge. Legioni di esseri umani desidererebbero tornare nell’utero [...]. La nebbia ti realizza questo sogno impossibile. Ti concede una felicità amniotica. Hai la sensazione che forse un giorno uscirai dalla vagina e dovrai affrontare il mondo, ma per il momento sei salvo. E siccome la nascita è l’inizio del percorso che ti porterà inesorabilmente alla morte, la nebbia è la garanzia (ahimé virtuale) che la morte forse non perrerrai.”

6 My translation. “(Io non sono i protagonisti dei miei romanzi).”
Like the fog, Eco’s admission that he is present within his novels has an equally paradoxical quality, what he aptly calls “l’effetto nebbia” or “the fog effect” (IOI 147), since he reveals himself even as he attempts to conceal himself. To consider Eco’s work as a sort of autobiography, the reader, as he reiterates in Confessions of a Young Novelist (2011), “cannot give just any interpretation, simply depending on his or her fancy, but must make sure that the text in some way not only legitimizes but also encourages a particular reading” (35); the reader, or Eco’s Model Reader, must take into account not only the author’s entire corpus, but the intertexts that influence the assembly of that corpus as well. Eco’s Intertexts reveal details about the author’s reading experiences and subsequently about himself.

Tracing Eco’s intertexts (and intratexts) as a way to uncover his reading experiences irrevocably reveals something about the author’s experiences, personally, culturally, or with reading. Gérard de Nerval’s Sylvie is a particularly exceptional intertext for Eco because it brings to light not only his reading experiences, but his reading process as well. As such, Sylvie subsequently influences Eco’s writing process (which looks back to his reading experiences) and becomes an intertext for Eco’s works, especially as it pertains to fog:

In my youth I read for the first time Sylvie by Gérard de Nerval and I was fascinated by it. During my life I have re-read it many times, and the fascination increased every time. When I read Proust’s analysis I realized that the most mysterious feature of Sylvie was its ability to create a continuous ‘fog effect,’ an ‘effet de brouillard’, by which we never exactly understand whether Nerval is speaking of the past or of the present, whether the Narrator is speaking about factual or a remembered experience, and the readers are compelled to turn over the pages backwards to see where they are – their curiosity being always defeated (IOI 147).

Eco attempts to replicate this effect, especially in his penultimate novel, La misteriosa fiamma della regina Loana, by blurring the lines between truth and fiction, the model author and the
empirical one. Eco’s readers, like Eco in his (re)reading of Nerval, must also continuously reread his works in order to come to some (new) understanding or interpretation of the text and the author each time.

Eco writes about his experiences with *Sylvie* in several of his theoretical writings, including *Interpretation and Overinterpretation* and *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods*; he even published his own translation of the text (1999) where he provided a “Rilettura di Sylvie” (“A Rereading of Sylvie”), republished in *Sulla Letturatura* as “Le brume del Valois” (“The Mists of the Valois”) in 2002. Eco’s fascination with Nerval’s text, not only in terms of themes of memory and fog, is particularly relevant for a discussion of the concept of self-reflexive intertextuality because as he writes (or speaks) about *Sylvie*, be it in his fiction or non-fictional works, he fulfills its very definition. What’s more is that with each rereading and rewriting of *Sylvie*, Eco lives out not only the definition of self-reflexive intertextuality but his own conceptions of the model author and model reader, discussed in chapter one of this dissertation, as well. In *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods* he restates that:

> Any such text is addressed, above all, to a model reader of the first level, who wants to know, quite rightly, how the story ends [...]. But every text is also addressed to a model reader of the second level, who wonders what sort of reader that story would like him or her to become and who wants to discover precisely how the model author goes about serving as guide for the reader [...] to identify the model author the text has to be read many times, and certain stories endlessly. Only when empirical readers have discovered the model author and have understood (or merely begun to understand) what it wanted from them, will they become full-fledged model readers (27).

This does not exclude the search for the empirical author as even this information can facilitate various interpretations. In Eco’s case, as discussed throughout this dissertation, information
about the author, which he himself has made available through his own writings, aids in formulating sound interpretations of his novels.

In his various treatises on *Sylvie*, the most recent in *Sulla letturatura*, Eco reiterates that he has

reread this story very many times in the course of the last forty-five years, and on each occasion I would try to explain to myself or to others why it had this effect on me. Each time I thought I had discovered the reason, and yet each time I started to reread it I would find myself at the beginning, still a victim of the mist effect [...]. The more the reader knows about [the text], the more able will s/he be to reread with renewed astonishment (*OL* 29).  

Believing that each rereading also produces new interpretations, he still discourages the reader’s search for the empirical author of the text, though, as we have seen, this can also often aid in understanding the work:

I must begin with an important distinction. I want to eliminate from the outset an unwelcome character – namely, the empirical author. The empirical author of this story was called Gérard Labrunie, and he wrote under the nom de plume Gérard de Nerval [...]. Many solid academic reputations have been built on the basis of such meticulous research, all very useful for writing a biography of Gérard Labrunie but not for understanding *Sylvie* (*OL* 30).

While Eco does not approve of his model reader searching for the empirical author of a text – and admittedly it is more difficult with Nerval as he writes under a pseudonym and has not provided any theoretical or critical treatises with which to look back and make connections with
his narrative work, there is no question that Nerval and Labrunie’s reading experiences (intertexts) are shared and that these reading experiences influenced the process of Nerval’s writing. With Eco, he is clearly simultaneously present as both the model author and the empirical one since the intertexts (and intratexts) he utilizes, *Sylvie* included, reveal both his reading and writing practices and processes. Umberto Eco, thus, is a hybrid entity, both reader and author, and his novels are a combination of intertexts and intratexts, and personal, cultural and reading experiences and memories.
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