

**Umberto Eco's Adventurous Orders:
A Critical Review-Essay on
Claudio Paolucci, *Umberto Eco: Tra Ordine e Avventura*
(Milan: Feltrinelli, 2017)
Lucio Angelo Privitello**

Reading the morning newspaper is the realist's morning prayer. One orients one's attitude toward the world either by God or by what the world is. The former gives as much security as the latter, in that one knows how one stands.

G. W. F. Hegel, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 247

Umberto Eco masterfully navigated between this Hegelian *aut aut*. He knew how one can be taken in, entitled, and effortlessly drift into the apocalyptic censoring shore on one side, or manoeuvre towards integralism, academic control, and conspiracy, on the other, and how each churns currents even within itself. He sailed through these haunted straits with his nimble craft of truth — narration — and he did so with intellectual emancipation and cultural production as his goal. Narration gives the 'gift of the present', it gives flashes of Truth (*Verità*) that briefly illuminate our existence, and forge passages through those of others. Narrated moments grant a virtual *sostenuto* where life, and the social aspect of theory, is held in place, intractable, gifted, and where events fit together as in a great work of art, to which Charles Sanders Peirce compared the Universe.¹

Even with his beloved Peirce, Eco would theoretically object to going this far. Instead, à la Foucault, he would turn and say: 'I'm not where you are lying in wait for me, but over here, laughing at you'.² This was Eco's *summation* at the end of *Foucault's Pendulum*, the laughter in *The Name of the Rose*, his idea of a third type of intellectual (neither apocalyptic nor integrated), his sense of humour, and his moves through multiple cultural dimensions and domains. This is what we find in a mixture of reverence, erudition, and examples of a philosophical apprenticeship in Claudio

¹ Peirce, 'The Seven Systems of Metaphysics', *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings*, Vol. 2 (1893-1913), (EP2: 194).

² Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 17.

Paolucci's recent book, *Umberto Eco: Tra Ordine e Avventura (Between Order and Adventure)*.³

Paolucci's book is not an intellectual biography, nor a straightforward biography of Umberto Eco.⁴ Paolucci also does not engage in polemics, sustained criticism of previous established studies, or essays on Eco, volumes of which are well on the way to becoming an encyclopaedia of their own, going back even further than Teresa de Lauretis's 1981 monograph.⁵ We do find a surprising mention of – and retort to – Father Sommovilla's 1981 criticism of Eco's humour, irony, (and laughter) in *The Name of the Rose*, spread across seven pages. It gives away how far (and far back) a student's defence of their beloved mentor can go, especially when setting straight a misnaming of Eco's laughter as 'happy nihilism', 'that takes nothing seriously', where 'everything is equivalent to everything else' and is made so by this 'juggler of nothingness' (UE, 147-153).⁶ We also find Paolucci's call for a 'third position' in reference to the debates surrounding Eco's semiotic-philosophical work. Do they constitute a distinct genre with respect to his novels and essays? (UE, 18, 226n14, and UE, 166-190).⁷

Paolucci mentions fifty-three texts by Eco, and skilfully uses most of them; others are left only as title references to key issues or concepts. The use of the recent

³ See Paolucci, UE, 93. Quotations and references from Paolucci's *Umberto Eco: Tra Ordine e Avventura* are cited parenthetically as UE plus the page number. All translations from Paolucci's text, untranslated texts by Eco, and Apollinaire's poem, are mine.

⁴ Perhaps in years to come we may expect a series of volumes on Eco's lectures, drawings, letters, conversations, and transcribed videos, accompanied by a definitive biography similar to Nicholas Boyle's life of Goethe, which so far includes two volumes, with Volume 3 yet to come. Eco, no doubt, would cringe at the thought of such closure.

⁵ There are two previous studies on Eco which readers may find highly instructive, which share in some of the spirit of Paolucci's text. One is by Francesca Pansa and Anna Vinci, entitled *Effetto Eco (The Eco Effect)*, which adds some detail to Paolucci's account regarding Eco's intellectual and social ties, and employs interviews with fellow educators, intellectuals, and figures from Italian culture. The other, arranged as essays on the work of Eco, is edited by Patrizia Magli and entitled *Semiotica: Storia Teoria Interpretazione: Saggi Intorno a Umberto Eco*. Here, too, we find critical reflections on the many areas of Eco's work, something that Paolucci's texts covers very well, here written by those who taught alongside Eco, fellow philosophers, and, most importantly, many of his students. That they display the full breadth of a community of interpreters engaged with Eco prompts me to recommend these as direct ancestors of Paolucci's text.

⁶ See Sommovilla, *L'allegro nominalismo nichilistico di Umberto Eco* (The Happy Nihilistic Nominalism of Umberto Eco), 502-507.

⁷ On this issue, Eco has said plenty, and spoke of three categories of reader, beginning with his dust jacket blurb written for the first Italian edition of *Il Nome della Rosa*, in 1980 and most recently, in 2016, in his 'Intellectual Autobiography', 57-61, and responses to a few authors, found in the same volume, *The Philosophy of Umberto Eco*, 560-561, and 654-655. See also Eco, 'Writing from Left to Right', 1-32.

Pape Satàn Aleppo (February 2016), a collection of Eco's commentaries from 2000 to 2015, found on the back page of *L'Espresso*, entitled 'La Bustina di Minerva', while correctly described as Eco's active part in a '*guerriglia semiologica*', leaves the reader wanting more. While this can be understood as a necessary restriction of sources, it leaves open the question of what should come next: we suggest a sustained study of how Eco, as Paolucci explains so well, uses the crisscrossing of dimensions in cultural productions and histories, between low-high (*elevation*), high-low (*fall, irony, laughter*), and high-low-low-high (*feedback*) (UE, 75-77).

It would be a daunting and unlimited task to cover the full breadth of Eco's works. What Paolucci has done is to give us an expansive view of Eco's development and production, whilst maintaining an intimate grasp of what is most alive and central in Eco's intellectual, pedagogic, and literary gifts. Paolucci's text does so without sacrificing what remains clearly encyclopaedic in Eco's range, interests, and influence. Paolucci clearly reveals what is distinctive in Eco's position as a continental philosopher who works within historical studies, and ultimately as a historian of culture. This is also how Eco described his own position, although he was well-versed and engaged in problems of analytic philosophy.

To stay true to this approach, this essay will be built around what I see as four integral parts of Paolucci's text, along with a brief conclusion. The first section will follow the theme of 'order and adventure' that makes up a living core of the text, and Paolucci's assessment of Eco's historical and theoretical weave. The second section will follow the emergence of a philosophical apprenticeship (Eco's mentorship of Paolucci), that gives the text its unmistakable humanity and vitality. The third section will engage with a few details of Paolucci's approach to Eco's works, and the fourth section will focus on the influence, use (and abuse) of Charles Sanders Peirce in Eco, along with Paolucci's critique.

1. INSOLITUS TEXERE INTER FALSUM VERUM

Part of the strange weave between the false and the true in Eco's work (UE, 14) was born from the dialectical struggle between order and adventure, '*legge e creatività*' (law and creativity), tradition and innovation, the past and the present. The subtitle of Paolucci's book, 'Between Order and Adventure' (*Tra Ordine e Avventura*), is borrowed from Apollinaire's 'La Jolie Rousse': it comprises a line that stands on its own, according to the definitive edition of Apollinaire's *Œuvres Poétiques* produced by the Bibliothèque de la Pléiade. Paolucci believes that this dialectic between order and adventure is the most important tension throughout the works of Umberto Eco, and bursts forth in all its mature narrative strategies in *Foucault's Pendulum*. Paolucci's take rings true, especially when we consider the tripartite constitutive dimensions of Eco's approach; History, Theory, and Narration, and, more interestingly, when we

notice their inmixing throughout Eco's novels. The struggle between order and adventure, together with the reasons why such an inmixing was necessary, can be explained by reference to the problems of aesthetics, and in particular to what Eco called the '*germ of formativity*' (a ghost of Luigi Pareyson⁸), or that which halts a lavish disorder due to its work in progress. This 'poetics of openness' resists becoming a static 'poetics of art'. It does so by embracing the continuum of historicised life, and thus of interpretative indeterminacy and fallibilism.⁹

There is a clear sense that Eco wanted to save the raw experience of inference-less perception (*contra* Peirce), and found a way to *show* this (not *say* it) in his novels, which are a mix of cosmos, community, and continuity. As Eco objected to following Peirce all the way in this regard (a fact to which we shall return), he also objected to remaining within a particular historical period. This objection was a reaction to the expression of the medieval *summae*, in which one encounters the 'magisterial ease of a module of Order in which all is justified'.¹⁰ Here, too, Paolucci correctly claims that all the works of Eco, beginning from his youthful, and intense, immersion in Thomas Aquinas, and love for the Middle Ages, will move between the poles of order and adventure (UE 47). Even in the later text, *Kant and the Platypus*, a deeply theoretical example of Eco's struggle to highlight the dominance of adventure over order, we witness his attempts to find some kind of rule, or module, within which to place this blessed creature (exemplified as a conceptual hybrid) that is inmixing incarnate.

From his earlier period and involvement at the RAI (*Radiotelevisione italiana*) of Milano (1954–58), Eco exploded on the scene with *The Open Work* (1962). It is here that we find him for the first time invoking several verses from Apollinaire's 'La Jolie Rousse' which act as a key note (like Jacopo Belbo's virtual note in *Foucault's Pendulum*), revealing not only the time for experimental techniques and cross-pollination of fields and theories, but a creative approach, reworked from Eco's religious crisis, the spell of the medieval *summae*, Pareysonian aesthetics, and

⁸ Luigi Pareyson (1918–1991) was one of Eco's professors at the University of Torino. Pareyson's range and influence on his students was profound, from his early (Christian) existentialist position, to his focus on hermeneutics, and his historically-minded activities, which he deployed in his theoretical studies, on aesthetics in particular. His understanding of 'formativity' and interpretation so akin to the artistic experience itself, is what set him apart from the aesthetics of Croce. Pareyson believed that philosophical thought is hermeneutical in the fullest sense, due to the way in which interpreting experience is simultaneously interpreting truth. For a rare photograph of Pareyson with both Eco and Gianni Vattimo, as well as a concise biography, see www.pareyson.unito.it/Par_vit.html (accessed 16th March 2018). (For more on Pareyson's work, see Andrea Bellocchi's 'Interpretation and Demythologisation: The Problem of Truth in Luigi Pareyson's Hermeneutics' in the present volume.)

⁹ Eco, 'Openness, Information, Communication', in *The Open Work*, 65, 21–23. See also Eco, *Kant and the Platypus: Essays on Language and Cognition*, 1999: 97–98.

¹⁰ See Eco in Paolucci (UE 47).

personalism à la Emmanuel Mounier.¹¹ *The Open Work* incarnates these verses of Apollinaire, more so than those used in Eco's text:

We are not your enemies / We want to give you vast and strange domains /
Where mysteries in flower spreads out for those who would pluck it / There
where new fire of colours never seen before / A thousand imponderable
phantasms / Which still need to be given of reality [...].

Paolucci should have cited these lines from Apollinaire's 'La Jolie Rousse' while reflecting on Eco's *The Open Work* (UE, 69), notwithstanding Eco's use of others in his first introduction to the 1962 Italian edition of *L'Opera Aperta*.¹²

In Eco's attempt to encompass different cultural domains, and to have them communicate and share their workings, we find his reliance on the idea of the global and local Encyclopaedia. In its global state, the encyclopaedia is an example of a grand adventure, one in which there is no meta-domain, but only a proliferation of forms, a rhizome as an open labyrinth. But in its local state, the encyclopaedia assumes the form of order, and theory (UE, 42, 119-120, 122, 172-173). This global-local, and local-global movement is one of Eco's distinctive theoretical characteristics.

Paolucci is correct in stating that 'the concrete enactment of the encyclopaedic model resides in [Eco's] novels' (UE, 173). This was experienced early on in Eco's career, but from the side of theory. When he was defending his dissertation on the problem of aesthetics in Thomas Aquinas, Eco's second committee member, Augusto Guzzo (1894-1986) raised the astute observation that '[in your dissertation] you have revealed [and kept] the various stages of your research as if it was an investigation, noting even false leads, hypotheses that you then eliminated; in contrast the mature scholar goes through this but then gives [his readers] only the conclusions' (UE, 44).

From what I see in Paolucci's texts, and in Eco's works, I believe that Eco realised that this astute criticism was not a limit (a negative realist's 'No!'), nor a hindrance, but rather that 'research is to be "told" in this way', and more importantly shown. Here too we notice a double use of fallibilism: both against the negative realist's 'No!' as well as towards the possibility of recognising stages of knowledge in (and from) a *continuum*. From then on, Eco practised this technique, so that his essays, articles, and theorising could, in some way, also satisfy his longer-running passion for narration (cf. Eco, *Sulla Letteratura*, 329-330).

¹¹ See Emmanuel Mounier (1905-50), *Existentialist Philosophers*. Trans. E. Blow, London: Rockliff, 1948.

¹² Paolucci believes that Eco constructed *The Open Work* as a history of culture based upon the aesthetic object and domain. See UE, 68, and 229n10. These verses do not appear in the second edition, or in the English translation.

In Eco's hands, narration is a manoeuvre designed to avoid the loss of the initial, or spontaneous, flash of indeterminacy (the evanescent iconic variety of Firstness, a 'quality of feeling', as Peirce would see it).¹³ Eco desired to hold on to that beautiful fleeting moment, and in Eco's novels, both homogeneity and variety are revealed to be on the side of adventure that may be couched in terms of orders.¹⁴

Eco remained deeply indebted to his Thomistic training, and that order (peppered with adventure and perhaps imaginary duels), prevails in his theorising, his semiotic interpretations, and his use of Peircean abduction, that is, interpretative inferences as spontaneous conjectures on various levels of a text (UE, 39, 176, 172). But within Eco's theorising, and his orders, we find his laughter, his doubting materialised, where what is closest to him is exposed, tested, and inspected for further possibilities of innovation.

Laughter was the first touch of adventure that a theory must withstand. All this was clearly noted in Eco's 1963 *Diario Minimo* (UE, 144-145). Laughter is the shaking up of order within which some truths 'must fall' (UE, 150), not where another truth, essence, or order arises (UE, 153). If a truth or an essence cannot withstand the critique of laughter, it must be re-formed (UE, 161-162). Humour and laughter, as Paolucci repeatedly tells us, constitute Eco's 'maieutic of possibilities' (UE, 163, 144), the constant thread that he weaves between order and adventure – in short, laughter is 'one of the most important notions within the works of Umberto Eco' (UE, 138, see also UE, 144, 188, 191).

What is lacking in Paolucci's account is, first of all, the mention and some use of Eco's 1998 text, *Between Lies and Irony* (*Tra menzogna e ironia*), which not only contains a microcosm of Eco's approach with respect to what comes between order and adventure, but in one of the four readings, 'Campanile: The Comic as Estrangement' (*Campanile: Il Comico come Straniamento*), is a sustained investigation of the comic and humour.

Perhaps it is with Borges, Eco's anxiety of influence, that we should round this section off, and where, in commenting on the work of Apollinaire, Borges noted that, 'in the long run each individual adventure enriches the order of everyone and time legalises its innovation'.¹⁵ This sounds so very Peircean, and also what will forever haunt Eco's literature of attics, the cult of antiquarian books, and the debris, dross, and detritus of a global encyclopaedia.

¹³ See Peirce 'A Guess at the Riddle', EP1: 257, 275, and especially 278. It is in 'The Basis of Pragmaticism in the Normative Sciences' that Peirce would have interested – or perhaps did interest – Eco's counter-position, and in Eco's doubts about 'unlimited semiosis' concerning indeterminacy and interpretation. See Peirce, EP2: 394.

¹⁴ As Eco paraphrased his character, William of Baskerville, 'there are many kinds of order, and all of them must be tried in order to reach some (provisional) solution', Eco in Rosso, 6.

¹⁵ Borges in Bohn, *Apollinaire and the International Avant-Garde*, 246.

We now pass on to another section, and one which shows how the apprentice (in this case, Claudio Paolucci) learned from his *maestro*, and how Eco's individual adventure, and teachings, indeed enriched the order of what is most alive in a philosophical-cultural apprenticeship.

2. THE AURA OF A PHILOSOPHICAL APPRENTICESHIP

Recognition, reverence, and a demand that can be satisfied only later, commingle to form an emergence of the aura of a philosophical apprenticeship. Paolucci's text is a clear example of this. Umberto Eco was his mentor. Published within the Feltrinelli series entitled *'Eredi'* (Heirs), directed by the Italian (Lacanian) psychoanalyst, essayist, and pedagogue, Massimo Recalcati, we have a canvas with the right texture. This enables us to contemplate the gestures of acknowledged symbolic debt, scholarly details, and the highlights of a living heritage that Paolucci displays in his relation to his beloved *maestro*, Umberto Eco. There is an ethics to the shimmer of this aura. It aspires not only to future emergence, and heirs (*eredi*), but also to future works in the art of teaching, theorising, narrating, and living, exemplified by dedication and by a promise. There is a thread that ties together what is at stake here to what Eco saw in fiction, and its place in the domain of ethics, as it is born from storytelling (*muthos*), and therefore entails 'models of human behaviour'.¹⁶ What we have in this apprenticeship is what Eco believed is the 'ethical dimension [that] comes into play when the other arrives on the scene [...], a natural ethics – worthy of respect for the deep religiosity that animates it'.¹⁷ What Paolucci's text gives us is this living model through mentoring and storytelling. Here we approach a Spinozistic pedagogy, *tam difficilia quam rara sunt* (as difficult as [it is] rare), but it is precisely here that we are encouraged to realise that such rarity was made real.

In past interviews with Umberto Eco, in print, audio, and video, we have caught glimpses of his lively interaction with individuals, their questions, and key points that they raise with respect to his works, both theoretical and narrative, along with his longstanding dedication to the pedagogical. In Paolucci's text these come together as never before; not only is his a 'book intended as a testimony to [his] great affection for [his] *maestro*' (UE, 11), but it is even more a link forged from a twenty-year apprenticeship between student and teacher, that reactivates a heritage.

More on this would have been most welcome, but it provides at least the rudiments for a future study of Eco as pedagogue. The aura intended here, the aura of a philosophical apprenticeship, is possible only as a work of pedagogical artistry, through the dialectical activation of a heritage. Here, too, we have the tension between

¹⁶ See Eco, Lopez, Costa, Tucker, 50.

¹⁷ See Eco, 'Ethics Are Born in the Presence of the Other', 93-94, 102.

order and adventure, between law and creativity. We see this so clearly in Eco's relations to his teachers, and how he transformed or sublated these relations into his adventures in teachings, into key characters in his novels, and into his scholarship. We now see how Paolucci forms these into an ordering of adventures for future heirs. With the exception of his 'Introduction', Paolucci structures each of his ten chapters that span Eco's intellectual, political, and pedagogical commitments, according to a show and tell of mentoring moments. This is where the pedagogical aura emerges, and where this text stands alone in the countless studies on Umberto Eco.

Eco showed how 'a great student is one only when they are able to raise the stakes' (UE, 68). In Chapter 2, *La formazione*, we are reminded of a few of these stories and mentoring moments from Eco's own educational background.¹⁸ These are extremely useful, grouped as they are, to highlight the deeply human aspects of Eco's generosity, humour, toughness, and ability as a *maestro della vita*. In *Numero Zero* (2016), Eco gives a superb narrative of the intellectual fallout from Italian academic life.¹⁹ Paolucci gives us the inside story of Augusto Guzzo's question at Eco's dissertation defence. It is here that one can tease out a germ of formativity that became clear in Eco's method, both in his theory and in his novels. Perhaps this was his 'one idea', a quip relayed to Eco by Pareyson in 1954, according to which, each of us are born with just one idea, and that for the rest of our life we circle around it. By 1990, Eco had realised that Pareyson was correct, but added with his noted humour 'only that it is still early to say what it is'.²⁰

I believe that part of Eco's 'one idea' was his method, as astutely pointed out by Augusto Guzzo. Another insight could be what Enzo Paci told him when he heard of his dissertation topic: 'thinking of [writing] a dissertation on [...] medieval aesthetics was to behave like those characters in nineteenth-century novels who had to begin their careers in society with a duel'.²¹ This insight was carried into Eco's works, and in the realisation that one cannot use an encyclopaedia's non-hierarchical rhizomatic model for theoretical analysis, but only as a *mise en abyme* in narrative discourse (UE, 173). There is a reliance on the *mise en abyme* in much of Eco's work, and his sense

¹⁸ See also Eco, *The Philosophy of Umberto Eco*, 5-11, 17-19. Here one can trace Eco's raising the stakes in relation to his teachers, beginning with Luigi Pareyson, and then with Pareyson's teacher, Augusto Guzzo, before moving on to Nicola Abbagnano, Noberto Bobbio, and Carlo Mazzantini.

¹⁹ Eco, *Numero Zero*, 3-11, see also Paolucci (UE, 33-34). What Paolucci also gives us is the story of the 1964 'concorso' (competition) for a tenure-track position in Aesthetics and Theoretical philosophy at the University of Turin, which, due to Pareyson's final decision, went to Pareyson's other student, Gianni Vattimo. Eco was saddened every time this matter was subsequently brought up. Paolucci says of this incident, 'I believe that not being selected by his maestro was a deep wound, given the sincere esteem that he had for Pareyson' (UE, 73).

²⁰ Eco in *Autodizionario degli scrittori italiani*, 152. See also Paolucci UE, 192.

²¹ Eco, 'Intellectual Autobiography', 9-10.

of humour shows framing narratives as a core narrative, and cores as frames. Through Guzzo, Pareyson, (and Enzo Paci), we have examples of reactivating (and transfiguring) a heritage, one that Eco used widely and positively in his openness to various methodologies, and to his student's interests and approaches.²²

Just like any other pedagogue, Eco has also struggled with the development of the university system. He was made keenly aware of its effects while participating in its Oedipal set-up (another order and adventure story), and could at times come off as 'rash, un-self-critical [when] speaking about it'.²³ Recall his 1987 interview in *Diacritics*, where he expands upon his criticism of contemporary universities and their becoming 'parking lots for youth', of older students, hangers-on, and that, in all this, he felt like an accomplice. He did belong within the margins of university life (between tradition and innovation), and believed that students, as with Paolucci and many others, not only could but actually must carry the torch of scholarship onwards. There is a sense that Eco's approach to teaching was similar to that which was sought by Barthes when he prepared his courses: that is, 'an introduction to living, a guide to life...' ²⁴ But, all in all, Eco's pedagogical criticisms can be re-adopted to loosen the 'reciprocal corruption', or, as he also called it, the '*pax sceleris*' (contaminated peace) of educational parking lots.²⁵ It is here again that we can hear the voice of Apollinaire in 'La Jolie Rousse' and move towards a particular type of recalibration of '*cette longue querelle de la tradition et de l'invention*'.

I am certain that due to Paolucci's book we may expect texts dedicated specifically to Eco's pedagogical work, lectures, and assignments from his many years in academe. What remains certain is that in Eco's approach we have a palpable sense of his links to tradition and, at the same time, his openness to innovation. This is seen in Eco's working under the great influence of Barthes who, as Paolucci tells us, was a dear friend and inspiration for Eco's approach to cultural analysis (UE, 9, 16). Eco aimed at a text of pleasure, that 'fills, grants euphoria: the text that comes from culture and does not break with it', while in his novels Eco aimed at texts of bliss, texts that 'impose [...] a state of loss, a text that discomforts, [...] unsettles the reader's historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, [...] brings to a crisis [their] relation with language'.²⁶ The orders of pleasure and bliss have been interwoven in Eco's use of tradition and innovation, and his career worked these into a fine weave, especially his

²² As one example, among the many hundreds which could be given, see Bruss, Waller, and Eco, 416.

²³ Carpenter, 'Eco, Oedipus, and the 'View' of the University', 78.

²⁴ Barthes, *The Neutral*, 11, 51.

²⁵ See Eco, Lopez, Costa, Tucker, 47-48. For a very recent description of Eco as professor, see Giovanna Cosenza, '*Faceva paura: sapeva tutto*', 28-29, as well as Cotroneo in Paolucci, UE, 218-219, and 237n6.

²⁶ Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, 14.

involvement in DAMS (*Discipline delle Arti, della Musica e dello Spettacolo*) at the University of Bologna. This much is made very clear by Paolucci's text and by its author's twenty-year apprenticeship with *maestro* Eco (UE, 34–37, 29, 113–114, and 221–224).

Next, we pass on to a section dedicated to a few details regarding the way in which Paolucci approaches Eco's works, and how he sees laughter (humour) as the core element of Eco's philosophy, cultural reflections, and literary works.

3. QUID SIT ECO

Let us return to the 'one idea that each of us are born with [...] and that for the rest of our life we circle around'. By 1990, Eco had realised that Pareyson's words from 1954 reflected something of the truth, but, as we have seen, he added that it was still too early to say just what his one idea was. As we have already suggested, a part of this 'one idea' was Eco's method. This was pointed out by Augusto Guzzo, on the very day of Eco's dissertation defence – and there, Eco was given two key ingredients of his future work. In Paolucci's text, we find various suggestions as to how we might further build on this 'one idea'. What follows will give us a map.

In *Nel nome del senso* (2001), Eco recounts Pareyson's proposal of the 'one idea'. Due to the occasion of a conference on his work in Cerisy, Eco felt courageous enough to give a face to this one idea, saying, 'I suspected that the idea had to do with the question of whether the world existed, and (as a consequence) with the other question, *quid sit veritas*' (UE, 192).

By asking whether the world exists, we notice how Eco works the many orders in-between the Hegelian idea of orientating 'one's attitude toward the world either by God or by what the world is', and, more adventurously, avoiding those straits altogether, and seeking, as in his work on 'primary iconism', for a ground of reality itself (*pace* Peirce's refusal of such a claim).²⁷ Paolucci notes that the ideas of Truth, and Essence are enemies of Eco's thought, and can only be used if they pass the test of laughter (a primary laughter?) within which they can be transformed (UE, 161).

This became the kernel of Eco's thought after *The Name of the Rose*, where we find a parallelism between narration and theory, theory and narration, each feeding the other, in 'an all-out *sui generis* Spinozism'. What happened with this 'one idea' statement, that first appeared to Eco to express a reactionary position, was that he began to play with its spectral seriousness, and then with choreographing a narrative dance that encircles this appearance–disappearance, or haunting, and fall, of the 'one idea', or thing-in-itself (UE, 191, 18). Eco's narrations are not as much *about* as they are *within* the world narrated. In laughter, the existent Order (whatever that was

²⁷ For Peirce, '[r]eality is an affair of Thirdness'. See 'The Three Normative Sciences', EP2; 197

imagined to be) is put in question from the inside. It is put into the path of questions which avoid the stasis of doubt that does nothing but pine for certainty. It is about questioning the *questions* (the very kernel of searching itself).

For Paolucci, this laughter has a fundamental function, and is one of the most important notions at the core of Eco's philosophy (UE, 163, 138). Questions, not doubt (of the Cartesian kind), fuel Eco's tracking of the choreography of signs, a movement of signs that are not Truth, since signs can be used to lie. Only in the stasis, in the arresting of signs, does Truth (justice?) enter the scene (UE, 24).

Quid sit veritas, then? Certainly not in the asphyxiating stranglehold of the correspondence between things and thought, which results in nothing but a fainting world, albeit in narration. 'To tell a story you must first construct a world'.²⁸ This world was where Eco could ground reality beyond the continuum of mediated signs that Peirce's spectre reminded him of:

the entire universe, – not merely the universe of existents, but all that wider universe, embracing the universe of existents as a part, the universe which we are all accustomed to refer to as 'the truth', – that all this universe is perfused with signs, if it is not composed exclusively of signs.²⁹

Quid sit Eco, residing in the choreography of ideas, signs, histories, and in this 'gift of multiple presents', movement, bodies, and lives (UE, 27). Only there, on the stage of narration, can one make Truth laugh, where truth becomes something primary for the subject. If you can make truth laugh then you may perhaps find where Truth actually lies.

What surrounds a domain of inquiry, and what can be made to participate in that inquiry from other domains of inquiry is a mainstay of Eco's approach. Again, we have a choreography of cultural products and movements. This lends itself to what Paolucci lays out extremely well as the set of transitions that happen between low-high (*elevation*), high-low (*fall, irony, laughter*) and high-low-low-high (*feedback*). In Paolucci's words:

It is not possible to understand Mike Buongiorno without understanding Husserl: and phenomenology (DM). It is not possible to understand avant-garde poetics without understanding theories of information and the indeterminacy principle that regulates order and research in physics (OA). It is not possible to understand Superman and popular literature without understanding Marx and Gramsci (AI, SM). It is not possible to understand the

²⁸ Eco, 'How I Wrote *The Name of the Rose*', 35.

²⁹ Peirce, 'The Basis of Pragmatism in the Normative Science', EP2: 394.

platypus without understanding Kant, nor is it possible to understand Kant without understanding the platypus (KO). (UE, 56, 19)

As Paolucci explains, these are a few examples of the ‘three “vertical” movements within the works of Eco’ (UE, 77). These are exchanges of domains, and that within those domains, produce exchanges that create passages through which one may question and choreograph a reading that remains on guard against a fundamental protective blindness of the single domain. To explain this vertical movement, or conceptual dance step, Paolucci shows us the horizontal tools of critique which Eco employs: the encyclopaedia, semiotic theory of interpretation, narration, and historical analysis. From this working through of horizontal structures, we are able to plot the ‘philosophy of passage’ or ‘philosophy of transport’ that Eco deeply admired in Michel Serres (UE, 78, see also 83, 85, 136). We see much of this in Eco’s *Open Work*, and his *Diario Minimo, Apocalitti e integrati: Comunicazioni di massa e teorie della cultura di massa*, and in the articles and studies he composed throughout his career.³⁰ Paolucci sees this pre-semiotic approach as what ‘always gives form to another form, to another formed-matter that circulates in the universe of knowledge and that comes from another domain’ (UE 65, 229n8).

In these early approaches, we see the link between history and theory, Eco’s reforming of Pareyson’s influence, and his *Il problema estetico in Tommaso d’Aquino*. With the historical moment the problem is initially placed within its domain (exemplified in Eco’s dissertation). There then follows the work of theory that can propose solutions only by noticing and using links to other domains (UE, 71).

This was a start in what Paolucci calls Eco’s ‘*sui generis* philosophy’, or his ‘platypus philosophy’. It served Eco in creating (or at least in projecting) a third type of intellectual: one outside the apocalyptic intellectual, and academically integrated intellectual. This served to eliminate the all-too-easy antithetical poles of high and low, and thus plays in turn with elevating, bringing down, and recognising the feedback in products of diverse cultural and historical domains (UE, 86, 88–89, and 102). As we shall see, this will be a passage-between, not an entrenched technicality, or a vantage point from outside. As Paolucci explains,

Eco’s philosophy is a philosophy made from works of non-philosophy, and semiotics represents the universe of Theory that is most intimately this (non)philosophy. It is a theory of transport, of passages, of mediation, of interpretation, precisely in the sense in which ‘to interpret’ means to pass *inter-partes*, between two different domains between which one looks for a linking-

³⁰ For a brief selection, see the articles listed in the bibliography from Eco, *The Philosophy of Umberto Eco*, 709–712.

up. In this, the semiotics of Eco was interpretative: corresponding to an intellectual attitude of its author and an epistemological need of his Theory. (UE, 132)

The *inter-partes* is the passage between the apocalyptic and the integrated, an in-between passage, not a vantage-point beyond them. Eco is there-between and, in his own words, more interested in how these intellectual positions 'needed a unifying theoretical framework'.³¹ With this in place, we can follow what Paolucci sees as the first steps towards a comprehension of the thought of Umberto Eco. These entail five points:

- i. 'One cannot theorise on truth (of truth one can only laugh).
- ii. What cannot be theorised, one must narrate.
- iii. Narration serves to "give presents" to our lives.
- iv. Narration is introduced to supplement the impossibility of theory in the moment that theory works in absence, and through signs and conjectures'. (UE, 28)

In addition, the complexity of Eco's position can only be understood if one realises the constitutive characteristics of his view on narration, which are:

- i. *A cosmogonic structure*: to narrate is always, and first of all to 'construct a world' (SL, 334-339).
- ii. *A 'surrogate' form*; the constructed world constitutes an *Ersatz* (substitute) of the real world.
- iii. *Constitutive Spinozism*, the narrated world, *Ersatz* (substitute) of the real world, is constructed in such a way that within the interior of this 'world-model', the 'order and connection of things is the same as the order and connection of ideas' (*ordo et connexio rerum ide nest ac ordo et connexio idearum*), even when this order is invalidated, as in *The Name of the Rose* and *Foucault's Pendulum*.³²
- iv. *A regulative Kantianism*; the structure of narration is defined as a *transposability* that we use in non-narrative worlds. This transposability defines a Kantian narrativity (UE, 204).

³¹ See Eco, 'The Reactions of the Author: Now (1974 and 1977)', 56. Eco's 'reactions' were to the continued interest in his 1964 text, *Apocalyptic and Integrated Intellectuals: Mass Communication and Theories of Mass Culture*.

³² The passage in Latin is from Spinoza, but the order of the original statement has been modified: 'The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things' (Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part 2, Proposition 7, see also *Ethics*, Part 1, Axiom 4, and Spinoza, *Letter* no. 58).

Paolucci sees the high point of this approach of theory and narration in the parallelism between *Kant and the Platypus*, and *The Island of the Day Before*, with the added ‘detritus of the encyclopaedia’, most prevalent in *Foucault’s Pendulum* and in *The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana*, ‘one of the most undervalued, and most important books of Eco if one wants to understand the structure of [his] thought’ (UE 18).

There is much to take in with this overview that Paolucci grant us, but it is precise, and clearly telling of the armature of Eco’s approach, method, and style. It allows us now to enter into what has transpired in a life, and through an apprenticeship. Let us recall Eco’s words to his grandson: ‘There it is; life is like a film from my [youth]. We enter into life when many things have already happened, for hundreds or thousands of years, and it is important to apprehend what has happened before we were born’.³³

4. PEIRCE ECO

This section will focus on the influence, and Eco’s use (and abuse) of Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914). The history of the reception, critique, and development of pragmatism in Italy, is a long and winding story.³⁴ It is one that Paolucci’s book justly avoids, seeing that his focus is on Eco’s use of Peirce alone (and only certain parts of Peirce’s work, at that), not Eco’s place in the history of Italian pragmatism, or pragmatism more broadly construed, or even Peirce studies.

Eco mentions how he came to discover Peirce (and before that, the more palatable Dewey), in his recent ‘Intellectual Autobiography’.³⁵ He heard mention of Peirce during his university studies through Niccolò Abbagnano’s interest and translation of Peirce’s *Chance, Love, and Logic* in 1956, and through Guzzo’s student, Nynfa Bosco, who published the first Italian monograph on Peirce, with one chapter even dedicated to Peirce’s semiotics in 1959.³⁶ What we do not know is the extent to which Eco was influenced by Niccolò Salanitro’s groundbreaking 1969 study, *Peirce e i problem dell’interpretazione*, the first full-length study in Italian dedicated to Peirce’s semiotics. In any event, Eco began his study of Peirce in 1960, and wrote on Peirce from the later 1960s right up until 2015. In 1998–9, as Paolucci’s thesis advisor,

³³ Eco, *Impara “La vispa Teresa”*, and UE, 112. See: <http://espresso.repubblica.it/visioni/2014/01/03/umberto-eco-caro-nipote-studia-a-memoria-1.147715> (accessed 5th December 2017).

³⁴ See Maddalena, ‘The Three Waves of Italian Reception of Peirce’, 9–14, as well as Maddalena and Tuzet, ‘The Sign of the Four: Italian Pragmatists Retold’, 147–162.

³⁵ See Eco’s ‘Intellectual Autobiography’ in *The Philosophy of Umberto Eco*, 17–19, and 21–23.

³⁶ See Nynfa Bosco, *La filosofia pragmatica di Ch. S. Peirce*.

he followed his student, 'a twenty-four year old', who critiqued his take on Peirce's categories, and his rereading of Kant through Peirce in the then recently published *Kant and the Platypus* (UE, 34).

Eco was not, by any means, a card-carrying Peircean, or, in his own words, a Peirce-*ologist*.³⁷ His early discovery, interest, and intense study and application of Peirce's semiotics (*semeiotics*) can be compared to Josiah Royce's adoption of Peirce to clarify key concepts in his mature work, *The Problem of Christianity*, his famous *Seminar of 1913-1914*, and his 1915-1916 philosophy course, *Metaphysics*. One can safely see that Eco did use and expand applications of Peirce's theories of signs, and thus can be considered, in Peirce's own words, as one of its 'future explorers'.³⁸ That said, the use and application stop there, since Peirce's theoretical architectonic, his view of intelligibility as a structure of the universe, his cosmology, the idea that logic and ethics ultimately depend on aesthetics, and all that synechism (the principle of continuity), was far too theoretically rich for Eco's taste, and perhaps displayed too much 'metaphysical lust', as Eco would say.³⁹ Unless, that is, we enter the world of Eco the novelist, where contradictions are offered, not solutions.⁴⁰ In Paolucci's words, 'for Eco it is not the world, but rather the novel – that is purely made of signs and only signs that represent the ideal model of truth' (UE, 150).

Peirce's philosophical/scientific theory building was cosmogonic, while for Eco, narrating usurped such an all-producing and consuming drive. In Eco, the cosmogonic was the 'model [narrative *Ersatz*] world in which the internal order of ideas corresponded to that of things' (UE, 211, see also 207). Thus, it was *regulative* in contrast to Peirce's *constitutive* synechism.

According to Paolucci,

[i]t is truly here that Eco, who began rereading Kant through Peirce, does the exact contrary, and rereads Peirce through Kant. It is the fundamental threshold of the 'as if', a Kantian constitutive idea of 'narrating' that is capable of co-adapting the semiotic order of interpretations (determinations) with the ontological order of things (determinable), guaranteeing them a possible commensurability. (UE, 211-212)

³⁷ See Eco in Paolucci, *Studi di Semiotica Interpretativa*, 147.

³⁸ Peirce, 'Excerpts from Letters to Lady Welby', EP2: 477-491. See letter from 23rd December 1908, EP2: 482.

³⁹ Eco in Bruss, 413-414.

⁴⁰ Paolucci explores this connection throughout his text: see chapter 1, 'Two citations', UE, 23-31, chapter 8, 'The laugh and the rose', UE, 138-165, and chapter 9, 'Parallelisms', UE, 166-190. Eco clarifies the relation between theory and the novel in his 'Reply to Norma Bouchard', and his 'Reply to Brian McHale', in *The Philosophy of Umberto Eco*, 560, and 654-655.

Paolucci believes that the greatest difference between Peirce and Eco resides in Peirce's use of '*il lume naturale*' (the natural light [of reason]), and Eco's 'power of the false' (UE, 201).⁴¹ I believe that this is an exaggeration, and misses the undercurrents of Eco's agreement with Peirce's understanding of the place of reason. Even if Eco turns to what he himself has dubbed a 'negative realism', or what is 'reasonable' over and above the need for reason, that 'reasonableness' would still rely on what Peirce called his 'three sentiments': 'interest in an indefinite community, recognition of the possibility that this interest be made supreme, and hope in the unlimited continuance of intellectual activity [– these are] indispensable requirements of logic'.⁴²

This can be seen as a take on what is reasonable enough (or, even 'retroductive', in Peirce's terms; the spontaneous conjectures of instinctive reason).⁴³ Eco should have realised, and Paolucci as well, that for Peirce, 'the only desired object which is quite satisfactory in itself without any ulterior reason for desiring it, is the reasonable itself'.⁴⁴ Further, we find Peirce speaking of the laws of nature and saying that 'an energising reasonableness [...] shapes phenomena in some sense, and that this same working reasonableness has moulded the reason of man into something like its own image'.⁴⁵

It is difficult to imagine Eco not siding with Peirce at this level (yet, he doesn't), even when Eco himself would say that, 'if we accept the premise that our behaviour in the world ought to be not *rational* but *reasonable*, then I will say (and with a certain satisfaction) that if there is a crisis of Reason, there is no crisis of Reasonability'.⁴⁶ One can easily identify Peirce's view of the general nature of Instinct, otherwise seen as the Insight for best guesses, in what Eco describes as 'our behaviour in the world' (given that he is a negative realist). He adds that, 'for though it goes wrong oftener than right, yet the relative frequency with which it is right is on the whole the most wonderful thing in our constitution'.⁴⁷ This is what Peircean synechism simply proposes.

⁴¹ For an overwhelming example of Peirce's idea of '*il lume naturale*' see his 1901, 'On the Logic of Drawing History from Ancient Documents' in Peirce EP2: 73–114, esp., 108. See also Peirce, '*Il Lume Naturale*' in EP2: 211.

⁴² Peirce, 'The Doctrine of Chances', EP1: 150.

⁴³ See Eco in Rosso, 4.

⁴⁴ Peirce, '*Pearson's Grammar of Science*', EP2: 60.

⁴⁵ Peirce, 'Laws of Nature', EP2: 68. Further on in this same text, Peirce sets up the clash between Ockhamism and evolution, and states that in his day, a philosophy must be either Ockhamism or a variant of evolutionism. We must remember the likes of Chauncey Wright, Nicholas St. John Green, John Fiske, and Francis Ellingwood Abbot, friends of Peirce, each working on a certain evolutionism. What Peirce (unlike Eco) strives for is to 'eventually restore that rejected idea of law as a reasonableness energising the world (no matter through what mechanism of natural selection or otherwise)' (ibid., 72).

⁴⁶ Eco in Rosso, 4.

⁴⁷ Peirce, 'The Nature of Meaning', EP2: 218.

Eco sought to swerve away from this conjectural necessity when outside of his narrative world-making. Paolucci, in disagreement with his *maestro*, cites Roberto Rampi to support his own worries regarding such synechistic abandonment:

A certain Peircean synechism seems necessary for any conjectural thought. One needs to believe that there is a bottom-line rationality in what happens in the universe – a logic – to be able to formulate a personal hypothesis of explanatory observations of the world that connect them in a consequential manner, while conjecturing what this logic might be. (UE, 207)⁴⁸

A reference to Peirce would help give this more depth. Again from his 1901 'Laws of Nature' we see the extent of Peircean reasonableness:

By reasonableness, I mean, in the first place, such unity as reason apprehends, – say, generality. [...] The green shade over my lamp, the foliage I see through the window, the emerald on my companion's finger, have a resemblance. It consists in an impression I get on comparing those and other things, and exists by virtue of their being as they are. If a man's whole life is animated by a desire to become rich, there is a general character in all his actions, which is not caused by, but is formative of, his behaviour. [...] It is the law that shapes the events, not a chance resemblance between events that constitute the law [...]. But if things can only be *understood* as generalised, generalised they really and truly *are*; for no idea can be attached to a reality essentially incognisable. However, Generality, as commonly understood is not the whole of my 'reasonableness'. It includes *Continuity*, of which indeed Generality is but a cruder form. [...] There are certain ideas [which] have a character that our reason can in some measure appreciate but which it by no means creates, which character insures their sooner or later getting realised. [...] These, then, are the naked abstract characters that must be recognised in the 'reasonableness' of a law of nature.⁴⁹

Whether one turns to Eco the theorist, essayist, or novelist, Peirce's 'reasonableness' can, or should, be found in his attitude, for 'we call that opinion reasonable whose only support is instinct'.⁵⁰ Peirce also captures Eco's Lacanian love of the encyclopaedia, and reminds us of Yambo from *The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana*, when he states that,

⁴⁸ See Rampi, *L'ornitorinco. Umberto Eco, Peirce e la conoscenza congetturale*, 63.

⁴⁹ Peirce, 'Laws of Nature', EP2: 72.

⁵⁰ Peirce, 'The Nature of Meaning', EP2: 218.

in all his life long no son of Adam has ever fully manifested what there was in him. So, then, the development of Reason requires as part of it the occurrence of more individual events than ever can occur [...]. [T]his development of Reason consists [...] in embodiment, that is, in manifestation. [...] Under this conception, the ideal conduct will be to execute our little function in the operation of the creation by giving a hand toward rendering the world more reasonable whenever, as the slang is, it is 'up to us' to do so.⁵¹

Peirce would agree that 'no "I" truly has the first word', and as Paolucci has it, quoting Eco, 'to speak is to use the "dribble and detritus of the encyclopaedia"[⁵²] to construct one's own word in relation to those spoken by others. Enunciative activity is always held together in a chain [...] into which each single enunciation gradually disappears' (UE, 17). Peirce's agreement, most simply put, resides in his view that, 'individualism and falsity are one and the same'.⁵³ In denying the notion that the semiotic structure is also the structure of the world, Eco (who believes that any enunciative activity is part of a chain-link within what has already been said) seems to misread his own view of the 'wisdom of the community', as well as his call for 'reasonableness', that works to justify how a theory of the false could function as a way to reveal the place where truth lies. In Eco's words:

To recognise that our history has been motivated by many tales that we now recognise as false, must make us attentive, capable of putting into question those self-same tales that we now hold as true, because the criterion for the wisdom of a community is founded on constant vigilance in relation to the fallibility of our knowledge. (UE, 235n10)⁵⁴

Eco beautifully describes life and history in the following way: '[i]n my times, you could enter a movie theatre at any time, I mean even in the middle of a film you could arrive while many things were happening and one tried to understand what had happened before' (UE, 112) – but how can he say so whilst relying on Peirce's view of signs, divested of their resting place within 'habit'?

Habit, on a Peircean view, amounts to the *showing* of what went into *saying*. It is also, more importantly, a showing-up of saying and the said, when in a 'habit-

⁵¹ Peirce, 'What Makes a Reasoning Sound?' EP2: 255.

⁵² Paolucci is here citing Eco's *Semiotica e filosofia del linguaggio*, 54.

⁵³ Peirce, *Collected Papers*, 5: 402. Peirce also stated that, 'Truth and Falsehood are but special varieties of necessity and impossibility; namely such as are determined by omniscience. For to omniscience, the universe of possibility is obviously no wider than the actual fact' (5: 333).

⁵⁴ Eco, *Sulla letteratura*, 322.

change [there is] a modification of a person's tendencies towards action, resulting from previous experiences ... [thus] as final logical interpretant',⁵⁵ and as habit-change (or previously, as habit), is different from a sign; it is 'self-analysing, [and] a modification of consciousness'.⁵⁶ This is something that is not followed through in Paolucci's otherwise informative critique. Even in Eco's view, one can see that 'in order to implement any interpretation, there must be some fact to be interpreted',⁵⁷ and 'habit' could very well be that node of fact(s). As Eco has most recently stated, 'the process of unlimited semiosis stops when we produce a *habit* that allows us to come to grips with the reality (the Peircean dynamical object)'.⁵⁸

It is still unclear how Eco's pragmatism (or a version thereof) could have been so 'strongly [...] influenced by Peirce',⁵⁹ when Eco's use of Peirce's view of knowledge of the world does not take into account his idea of a reasonableness in nature, and history.⁶⁰ In chapter 10, '*Quid sit veritas*, on what one cannot theorise, one must narrate' (*Di ciò di cui non si può teorizzare, si deve narrare*), Paolucci returns to his longstanding critique of Eco's use of Peirce, and shows us the break between Eco and Peirce, the break with the principle of synechism, where,

there is continuity between mind and matter, between sign and object, between Immediate Object and Dynamic Object, in that the mind is part of the world through which the world represents itself [...]. This is why for Peirce there exists 'a natural instinct to guess correctly', that guarantees our semiotic grasp of the world. (UE, 200)⁶¹

Eco also loses Peirce (only to meet him again in the darker alleys of narration), by working against the grain of interpreters of his novels, setting up empty segments, forged trails, endless dead-ends, and fakes, where he 'makes play of anyone who believes that *patterns* of interpretation are in a natural accord with things' (UE, 201). Yet, in his novels we find a link between the order of ideas and the order of things,

⁵⁵ Peirce, *Collected Papers* 5: 476, 491.

⁵⁶ Peirce, *Collected Papers* 5: 485.

⁵⁷ Eco, 'Some Remarks on Fictional Characters', 88.

⁵⁸ Eco, 'Intellectual Autobiography', 46. See also 54, and Paolucci's 'Eco, Peirce, and the Anxiety of Influence', 261. I would only add that a series of interpretations comes to rest (as in a node) rather than, as Paolucci stated, 'a series of interpretations [...] in a certain respect ends [...]'. Also, rather than 'unlimited semiosis', or 'infinite semiosis', it is best, with Peirce's understanding of the laws of nature, to call it 'continuous semiosis'.

⁵⁹ Paolucci, UE, 110-113.

⁶⁰ For his view of a science of history hypothesis, see Peirce's 'On the Logic of Drawing History from the Ancient Documents, Especially from Testimonies', EP2: 75-114.

⁶¹ See also UE, 35, and 228n1.

their co-adaptation, with a touch of cosmogonic world-building, a splash of the false, read as stories, as if surrogates of the real. Again, we are lied to by Eco, and that opens us up to the dross and dribble of what, in narration, cannot be but theorised, so that we are given more experience of the world in the richness of experience as continuity.

5. ECO'S DANTESSQUE SEND-OFF

Eco's brilliantly titled and posthumous, *Papè Satàn Aleppe* (February 2016), belongs with his semiological analyses of culture, and his political and social commentaries. It also shows not only how he felt about the issues he commented on, recomposing a selection from 2000 to 2015, of his '*Bustine di Minerva*' from the back pages of *L'Espresso*, under various headings and themes irrespective of their original dates, but how he wished to leave his readers: ... guessing, perhaps for five centuries, (re-Joyce, re-Joyce), as to the reasons why he selected this infernal title, and not another particular infernal glossolalia. My guess is that Eco did not select the other jewel of infernal glossolalia (from *Inferno*, XXXI, 67-69), because, as a semiotician, he would not second the belief that, as Virgil tells Dante, 'Waste no words on him: it would be foolish. / To him [Nimrod] all speech is meaningless; as his own, / which no one understands, is simply gibberish'.

Meaninglessness was not an option for Umberto Eco. The confusion of tongues in Plutus's words gives way to greater issues in interpretative semiotics due to the exchange of signs of currencies. This is one reason why Eco chooses these words of Plutus to stand as a title for his volume, and as his send-off for us to ponder: '*Papè Satàn, papè Satàn aleppe!*' (*Inferno*, Canto VII). How much more appropriate it is against the nihilistic gibberish, and unlimited multilingual semiosis of Nimrod: '*Raphèl may amèch zabì almi*' (*Inferno*, Canto XXXI).

Another reason for Eco's choice of citation is that within *Inferno*, Canto VII we have a sublime rendition of the power and figure of Fortune (*Fortuna*), guide to all earthly splendours (*Inferno*, VII, lines 61-96). There too we have a maestro's winking back (perhaps at Paolucci's apprenticeship). As Paolucci describes it, 'If I think of the relation that I have had the privilege to have with [Umberto Eco], I consider myself, without a doubt, immensely fortunate, as I have tried to recount in this work' (UE, 220). Eco could weave a tale, and deliver an open lesson, even with a choice of a title, that itself is a citation.

With such fortune though, there comes the weight of a heavy tradition, a fate in the task of maintaining the stakes, and even more, of raising the stakes. This is now left to us. Such is the intimate power of a profound cultural apprenticeship, and intellectual currency, and a warning of the use and abuse of these cultural, intellectual, and political riches by hoarders and wasters. Eco, part Plutus, and part Virgil, leaves us with this reminder.

But, why not a citation from *Paradiso*, VII, 1-3, where angels joyfully express themselves in a weave of different languages? Here perhaps is another reason that Eco selected the opening line from *Inferno*, VII, 1. It is a brilliant reading of intertextual mirroring of what would (much later in the *Commedia*) be a counterbalance to the battles between hoarders and wasters in Plutus's reign, with those who, by contrast, act honourably, and whose opening lines are: '*Osanna sanctus Deus Sabaoth / superillustrans claritate tua / felices ignes horum malachoth!*' (*Paradiso*, Canto VII, 1-3). But, why then not use this citation from various languages as his send-off title? Too long, for a start. It would also have truncated Eco's lessons to his readers, that is, 'to cultivate the art of lingering', and to resist anticipating the end.⁶² All this made using this quotation from *Paradiso* too facile, and optimistic, even though Eco felt that

Dante's *Paradiso* was the apotheosis of the virtual world, of nonmaterial things, of pure software, without the weight of earthly, or infernal hardware [...]. After all, with regard to ecstasy, Dante's [*Paradiso*] keeps its promises and actually delivers it.⁶³

What is certain is that Eco selected his title, *Pape Satàn Aleppe*, from one of his favourite authors, known to have baffled, enticed, and embattled scholars for centuries. Here, too, Eco signals back to the issues with an 'infinite semiosis' (or continual semiosis) that worried him in Peirce's rendition, replete with a groundless process of mediation, over-interpretation, hermetic tendencies, loss of both source and target, double-coding, and the like. Perhaps the more hermetic citations from Dante are a way to warn of an unregulated exchange of terms from the various languages employed (Hebrew, Arabic, Latin, and perhaps dialects), or even a language invented by Dante.

I would leave the author, Claudio Paolucci, a bibliophilic challenge: Did Umberto Eco, in his vast library, have a copy of Giovanni Ventura's, *L'incompreso verso di Dante Pape Satan Pape Satan Aleppe spiegato dopo cinque secoli e la nuova maniera di intendere una scena delle più celebrate della Divina Commedia* (*The misunderstood verse of Dante Pape Satan Pape Satan Aleppe explained after five*

⁶² See Eco, *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1994). See also Helen Bennett, 'Reading Lessons in *Foucault's Pendulum*' in Eco, *The Philosophy of Umberto Eco*, 563-586.

⁶³ Eco, *On Literature*, 16-22.

centuries and the new manner of interpreting one of the most celebrated scenes in the Divine Comedy) (Milano: coi tipi di Giuseppe Bernardoni, 1868)?⁶⁴

Eco's Dantesque send-off is a challenge, a final lesson, and a late self-portrait of his role. Paolucci sees this text, and similar social commentary-based texts by Eco, in three dimensions: as a function of philosophical emancipation, as reading lessons from the media for the education of the masses, and as a critique of ideology at the semiotic level (UE, 100).

There is another dimension to Eco's choice of citations from Dante: its self-portrayal, its mirror, and its call to the reader. Paolucci admits that, in his twenty-year apprenticeship under Eco (unfortunately, the Berlusconi years), he saw Eco's worries regarding persuasion techniques, mass-manipulation, and disinformation deepen. He fought, but felt that the battle was being lost (UE, 102). It is this loss (and how deep in the pit we feel today), that contributes part of a self-portrait in Eco's quotation from *Inferno*, Canto VII, line 1. As Eco shows us by example how to make continual and more skilled valuations based on the versions of what is to be interpreted, he also makes valuations of the very economy of evaluations. Eco plays himself out as an *n*th version of Plutus, similar to one of Rembrandt's final self-portraits as the laughing Democritus.⁶⁵

They could easily have exchanged their final self-images.

⁶⁴ If not, perhaps he would find the texts on Dante's passage from Domenico Guerri (1880-1934), or by Orazio Bacci (1864-1917) who read the exclamation by Plutus as addressed to Dante in surprise, and as a warning.

⁶⁵ This portrait by Rembrandt van Rijn is from 1662, and is in the Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne.

Works Cited

- Apollinaire, G. *Oeuvres Poétiques*. Préface par André Billy. Texte établi et annoté par Marcel Adéma et Michel Décaudin. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1965.
- Barthes, R. *The Neutral. Lecture Course at the Collège de France (1977-1978)*. Trans. Rosalind E. Krauss and David Hollier. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.
- . *The Pleasure of the Text*. Trans. Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang, 1975.
- Bohn, W. *Apollinaire and the International Avant-Garde*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997.
- Bosco, N. *La filosofia pragmatica di Ch. S. Peirce*. Torino: Edizioni di Filosofia, 1959.
- Bruss, E., Waller, M., Eco, U. 'An Interview with Umberto Eco'. *The Massachusetts Review*, Vol. 19. No. 2, (Summer 1978): 409-420.
- Cosenza, G. 'Faceva paura: sapeva tutto'. *L'Espresso*, No. 9, anno LXII, 3 Marzo, 2016: 28-29.
- Carpenter, W. M. 'Eco, Oedipus and the "View" of the University'. *Diacritics*, Vol. 20. No. 1 (Spring 1990): 76-85.
- De Laurentis, T. *Umberto Eco*. Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1981.
- Eco, U. *The Philosophy of Umberto Eco*. The Library of Living Philosophers, Volume XXXV. Ed. Sara G. Beardsworth and Randall E. Auxier. Chicago: Open Court, 2017.
- . *Pape Satàn Aleppe. Cronache di una società liquida*. Milano: La nave di Teseo, 2016.
- . *Numero Zero*. Trans. Richard Dixon. Boston: Mariner Books, 2016.
- . 'Impara "La vispa Teresa"'. *L'Espresso*, January 3rd, 2014.
- . 'Ethics Are Born in the Presence of Others', *Belief or Nonbelief? A Confrontation*. Umberto Eco and Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini. Trans. Minna Proctor. New York: Helios Books, 2012.
- . 'Writing from Left to Right'. *Confessions of a Young Novelist*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011.
- . 'Some Remarks on Fictional Characters'. *Confessions of a Young Novelist*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011.

- . *Sulla Letteratura*. Milano: Bompiani, 2002.
 - . *On Literature*. Trans. Martin McLaughlin. Orlando: Harcourt, 2004.
 - . *Nel nome del senso*. Milano: Bompiani, 2001.
 - . *Kant and the Platypus: Essays on Language and Cognition*. Trans. Alastair McEwen. New York: Harcourt, 1999.
 - . *Tra menzogna e ironia*. Milano: Bompiani, 1998.
 - . ‘Reactions of the Author: Now (1974 and 1977)’. *Apocalypse Postponed*. Ed. Robert Lumley. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.
 - . *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994.
 - . *Autodizionario degli scrittori italiani*. A cura di F. Piemotese. Milano: Leonardo, 1990.
 - . *The Open Work*. Trans. Anna Cancogni, with an Introduction by David Robey. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989.
 - . ‘Interview’. Conducted by Adelaida Lopez, Marithelma Costa, and Donald Tucker. *Diacritics*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Spring 1987): 46–51.
 - . *Semiotica e filosofia del linguaggio*. Torino: Einaudi, 1984.
 - . ‘How I Wrote *The Name of the Rose*’. *The New York Times Book Review*. October 14th 1984: 1, 35–37.
 - . ‘Professione: genio, nazionalità: americana’, in *L’Espresso*, No. 28, 11th July, 1976: 52–56.
- Foucault, M. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972.
- Hegel, G. W. F. *Miscellaneous Writings*. Ed. And trans. Jon Stewart. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2002.
- Maddalena, G., and Tuzet, G. ‘The Sign of the Four: Italian Pragmatists retold’. *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2011: 147–162.
- Maddalena, G. ‘The Three Waves of Italian Reception of Peirce’. *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy*, vol. 6, No.1, 2014: 9–14.
- Magli, P, et al. Eds. *Semiotica: Storia Teoria Interpretazione: Saggi intorno a Umberto Eco*. Milano: Bompiani, 1992.
- Mounier, Emmanuel, *Existentialist Philosophers*. Trans. E. Blow. London, 1948.

- Paolucci, C. 'Eco, Peirce, and the Anxiety of Influence'. Chapter 8 of *The Philosophy of Umberto Eco*, The Library of Living Philosophers, Volume XXXV. Ed. Sara G. Beardsworth and Randall E. Auxier. Chicago: Open Court, 2017.
- *Studi di Semiotica Interpretativa*. A cura di C. Paolucci. Milano: Tascabili Bompiani, 2007.
- Peirce, C. S. *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*. Ed. Charles Hartshorne, Paul Weiss and Arthur Burks, 8 vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931-1958.
- 'The Doctrine of Chances', *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings*, Volume 1 (1867-1893). Ed. Nathan Houser and Christian Kloesel. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.
- 'A Guess at the Riddle', *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings*, Volume 1 (1867-1893). Ed. Nathan Houser and Christian Kloesel. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.
- 'The Seven Systems of Metaphysics', *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings*, Volume 2 (1893-1913). Ed. the Peirce Edition Project. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998.
- 'The Basis of Pragmaticism in the Normative Sciences', *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings*, Volume 2 (1893-1913). Ed. the Peirce Edition Project. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998.
- 'Pearson's Grammar of Science', *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings*, Volume 2 (1893-1913). Ed. the Peirce Edition Project. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998.
- 'Excerpts from Letters to Lady Welby', *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings*, Volume 2 (1893-1913). Ed. the Peirce Edition Project. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998.
- 'Il Lume Naturale', section XII of 'Lessons from the History of Science', *Essays in the Philosophy of Science*. Ed. Vincent Tomas. Indianapolis: The American Heritage Series, 1957.
- Rampi, R. *L'ornitorinco. Umberto Eco, Peirce e la conoscenza congetturale*. Milano: MB Publishing, 2005.
- Rosso, S., 'A Correspondence with Umberto Eco: Genova-Bologna-Binghamton-Bloomington, August-September, 1982, March-April, 1983'. Trans. Carolyn Springer. *boundary 2*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Autumn 1983): 1-13.
- Salanitro, N. *Peirce e I problemi dell'interpretazione*. Roma: Silva, 1969.

Sommavilla, G. 'L'allegro nominalismo nichilistico di Umberto Eco'. *La Civiltà Cattolica*, anno 132, vol. III, Quaderno 3150, 19 settembre, 1981: 502-507.