

University of Tartu
Faculty of Arts and Humanities
Department of Semiotics

Yimeng Cui

Problems of Bakhtin's Aesthetics: *The Name of the Rose* as a critical
examination of carnival

M.A. Thesis

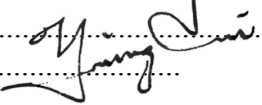
Supervisors: Lauri Linask
Silver Rattasepp
Mihhail Lotman

Tartu

January 2016

2017

I have written the Master Thesis myself, independently. All of the other authors' texts, main viewpoints and all data from other resources have been referred to.

Author: Yimeng Cui  (signature)
.....

(21.05.2017)

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Defining the Research Object: the novelistic and the carnivalesque	17
1.1 <i>Bakhtin's aesthetics, genres and concepts</i>	17
1.2 <i>The novel and the novelistic</i>	20
1.3 <i>Carnival and the carnivalesque</i>	21
1.4 <i>Problems of the carnivalesque</i>	23
1.5 <i>Conclusion: Bakhtin as an explicit voice in his works</i>	25
2. The Name of the Rose in a Bakhtinian context	27
2.1 <i>Aims, materials and methodology of the analysis</i>	27
2.2 <i>Historical background and semiotic context</i>	30
2.3 <i>Polyphony in the novel</i>	33
3. Bakhtin and Eco's definitions of carnival	40
3.1 <i>Examples of the carnivalesque in <i>The Name of the Rose</i></i>	40
3.2 <i>Eco's definition of carnival</i>	46
4. Deconstructions and carnival in the novel	52
5. Carnival and the problem of reference	63
5.1 <i>The novelistic and unlimited semiosis</i>	63
5.2 <i>Signification and reference in the novelistic</i>	66
5.3 <i>Final thoughts: reconciling the epic and the novelistic</i>	70
Conclusion	72
References	76
Kokkuvõte	79

Introduction

Topic: A structural contradiction in Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque, as exemplified in Eco's novel *The Name of the Rose*.

Research objects: The first object of analysis is M. Bakhtin's concept of carnival and the carnivalesque. The first level of analysis takes the assumption that the world of Bakhtin's aesthetics is consistent, and interprets Bakhtin's carnival as the relationship between his earlier literary and cultural concepts of novel and epic; in other words, what is carnival, and how does it incorporate and systematise Bakhtin's concepts of epic and novel as outlined in *The Dialogic Imagination*?

The second object of analysis is U. Eco's *The Name of the Rose*, in this case interpreted as A). a reconstruction of the world of Bakhtinian aesthetics, and B). a critical commentary of Bakhtin's concept of carnival.

Research materials: the main texts in which the concepts of carnival, grotesque and heteroglossia appear (*Rabelais and his World*, 1965; essays from *The Dialogic Imagination*, 1975), and in this context, supporting texts such as *The Name of the Rose*, the short essay *The frames of comic 'freedom'*, in which Eco explains his views towards carnival.

Goals: To show, to show that Eco's novel recreates the world of Bakhtin's aesthetics, including its flaws, and through a close reading of inverted binary oppositions in Eco's novel, to show that that the world of Bakhtinian aesthetics is not in fact consistent, due to its misuse of binary oppositions.

Aims: The first aim of this work is to identify a structural contradiction within Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque. The second aim is to show how Eco's *The Name of the Rose* expresses this structural contradiction.

Research questions: (1) What is the difference between epic, the novelistic and the carnivalesque, and how do these concepts are related to one another? (2) How does *The Name of the Rose* criticise Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque? (3) Does Eco hold any specific views on Bakhtin's carnivalesque, and if so, do these views make their way into his novel? (4) Is a carnivalesque model the only one that places the concepts of the epic and novelistic into system of mutually dependent terms?

General Methodology: Since methodologies for semiotic analyses tend to build on top of each other and overlap, in this case it is not useful to stick to a single author's proposed method for the entire analysis. For instance, if I were to apply a Greimasian analysis of an isolated phenomenon using the semiotic square, my work would have little meaning or significance outside of exemplifying this one method of analysis. The point of this work is to show an inner contradiction in Bakhtin's use of the carnivalesque. I use Eco's novel as an extended example because the work affords it.

In the early stages of writing this work, I tried to identify Eco's own voice in his novel—assuming it is even there—and realised that the 'voice' I found corresponds to Eco's voice in *The frames of comic 'freedom'*. Eco's criticism of carnival in *The frames...* was present in *The Name of the Rose* as well. Since this work aims to trace Eco's implicit critique of carnival, I aim to identify Eco's own methodology for his critique of carnival in *The frames*, and apply it myself in a close reading of *The Name of the Rose*. Eco seems to have a vague and intuitive method that is consistent with many points made by Derrida in his works on deconstruction. Eco's work shows that he agrees with Derrida in criticising structuralism's use of binary oppositions¹.

¹ Eco's first academic book, *The Open Work* states that in structuralism, "Communication occurs to the extent to which a given message is decoded according to a pre-established code shared by both the addresser and the addressee" (Eco 1962:219). This pre-established code is a universal, or as young Eco calls it, the 'Ur-code' that structuralism aims to discover (Eco 1962: 220–221). However, to imply that the Ur-code exists is to imply that there are ideal interpretations of texts (to interpret according to the Ur-code).

In isolating fundamental oppositions, such as raw-cooked, day-night, sun-moon, and many of more exotic and unexpected sorts, Lévi-Strauss is describing codes: sets of categories drawn from a single area of experience and related to one another in ways that make them useful logical tools for expressing other relations [...] The general implication of this method, which has become a fundamental principle of structural and semiotic analysis, is that elements of a text do not have intrinsic meaning as autonomous entities but derive their significance from oppositions which are in turn related to other oppositions in a process of theoretically infinite semiosis. (Culler 1981: 29)

Ferdinand de Saussure writes in his *Course on General Linguistics* that in language, meaning generates from differences among disparate terms in a system (Saussure 1983: 120); In *Of Grammatology*, Jacques Derrida agrees with this point, and famously says that there is no unmediated text that is independent of the differences given to it by its context (Derrida 1976: 220) Jonathan Culler explains, “If a text compares a woman with the moon, that predication has no inherent meaning; significance depends on the opposition between sun and moon” (Culler 1981: 29).

Therefore following Saussure, we can clarify the point: meaning is created by differences, so it is necessary for signs, or terms to be organised in a system in order to generate meaning, since differences are only possible in systems. Following this assumption, a binary opposition would be the simplest and most primitive system, having only two terms, each term defined by the other through difference (that is, in a binary system, there is a positive term and negative term).

Lévi-Strauss uses the binary opposition as the basic unit of meaning in his analysis of myth (Lévi-Strauss 1955). The binary system is self-referencing. This simple unit of meaning has the problem of referring more or less only to itself; each side defines itself by negating the other. This may not have been a problem for Lévi-Strauss, whose terms in binaries are mostly descriptive, but it is a problem for Bakhtin, who created a binary opposition with two agonistic terms, and wanted one term to be free of the other.

Therefore every sign—verbal or otherwise—may be interpreted at different levels, in configurations and functions “which are never prescribed by its “essence”, but emerge from a play of differences” (Derrida 2001: 267). Structure

In contrast, open works “Allow codes to evolve into new ones, to merge their branches rather than to trace their supposed origin”, and to focus on the production of meaning rather than the discovery of universal textual interpretations (Eco 1962: 221). Eco later wrote two historiographies on the Ur-code, *The Search for the Perfect Language* (1993) and *Serendipities: Language and Lunacy* (1998).

[...] has always been neutralised or reduced, and this by a process of giving it a centre or of referring it to a point of reference. The function of this centre was not only to orient, balance, and organise the structure [...] but above all to make sure that the organising principle of the structure would limit what we might call *play* of the structure [...] the notion of a structure lacking any centre represents the unthinkable itself. (Derrida 2001: 351-352)

Derrida's thoughts can be divided into themes, or statements: difference produces meaning (after Saussure), signification in a system of binary oppositions create meaning when each term defines itself against its opposite, in such systems one side of the binary is more powerful than the other (one term corresponds to presence, and the other to absence), and therefore all binary oppositions are inherently unstable. Since he works with the pre-assumption that texts are made up of binary oppositions, then Western metaphysics depends as much on absence as it does on presence. This current work will only use some of these points, and my close analysis of *The Name of the Rose* will not answer any questions about texts in general or Western metaphysics.

If binary oppositions are unstable, then its two sides have the potential to switch places, and the dominance of either side is arbitrary; for instance, one of Derrida's main binary oppositions is presence/absence. Although Western metaphysics tends to favour presences above absences, the concepts themselves only make sense when defined as the opposite of each other. Like Derrida, Bakhtin assumes that in Western metaphysics, one side of the binary holds preference over the other. His version of presence/absence is expressed as centre/periphery, or epic/novel, in which 'epic' corresponds with an established genre on the literary level, and the centre on the cultural level; whereas 'novel' corresponds with a much younger genre on the literary level, and the peripheries on the cultural level.

Additionally Western metaphysics do not have to be based on binary oppositions; simply come up with a system of differences that include more than two mutually-dependent and mirroring terms, and self-referencing among the terms would decrease. A system can include shades of graduated differences instead of only black-and-white opposites. I would argue that Yuriy Lotman successfully comes up with a system like this in his semiospheric model of culture, but this is besides the point of my current work. In any case, Bakhtin tries to make a heterogeneous, non-arbitrary model as well, but fails because he uses two terms—the epic and the novel—in a binary opposition.

Eco and Derrida's methodology do overlap in many ways, but my purpose here is not to analyse Bakhtin or Eco's work using Derrida's method of deconstruction as it pertains to text and Western metaphysics. The work focuses on Eco's implicit or potential identification and deconstruction of the epic/novel binary opposition central to Bakhtin's work. I do use deconstruction, but maybe it is better to say that I only identify Eco's casual use of deconstruction in *The frames of comic 'freedom'* and *The Name of the Rose*.

Current state of research on this topic: As yet I have not found any works that present a direct critique of Bakhtin's carnival, using Eco's *The Name of the Rose* as an illustration of carnival's problems. However, since this thesis must, like all writings, stand "on the shoulders of giants", it is lucky that scholarship of both Bakhtin and Eco is in general both abundant and relevant, although during Stalin's purges this was not always the case.

In 1990, Caryl Emerson teamed up with Gary Saul Morson to write *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics*. In her later book, *The First Hundred Years of Mikhail Bakhtin*, Emerson explains that "prosaics was his [Bakhtin's] starting point of studying novelistic prose" (Emerson 1997: 35), and that to Bakhtin, the novel is "a voracious incorporation of genres and its proliferation of voices" (Emerson 1997: 35), which allowed the reader more options and freedom of interpretation than the comparatively rigid genre of poetry. Emerson does not mean to say that Bakhtin rejects poetry as art, and in fact, Bakhtin was fond of poetry, although it was not the focus of his academic writings (Emerson 1997: 35).

In the West, Emerson's *The First Hundred years of Mikhail Bakhtin* (1997) is the most comprehensive guide to Bakhtin studies. It presents a historiography of Bakhtinian criticism in the post-Stalinist Soviet Union, and discusses "outsideness" as a theme in Bakhtin's writings, as well as his work on Dostoevsky's novels, folk culture, anachronistic historical accounts and carnival.

Until the Gorbachev years, Bakhtin's writings found most of their audience outside the USSR (Emerson 1997: 38), although that is not to say the Russians ignored Bakhtin completely. After the same Stalinist purges that repressed Bakhtin's career and writings came to an end, the Russian literary circle found it necessary to redefine their

goals, in order to build a new working environment. Thus, the period of de-Stalinisation in the 1950s allowed formalist theory to re-emerge in the Moscow; and Roman Jakobson's work was re-introduced (Emerson 1997, 41). When Jakobson's opponents argued that his work was socially and culturally irrelevant, the Tartu-Moscow School of semiotics intervened by trying to integrate Jakobson's formalism with the Marxist approaches to literature that were popular at the time:

For all its reliance on models and codes, then, and for all its fierce eclecticism and independence, the research of the Tartu school seemed to many Russians of the 1960s and 1970s reassuringly close to familiar Marxist-humanist concerns, both in its search for a materialist aesthetics and in its careful attention to sociohistorical questions. It promised the rigor of Formalism without any embarrassing neglect of content or social responsibility—that is, it promised “Structuralism with a human face”. (Emerson 1997: 42)

It was in this newly (relatively) open-minded context that in the late 1950s, students of the Gorky Institute of World Literature in Moscow rediscovered Bakhtin's 1929 work, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, and were overjoyed to find the author still alive and teaching in the geographical peripheries of the Soviet Union (Emerson 1997: 42). Some work on Bakhtin's research began, including in Moscow and St. Petersburg, though it would appear that Tartu showed more interest. Georgij M. Fridlender thought that Bakhtin was “monologic and didactic” in his insistence on polyphony. This is a case of someone saying Bakhtin's work contains an inner contradiction² (Emerson 1997: 166). Other critics include Dmitri S. Likhachev and Anton M. Panchenko in their 1976 work, *The World of Laughter in Early Russia*; however, Yuriy M. Lotman and Boris A. Uspenskij argued against Likhachev and Panchenko in their 1977 work, *New aspects on the study of Ancient Rus*³, in which they argued that Likhachev and Panchenko made the mistake of applying the world of Rabelaisian laughter—the subject of Bakhtin's writings—to the worldview of medieval Russia (Emerson 1997: 271).

Shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian and Western scholars were able to meet. At a conference in the 1990s, Emerson notes that

The foreigners' presentations tended to be at the theoretical cutting edge and “outside” Bakhtin's lived experience; several were recognizably postmodernist, some were feminist and deconstructed

² Фирдлендер, Георгий Михайлович. 1964. *Реализм Достоевского*.

³ Лотман, Юрий Михайлович; Успенский, Борис Андреевич. 1977. *Новые аспекты изучения культуры Древней Руси*.

in their approach, quite a few were critical of Bakhtin's formulations. Others were imaginative expansions of his thought into genre theory, translation practice, and the visual arts. We outsiders, it seemed, were forever grasping a small amount of Bakhtin and then applying it to concerns within our own fields of expertise. For the majority of the Russian delegate, in contrast, *Bakhtin himself* was the field. (Emerson 1997: 33)

It would appear that the Western scholars, with limited access to Bakhtin's biographical details and the Russian context of his works, could do little more except to apply his theories to their own academic research. In Russia, however, postmodernism, feminism and deconstruction had not been as prominent in academic discourse as they are in the West, therefore the Russians worked with what they had, with the result that

A large portion of their papers were archival, pedagogical, closely argued philosophical investigations, at times simply reverent paraphrase. Textological problems were cleared up, details of Bakhtin's biography filled in. (Emerson 1997: 33)

Tsvetan Todorov and Julia Kristeva—both Bulgarians working in Paris—are two of the more famous Western scholars who incorporated Bakhtinian concepts into their own fields of study. Todorov wrote *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle* (1984) as a guide to Bakhtinian thought, but according to Emerson and Morson, Todorov tries to find an underlying system underlying Bakhtin's thought, even though such a system does not even exist (Emerson and Morson 1990: 5). Todorov may have been misguided in his attempts to organise Bakhtin's work, but while writing his book, Todorov was able to discover his own work by expanding Bakhtin's concept of dialogue into his own thoughts on intertextuality. Julia Kristeva also connects Bakhtin's notion of dialogue with her own work on intertextuality, beginning in a 1966 presentation that eventually turned into part of her paper *Le mot, le dialogue, et le roman (Word, dialogue, and the novel)* (Lesic-Thomas 2008).

As Emerson mentioned, studies including Bakhtin range from feminism to the visual arts; however, I have found relatively few that examine his use of binary oppositions. In 2001, Jørgen Bruhn and Jan Lundquist's *The Novelness of Bakhtin: Perspectives and possibilities* comes close, claiming that "Reading Bakhtin, one is struck by the way he thinks in terms of theoretical oppositions while at the same time, he is obsessed by overcoming exactly the same oppositions" (Bruhn, Lundquist 2001: 23). They list some oppositions underlying Bakhtin's work, such as form/content, style/thematics and autonomy/history, as well as the binary oppositions

synchrony/diachrony, literary language/vernacular and individual/social. In Michael Holquist's *Why is God's Name a Pun? Bakhtin's theory of the novel in the light of theophilology* (2001), the binary opposition at the centre of Bakhtin's works is holy/profane. However, this paper primarily concerns Bakhtin's use of language (following a tradition that includes Jakobson, Shpet, Trubetskoj, Benveniste and Bataille, Holquist believes), as a "trilogic" sign that transcends binary oppositions; that is, it is the sign and referent at the same time (Bruhn, Lundquist 2001: 24).

Since *The Name of the Rose* works on many levels of interpretation, a number of critical essays have been written about it, especially in the 1980s. Most of them explore the novel from the point of view of various academic disciplines, and in one example, from the point of view of its author's ethnic background. Some of these essays are of higher quality than others; for instance, Carl Rubino's *The Invisible Worm: ancients and moderns in "The Name of the Rose"* (1985) claims that William "[...] shows an unsettling familiarity with the details of inquisition" (Rubino 1985), appearing to forget that before the events of the novel, William had worked as a professional inquisitor (Eco 1984a: 168). Rubino's paper loosely relates William of Baskerville to the fictional characters Ireneo Funes and Sherlock Holmes, as well as to the historical figures Sir Isaac Newton and Ilya Prigogine, on the grounds that all of these characters sought order in the world, or tried to perceptually organise it in some way. In *Naming the Rose: readers and codes in Umberto Eco's novel*, Steven Sallis discusses the multiple interpretations possible for *The Name of the Rose*:

A reader could explore *The Name of the Rose* on several levels. Descriptions of monastic and civil rivalry, the troubled history of the papacy in the fourteenth century, and lists of medieval herbs, beasts, and favourite books could captivate a reader with interests in the Renaissance. The unusual murders, clues to the murderer's identity, and the narrator's observations would lead the adept mystery-reader to the text in order to try to solve the mystery of the novel's intrigue. The exposition of Eco's semiotic theory would lead the reader interested in literary criticism to another level of reading, the examinations of the role of the reader interpreting a text. (Sallis 1986)

Sallis argues for Adso and William as naïve and critical readers, which is valuable for seeing the story through two different eyes, but problematic in that the reader is then limited to seeing through the eyes of only two readers, limiting not only the possibilities of interpretation, but also ignoring the other points of view in the novel, such as those of

Ubertino, Abo and Jorge. Leticia Reyes-Tatinclaux's *Missing Eco: on reading "The Name of the Rose" as library criticism* takes an unusual perspective by exploring the book as a book about books-within-books; however, her paper acknowledges that a reader "[...] must not reduce this to mere 'library fiction'" (Reyes-Tatinclaux 1989). Robert F. Yeager, in his 1985 article *Fear of writing, or Adso and the poisoned text* compares Eco's narration techniques with those of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Ian Fleming. In 1989, David G. Baxter's *Murder and mayhem in a medieval abbey: the philosophy of The Name of the Rose* reads Eco's book as a philosophical novel, but the only philosophical concepts it explores are Aristotelian logic and abductive theories.

The Egyptian literary researcher Sabry Hafez draws upon her own cultural background in *The Name of the Rose: time and dialectics of parallel structures* (Hafez 1989). Her paper points out many interesting observations about the novel's correspondence between its meta and object levels. For instance—it may be useful to remind the reader that *The Name of the Rose* is a frame novel that begins with the discovery of Adso's manuscript—Hafez traces the temporal milestones of Adso's narrative as a text:

Late November 1327	The date of the narrated events
Late 14th century	The writing of the manuscript
17th century	Approximate date of the Latin edition
1842	The date of the French edition
1968	The handing over of the manuscript
1970	The vindication of its authenticity
1980	The publication of the Italian version of the text (Hafez 1989)

Hafez connects these seven incarnations of the text to the seven murders in the abbey, displaying a beautiful parallel. In addition, the pace of the text speeds up just like the pace of events during the last three days at the abbey—another correspondence between the novel's meta and object levels (Hafez 1989). Hafez also points out the similarity between Adso of Melk and Shahrazad (Scheherazade), the narrator of *The Arabian Nights*. She argues that both are storytellers using narrative as a means of survival (Hafez 1989), yet whereas Shahrazad does so within her lifetime, Adso, by committing his to manuscript, preserves his voice even centuries after his death. Yet this observation applies to many fictional narrators, and is not unique to Adso and Shahrazad.

Rocco Capozzi's 1989 paper *Palimpsests and laughter: the dialogical pleasures of unlimited intertextuality in The Name of the Rose* discusses Eco's novel in a Bakhtinian context, noting the text's abundant use of quotations, which gives it a hybrid structure. While Capozzi does mention that the role of laughter in Eco's novel may have something to do with Bakhtin's carnival, he does so only to say he will not explore this issue further in the current paper.

Theresa Coletti wrote a collection of excellent essays in 1988, collectively called *Naming the Rose: Eco, medieval signs, and modern theory*, in which she explores a series of themes in Eco's novel, including heresy as interpretation, palimpsest and deconstruction. Coletti's aim is to present Eco's work as a novel of ideas, and to "address the relationship between the novel's medievalism and its preoccupation with signs, focusing on the thorough grounding of its semiotic concerns in its representation of medieval culture" (Coletti 1988: 4–5). She aims to show that Eco uses accurate historical details in his novel "to reflect on the uses of the past and on history itself" (1988: 5), and so "out of a concrete rendering of medieval social and intellectual life Eco substantively crafts a distinctly contemporary statement about language and meaning, responsible intellectual activity, and the nature of critical discourse" (1988: 5).

We get closer with Evelyn Copley's 1989 paper, *Closure and Semiosis in Mann's "Dr. Faustus" and Eco's "The Name of the Rose"*, which interprets Thomas Mann's *Dr. Faustus* as an intertext for *The Name of the Rose*. She writes,

"My purpose here is to take a close look at these oppositions, discussing them as ideologically weighted constructs rather than as relatively static or equal terms [...] My approach is meant to complement Walter E. Stephens' excellent interpretation of *Rose* as a "showdown between medieval theocentric semiosis and a version of Peircean unlimited semiosis", and to apply certain aspects of Eco's theory of semiotics to *Faustus*. What I hope to show above all is that any gesture to close off an inside (one side of the opposition) from an outside (the other side) is doomed to reproduce what it means to exclude." (Copley 1989)

At this point, her work may seem to be a direct precursor to mine (aside from the discussions on Mann's *Dr. Faustus*), as it makes the argument that Eco's novel contains a number of unstable binary oppositions. In addition, Copley makes the distinction between the "closed", single-referent nature of Christian hermeneutics (which she calls "medieval semiotics"), and the Peircean concept of unlimited semiosis. However, Copley does not deconstruct this meta-binary opposition between medieval and Peircean (closed and

open) semiotics at the core of her paper, therefore it ends without addressing the relationship between single-referent and referent-free interpretation.

The work that is thematically closest to the topic of this thesis is Thomas Sebeok's 1984 anthology *Carnival!*, a collection of three essays which includes Eco's *The frames of comic 'freedom'*. Each of the three writers uses a different definition of carnival, and Eco's essay is the only one that has relevant to Bakhtinian theory. What Eco says in this essay is significant, since it explains the critical viewpoint towards carnival, which he shows in *The Name of the Rose*, although this paper does not mention the novel itself.

In short, most of the critical essays on *The Name of the Rose* were written in the decade of its publication. It would appear that literary and cultural scholars have moved on to discuss Eco's more recent works, fictional and non-fictional alike. Although *The Name of the Rose* has not been under much discussion in the recent years, I find it important to bring it up again, as there are issues that have not been resolved earlier, and are still relevant today. In addition, my argument does not stay within the novel, but merely uses it as an illustrative device to discuss Bakhtin's concepts of carnival and the carnivalesque, in order to make a point about the role of reference in Bakhtin's concepts of novel and epic. In other words, although my thesis uses a close reading of Eco's novel, this close reading is not the point of the work. I discuss Bakhtin's literary and cultural concepts within the context of Eco's novel in order to give some form to an otherwise abstract topic.

There are two works that probably discuss Bakhtin's carnival and Eco's commentary; however, it is difficult to access either of them. In 1995, Ben Taylor from Nottingham Trent University wrote his thesis *Bakhtin, carnival and comic theory*. According to an Internet search, the thesis mentions that Umberto Eco is a critic of carnival; however, the full work, even the abstract, is not easily accessible. Today Taylor works as a lecturer in the field of media and cultural studies, and does not appear to have published any significant works on Bakhtin and carnival.

There is a 2013 work by Nadia Bobbio entitled *Umberto Eco and Rabelaisian Grotesque: Bakhtinian Echoes and Sociopolitical Criticism in the Fictional Works of Umberto Eco*; however, I could not find neither a copy nor publisher, or even any record

of a citation. Upon further examination, it turns out that this work is Bobbio's PhD thesis, and that throughout her studies, Bobbio had been working in finance and investments. After receiving her degree from Trinity College, Dublin, Bobbio left academia to continue her work in the finance sector.

It is disappointing that such an important theme should be neglected, especially since Taylor and Bobbio came very close. In any case, no research on Bakhtin or Eco can be considered wasted, as each work adds some height to "the shoulders of giants"—Bakhtin studied Dostoevsky, Emerson studied Bakhtin, Eco responded to Bakhtin, and a list of scholars are still continuing the conversation about Eco's long list of works—and in any case, Eco's critique of Bakhtin's use of binary oppositions has not yet been said, therefore from the "eclecticism and independence" of the Tartu school of semiotics, my work will humbly propose to add a few notes to the discourse.

Relevance: If one of Bakhtin's most prominent ideas does indeed work against the author's strongly-stated intentions, it may be necessary to understand how they do so, before applying these ideas—along with their mistakes—in a broader and more practical cultural context. The point of Bakhtin's concept of the novelistic is to destabilise what he considered an overly structured world, where cultural structures and categories are strict to the point of being oppressive. However, destabilisation and revolution are both dangerous concepts that should not be taken too far. I believe that Bakhtin is too extreme in his destruction of existing systems, and instead of creating a model for a healthy, open culture, he creates something that can be used for further oppression. This model needs to be criticised more openly.

Bakhtin's concept of carnival goes much further than literary criticism. It is a model for a social, cultural and political revolution. I argue that Bakhtin's carnivalesque, when taken too far, causes novelistic discourse to generate signs without reference, which leads to a collapse of meaning. In short, to study carnival is to examining how a model of revolution and meaning making fails. By figuring out why it, we may also learn what it takes for such a model to succeed.

Structure and tasks:

Following this general introduction, this work will proceed to one chapter of further introduction to its topic, followed by four more chapters of analysis.

The first chapter aims to delimit the topic of this thesis, briefly introduce Bakhtin's work in which the objects of analysis appear, as well as include a short biographical overview to suggest that Bakhtin's academic interests may have been influenced by personal motivations. This chapter will also explain Bakhtin's style, define the concepts that are the objects of this analysis, and introduce their inner structural contradictions; the aim is to define and explain the evolution of the Bakhtinian concepts I will discuss in this work: the novel, the epic, carnival and the carnivalesque.

The following three chapters analyse *The Name of the Rose* as a critique of the four Bakhtinian concepts introduced in the first chapter. Chapter two gives an overview of the semiotic context of Eco's novel, as well as my methodology for the close reading, and will explain the reason for using binary oppositions as the main focus of the analysis. Chapter three has two principal aims: to identify and list the carnivalesque binary oppositions in the novel, and to explain Eco's views on carnival as shown in his deconstruction of the tragedy/comedy binary opposition. The fourth chapter identifies these views by showing examples of deconstructions and carnivals within the novel. In the fifth and final chapter, I aim to address the relationship between the novelistic and unlimited semiosis, as well as the place of reference in a purely novelistic setting. Lastly, I will propose a new way to systematise Bakhtin's concepts of epic and novel without the use of binary oppositions. A general conclusion will restate the themes and conclusions discussed in the work.

Defining the Research Object: the novelistic and the carnivalesque

1.1 Bakhtin's aesthetics, genres and concepts

As a person, Mikhail Bakhtin is somewhat of an eccentric, and his writings have a very specific style and personality. As a theorist, Bakhtin's work does not strictly fit the categories of literary or cultural criticism. Often his literary concepts cross over to the field of cultural studies, and Bakhtin firmly believes that literature is inseparable from culture (Bruhn and Lundquist 2001: 22). Therefore, he has a tendency to repeat himself on different levels of analysis, explaining a concept in its literary context, then applying the concept again in a cultural context. The American Bakhtin scholar Michael Holquist writes, in his introduction to *The Dialogic Imagination*, that "[...] Bakhtin's motivating idea is in its essence opposed to any strict formalisation" (Holquist 1981: xviii); Todorov sees this as a weakness, and Holquist believes it is because other language theorists tend to be more organised by comparison; for instance, "It may be said Jakobson works with poetry because he has a Pushkinian love of order; Bakhtin, on the contrary, loves novels because he is a baggy monster" (Holquist 1981: xviii). However, what Bakhtin does have in his work is "an almost Manichean sense of opposition and struggle" in his concept of language, which is present in both culture and (Holquist 1981: xviii). I believe this causes the problem in his methodology, but before jumping to discussing specific problems, it would be useful to note that there is a particular way to read and tame this "baggy monster".

It may be useful to note that instead of making accurate claims, Bakhtin sets up systems of terms, and makes his points in the relations between elements in his systems, rather than on the elements themselves. Sometimes he makes very general claims about history or literary theory when attempting to describe a very abstract idea, but since these are difficult to put into words, he describes them using concrete names as placeholders. To a new reader, his claims may sound like heavily generalised historical statements that cannot be proven, and sound too extreme to be accurate, but they make more sense after one disregards specific nouns and thinks of them as placeholders for very general or abstract phenomena. For instance, his essay *From the prehistory of novelistic discourse*

claims that polyglossia came from Rome, which used three languages (Bakhtin 1981: 63), and that Roman laughter developed from Hellenic polyglossia that originated in the Orient (Bakhtin 1981: 63). From a historical point of view, this claim is vague and makes little sense, but remove the proper nouns, and it becomes clearer that thematically, Bakhtin is simply describing a cultural crossroads in which meeting points result in dialogue. Hellenistic culture was cosmopolitan, and included voices from various ethno-linguistic, political, social and occupational backgrounds; and later the Romans inhabited a cosmopolitan cultural space as well. “Hellenistic” and “Roman” are proper noun placeholders, and Bakhtin’s point is not to describe language usage in two classical empires, but to vaguely make a connection between cultural openness and laughter.

Although Bakhtin writes academic works, what stands out the most to me is his aesthetic; he writes about forms that are jumbled up and stuck together, playful, parodic, irreverent and loud, evoking medieval festivals at their most vulgar and festive. His style matches his content, full of long, passionate and rhetorical sentences, obscure allusions and generalisations that are extreme and seemingly arbitrary. Bakhtin does not stress the accuracy of his details, instead focusing on creating open, dynamic systems involving concepts that directly relate to one another. His literary concepts have direct counterparts in his cultural concepts, and one can view Bakhtin’s later works as additional layers built on top of his earlier works, sometimes transgressing the previous ones’ genre.

Despite dedicating my work to criticising his, I recognise that Bakhtin’s writing is valuable because it so vividly expresses what had been previously missing in literary and cultural theory: a model of a living and constantly-evolving genre comprised of a plurality of voices; and in cultural theory, a model of a culture in which different social, occupational and political discourses engage in dialogue with each other as equals, without the interference of an authority figure.

Bakhtin’s later concepts of novel and the novelistic, heteroglossia and carnival began in *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, where he introduced the concept of the polyphonic novel. This work begins by stating that

Any acquaintance with the voluminous literature on Dostoevsky leaves the impression that one is dealing not with a single author-artist, [...] but a number of philosophical statements by several author-thinkers—Raskolnikov, Myshkin, Stavrogin, Ivan Karamazov, the Grand Inquisitor, and others. (Bakhtin 1993: 5)

According to Bakhtin, “Dostoevsky [...] created a fundamentally new novelistic genre” (1993: 7) in which each of his characters, instead of being “an object of authorial discourse”, is a “fully valid, autonomous carrier of his own individual world” (Bakhtin 1993: 5).

After *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin and his colleagues were arrested and sentenced to ten years of hard labour in Siberia. Bakhtin was able to appeal his sentence, since earlier in 1983 Bakhtin suffered a bone disease that later led to the amputation of his leg. Therefore, instead of the prison camps, Bakhtin went into exile for six years in Kustanai (Qostanay), Kazakhstan. He was relatively prolific during this period, during which the Great Terror, particularly the Yezhovshchina would have made it dangerous for him to publish. Bakhtin’s writings after these repressions concern literary and culture openness, and seem to remove characteristics of Dostoevsky's polyphonic novel out of its specific context, placing them into the broader context of novels and even culture in general. The philosopher Simon Critchley believes Bakhtin's focus on openness in his later work is

[...] not incidental [...] to the circumstances of composition and indirect intention of Bakhtin’s *Rabelais and his World* [...] written in 1941, just a few years after the height of the Stalinist purges [...] Bakhtin’s defence of what he calls ‘grotesque realism’, his praise of ‘comic heteroglossia’, of unofficial culture, of the unruliness of the body and the identification of the latter with the ‘collective ancestral ground of the people’, is clearly an implied critique of the official culture and hierarchy of Stalinism and its aesthetics of social realism. (Critchley 2002: 82).

Epic and novel: Towards a methodology for the study of the novel was presented in 1941, and in this essay, Bakhtin describes the novel in general as a polyphonic work, not only the ones written by Dostoevsky.

1.2 The novel and the novelistic

As in the case of Dostoevsky's novels in particular, Bakhtin's general notion of 'novel' is not merely a fictional prose narrative divided into chapters. 'Novel' refers to a work of protean form due to its containing more than one inner structure (Bakhtin 1981: 5). These inner structures, each of which represents a discourse, are artistically arranged into a unified work that nevertheless is free of an overarching authoritative voice, so that each discourse represented in the novel is validated as much as the others (Bakhtin 1981: 262). Again, as with Dostoevsky's novels, this newly generalised notion of "novel" contains a multitude of voices spanning various social, political and occupational backgrounds. Thus, "The language of the novel is a system of languages that mutually and ideologically interanimate each other. It is impossible to describe and analyse it as a single unitary language" (Bakhtin 1981: 47).

In addition, Bakhtin notes that the inclusion of multiple voices within the novel generates metalanguage when the different layers of discourse communicate among themselves. As these layers become

[...] more free and flexible, [...] permeated with laughter, irony, humour, elements of self-parody [...] the novel inserts into these other genres an indeterminacy, a certain semantic openness, a living contract with unfinished, still-evolving contemporary reality (the opened present)" (Bakhtin 1981: 7).

In other words, the novel's openness makes it the best literary genre for modelling reality (Bakhtin 1981: 7), which Bakhtin imagines "to be something like an immense novel" (Bakhtin 1981: 60). While Bakhtin's notion of "novel" can be applied to fictional prose narratives, he does not limit its use to literary criticism alone. Instead, the novel as a literary genre demonstrates the description of "novelistic", which can refer to anything characterised by openness and a mix of discourses, including culture, festivals and even bodies. Bakhtin writes that "Studying other genres is analogous to studying dead languages; studying the novel, on the other hand, is like studying languages that are not only alive, but still young" (1981: 3). Therefore, cultures and forms that acknowledge their own evolution may be described as novelistic.

Bakhtin contrasts the novel against the epic, which speaks with a single authorial voice that dominates the entire work. He describes the epic as an "absolutely completed

and finished generic form” (1981: 13–14), in contrast to the novel, which “is determined by experience” (1981: 15). Since the epic contains only one voice, and therefore only one level of discourse, it lacks the capacity for metalanguage. The epic voice cannot be an equal among many others in a conversation, because the work contains no other voices with which it can converse. Set in the absolute past, it speaks to its audience through a vast temporal distance, and “[...] precisely because it is walled off from all subsequent times, the epic past is absolute and complete. It is closed as a circle; inside it everything is finished, already over” (Bakhtin 1981: 16).

If “[...] tradition isolates the world of the epic from personal experience, from any new insights, from any personal initiative in understanding and interpreting, from new points of view and evaluations” (Bakhtin 1981: 16), then the epic speaks to a purely receptive audience. The reader is not given room to participate (interpret) in the epic world if epic distance makes the epic’s voice sacred and unquestioned. In short, the epic is the authoritarian opposite of the novel.

1.3 Carnival and the carnivalesque

Bakhtin first introduces carnival as an extra-literary concept in *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, explaining that “Carnival itself [...] is not, of course, a literary phenomenon” (1993: 122), but rather a literary or social context that is “the place for working out [...] a new mode of interrelationship between individuals” (1993: 123).

Rabelais and his World goes further in its exploration of carnival, tracing its roots to the Feast of Fools, in the High Middle Ages, an annual festival in which Church officials switched social roles with the common people. In *Rabelais and his World*, Bakhtin argues that the Feast of Fools offered a brief window of social equality (Bakhtin 1984: 10), celebrating the vernacular of the marketplace using dynamic, undefined and often grotesque forms, and featuring relative social equality. In other words, formal openness and liminality are both what Bakhtin would consider as carnivalesque phenomena, and carnival is the site where the novelistic discourse manifests itself. In fact, in *Epic and novel*, Bakhtin notes that novelistic discourse, originated in the “conversational folk language” of the marketplace (Bakhtin 1981: 50).

As an event, carnival celebrates the “temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order”, and its feasting is “the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change and renewal” (Bakhtin 1984:10). Therefore, “This temporary suspension, both ideal and real, of hierarchical rank created during carnival time a special type of communication impossible in everyday life” (Bakhtin 1984: 10). In other words, carnival is a brief interruption of accepted social roles. However, Bakhtin appears to contradict himself because whereas “becoming, change and renewal” suggests a state of continuous liminality and unlimited growth, a “temporary liberation” suggests a one-time transgression determined by the norm that is transgressed.

Initially (in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*), carnival is merely descriptive, but in *Rabelais and his World*, the novelistic world of carnival forms a contrast against the epic world of the Church. Bakhtin writes that,

An intolerant, one-sided tone of seriousness is characteristic of official medieval culture. The very contents of medieval ideology—asceticism, somber providentialism, sin, atonement, suffering, as well as the character of the feudal regime, with its oppression and intimidation—all these elements determined this tone of icy seriousness. It was supposedly the only tone fit to express the true, the good, and all that was essential and meaningful. Fear, religious awe, humility, these were the overtones of this seriousness. (Bakhtin 1984: 73)

This description is reminiscent of epic distance, which on this cultural level of analysis is called the “official” culture of the Church. Carnival mocks hallmarks of the epic genre, seeking to degrade discourses made sacred by epic distance, bringing them down to earth and exposing them to dialogue (Bakhtin 1984: 24). Bakhtin believes that degradation is significant for challenging “the extreme expression of narrow-mindedness and stupid seriousness [of authoritarian discourse], which is defeated by laughter” (Bakhtin 1984: 47). It is in *Rabelais and his World* that Bakhtin most clearly presents epic and novel as antagonistic concepts, siding with the novel; we have seen earlier in *Epic and novel* that he believes the novel to be a more accurate representation of the world. In *Rabelais and his World*, takes this idea even further, claiming that the true nature of the world is laughter (1984: 9).

1.4 Problems of the carnivalesque

Initially, the concepts ‘epic’ and ‘novelistic’ both describe literary genres. In a novel, the epic voice would be reduced to one dialect among many others, losing its authority when put into dialogue with other, equally important voices also present in the same work, depriving it of the epic distance which lends it its authority. A novel can potentially absorb the epic voice and add it to its layers of discourse. As an ever-growing collection of voices, the novel does not have boundaries to transgress. The problem starts with the carnivalesque in *Rabelais and his World*, where the novelistic becomes characterised as the model of openness set against the epic voice, where its goal becomes not to grow, but to oppose the epic voice, which can be represented in medieval European society by

Aristotelian poetics, the poetics of Augustine, the poetics of the medieval church, of “the one language of truth” [...] they serve one and the same project of centralising and unifying the European languages. The victory of one reigning language (dialect) over the others, the supplanting of languages, their enslavement, the process of illuminating them with the True Word, the incorporation of barbarians and the lower strata into a unitary language of culture and truth [...] (Bakhtin 1981: 271).

It matters to note that by “languages”, Bakhtin does not refer to the local use of grammar and vocabulary, but “language as a world view, even as a concrete opinion”, and the ‘one language of truth’ is any language that believes itself to be the basis for “sociopolitical and cultural centralisation” (Bakhtin 1981: 271).

In the carnivalesque model of culture, representatives of novelistic openness (the comedic and vernacular, the marketplace) in the epic/novel binary pair are treated as somehow truer and better than the closedness of epic. These peripheral, novelistic discourses seek to break free from authoritarian discourse by directly opposing it. Yet the side that seeks to transgress depends on the other side to make rules that they can transgress. Instead of being reduced to a mere dialect, the authoritarian side is acknowledged in every one of their broken rules. By defining itself as the binary opposite of the epic side, the novelistic side depends on it for its very own identity.

If Bakhtin’s concepts on the novelistic side promote political autonomy, and to be free to grow without being stunted by rigid boundaries, it is a problem if this open, novelistic culture is dependent on its complete opposite. In a true binary opposition, one side is never free of the other. While there is nothing wrong with the purely descriptive

use of binary opposites, something is wrong in carnival, when one side wants to leave while trapped in a structure that will not let it leave.

On the literary level, 'epic' and 'novel' are both descriptive concepts. They are not part of a binary opposition because novel absorbs the epic voice as one of its many artistically stratified voices; however, the carnivalesque first places these two concepts into a binary opposition that operates on the following levels:

- On the social/cultural level: Church vs. marketplace
- On the ideo-linguistic level: Latin vs. vernaculars
- In socio/cultural semiotics: centre vs. peripheries

Derrida notes that Western metaphysics usually favours the first term in a binary opposition (Derrida 1982: 21, 28); in this case, Church, Latin and centre all dominate their more peripheral opposites. After Bakhtin's carnivalesque emphasises the opposition between the two terms of the binary, it then switches the traditional order of dominance. Therefore, the carnivalesque favours the marketplace, vernaculars and peripheries, believing these sides to be more reflexive of reality, as well as key to social and political autonomy. However, in a binary opposite, each side is a mirror reflection of the other, and each side defines itself through its difference from the other. Therefore by opposing epic discourse in a binary opposition, novelistic discourse actually confirms it, unwittingly becoming a proponent for authoritarianism.

It should be noted that Derrida's binary oppositions could consist of any pair of opposites, but Bakhtin's carnival concerns only the binary oppositions that derive from epic/novelistic aesthetics, or in a social context, centre/peripheries. Other binary oppositions used by Lévi-Strauss and Derrida, such as male/female, sun/moon, speech/writing and presence/absence are of little to no relevance to Bakhtin's concept of carnival. Carnival only seeks to overturn the opposition between a unified ruling voice and the voices it speaks above, therefore its binary oppositions involve an element or discourse belonging to a firmly-established social centre matched against an element or discourse of the social peripheries. That which can be described as carnivalesque inverts the familiar order of binary oppositions, and carnival is the event of inversion itself.

1.5 Conclusion: Bakhtin as an explicit voice in his works

Bakhtin's most famous concept is the 'novel', which he characterises as a unified work containing a plurality of voices from a variety of social, historical and occupational backgrounds, each promoting its own discourse. The novel artistically stratifies these voices into dialogue, therefore the voices in a novel are equally important, and their interdependency (for dialogue) allows them equal validity in the eyes of the author. Although Bakhtin first noticed this particular structure in the polyphonic novels of Dostoevsky, later on, his study of the polyphonic novel evolves into a theory of novels in general. Eventually the description 'novelistic' expands into Bakhtin's cultural theories as well; that is, a novelistic culture would contain a variety of discourses from voices of different social, historical and occupational backgrounds, none of them privileged above the others.

When Bakhtin wrote his general theory of the novel, he also defined his concept of the epic, a literary form that is the complete opposite of the novel in its containing only one voice, which dominates the entire artistic work. When *Rabelais and his World* places the novelistic into a cultural context, corresponding it with the culture of the marketplace, the description of the epic extends into a cultural description as well. In Bakhtin's culture theory, the epic describes the solemn, authoritarian culture of the Catholic Church intent on maintain its political, social and cultural dominance, while the description of novelistic characterises the marketplace, a world consisting of people from a variety of social, economic and occupational backgrounds.

Bakhtin's concept of carnival is derived from the Feast of Fools, a festival in which the people of the marketplace mock the figures and rituals of the Church, or the cultural centre. It refers to the switching of places between components of a binary opposition. Therefore, the carnivalesque refers to an agonistic relationship between Bakhtin's earlier descriptions of the epic and novelistic (central and peripheral discourses) in a binary opposition, in which the novelistic (peripheral) discourses are favoured over the epic (the authoritative centre). Carnival has an inconsistent inner structure: by placing epic and novel in a binary opposition, the terms become mutually

dependent, but at the same time, carnival pushes for the novelistic to be independent from, as well as dominant over the central epic discourse of its given culture.

My reason for using this entire work to criticise the consistency of Bakhtin's ideas is that his methodology defeats his intention to model a dynamic culture. Bakhtin's work has a consistent aesthetic (people from different backgrounds mixing in the marketplace, laughter bordering on vulgarity, medieval folk festivals), and progresses from being descriptive to argumentative. 'Novel' and 'epic' lose their neutrality as Bakhtin develops his thesis on carnival, which places these two concepts in a binary opposition. However, Bakhtin advocates for the carnivalesque; that is, perhaps due to his personal experiences against the historical background of his time, Bakhtin sincerely believes that the peripheral, or novelistic discourses should dominate over the central, or epic discourse in culture. Yet due to the nature of the binary opposite, neither side can win. By using the binary model in his cultural theory, Bakhtin guarantees that his dream of a dynamic, open culture depends on an authoritarian culture in order to validate its own existence. Conversely, the authoritarian culture depends on its ability to marginalise the marketplace—that is, the peripheral discourse in order to validate *its* own existence. A culture cannot free itself from an authority figure by depending on it. Bakhtin passionately puts forth a model, but sabotages it with his own methodology.

Bakhtin's writing combines rhetorical and academic styles, includes references and allusions to other works; and responds to other voices, particularly that of François Rabelais. Yet his writing is far from novelistic, because Bakhtin's own voice dominates the work. In spite of his praise for the use of multiple, equally important voices in a single work, Bakhtin does not leave his own words open to interpretation: he is very insistent on promoting novelistic discourse. In other words, in order to make his argument clear and free of ambiguity, Bakhtin relies on the authority of the epic voice in his work. This is an important point that I will refer back to in the final chapter, after first exploring the implications and problem of carnival.

2. The Name of the Rose in a Bakhtinian context

2.1 Aims, materials and methodology of the analysis

The previous chapter stated the problem, which is that Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque places his concepts of the epic and novel in a binary opposition, causing each to depend on the other, while simultaneously believing that this arrangement allows the novel to be free of the epic. My primary aim in this chapter is to show that Umberto Eco's novel *The Name of the Rose* can be used as an illustration to explore how the carnivalesque model structurally contradicts itself.

The Name of the Rose was first published in Italian in 1980, and the English translation by William Weaver was published in 1983. For this analysis, I will be using the 1984 edition, which includes the supplemental essay *Postscript to The Name of the Rose*.

While it is unlikely that Eco wrote his novel as a direct response to Bakhtin, what stood out to me was that *The Name of the Rose* has a distinctly carnivalesque aesthetic: Eco contrasts the vernacular world of the medieval marketplace against the solemn and dignified world of the Church. There are some grotesque characters, descriptions of wild feasting and revelry, a protagonist who consistently expresses his disdain for political and religious authority figures, and multiple voices from both dominant and peripheral discourses. Since this is a very specific aesthetic, I kept the possible link between *The Name of the Rose* and Bakhtin's carnival in mind, and eventually, Eco's short essay *The frames of comic 'freedom'* in *Carnival!*, Sebeok's 1984 anthology, confirmed that Eco had indeed given thought to carnival and the carnivalesque:

The idea of carnival has something to do with comic. So, to clarify the definition of carnival it would suffice to provide a clear-cut definition of comic. Unfortunately, we lack such a definition. From antiquity to Freud or Bergson, every attempt to define comic seems to be jeopardised by the fact that this is an umbrella term [...] that gathers together a disturbing ensemble of diverse and not completely homogenous phenomena such as humour, comedy, grotesque, parody, satire, wit, and so on. (Eco 1984b: 1)

A deeper look shows that *The Name of the Rose* can be read, among other things, as a critique to Bakhtin; in fact, the novel provides a context in which Bakhtin's carnival plays out—and collapses in on itself. Like Bakhtin, the protagonist William of

Baskerville champions a novelistic culture, but does so by dividing the discourses around him into the central and peripheral.

William divides much of the debates and cultural phenomena around him into binary oppositions consisting of a centre against its peripheral opposites. William believes that supporting the peripheral side will help to promote an open, novelistic culture free of the authoritarian voice. In the later chapters of the novel, a few of these binary oppositions deconstruct, revealing its two sides to be the same as each other, so that by supporting the peripheral side of a binary, William unknowingly supports the central, epic and authoritarian side at the same time.

My analysis consists of a close reading of Eco's novel not as historical reference, but as an example or illustration that exposes why Bakhtin's idea of the carnivalesque is structurally flawed. I will point out William's binary oppositions within the novel, and indicate how these correspond to the fundamental epic/novel opposition at the heart of Bakhtin's carnival.

While working on this task, I noticed that *The Name of the Rose* also gives some insights into Bakhtin's concept of the novel. Therefore, a secondary of this chapter is to indicate that the idea of novelistic discourse being independent from epic is flawed in a different way that has nothing to do with binary oppositions. Each voice in the novel is its own authoritative voice; in other words, the novel contains many epic voices in dialogue with each other. In *Discourse in the novel*, Bakhtin writes that "The language in a poetic work realises itself as something about which can be no doubt, something that cannot be disputed, something all-encompassing" (Bakhtin 1981: 286). While each voice in the novel is authoritative in that it does not invite dispute regarding its specific referents (in a dialogue, the listener may interpret the speaker's intentions without questioning each word being said), it is not necessarily "all-encompassing", due to being challenged by other subjectively authoritative voices that keeps it in dialogue. Bakhtin's concepts of novel and epic do depend on each other, but they are not binary opposites.

Since my aim is to critically analyse Bakhtin's carnivalesque using Eco's novel, the majority of my references will come from the primary sources. To avoid extrapolation, I will work mostly closely with *The Dialogic Imagination, Rabelais and his World* (the

works in which Bakhtin discusses the concepts of novel, epic and carnival) and *The Name of the Rose*. My main secondary sources are Eco's short essay *The frames of comic 'freedom'*, in which he clarifies his views on the arguments implied in *The Name of the Rose*. In addition, I will refer to *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, Eco's short historical overview of medieval aesthetics, which summarises the nonfictional historical background of *The Name of the Rose*, including historical debates that inspired the ones in his novel. It can be seen as a reader's guide to the historical inspiration behind his novel.

My two primary sources for the analysis are Eco's *The Name of the Rose* and *The frames of comic 'freedom'*. Related concepts, such as comedy and tragedy will be mentioned as well, yet since this work is about Bakhtin's theories as illustrated by Eco, I will not focus on these comedy and tragedy. Therefore, in the subchapter on comedy I will mostly reference Eco's essay (*The frames*), because the point is not to write about comedy, but Eco's idea of comedy as it appears in his novel. I also include Eco's nonfictional historical overview of medieval aesthetics (*Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*) as a secondary source to show that Eco's characters can stand in for different sides of historical debates. Some of the voices and arguments in *The Name of the Rose* appear to correspond to historical figures; for instance, the abbot Abo's love of art and material wealth to express allegorical meanings recalls the philosophy of Suger of St. Denis (1081–1151), and Jorge of Burgos' arguments—even their style—against parody and the inclusion of imaginary creatures in allegorical works strongly evoke those of Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153).

The purpose of this work is not to examine how epics, novels, carnival, tragedy and comedy relate to any general literary or historical context. I should clarify that the aim here is not to show that how Bakhtin's concept of carnival fit into a broader literary context, but to explain why it fails in the context of his own work. To state this point, I will interpret *The Name of the Rose* as a commentary on the Bakhtinian carnival. Whether this is part of Eco's intention is unclear; however, in the *Postscript to The Name of the Rose*, he writes that “The text is there, and produces its own effects of sense [...] The author should die once he has finished writing. So as not to trouble the path of the text” (Eco 1984a: 507–508).

2.2 Historical background and semiotic context

In the sixth century CE, Benedict of Nursia's monastic reforms popularised the expression of Christian scriptures using allegory (Clark 2011: 238). One purpose of this mediation was to make scriptures more accessible to the common people, until "pictures were the literature of the laity" (Eco 2002: 54). Expressing scripture through stained glass images increased symbol usage in the medieval Church, as symbols "...were able to articulate qualities that theory could not...they could make intelligible those doctrines which proved irksome in their more abstract form" (Eco 2002: 54). Sometimes symbolic representation happened organically, because "...unsophisticated persons found it easy to convert their beliefs into images" (Eco 2002: 54), but in the High Middle Ages, members of the clergy also created a vocabulary of image-based symbols, each linked with a specific and unchanging referent⁴.

Among Benedict's reforms was the requirement for every monastery to maintain a book collection, so in the centuries that followed, monasteries turned into bookmaking factories and trade networks (Clark 2011: 238). The growth of libraries coincided with the rise of allegory among laypersons; in addition, allegories entered into writing as well, and as monks moved away from literal readings of scripture, they no longer saw signs as obstacles to the referent, but as supplements in understanding it more deeply, by seeing it in surprising ways (Eco 2002: 57). In *The Name of the Rose*, for example, the fictional Adelmo of Otranto illustrated humorous marginalia, much like many of his historical counterparts. Meanwhile, monasteries gained more political power as Christianity became more firmly defined as the dominant discourse in Western Europe, and therefore the monasteries were able to afford libraries, illuminated manuscripts, relics and reliquaries and other displays of wealth.

After Benedict's reform, monasteries not only produced new books, but collected existing ones as well, and since at the time there were not enough Christian books to circulate through an entire library system, pre-Christian books as well as their Arabic translations and commentaries also found their way into these libraries. The fictional

⁴ Some images had two referents; for example, the snake represented both prudence and Satan (Eco 2002: 56). However, the referents for each sign are conventional and predetermined. Allegories did not spontaneously change their referents.

abbey in *The Name of the Rose* restricted access to its library, so its books were not widely read or circulated, but instead kept locked so and their value consisted mainly in adding to the abbey's wealth.

However, in nonfictional abbeys over time, the contents of these Benedictine libraries *were* read. Scriptural texts lost their former authority when monks engaged them in conversation through their commentaries, and some conservatives resented what they thought as the increased secularisation of the Church. In addition, the High Middle Ages saw knowledge open to cathedral schools, and later to universities, effectively ending the monastery's monopoly on academic writing. *The Name of the Rose* takes place during this scholastic shift.

The novel is set in 1327 during an investigation of heresy in a Benedictine abbey. A former inquisitor, the Franciscan William of Baskerville, arrives with his Benedictine novice Adso of Melk to investigate; however, William spends most of his stay acting as a detective in order to solve a series of apparent murders. William's investigation tools include cutting edge (for the time) applications of Aristotelian logic and syllogism, a knowledge of herbs courtesy of Abbasid scholarship, and tools such as astrolabes and eyeglasses that the Benedictines around him have, for the most part, never before encountered.

The two professional investigations correspond with William's personal crisis. As an inquisitor, William had been disappointed in his unsuccessful quest for a universal truth. Having discovered that political and religious authorities create arbitrary social and cultural distinctions to keep themselves in power, William begins to discredit the dominant discourse. Throughout his stay at the abbey, William questions Benedictine traditions (such the abbey's restricting access to their library), mocks displays of material wealth, engages in dangerous debates about heresy and teaches his young novice to be sceptical of authority figures in general. As a Franciscan, William finds the Benedictines old-fashioned and their displays of wealth out-dated. William shows strong enthusiasm for the apparent cultural openness of scholasticism.

It is implied that William himself may have been accused of heresy had he not enjoyed the protection of his social rank as a former inquisitor. It is ironic that William's reputation as an authority figure grants him the safety and relative freedom to criticise

authority figures. In addition, William is somewhat of a revolutionary, and his interest in scholasticism and dialectic goes hand in hand with a disdain for Benedictine tradition, from its use of closed, mono-referential allegories to its material displays of wealth.

2.3 Polyphony in the novel

Some characters in *The Name of the Rose* have historical counterparts, and the novel contains two voices from historical debates on aesthetics: the abbot Abo, whose love of allegorically justified wealth recalls the historical abbot Suger of St. Denis (1081–1151), and Jorge of Burgos, the blind former librarian who, when discussing allegory and parody, makes arguments that recall the historical Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) in both style and content. In addition, William, whose arguments recall those of Bakhtin. The polyphony of Eco's novel is significant for allowing its discourses to express themselves, independent of an author's agenda or overarching voice. In this particular case, polyphony allows Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque (represented by William) the opportunity to take a test run in a cultural context, unaided by the author. Applying the carnivalesque in the context of the novel is enough to reveal its inner contradiction; however, this is only possible if the novel itself is unbiased. Polyphonic novels, by giving equal validity to the voices in their narrative, ensure a necessary degree of neutrality.

In *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, Eco characterises Suger as a “medieval man of taste and the art lover” (Eco 2002: 13). Suger had a certain fondness for jewels, and filled the treasury at St. Denis with “[...] the sardius, the topaz, and the jasper, the chrysolite, and the onyx, the beryl, the sapphire, and the carbuncle, and the emerald” (Eco 2002: 13). He describes a nearly mystical pleasure in contemplating jewels:

Thus, when—out of my delight in the beauty of the house of God—the loveliness of the many-coloured gems that has called me away from external cares, and worthy meditation has induced me to reflect, transferring that which is material to that which is immaterial, on the diversity of the sacred virtues: then it seems to me that I see myself dwelling, as it were, in some strange region of the universe which neither exists entirely in the slime of the earth nor entirely in the purity of Heaven; and that, by the grace of God, I can be transported from this inferior to that higher world in an anagogical manner. (Eco 2002: 14, quoting Suger)

In *The Name of the Rose*, Abo repeats Suger's words almost verbatim:

“As I take pleasure in all the beauties of this house of God, when the spell of the many-colored stones has torn me from outside concerns and a worthy meditation has led me to reflect, transferring that which is material to that which is immaterial, on the diversity of the sacred virtues, then I seem to find myself, so to speak, in a strange region of the universe, no longer completely enclosed in the mire of the earth or completely free in the purity of heaven. And it seems to me that, by the grace of God, I can be transported from this lower world to that higher world by anagoge....” (Eco 1984a: 144)

In the novel, Abo appears to justify his enjoyment of gems by discussing their allegorical uses:

The riches you see [...] and others you will see later, are the heritage of centuries of piety and devotion, testimony to the power and holiness of this abbey. Princes and potentates of the earth, archbishops and bishops have sacrificed to this altar and to the objects destined for it rings of their investiture, the gold and precious stones that were the emblem of their greatness, to have them melted down here to the greater glory of the Lord and of this His place. (Eco 1984a: 143)

However, he shows more interest and attention in the precious stones themselves rather than what they signify.

“You recognise it, do you not? [...] The symbol of my authority, but also of my burden. It is not an ornament: it is a splendid syllogism of the divine word whose guardian I am [...] This is amethyst [...] which is a mirror of humility and reminds us of the ingenuousness and sweetness of Saint Matthew; this is chalcedony, mark of charity, symbol of the piety of Joseph and Saint James the Greater; this is jasper, which bespeaks faith and is associated with Saint Peter; and sardonyx, sign of martyrdom [...]” (Eco 1984a: 447)

Naturally there were critics, for example Bernard of Clairvaux, who feared that signs might distract from the referent (Eco 2002: 6), and that ornamented churches might prove a distracting environment for prayer. Eco characterises Suger and Bernard as psychological and moral opposites (Eco 2002: 13), because Suger’s attention towards objects that invoke immediate pleasure clashes with Bernard’s asceticism

In addition, it was not only wealth that comprised the new media. Since parody had its place in the popularisation of allegory as well, often the two appeared together in the same statues and illuminated manuscripts. Some theologians, for instance Hugh of St. Victor, saw in parody an opportunity to see things in surprising ways, so that it can be used as a pedagogical tool. In *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, Eco notes that in addition to an allegories of art, Hugh was a proponent of an allegories of nature:

Christ and His divinity were symbolised by a vast number and variety of creatures, each signifying His presence in a different place—in heaven, on mountain-tops, in the fields, the forests, and the seas. The symbols used included the lamb, the dove, the peacock, the ram, the gryphon, the rooster, the lynx, the palm-tree, even a bunch of grapes: a polyphony of images. (Eco 2002: 56).

Hermeneutic interpretations of nature eventually gave way to parody. Some historical perspectives on parody make their way into Eco’s novel, when the Greek

scholar Venantius defends Adelmo's use of parodic allegory, recalling a perspective from the historical Hugh of Foulloi (Eco 2002: 6):

Adelmo took care that his art, indulging in bizarre and fantastic images, was directed nevertheless to the glory of God, as an instrument of knowledge of celestial things. Brother William mentioned just now the Areopagite, who spoke of learning through distortion. And Adelmo that day quoted another lofty authority, the doctor of Aquino, when he said that divine things should be expounded more properly in figures of vile bodies than of noble bodies...The question, in fact, was whether metaphors and puns and riddles, which also seem conceived by poets for sheer pleasure, do not lead us to speculate on things in a new and surprising way [...] (Eco 1984a: 82).

On the other hand, the historical St. Bernard of Clairvaux challenges Hugh of Foulloi's side of the debate, writing,

What is the point of this deformed beauty, this elegant deformity? Those loutish apes? The savage lions? The monstrous centaurs? Those half men? The spotted tigers? [...] You can see a head with many bodies, or a body with many heads. Here we espy an animal with a serpent's tail, there a fish with an animal's head. There we have a beast which is a horse in front and a she-goat behind [...] In short there is such a wondrous diversity of figures, such ubiquitous variety [...] and one could spend the whole day marvelling at one such representation rather than meditating on the law of God. (Eco 2002: 7–8, quoting from Bernard's *Apologia ad Guillem*, Ch. 12).

Bernard's point is that these ornaments, even if they are allegorical, distract the viewer from their referent. However, his critiques actually describe and cause the reader to visualise the clutter he purposes to hate. His style of invective is particularly vivid, leading Eco to conclude in his own way, Bernard appreciates the very aesthetic he vilifies, using his critique as an opportunity to wistfully contemplate the decorated churches and imaginative artworks, as his asceticism prevents him from enjoying them in good conscience. Eco writes that

Ascetics, in all ages, are not unaware of the seductiveness of worldly pleasures; if anything, they feel it more keenly than most. The drama of ascetic discipline lies precisely in a tension between the call of earthbound pleasure and a striving after the supernatural. But when the discipline proves victorious, and brings the peace which accompanies control of the senses, then it becomes possible to gaze serenely upon the things of this earth, and to see their value, something that the hectic struggle of asceticism had hitherto prevented. (Eco 2002: 6).

Bernard's views, and even the style with which he expresses them, make their way into the novel when Jorge responds to Venantius:

[...] Saint Bernard was right: little by little the man who depicts monsters and portents of nature to reveal the things of God per speculum et in aenigmate, comes to enjoy the very nature of the monstrosities he creates and to delight in them, and as a result he no longer sees except through them. (Eco 1984a: 80)

He continues,

“[...] what is the meaning of those ridiculous grotesques, those monstrous shapes and shapely monsters? Those sordid apes? Those lions, those centaurs, those half-human creatures, with mouths in their bellies, with single feet, ears like sails? Those spotted tigers, those fighting warriors, those hunters blowing their horns, and those bodies with single heads and many heads with single bodies? Quadrupeds with serpents’ tails, and fish with quadrupeds’ faces, and here an animal who seems a horse in front and a ram behind, and there a horse with horns, and so on; by now it is more pleasurable for a monk to read marble than manuscript, and to admire the works of man than to meditate on the law of God!” [...] The old man stopped, out of breath. (Eco 1984a: 80–81).

As with Eco, what stands out to Adso is Jorge’s passion, and Adso is impressed that the blind Jorge remembers these images so well (Eco 1984a: 81). Jorge continues his attack for a few more pages:

Our Lord did not have to employ such foolish things to point out the straight and narrow path to us. Nothing in his parables arouses laughter, or fear. Adelmo, on the contrary [...] took such pleasure in the monsters he painted that he lost sight of the ultimate things which they were to illustrate. And he followed all, I say all [...] the paths of monstrosity (Eco 1984a: 83).

William defends allegory, or more precisely, the use of signs. In his own words,

God can be named only through the most distorted things. And Hugh of St. Victor reminded us that the more the simile becomes dissimilar, the more the truth is revealed to us under the guise of horrible and indecorous figures [...] (Eco 1984a: 80).

In this he reveals his own methodology for solving the murders: look for clues that point to the murder, or more broadly, look for signs that point to the truth. Until the very end of the book, William firmly believes in the existence of a unified truth. However, before events in the novel, William realised that the inquisitor’s job is not to find out the truth, but to keep the current authorities in power. The differentiation between saints and heretics is only a tool, and the power relations created by this binary are completely arbitrary. In his first debate with Ubertino, he says that saints and heretics are extremely similar, and that “...often the step between ecstatic vision and sinful frenzy is very brief” (Eco 1984a: 57), and “[...] there is little difference between the ardor of the seraphim and the ardor of Lucifer, because they are always born from an extreme igniting of the will” (Eco 1984a: 58). In short, William realises that there is no ontologically heretical belief; rather, a heresy is anything that threatens the central position of the currently dominant discourse. In her study of the novel, Teresa Coletti notes that heresy is the “semiotic containment of the margins by the centre” (Coletti 1988: 82). In William’s

own words, “Every battle against heresy wants only to keep the leper as he is” (Eco 1984a: 218).

This realisation showed William that the truth was not to be found in the epic (culturally centre) side of discourse, which is more interested in maintaining political dominance. He lost faith in the Benedictines and their allegories after seeing that the saint/heretic binary it constructed is empty, and the authority it helps is not necessarily closer to God or representative of any universal Truth. Abo’s gem collections are as devoid of meaning as the inquisition, and they exist not as a reflections on the ‘true’ nature of the world, but only show off the Benedictines’ wealth and power. William’s resignation as inquisitor marks his shift to the carnivalesque, from working for the centre to being a proponent of the cultural peripheries. He then denounces everything else that has to do with the epic, or central discourse, from Jorge’s seriousness and Abo’s display of material wealth and political power. The root of William’s investigation into laughter is his admiration of his order’s patron saint, Francis of Assisi (1184-1226). After losing his faith in the inquisition, he holds on to his faith in Francis, and by extension, in the peripheral side of culture. Francis himself appears as a carnivalesque figure, an eccentric who distrusted the dominant discourse, choosing instead to preach and practice poverty. William appears to especially admire how Francis used laughter to reveal the foolishness of existing categories, hoping to imagine a better world when these arbitrary distinctions that keep certain discourses in power are dissolved.

I have already pointed out two discourses in the novel⁵. William is the voice of Bakhtin. They share a common distrust of the epic voice and things that represent it, and seek out a better world in that of the marketplace, of laughter. Bakhtin believed that

⁵ There are, of course, more voices than the three I pointed out in Eco’s work. For instance, Ubertino’s rant about secret rituals brings to mind the *Les Mystères de Paris* by Eugene Sue:

But I learned certain things, certain things, William! They gathered at night in a cellar, they took a newborn boy, they threw him from one to another until he died, of blows...or other causes[...] They lighted candles on Easter night and took maidens into the cellar. Then they extinguished the candles and threw themselves on the maidens, even if they were bound to them by ties of blood...And if from this conjunction a baby was born, the infernal rite was resumed, all around a little jar of wine [...] and they became drunk and would cut the baby to pieces, and pour its blood into the goblet [...] (Eco 1984a: 59).

Sue’s novel was among the plagiarised texts that comprised *The protocols of the elders of Zion*. Eco has written about vague falsehoods being taken as first-hand accounts of a minority group’s secret rituals in

“Laughter demolishes fear and piety before and object, before a world, making of it an object of familiar contact and thus clearing the ground for an absolutely freer investigation out of it” (Bakhtin 1981: 22). Comedy, which is rooted in folklore of the marketplace, demolishes epic distance (Bakhtin 1981: 22–23, 35). He divides medieval discourse into the sacred and profane, Church and folk, and describes parody as the meeting point between the two (Bakhtin 1981: 96).

Another’s sacred word, uttered in a foreign language, is degraded by the accents of vulgar folk languages, re-evaluated and re-interpreted against the backdrop of these languages, and congeals to the point where it becomes a ridiculous image, the comic carnival mask of a narrow and joyless pedant, an unctuous hypocritical old bigot [...] (Bakhtin 1981: 77).

William thinks he can use laughter and reversals in order to see old ideas in unexpected ways, like Francis. He thinks his use of laughter transcends cultural codes, and is subversive because “laughter redeems fear; distinctions between margin and centre dissolve the customary rhetoric and topics of philosophy are dismantled...” (Coletti 1988: 146). Francis deliberately worked with people on the peripheries, and William sides with him, especially with his sense of humour. In his book *On Humour*, Simon Critchley summarises that “By laughing at power, we expose its contingency, we realise that what appeared to be fixed and oppressive is in fact the emperor’s new clothes, and just the sort of thing that should be mocked and ridiculed.” (Critchley 2002: 11).

It should be noted that Francis himself was not a proponent of institutionalised learning because he saw it as the hoarding of knowledge. Although the Church declared him a saint, in the novel, the only Franciscans with similar viewpoints on learning are the Fraticelli, Franciscan extremists and poverty enthusiasts who openly rebelled against the Church, and were declared heretical. Although William himself supports learning, he does so with the belief that learning prevents knowledge from being hoarded in the inaccessible libraries of monasteries, inaccessible to the common people. In fact, he regards learning as belonging to the common people on the peripheries. During his short stay at the abbey he takes the peripheral of almost every available debate, championing laughter, bragging about science in an age of prayer, taking the side of debates that

Fictional protocols (from *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods*, 1994) and *The power of falsehood* (*On Literature*, 2002). Conspiracy theories and initiation rituals are explored in more depth in his second novel, *Foucault’s Pendulum* (1988). The point here is that there are many voices in *The Name of the Rose* that are not discussed in this thesis, such as Salvatore’s voice, Bernard Gui’s voice, Benno’s voice...

claimed Christ laughed and was poor, and defending Adelmo's colourful illustrations that do not depict anything directly holy. The point is that William is a strong proponent of the carnivalesque. He supports the vernacular, the comic and the peripheral precisely because, like Bakhtin, he knows that epic distance and authoritarianism relies on rhetorical devices that keep them in power, instead of the truth.

Having said this, it is very important to show that *The Name of the Rose* is what Bakhtin would have considered a polyphonic novel, and just as Dostoevsky's works seem to be written by the different philosophers Raskolnikov, Marmeladov, the Grand Inquisitor and etc., *The Name of the Rose* contains the independent viewpoints of Abo (Suger), Jorge (Bernard) and William (Bakhtin) in dialogue with each other. I emphasise this point because in a polyphonic novel, there is no authoritative voice. In this case, the lack of an authoritative voice shows how Bakhtin's concepts, quite independent of the author, reveals its own flaws as soon as it is given a context in which it can play out. The novel does not control the concept, only gives it a context in which to play out and fail on its own. The lack of authority figure gives carnival an independence to play out on its own, without its success or failure being interfered with by the author's personal agenda.

In the postscript to the novel, Eco writes that he did not know that Jorge would turn out to be the murderer, and that

He acted on his own, so to speak. And it must not be thought that this is an "idealistic" position, as if I were saying that the characters have an autonomous life and the author, in a kind of trance, makes them behave as they themselves direct them [...] The fact is that the characters are obliged to act according to the laws of the world in which they live. (Eco 1984a: 515).

Eco does not cause William to fail in his search for a universal Truth. William does so himself. Once again, the polyphonic nature of the novel gives concepts the freedom to play out on their own. And ultimately, this is what *The Name of the Rose* manages to accomplish; Eco may not have been writing a specific critique of Bakhtin, but once the carnival structure is set in place, it plays out on its own to cause William's failure.

3. Bakhtin and Eco's definitions of carnival

3.1 Examples of the carnivalesque in *The Name of the Rose*

The carnivalesque consists of two components: organising cultural phenomena into binary oppositions that correspond to epic/novelistic, and being a proponent for the 'novel' side. In *The Name of the Rose*, William organises his world and his place in it into binaries; in fact, he makes his choices to correspond with the 'novelistic', peripheral and comedic side of the binary.

I should make it clear that before resigning his post as an inquisitor, William successfully deconstructs the saint/heretic, or orthodoxy/heresy binary opposition. While explaining heresy to Adso, he notes that the inquisition regards several different peripheral discourses as a single voice that challenges the dominant discourse. Unlike the inquisitors, William chooses to recognise the variety of voices in the peripheral discourses considered heretical by the Church:

The inquisitors are mistaken, rationally speaking, because they lump contradictory doctrines together [...] The simple cannot choose their personal heresy, Adso; they cling to the man preaching in their land, who passes through their village or stops in their square. This is what their enemies exploit. To present to the eyes of the people a single heresy [...] it shows the heretics as one jumble of diabolical contradictions which offend common sense (Eco 1984a: 200).

William concludes that the Church and its inquisition use exclusion to maintain their dominant status in cultural discourse. However, exclusion results in the creation of more peripheral dissent, fuelling yet more efforts from the inquisition to suppress them:

For centuries, as pope and emperor tore each other apart in their quarrels over power, the excluded went on living on the fringe, like lepers, of whom true lepers are only the illustration [...] so that in saying 'lepers' we would understand 'outcast, poor, simple, excluded, uprooted from the countryside, humiliated in the cities' [...] Excluded as they were from the flock, all of them were ready to hear, or to produce, every sermon that [...] would condemn the behavior of the dogs and shepherds and would promise their punishment one day. The powerful always realized this. The recovery of the outcasts demanded reduction of privileges of the powerful, so the excluded who became aware of their exclusion had to be branded as heretics, whatever their doctrine. This is the illusion of heresy [...] The faith a movement proclaims doesn't count: what counts is the hope it offers. All heresies are the banner of a reality, an exclusion. Scratch the heresy and you will find a leper. Every battle against heresy wants only this: to keep the leper as he is. (Eco 1984a: 203)

William's conversion to the carnivalesque is an act of inclusion. The Church creates heretics in order to maintain political power. Whatever 'Truth' the inquisition finds is therefore likely to be nothing more than a practical tool for political authorities to exploit.

If orthodoxy/heresy is a falsehood, and working as an inquisitor is not a reliable way to find any sort of truth. However, William does end up continuing his search for 'Truth' in the cultural peripheries, despite knowing full well that it contains multiple and contradictory discourses, and that each discourse contains its own unique and contradictory idea of truth. It makes little sense to believe that all of these heterogeneous voices subscribe to any singular, universal notion of 'Truth'. The question now is why William becomes a proponent of peripheral discourses. William is not particularly sympathetic towards accused heretics. It appears that instead of showing a true interest in the cultural peripheries, William simply holds a blind admiration of Saint Francis.

The outcast lepers would like to drag everything down in their ruin. And they become all the more evil, the more you cast them out [...] Saint Francis realized this, and his first decision was to go and live among the lepers. (Eco 1984a: 201–2)

Driven by his thirst for Truth, William suffers a truly unfortunate lapse in logic. Like the inquisitors, William proceeds to “lump contradictory doctrines together”. He does not regard separate peripheral discourses for what they are, but present them as a single revolt against the political scapegoating of the Church, superficially characterising the cultural peripheries as one jumble of anti-authoritarian voices that appeases his disillusionment in the inquisition.

Therefore, although William successfully deconstructs the orthodoxy/heresy binary, he could not deconstruct centre/periphery, or Benedictine seriousness/Franciscan laughter, both of which are derivatives of Bakhtin's central binary of epic/novelistic. William's tendency towards the carnivalesque manifests in his categorising cultural debates and phenomena into binary oppositions, and always choosing the less culturally dominant side. The first part of *The Name of the Rose* contains several such binaries. I have selected the following because they are relevant to the Bakhtinian context, that is, they involve one side that is dominant, unified and established matched against something peripheral, varied and culturally new. This is characteristic of Bakhtin's carnival, and the following binary oppositions illustrate it:

William is a proud Franciscan among Benedictines. In the beginning of the novel, Adso notes that William emphasises this distinction: “[...] he replied that herbs that are good

for an old Franciscan are not good for a young Benedictine” (Eco 1984a: 16), and when Adso marvels at his unusual habit of carrying around scientific instruments, explains that “the Franciscans of his island were cast in another mold” (Eco 1984a: 17). Later, when Ubertino goes into an apocalyptic frenzy, William makes yet another dry comment about Franciscans:

“The days of the Antichrist are finally at hand, and I am afraid, William!” He looked around, staring wide-eyed among the dark naves, as if the Antichrist were going to appear any moment [...] “It will be then that God will have to send [...] so that one day they may confound the Antichrist, and they will come to prophesy clad in sackcloth, and they will preach penance by word and by example....”

“They have already come, Ubertino,” William said, indicating his Franciscan habit”. (Eco 1984a: 62–63)

In short, William proudly distinguishes himself from the Benedictines, and at the end of his manuscript, Adso makes a note of this: “I pray always that God received his soul and forgave him the many acts of pride that his intellectual vanity had made him commit” (Eco 1984a: 499).

Binaries: Benedictine/Franciscan, local/foreign

By 1327, the setting of the story, the Benedictines had been working within a well-established Catholic society, whereas the Order of St. Francis is relatively new, has offshoot branches that have been declared heretical, and was founded by an eccentric who once preached to a wolf. In addition, William uses a variety of scientific instruments that most of the Benedictines have never seen (Eco 1984a: 17, 74), and likes to think that through science, he is reading nature as a book the same way more traditional monks read scripture (Eco 1984a: 24–25). William admires Thomas Aquinas and William of Ockham for their use of logic, and Roger Bacon for his knowledge in the natural sciences and engineering. Both Aquinas and Bacon’s methods are inspired by Aristotle and various Arab commentators who worked during the translation movement of the Abbasid Caliphate. Conservatives such as Ubertino are sceptical of William’s interest in scholasticism; in fact, near the end of their conversation, Ubertino urges William to be more humble about his intellect, contemplate the suffering of Christ and throw away his books (Eco 1984a: 63). For Ubertino, the Word of God is already complete; there is no need for further study and interpretation as if it were imperfect. The epic voice of

monasticism removes the potential for future growth within a discourse it considers to be complete and perfect. Learning is the admission that there is still something missing from the discourse. In a discourse with such rigidly closed boundaries, the pursuit of openness and growth is nothing less than a revolution (Bakhtin 1981: 38).

Binaries: wealth/**poverty**, culture/**nature**, wealth/**poverty**, old/**new**, tradition/**innovation**, monastic/**scholastic**.

The monks debate whether Christ ever laughed, and whether it is acceptable to express scripture in comic, parodic forms (Eco 1984a: 79-82). We have already examined the main arguments in a previous section, but for a clearer context, it is well to keep in mind that William was originally invited to the abbey in order to investigate heresy. The monks' debate is relevant because if the Church admits to Christ's laughter, and by extension his similarity to the common people of the marketplace, it would give credence to certain heretical groups that denied Christ's divinity (Eco 2007: 49). The divine Christ would not have laughed because, as Jorge later explains,

[...] laughter is weakness, corruption, the foolishness of our flesh. It is the peasant's entertainment, the drunkard's license [...] laughter remains base, a defence for the simple, a mystery desecrated for the plebians [...] the simple can conceive and carry out the most lurid heresies, disavowing the laws of God and the laws of nature (Eco 1984a: 474).

Jorge concludes, "That laughter is proper to man is a sign of our limitation, sinners that we are" (Eco 1984a: 474), using laughter—or in this case, the lack of it—to create epic distance between Christ and ordinary people. In order to separate their beliefs from those of the heretics, the Church was obliged to argue that Christ had no need to laugh; he is solemn, incorruptible and divine.

As mentioned before, William believes that comedy has God and Truth as referents. As for Christ, he laughed because "Nothing in his human nature forbid it" (Eco 1984a: 95). On one occasion he tells about how St. Lawrence mocked his enemies (Eco 1984a: 95–96), and later proudly speaks of St. Francis defacing a relic (Eco 1984a: 478). In *Rabelais and his World*, Bakhtin writes that the act of degradation brings its object down to earth, making it an equal among the variety of discourses in the marketplace (Bakhtin 1984: 14).

Binaries: tragedy/**comedy**, dignity/**ridiculousness**, god/**human**, Church/**marketplace**, orthodoxy/**heresy**, distance/**proximity**.

The abbey's library contains more books than any other in Christendom (Eco 1984a: 35), but while it continues to grow, Abo complains that books are beginning to be written in the vernacular (Eco 1984a: 36). In order to "defend the treasure of the Christian world, and the very word of God, as he dictated it to the prophets and to the apostles, as the fathers repeated it without changing a syllable" (Eco 1984a: 36–37), access to the library is heavily restricted. At the same time, Abo claims that the library contains "books by wizards, the cabalas of the Jews, the fables of the pagan poets, the lies of the infidels" (1984a: 37); in short, "falsehoods" too dangerous to circulate. William considers this restriction of access to the library to be "a great evil" (Eco 1984a: 89). In addition, Abo's use of allegory differs from William's use of signs. Whereas Abo's allegories use a closed method of signification in which each sign points to only one or two specific referents, William believes that his use of signification is more open, in that, like parodies, they reveal surprising truths about the world, adding new levels of meaning onto existing discourse.

Binaries: storage/**circulation**, hermetic/**hermeneutic**

Up to this point we have seen examples of the carnivalesque in William's categorisation of the discourses around him into elements of binary oppositions: Bakhtin's epic/novelistic binary opposition is expressed as centre/periphery, or orthodoxy/heresy in the setting, and Benedictine seriousness/Franciscan laughter to William personally. It is clear that William, in his choice to support the less powerful positions in each of the binaries mentioned, is a proponent of the carnivalesque. However, Eco has his own views on binary oppositions, as well as a distinct way of characterising carnival using a deconstruction of tragedy/comedy. This binary opposition from classical poetics is yet another incarnation of the Bakhtin's epic/novelistic opposition. Instead of supporting comedy, as William would have done, Eco argues that there is no rhetorical difference between tragedy and comedy.

Thus, it would be useful to interrupt the sequence of events and briefly exit the world of *The Name of the Rose* in order to explain Eco's definition of carnival, how it reveals a structural contradiction of the carnivalesque, and how this contradiction fits into the novel as a critique of Bakhtin.

3.2 Eco's definition of carnival

The following is an extrapolation on *The Name of the Rose* using Eco's own notes from *The frames of comic 'freedom'*. I do not intend to say anything about tragedy or comedy in a general literary context, only to clarify Eco's views on carnival in order to later explain how he uses this view in the novel. Here the emphasis is not on the concepts of tragedy and comedy themselves, but their relationship as binary opposites, and its relevance to carnival. In fact, Eco's essay is about carnival (Eco 1984b: 1), but in order to make his point, he has to first explore the social implications of comedy, and also of tragedy, its binary opposite.

It is likely that Aristotle compiled an early theory of humour in the second book of his *Poetics*, but this entire section is lost to history (Cooper 1922 :4–5). The author himself is unavailable to reconstruct the text, but contemporary scholars have tried to guess what the text might have said; for instance, in *Aristotle on Comedy: Towards a Reconstruction of Poetics II*, Richard Janko argues that the *Tractatus Coilinianus* is in fact based on Aristotle's lost book. Eco himself does something similar after indicating that both tragedy and comedy fulfil the same social function, though they do this in completely opposite ways. Comedy is essentially tragedy turned upside-down. Eco explains,

There is, however, one definition of comedy that seems to produce, as a side effect, a complementary definition of carnival: this is the one provided by the second book of Aristotle's *Poetics*. There is only a minor inconvenience: the book was either lost or was never written—an irreparable loss indeed. Fortunately, that which Aristotle could have said on comedy can be extrapolated from two sources: the observations on comedy and witty manipulation of language that can be found in *passim* in *Poetics* (book 1) and *Rhetoric*; and the post-Aristotelian Greek and Latin tradition, with its various more or less anonymous treatises on comedy (for instance the *Tractatus Coislinianus*) which allows us to speculate about a possible Aristotelian treatise on comedy.

Following this line of thought (let me consider my attempt an exercise in the Peircean art of 'fair guesses' or abductions) we can outline some basic differences between tragedy and comedy. (Eco 1984b: 1)

It is necessary to clarify that the following section discusses Eco's exploration of comedy and tragedy as components of a binary opposition. The point is not to survey comedic forms in classical poetics, but to explain the significance of comedy in a binary opposition according to Eco.

Tragedy

In *Poetics*, Aristotle writes,

“Epic poetry agrees with Tragedy in so far as it is an imitation in verse of characters of a higher type [...] Whoever, therefore, knows what is good or bad Tragedy, knows also about Epic poetry: for all the elements of an Epic poem are found in tragedy, but the elements of a tragedy are not all found in the Epic poem. (Aristotle 1902: 22)

Herodotus attributed to Solon the anecdote that those who are fortunate enough to have everything to lose cannot be the happiest people in the world, because they are haunted by the potential of future loss (Herodotus 2003: book 1, lines 31–32). A perfect member of society is in a similarly suspenseful situation, with the potential of losing his family, health, reputation and status. That this decline might be triggered by a single character flaw or even by fate is the tension that starts and drives the entire tragedy (Aristotle 1902: 45).

In classical drama, tragedies begin after the protagonist violates a social code, and since this code is one that most members of society respect out of habit and common sense, its transgression is always destabilising (Aristotle 1902: 49–51, Eco 1984b: 1-2). The perpetrator is very likely noble, and always sympathetic; in fact, the audience even identifies with the tragic hero, seeing him as an idealised version of themselves if only they were nobler, or *better* somehow (Eco 1984b: 1). Through empathy, the transgression plays on the audience’s anxiety of doing something socially unacceptable by accident. If we look at three tragic characters, Creon made a misjudgement due to one tragic flaw, Oedipus was a victim of fate, and Orestes found himself in a no-win situation due to bad luck and his parents’ mistakes. What all three have in common is their having to suffer disproportionate retribution. Unfortunately, Eco does not distinguish between the tragedies of Sophocles and those of Euripides, for instance, where there might not even be a single transgressive act that sets the plot in motion. However, I think his point is still valid, because Euripides’ plays are somewhat different in that their typically female protagonists do not bring about their own downfall, but they do suffer a reversal of fortune, and since tragedy belongs to the fatalistic Greeks, after all, it shows that even the best of us are fallible. The audience’s own vulnerability to fate and misjudgement connects them to the characters.

What makes tragedy enjoyable to watch is the catharsis that releases the tension of waiting for a perfect character to have one flaw. However, there is another side of catharsis; the audience may feel regret along with the hero, but also anticipates that for such a grave transgression, it is necessary for there to be a consequence. According to Eco, this second tension is relieved when the consequences appear, the transgression is recognised as such, and the perpetrator is punished accordingly; the rules are in place again, and social boundaries are restored (Eco 1984b: 1–2).

In this light, classical tragedies are subtly authoritarian. Usually a protagonist's fatal flaw or fate leads him or her to transgress social boundaries, essentially turning them into outsiders. In order for the audience to identify with them, they must show that they obey the same cultural rules, even if this means the tragic characters must accept the severest of consequences. In fact, remaining an outsider and unfamiliar different rules is not even an option⁶. In any case, the tension resolves not when the protagonists receive personal justice, but when social rules are once more in place. Anyone can suffer like a tragic hero, and what makes these characters particularly tragic is that they are the ones who have the most to lose, and their reversals of fortune are the most dramatic.

Comedy

Comedies are about unremarkable, clownish people⁷ who break minor rules (Janko 1984: 95). Whereas tragic figures violate well known social conventions that most people would not dare to transgress, the rules broken by comic characters are so unusual and specific that most people would not think of breaking them. For instance, it is not quite within many known cultural norms to walk sideways on one's hands while wearing a tropical mango cake for a hat, but at the same time, doing so is not strictly prohibited, not because such behaviour is acceptable, but because the authorities have not thought of prohibiting something so specifically deviant. Whereas tragic characters are made outcast

⁶ There are exceptions; for example, *Medea* is not punished by her community. The play ends with her as an unrepentant outsider. However, Aristotle (1902: 51) mentions Euripides' *Medea* as an example of a classical tragedy because its protagonist commits crimes against each and every member of close her family.

⁷ "Comedy is, as we have said, an imitation of characters of a lower type—not, however, in the full sense of the word bad, the Ludicrous being merely a subdivision of the ugly. It consists in some defect or ugliness which is not painful or destructive. To take an obvious example, the comic mask is ugly and distorted, but does not imply pain" (Aristotle 1902: 21).

by breaking the rules they know, comedy excludes its protagonists from society for not knowing the social codes that are obvious to the audience. In a way, comic characters invent transgressions by failing to act by everyday social conventions so ingrained in the dominant discourse that they are usually regarded as common sense. Comedy's trivial subject matter gives the audience permission to enjoy watching the buffoon stumble around, because the rule he breaks is so minor that it matters very little whether it is broken. In fact, comedy works so that the audience feels concern towards nothing, and rather enjoy its own disgust at the sight of the clown, mixing it with a feeling of superiority (Eco 1984b: 2).

Eco writes, "What remains compulsory, in order to produce a comic effect, is the prohibition of spelling out the norm. It must be presupposed both by the utterer and by the audience. If the speaker spells it out, he is a fool or a jerk; if the audience does not know it, there is no comic effect (Eco 1984b: 5–6)". Since comedy depends on the audience knowing something the protagonist does not know, in a sense, it depends on the audience's mockery at a social outsider in order to achieve its intended effect⁸.

Comedy dehumanises its protagonists, using their constant minor infractions to show that they cannot do anything correctly, that they are barbarian, or other, the polar opposite of tragic characters in that they are exactly what the audience do not want themselves to be. In addition, their actions or appearance are repulsive in order to prevent the audience from sympathising much less identifying with them. These characters make transgressions almost by definition of the genre, and are laughed at when there are disastrous results. They are "other" to begin with, and it is not that their transgression makes them other, but that their otherness causes the audience to expect transgressions from them.

What distinguishes the catharsis of comedy from that of tragedy (Janko 1984: 95) is a sentimental quality that not only evokes emotion, but also complacency in the emotion it evokes. The point is not the model audience's amusement and disgust, but its feeling of superiority in being amused and disgusted at characters seemingly worse than

⁸ Classical comedies probably contained humorous as well as comedic elements. Eco examines these elements separately, and probably referred to comedic elements rather than classical comedies themselves. Therefore his "comedy" is a generalisation. His use of "tragedy" is a generalisation as well, because in *The Trojan Women*, for example, there is no transgression.

they are. Although Eco argues that both comedy and tragedy are similar in their authoritarian overtones, I believe comedy is actually more harmful because at the very least, tragedy unifies members of all social strata in a given society, reminding them that none of them are invulnerable to unfortunate twists of fate. However, comedy is divisive, and its message for the audience is that at least they are not like *these fools*.

Eco writes that comedy “is always racist: only the others, the Barbarians, are supposed to pay...Comic pleasure means enjoying the murder of the father, provided that others, less human than ourselves, commit the crime” (Eco 1984b: 2). While I enjoy the dramatic impact of his sentence, it is important to point out that in a comedy, the transgression must be insignificant and inconsequential to society; therefore, to achieve maximum the comic effect, it is not the father that should be murdered, but for instance the father’s shoe, because such an act not only requires no courage, and can also hardly be carried out with dignity. It should be carefully noted that being silly enough to murder a shoe—and not the actual murder—is the crime, and unsympathetic laughter from the audience is the punishment.

Eco’s conclusion

One of Eco’s key points in *The frames of comic ‘freedom’* is that both comedy and tragedy restate social codes by representing its absence as something undesirable (Eco 1984b: 4). Both police cultural boundaries and encourage its audience to behave within cultural norms. But once again, I insist that comedy has a more harmful effect, because after all, tragedy expresses that it is unfortunate when a talented king accidentally kills his father and marries his mother, or that one should try not to lose one’s home to foreign invaders, and that a girl is generally happier when not forced to become Agamemnon’s concubine. After all, the events in tragedies are hardly everyday occurrences. However, the takeaway from comedy is that petty conventions are always right. Small, everyday things should be done a certain way, and anyone who fails to conform is a kind of outsider, therefore comic laughter “[...] seeks to confirm the status quo” by “demitigating a certain sector of society”, and such laughter “is not laughter at power, but the powerful laughing at the powerless.” (Critchley 2002: 11–2)

William in *The Name of the Rose* thought that comedy should reveal that the best of us are fallible, and are in many ways similar to clowns, foreigners and fools. He imagined

[...] laughter as a force for good, which can also have an instructive value: through witty riddles and unexpected metaphors, though it tells us things differently from the way they are, as if it were lying, it actually obliges us to examine them more closely, and it makes us say: Ah, this is just how things are, and I didn't know it" (Eco 1984a: 472).

However, this kind of laughter requires more nuance than the mockery of social outcasts, and as Critchley summarises, "If liberty loves humour, then slavery finds expression in buffoonery" (Critchley 2002: 82). In his deconstruction of the tragedy/comedy binary opposition, Eco defines carnival as the moment when two sides of a binary opposition are at their most arbitrary. It is the moment when the two sides show how easily they can reverse, showing that there is little distinction between them: each defines itself as the exact opposite of the other. More politically,

Carnival is the natural theatre in which animals and animal-like beings take over the power and become the masters. In carnival, even kings act like the populace. Comic behaviour, formerly a judgement of superiority on our part, becomes, in this case, our own rule. The upside-down world has become the norm. Carnival is revolution (revolution is carnival): kings are decapitated (that is, lowered, made inferior) and the crowd is crowned.

Such a transgressional theory has many chances to be popular today, even among the happy few. It sounds very aristocratic. There is but one suspicion to pollute our enthusiasm: the theory is unfortunately false. (Eco 1984b: 5)

The frames of comic 'freedom', shows that the distinction between tragedy and comedy is arbitrary. In *The Name of the Rose*, William sees through the arbitrary distinctions of orthodoxy/heresy. The following corresponding binary oppositions have not yet been deconstructed, yet it is only a matter of time before the same observation applies to them:

- Centre/peripheries (in the novel)
- Benedictine seriousness/Franciscan laughter (William's personal quest for Truth)
- Epic/novelistic (Bakhtin's cultural theory)

4. Deconstructions and carnival in the novel

Around the middle of the novel, William's list of carnivalesque binary oppositions end, and Eco's own voice appears. I have discussed how according to Eco, the binary opposition is not a model for growth and openness, due to its opposites sides' sharing of a common rhetoric. Unlike Bakhtin or William, Eco does not see a point in supporting the peripheral side of the centre/peripheries binary opposition. This section will identify Eco's voice—that is, his view of carnival—by exploring examples of deconstruction and instances of carnival in the novel.

I notice that on William and Adso's third day at the abbey, or more precisely, after Ubertino tells Adso about the heretics on Mount Rubello, the binary oppositions are no longer as clear as they were in the beginning. William starts his activities at the abbey convinced that the peripheral side of his binary oppositions hide some sort of universal Truth, mostly because the centre, dominant side has already showed that it invents arbitrary "truths" to keep itself in power. However, just as with the deconstructed saint/heretic binary opposition that led to William's resignation as an inquisitor, the distinctions among elements of subsequent binaries grow increasingly unclear, often melding into each other. These deconstructions failed to warn William, and he realises too late that there is little point in putting his faith in any one side of a binary opposition as the key to liberation, since binaries deconstruct eventually to show that the two sides are the same. William is a proponent of the peripheral and vernacular (in many cases, comedic), but as we have just seen in *The frames of comic 'freedom'*, Eco believes that there is little difference between the intentions of tragedy and the intentions of comedy if the two are in a binary opposition. After certain events in the novel, Adso realises it is no longer necessary to organise his world into binary oppositions.

On the third day after compline, Ubertino confuses Adso with a lecture about saints and heretics, after which Adso realises he can no longer distinguish between the most familiar binary oppositions. He looks at a picture of the Whore of Babylon while thinking about the Virgin Mary, reflects on the difference between the two, then mixes them up and leaves the labyrinth feeling restless and confused (Eco 1984a: 241). He then goes into the kitchen, which in this novel is the opposite of the library, the literal "lower

body stratum” of the abbey, where monastic vows are broken, and the deformed heretic procures village girls. Adso meets one of these village girls, and when he tries to talk to her, he is disappointed that she does not know Latin. Although he knows a bit of Italian, the girl speaks in a different dialect and Adso can hardly understand her in words.

He manages to understand that she thinks he is young and handsome, and feels glad, although he remembers being taught that physical beauty, due to its transitory nature, is contemptible (unless allegorised).

Adso describes their entire sexual encounter in a language familiar to him.

But her head rose proudly on a neck as white as an ivory tower, her eyes were clear as the pools of Heshbon, her nose was the tower of Lebanon, her hair like purple. Yes, her tresses seemed to me like a flock of goats, her teeth like flocks of sheep coming up from their bath, all in pairs, so that none preceded its companion (Eco 1984a: 245).

To a reader familiar with scripture, the images of towers, sheep and goats would evoke even more connotations from the same discourse. For example, likening the girl’s eyes to the pools of Heshbon places her as the beloved in the *Song of Songs* from the Old Testament. Adso places himself as the admiring bridegroom, and both, in this context, become familiar lovers whose union is authorised by the dominant discourse. To illustrate, when Adso looks at the girl, perhaps not in the eyes, he says to himself, “Pulchra sunt ubera quae paululum supereminet et tument modice”⁹ (Eco 1984a: 245, echoing Ubertino’s words fifteen pages earlier (1984a: 230). Ubertino had said that the Virgin’s small breasts represent feminine virtue, and that in contrast, different breasts represent sin and vice. Since Adso is confused, all he knows is that he likes the breasts in front of him, and although this encounter with the girl is clearly forbidden, she does somehow remind him of things that are holy and good. While he is supposedly sinning, Adso is having the most pious thoughts he has throughout the entire book. Within minutes the two are somehow naked, they felt no shame at their bodies and *cuncta errant bona*¹⁰ (Eco 1984a: 246). These words are originally from the Vulgate, describing the creation of the world.

In addition, some of Adso’s descriptions during the encounter recall those of

⁹ *Trans.* “Beautiful are the breasts which protrude slightly, only faintly tumescent.” These are lines from *Sermons on the Song of Solomon* by Gilbert of Hoyt. (Haft, White, J., White, R. 1999: 134).

¹⁰ *Trans.* “Everything was good.” This line is from Genesis 1:31. (Haft, White, J., White, R. 1999: 135)

mystic saints in ecstasy. There is even an example from the novel, when William reminds Ubertino about the erotic mystical experience of a particularly devout woman, whom Ubertino admires:

“Wasn’t it your Angela of Foligno who told of that day when her spirit was transported and she found herself in the sepulchre of Christ? Didn’t she tell how first she kissed his breast and saw him lying with his eyes closed, then she kissed his mouth, and there rose from those lips an ineffable sweetness, and after a brief pause she lay her cheek against the cheek of Christ and Christ put his hand to her cheek and pressed her to him and—as she said—her happiness became sublime?...” (Eco 1984a: 58).

Adso can suppose that he, too, is having a mystical experience. In this sense, it is less a carnal act than a way to physically experience the beauty of scriptures. Rather than remaining a dutiful monk, he briefly glimpses the world through the eyes of a saint. It is obvious that Adso enjoyed the experience and wanted to believe that it was good, although monastic rules forbid the act. Quite possibly, Adso is attempting to justify it to himself by linking it to ecstatic descriptions in scripture. In doing so, he is bringing scripture to life, engaging in an interactive reading, experiencing first-hand emotions from the *Song of Songs* that other monks can only imagine. Adso’s love for the girl is transformed into a love for scripture and poetry. At this point, the experience becomes an allegory; the girl no longer stands for herself, but for the random bits of scripture, though it is possible that later, to Adso alone, some lines in scripture begin to stand for her as well. Yet the sad reality is that Adso is breaking his monastic vows to secretly spend the night with a poor girl from the lower strata of society, who speaks a nearly incomprehensible vernacular.

Binaries: library/kitchen, wealth/poverty, virtue/violation, spiritual/carnal, holy/profane, virgin/whore, theory/practice.

Deconstruction of library/kitchen and wealth/poverty: Since Adso is a monk (part of the dominant culture), he should not be in the kitchen in the first place, and his going into the kitchen is an act of degradation; that is, bringing himself down to earth, temporarily joining the vernacular discourses of the marketplace, abolishing hierarchy. Theresa Coletti, in *Naming the Rose*, points out that

With the library at the top, the scriptorium in the middle, and the kitchen and refectory on the bottom, the Aedificium represents the hierarchy implicit in the dominant culture. And if in the Aedificium’s hierarchy the library is identified with the order, tradition, and the codifications of

official truth, the kitchen and refectory represents the force of competing values (Coletti 1988: 128–129).

Whereas the library is the locus of the official culture's ideal of semiotic containment and protectionism, the kitchen and refectory are open to discord (Coletti 1988: 130). In the original Italian, Adso is standing on the *limine*—threshold in the English translation—of the kitchen at the beginning of the scene (*sul limine tra refettorio e cucina*¹¹). Coletti explains that Adso's pause on the *limine* “indicates his entry into liminality” (1988: 131), or going outside of social structures. “For Adso, the kitchen is a new “cultural realm” of sexual arousal and multiple meanings, providing a fitting locus for his transgressive experiences of body and language” (Coletti 1988: 131), and I like to add, of social norms as well, because the kitchen is where a novice from the wealthiest monastic order in Europe shares a physical space with a peasant girl.

Deconstruction of spiritual/carnal, holy/profane, virgin/whore: As mentioned before, earlier in the book Umberto makes a clear distinction between virtuous feminine beauty and wanton feminine beauty. The virtuous inspires a love of God, the wanton tempts the beholder away from God, and the two types are personified as Virgin and the Whore. Yet for Adso, this distinction is unclear when he reflects that “My intellect knew her as an occasion of sin, my sensitive appetite perceived her as the vessel of every grace (Eco 1984a: 278)”. A few hours earlier in the labyrinth, Adso had unwittingly deconstructed the difference between Virgin and Whore, and due to his confusion, he has no way of knowing for sure whether it was right or wrong to be with the girl in the kitchen; the dominant discourse would say that he sinned, but the truth according to Adso's experience is that she inspired in him a love of all things spiritually good and beautiful:

I thought of the girl. My flesh had forgotten the intense pleasure, sinful and fleeting (a base thing), that union with her had given me; but my soul had not forgotten her face, and could not manage to feel that this memory was perverse; rather, it throbbed as if in that face shone all the bliss of creation. (Eco 1984a: 278)

Objectively speaking, the girl is neither the Virgin nor the Whore, but subjectively to Adso, perhaps she is both. By equating a peasant prostitute with the beloved from the *Song of Songs*, Adso blurs the difference between vastly different categories, neither of

¹¹ “I remained, on the threshold between refectory and kitchen, and so did a vague something near the oven.” (Eco 1984a: 242)

which is absolute. Whether the girl represents holiness or sin depends on her context; to Adso she is a personification of holy beauty, but ultimately, near the end of the novel, the inquisitors denounce her as a sinner and a witch.

Deconstruction of virtue/sin, theory/practice: Initially, Adso suffers remorse for his actions, but soon after, he realizes that is not that the action itself was wrong, but that it occurred in an inappropriate context.

Turning away from the familiar Benedictine rule, Adso temporarily ignores his place in society, allowing himself to simply explore the feeling of being in love. He redeems his action by recontextualising it so that it would no longer be considered a sin. As the object of love, the girl, instead of being a temptress and a whore, becomes the ultimate sign of everything that Adso finds good and beautiful. And in this new context, Adso is able to enjoy his feelings, and he realises that only his monastic context makes the action inappropriate. While reflecting on this, Adso says to himself, “How beautiful was the spectacle of nature not yet touched by the often perverse wisdom of man!” (Eco 1984a: 282).

Afterwards, in what I consider some of the most beautiful passages from the novel, the lovesick Adso falls into a melancholy with an intense longing to see the girl again, consoling himself with memories of the previous night. (Eco 1984a: 278–284).

[...] I “saw” the girl, I saw her in the branches of the bare tree that stirred lightly when a benumbed sparrow flew to seek refuge there; I saw her in the eyes of the heifers that came out of the barn, and I heard her in the bleating of the sheep that crossed my erratic path. It was as if all creation spoke to me of her. (Eco 1984a: 278)

As Adso begins to perceive his surroundings as metaphors for the girl, he feels that she is overwhelmingly present. Everywhere he looks he sees signs of her; he has reinterpreted the world so that everything contains traces of her presence. Yet at the same time Adso suffers from her absence, since if all signs signify the absence of the signified, then being surrounded by multiple signs of the girl is more than enough to remind him that she is not actually present. Everything he sees can only substitute for the girl, because she herself is not actually present.

Deconstruction of virtue/violation, presence/absence: Adso’s encounter with the girl in the kitchen is not objectively virtuous or sinful. Whether it is considered one or another

depends entirely on its contextual framing, making its place in the binary opposition completely arbitrary. Since Adso is a monk, the act is a transgression, but interpreting the act as a transgression says more about the interpreter than the act itself; as Adso shows that he can just as well consider the act something good, if only he were not a monk.

And therefore what I had suffered that morning was evil for me, but for others perhaps was good, the sweetest of good things; thus I understand now that my distress was not due to the depravity of my thoughts, in themselves worthy and sweet, but to the depravity of the gap between my thoughts and the vows I had pronounced. (Eco 1984a: 280)

Adso's later melancholy in the garden is a turning point in the novel. The girl here becomes "the dialectic of presence and absence" (Coletti 1988: 71), and

Adso's momentary perception that meaning is produced by absence experienced as desire links his feelings for the girl to a poststructuralist conception of the sign¹², because absence causes differentiation, which creates meaning. A sign cannot be the exact thing it signifies, and signification always implies the absence of the actual signified¹² (Coletti 1988: 71).

Since a sign's meaning is generated from its difference from other signs, each sign contains traces—that is, from differences—of what it does not mean, and a presence contains traces of the absence of what it is not (Derrida 1976: 24). By being absent, the girl can be represented by signs that at once evoke her discrete elements of her presence, while reminding Adso signs cannot replace the girl herself. While reminding Adso of the girl, the signs around him scream at the same time that she is not there¹³.

[...] everything, in other words, spoke to me only of the face I had hardly glimpsed in the aromatic shadows of the kitchen [...] if the whole world spoke to me of the girl, who (sinner though she may have been) was nevertheless a chapter in the great book of creation, a verse of the great psalm chanted by the cosmos [...] it could only be a part of the great theophanic design that sustains the universe, arranged like a lyre, miracle of consonance and harmony. As if intoxicated, I then enjoyed her presence in the things I saw, and, desiring her in them, with the sight of them I was sated.

And yet I felt a kind of sorrow, because at the same time I suffered from an absence, though I was happy with the many ghosts of a presence. (Eco 1984a: 279)

By realising that his frame was what marked his night with the girl as a transgression, Adso's experience adds a new voice to the novel: Like William's

¹² Borges' *On exactitude in science* shows an example in which the sign is identical to its referent. Cartographers sought to create the perfect map that matched its referent completely. Later discovering that it is useless, they destroy it, leaving the empire it mapped destroyed in the same manner.

¹³ According to Coletti, "The Italian makes more explicit the connection between Adso's longing for the girl as a presence and as sign and the novel's larger exploration of language and signification: "perche nin mi era neppure concesso [...] di lamentarmi invocando il nome dell' amata" (*Rosa* 409). The name of the beloved ("il nome dell' amata") and the name of the rose ("il nome della rosa") are the same name." (Coletti 1988: 71)

deconstruction of saint/heretic and orthodoxy/heresy, Adso's deconstructions regarding the girl and his transgression remind the reader of Eco's own views on binary oppositions, as expressed in *The frames of comic 'freedom'*. Before Adso's deconstructions, the novel explored William's carnivalesque tendency to side with the peripheral discourse in a binary opposition. Here the novel shifts to showing binary oppositions as Adso now sees them; from this point on, the novel lists deconstructed binary opposites and instances of carnival in which binary oppositions fully display their instability. There is no longer a need for the carnivalesque; it is possible that by listing deconstructed binaries, Eco is responding to Bakhtin, showing that it was pointless for William to take sides in binary oppositions, because the ones William sided with are no more stable than the deconstructed binary oppositions that appear later in the novel:

On the fourth day, Severinus discusses the different uses of his herbs. Whether they are poisons or cures depends on the context in which they are used:

As I told you before, many of these herbs, duly compounded and administered in the proper dosage, could be used for lethal beverages and ointments. Over there, datura stramonium, belladonna, hemlock: they can bring on drowsiness, stimulation, or both; taken with due care they are excellent medicines, but in excess doses they bring on death. (Eco 1984a: 262)

Deconstruction of antidote/poison: the same plants can be used to cure or to poison, therefore the plants in Severinus' lab are not universally helpful or harmful; their effect depends on a variety of other factors, such as usage and dose. Earlier in the discussion, Adso admits, "I was upset. I had always believed that logic was a universal weapon, but now I realized how its validity depended on the way it was employed" (Eco 1984a: 262).

On the sixth night, Adso tells William about a particularly strange dream, and William points out that this dream resembles the *Coena Cypriani*, a text also praised by Bakhtin in *Rabelais and his World* for exemplifying carnival, particularly in its use of banquet imagery (Bakhtin 1984: 288). However, in Adso's dream, the scene detailed by the text suggests chaos rather than liberation.

[...] Jorge drank from a great mug of wine, and Remigio, dressed like Bernard Gui, held a book shaped like a scorpion, virtuously reading the lives of the saints and passages from the Gospels, but they were stories about Jesus joking with the apostle, reminding him that he was a stone and on that shameless stone that rolled over the plain he would build his church, or the story of Saint Jerome commenting on the Bible and saying that God wanted to bare Jerusalem's behind. And at every sentence the cellarer read, Jorge laughed, pounded his fist on the table, and shouted, "You

shall be the next abbot, by God's belly!" Those were his very words, may the Lord forgive me.
(Eco 1984a: 428)

Bakhtin believes that feasts express liminality, and are always related to time and breaking points in cycles, in which "Moments of death and revival, of change and renewal always led to a festive perception of the world." (Bakhtin 1984: 9). In the dream, Adso also recognises his beloved, the "maiden terrible as an army with banners", this time dressed in rich clothing and presented as the Virgin Mary (Eco 1984a: 428-429), with

[...] a crown of white pearls on her head, a double strand, and two cascades of pearls fell on either side of her face, mingling with two other rows which hung on her bosom, and from each pearl hung a diamond as big as a plum. (Eco 1984a: 428).

There are more riches and abundance, including the eating of locusts and whales, "And gifts of valuable relics such as "the tail of Saint Ubertina¹⁴, the uterus of Saint Venantia" and "the neck of Saint Burgosina engraved like a goblet at the age of twelve¹⁵" (Eco 1984a: 432). The writing includes a handful of reversals, and in addition to the "diamonds as big as plums" there are also "plums as big as diamonds" (Eco 1984a: 428, 430); during the feast, "some died laughing and some laughed dying" (Eco 1984: 431); additionally, there is a reference to Bakhtin's assertion that feasts are related to time, because in Adso's dream, Jesus fasted for forty days and forty nights during the single night of a feast (Eco 1984a: 430), a unique and somewhat pointless miracle. Near the end of the dream, William's teacher, Roger Bacon, appears from out of the sky in a flying machine (Eco 1984a: 430)¹⁶.

The dream contains many instances of solemn figures—Abo, Jorge and characters from scripture—behaving outlandishly. Their behaviour degrades them, bringing them down to earth by removing the authority they gain from epic distance. Without epic distance, these figures become yet additional voices among the many in the marketplace

¹⁴ Just as in the novel, the historical Ubertino da Casale is a Franciscan, which lead me to think that maybe "Saint Ubertina" is a wolf. The wolf that Saint Francis preached to (the Wolf of Gubbio) is male, though, but it is possible that Adso dreamed up for him a saintly female disciple. It is nonsense, in any case.

¹⁵ Eco mentions the skull of Saint John the Baptist at the age of twelve in at least three works: *The Name of the Rose*, *The Aesthetics of Chaosmos* (1982) and *Inventing the Enemy* (2011). In his novel *Baudolino* (2000), the characters keep a total of seven heads of John the Baptist to give away as gifts to the kings they meet on their journey.

¹⁶ To be fair, Roger Bacon does seem to have a rather dry sense of humor. When asked to prove that diamonds can be cut without the use of goat's blood, he simply said, "I saw it with my own eyes" (Eco 2002: 64).

This old authority and truth pretended to be absolute, to have an extratemporal importance. Therefore, their representations [...] are gloomily serious. They cannot and do not wish to laugh [...] They do not see themselves in the mirror of time, do not perceive their own origin, limitations and end; they do not recognise their own ridiculous faces or the comic nature of their pretensions to eternity and immutability [...] Time has transformed old truths and authority [...] a comic monster that the laughing crowd rends to pieces in the marketplace. (Bakhtin 1984: 212 –213).

Bakhtin considers mockery to be a democratic act that turns people from different spheres of society into equals.

However, as transgressive as the contents of the dream appear, the *Coena Cypriani* (in this case, with some added details from Adso's waking life) was originally used as a mnemonic device meant for learning episodes in scriptures, and "through its jesting, the young could more easily commit to memory certain episodes of sacred history" (Eco 1984a: 437):

David stood on a mound, John on the floor, Pharoah on the sand (naturally, I said to myself, but why?), Lazarus on the table, Jesus on the edge of the well, Zaccheus on the boughs of a tree [...] Thecla on the window sill (from outside, Adelmo's pale face appeared, as he warned her it was possible to fall down, down the cliff), Susanna in the garden, Judas among the graves [...] (Eco 1984a: 429).

Therefore, in spite of its comic transgressions, Adso's dream contains a fair number of correct scenes from scriptures. It appears the *Coena*, at least for Adso, fulfilled its intentions, because even if it contains humorous scenes, its intention is still to encourage the correct memorisation of sacred texts. In *Frames*, Eco writes that

Carnival, in order to be enjoyed, requires that its rules and rituals be parodied, and that these rules and rituals already be recognized and respected. One must know to what degree certain behaviors are forbidden, and must feel the majesty of the forbidding norm, to appreciate their transgression. Without a rule to break, carnival is impossible [...] The *Coena Cypriani* quoted by Bachtin, a burlesque representation based on the subversion of topical situations of the Scriptures, was enjoyed as a comic transgression only by people who took the same Scriptures seriously during the rest of the year. (Eco 1984b: 6).

Later the scene grows more violent, displaying yet more of what Bakhtin considers the popular festive aesthetics of carnival:

Thus blood is transformed into wine; ruthless slaughter and the martyr's death are transformed into a merry banquet; the stake becomes a hearth. Bloodshed, dismemberment, burning, death, beating, blows, curses and abuses—all these elements are steeped in "merry time", time which kills and gives birth, which allows nothing old to be perpetuated and never ceases to generate the new and youthful. (Bakhtin 1984: 211).

The description in Adso's dream contains these gory elements of carnival, along with more scriptural mnemonics:

But the worst was when they found a black rooster on the girl, black and beautiful she was, like a cat of the same color, and they called her a witch and a Pseudo Apostle, so all flung themselves on her, to punish her. The Baptist decapitated her, Abel cut her open, Adam drove her out, Nebuchadnezzar wrote zodiacal signs on her breast with a fiery hand, Elijah carried her off in a fiery chariot, Noah plunged her in water, Lot changed her into a pillar of salt, Susanna accused her of lust, Joseph betrayed her with another woman, Ananias stuck her into a furnace, Sampson chained her up, Paul flagellated her, Peter crucified her head down, Stephen stoned her, Lawrence burned her on a grate, Bartolomew skinned her, Judas denounced her, the cellarer burned her, and Peter denied everything. (Eco 1984a: 432)

The scene is violent, but hardly merry. Adso overdoses on carnival and parody and in general, has a negative impression of carnival, which he sees more as needlessly confusing rather than liberating. An important point is that carnival destroys excessively; it does not destroy old hierarchies, but it does destroy any sense of order and harmony, and rather than creating something new out of fragments of the old, it only leaves only the fragments:

The girl's body, once so beautiful and sweet, was now lacerated, torn into fragments that were scattered among the glass cases and gold-and-crystal reliquaries of the crypt. Or, rather, it was not the body of the girl that went to fill the crypt, it was the fragments of the crypt that [...] gradually composed to form the girl's body [...] It was now as if a single immense body had, in the course of millennia, dissolved into its parts [...] and as if the substantial form of man's very body, the masterpiece of creation, had scattered into plural and separate accidental forms, thus becoming the image of its own opposite, form no longer ideal but earthly, of dust and stinking fragments, capable of signifying only death and destruction.... (Eco 1984a: 432–433).

In short, Adso's dream is a negative commentary on both the popular-festive forms of carnival, as well as its transgressive element. The violent, mocking and obscene laughter characteristic of Bakhtin's feast descriptions hardly resemble the "true nature of the world" (Bakhtin 1984: 9), and for all its violence, carnival does not go far enough in its transgression.

The monastery's library follows a strictly structured system that catalogues its books based on their origin and contents¹⁷. The books are separated into groups named after

¹⁷ The library consists of a centre surrounded by sixteen rooms. These sixteen rooms are at the centre of sixteen more rooms. In addition, there are four towers, one for each cardinal direction, surrounding these outer sixteen rooms. Yet five more rooms line the outer perimeter of each tower, so the library has a total of fifty-six rooms.

Each room is assigned a verse from Revelation, and the first letter of adjacent rooms can be read together as the name of the following regions: *Acaia* (Greece), *Aegyptus* (Egypt), *Anglia* (England), *Gallia* (France), *Germania* (Germany), *Hibernia* (Ireland), *Iudaia* (Palestine), *Leones* (Ethiopia), *Roma* (Italian city-states), *Yspania* (Spain) and the *Fons Adae* (the earthly paradise; this description corresponds to the contents rather than the origin of the books it contains). The *finis Africae* (the end of Africa, here understood as the peripheries of the geographical world) apparently does not contain books from the literal end of Africa, but

geographical locations, and it is only on the seventh night that William and Adso finally solve the puzzle that opens the *finis Africae*, the most restricted category containing books about the cultural periphery. Throughout his investigation, William had believed there to be one murderer acting according to a plan based on the book of Revelations, but as it turns out, not only were there multiple assailants acting according to different motivations, but that the key ‘murderer’ was an inanimate object, a copy of Aristotle’s treatise on comedy printed on linen paper and painted with poison. Although the narrative that William constructed out of clues did lead him to the source of the murders, the narrative itself was mostly false. He and Adso find Jorge waiting for them in the *finis Africae*, and although Jorge did spread poison on Aristotle’s book, he did not physically carry out any of the murders himself: Adelmo died by suicide after engaging in homosexual activities with the assistant library Berengar in order to gain access to the forbidden book; Severinus is murdered by Malachi in a fit of jealousy; Venantius, Berengar and Malachi all die by reading the poisoned book; and lastly, Abo suffocates in the labyrinth while trying to entre the *finis Africae*.

instead, its books discuss culturally peripheral themes such as parody, laughter and the wisdom of holy fools. Although it is natural for some of these categories—say, *Acaia*, *Aegyptus* and *Iudaia*—to contain pre-Christian, pre-Catholic and Jewish texts; it is implied that books considered heretical by the Catholic Church are locked up in the *finis Africae*.

The library does not seem to have rooms devoted to Persian and Arabic texts, so it is unclear whether a commentary on Aristotle by Averroes or Avicenna would belong in *Acaia* or the *finis Africae*. In addition, there is no category for Russian texts, although a bishop from Kaffa (Theodosia in the Crimea) does make a short visit (Eco 1984a: 342). Since this bishop was in the company of Bernard Gui, he is probably Catholic. However, this is historically unlikely since the Crimea would continue to be under Mongol rule until the middle of the century. In any case, it is unclear whether books from this region would be considered Greek or from “the end of Africa”.

5. Carnival and the problem of reference

5.1 The novelistic and unlimited semiosis

William and Jorge have an intense debate in the *finis Africae*. Jorge prompted the string of murders in an attempt to protect what he considered the Word of God, or the universal Truth. In his view, the abbey's library must remain closed in order to protect the Truth from distortions made possible by writing and interpretation, which will inevitable happen if monks begin debating with books as if they were living and fallible. Jorge believes that learning through signs is extraneous to the understanding of a singular and incontestable truth. Of particular importance to him is the assurance that truth cannot be mocked, and therefore the book he fears the most is Aristotle's treatise on comedy.

Teresa Coletti's theory is that William and Jorge are deconstructions of each other, because both sought to preserve knowledge, whether in isolation of circulation, and therefore they express different sides of the same trope (Coletti 1988: 174). But here I must disagree; keep in mind that Jorge started the fire in the library, hardly an act of preservation. Coletti comments, "It is painfully ironic that William and Jorge's efforts to preserve knowledge, albeit in distinct ways, culminate in both a real and a symbolic destruction of culture and civilization in which there is nothing left to read" (Coletti 1988: 174). Jorge worked to preserve was the integrity of the Word as a referent, sees the library as a threat, and its contents as a distraction from the already perfect and incontestable Truth. Keeping the library in isolation was not an effort to preserve its contents from decay, but to act as if they had never existed at all (we must keep in mind that Abo is running the abbey, and he keeps the library as a status symbol. If Jorge had been the abbot, there would likely not have been a library at all, or at least a much diminished one). William needed the library's books to be read because he believed they contain the multiple aspects of a universal Truth.

This is the catch: William values above everything else the notion of a singular and unified Truth. Having been an inquisitor once, he never stopped in his search for a universal Truth, and is willing to go to any length to find it. He admits tendency in an off-guard moment, saying, "No one must ever oblige us to know, Adso. We must, that is all, even if we comprehend imperfectly" (Eco 1984a: 450). From his first entrance at the

abbey, William shows that his interest in signs is an extension in his need to find a single referent, a 'Truth' any given frame: William finds the lost horse Brunellus through traces (signs, clues), using absence to piece together a presence. All of the signs he uses lead to Brunellus as a referent.

Ideally, Abo's relics and allegorical numbers should all point to one referent, to God in this instance. In a similar way during his murder investigation, William wanted his signs—that is, his clues—to point to a single referent—the murderer. Although he takes pride in being an “enlightened” and “peripheral” Franciscan, referencing William of Occam (1285-1347) and Roger Bacon (1214-1294), and utilising unorthodox tools methods during his investigation, his expectation that Truth exists as a singular referent Truth makes his quest no different from that of Jorge, Abo or the inquisitors. His jokes, paradoxes and deconstructions were made for the sake of constructing a unified account of why there were mysterious deaths in the abbey. The point here is that William's use of the carnivalesque; that is, his assumption that the collective peripheral discourses of a given culture contains this culture's universal Truth, makes little sense. As long as William expects his signs to point to a referent, rather than to more signs, he is relying on the epic voice, the very thing he has opposed throughout his stay at the abbey. Since by definition of the novelistic, no single voice can speak the 'Truth' for all discourses, thus **there is no universal Truth in novelistic discourse, because each voice within it claims a truth of its own.** The subjectivity allowed in a novelistic context requires the sacrifice of a universal Truth.

At the very least, William expected to an absolute referent specific to each context; for example, when searching for Brunellus, Brunellus is the referent at the centre of the many signs he left. William believed that even as signs led to more signs, eventually the chain of signification will stop and point to a single referent, therefore each sign is a necessary step leading towards this referent. In a chain of signification, each sign should lead one step closer to the ultimate referent, so every clue would be the next step in discovering the single mastermind behind the murders. Like the narrative that he created, which he thought had led him to the murderer, William believed that the chain of signification contains no random elements.

However, in a true, radical case of unlimited semiosis, the chain of signification does not stop after revealing the 'correct' referent. In fact, it does not stop at all. Each sign points to a yet another sign as its referent, and the chain has no end.

5.2 Signification and reference in the novelistic

Bakhtin suggests that the novelistic world does not have referents, only signification: “[...] no living word relates to its object in a *singular* way”, because “[...] the receiver is already “entangled, shot through with shared thoughts, points of view, alien value judgments and accents” (Bakhtin 1981: 276). In other words, if words are signs, then the addresser uses his personal background to determine their reference; signs are interpreted according to the addressee, and are not necessarily attached to any particular referent. During the confrontation with Jorge, William realises that a situation without a referent is horrific. If his words are signs, and his intentions are their referents, Jorge squeezes alternate interpretations out of William’s words exemplifying a completely novelistic situation in which there are no “correct” referents. William’s words are not interpreted according to the code he had in mind when he spoke them.

I hate you, Jorge, and if I could, I would lead you downstairs, across the ground, naked, with a fowl’s feathers stuck in your asshole and your face painted like a juggler and a buffoon, so the whole monastery would laugh at you and be afraid no longer. (Eco 1984a: 477)

Indeed, Jorge becomes laughable just a handful of pages (pun intended) later:

[...] he went on tearing the pages, determined to devour his prey as quickly as possible [...] Disfigured by anxiety, by the menace of the poison now flowing abundantly through his veins, by his desperate and diabolical determination, the venerable figure of the old man now seemed disgusting and grotesque. At other moments he might have inspired laughter, but we, too, were reduced to the condition of animals [...] (Eco 1984a: 483)

William had liked his words’ capacity for play, but when their referents are made irrelevant in a completely novelistic context, his own words mock him: William had wanted to see Jorge made ridiculous so that he would no longer be an authority figure, but instead, Jorge becomes ridiculous as he eats the last copy of Aristotle’s book. He had sought a universal Truth in common and peripheral spheres of culture, but following the fire, the abbey’s poverty following the destruction of its library fails to express any kind of universal Truth. William had wanted freer access to the books; in the end, all of the monks had full access to the books while the library was burning. William had not considered these interpretations of his words before, and at this point, his words and investigative methods, and even core beliefs betray him.

William did not anticipate that his words and their intentions would be absorbed into Jorge's discourse. William had sought dialogue in the library, but the confrontation with Jorge presented him with another way in which dialogue could take place.

In *Discourse in the novel*, Bakhtin claims that novelistic dialogue depends on

[...] an active understanding, one that assimilates the word under consideration into a new conceptual system, that of the one striving to understand establishes a series of complex inter-relationships, consonances and dissonances with the word and enriches it with new elements. It is precisely such an understanding that the speaker counts on. (Bakhtin 1981: 282)

Essentially, Bakhtin is saying that interpretation is a dialogic act, and that words spoken through dialogue cannot be spoken through the authority of epic distance. Demanding a particular referent renders the discourse authoritarian, and by virtue of its definition,

[...] authoritarian discourse permits no play with the context framing it, no play with its borders, no spontaneously creative stylizing variants on it...It is indissolubly fused with its authority—with political power, an institution, a person—and it stands and falls together with that authority. (Bakhtin 1981: 343)

Since William does not speak through epic distance, then by Bakhtin's conception of dialogue, his words can be interpreted in a number of ways depending on the receiver's personal background. If one were to apply Bakhtinian's notion of novelistic dialogue consistently, if William believes that monks should have freedom to interpret scripture in ways that may not always meet the Church's requirements, he must also give Jorge the freedom to interpret his own words (because as owner of the words, he is the authority figure) according to his Jorge's own points of view, value judgments and accents. Thus, discourse in a novelistic context is a double-edged sword. When the listener gains the power to interpret the speaker's words at will, the speaker is no longer an authoritative figure. However, The listener then becomes the authority figure; having full control over the speaker's words is similar to telling the speaker what to say. An example:

W.W. Jacobs' short story *The Monkey's Paw* tells of a British sergeant returning from India, who brings back the mummified hand of a monkey, which allegedly has the power to grant its owner three wishes. He shows this to his friend Mr. White, whose son Herbert casually suggests that he wish for 200 pounds. The next day, Herbert dies when he is in a factory machine, after which his employer pays Mr. White a compensation of

200 pounds. A week after Herbert's funeral, Mr. White tries to wish him back, but it is heavily implied that what comes back is the mangled corpse that had been completely unrecognisable after the accident. Mrs. White uses the third wish for the son to go away before Mr. White can open the door.

Bakhtin appears to argue that in true discourse, the speaker has no full control over his words. The listener must be given to assimilate them into his own worldview; in other words, the speaker is passive, and the listener is allowed to actively transform the speaker's words. Yet does Jorge's mocking misinterpretation of William's words really count as "enrichment"? Are Mr. White's words "enriched" when he finds out his wish for his son to come back can also be interpreted as a wish for his son's mangled and rotting corpse to return knocking in the dead of night? Does Bakhtin's novelistic discourse offer any insurance against intentional misinterpretation?

"In the atmosphere of a novel, the direct and unmediated intention of a word presents itself as something impermissibly naïve, something in fact impossible, for naïveté itself, under authentic novelistic conditions, takes on the nature of an internal polemic and is consequently dialogised..." (278).

Interestingly, an "active understanding" does not work both ways in this context. After all, it is possible for Jorge to project *his* unmediated intentions onto William's words. Therefore, novelistic conditions do not guarantee the removal of an authoritarian presence: a speaker addressing a voiceless audience may be an oppressive tyrant, but a listener that mocks the speaker's obvious intentions is a bully. In lowering the authority of the speaker's voice, Bakhtin's novelistic elevates the listener's voice into that of an authoritarian. If a speaker and a listener's voices are set up as a binary opposition in which one voice is authoritarian, a carnivalesque switch of roles between the two does not eliminate the authoritarian voice from the system.

Even if William did succeed in destabilising the binary opposition, the elements merely switched places, keeping the opposition between them unchanged so that no rule is broken, no frame is questioned, and the attempt at deconstructing the binary ends in failure. This total reversal of elements in a binary opposition is carnival, an upside-down world where the fool is king, William liked to think, but the problem is that there is still a fool, and there is still a king.

Carnival occurs when the opposite sides of a binary are at their closest in proximity and most interchangeable. It is the moment of deconstruction, the moment in which binary oppositions prove themselves useless as truly antagonistic systems, and it appears that William—and Bakhtin—overlooked it somehow. Whereas William intended a transgression to challenge the frame set by dominant discourse, carnival is the illusion of transgression, which is in fact authorized by the dominant discourse (Eco 1984b: 6). Additionally, carnival can be characterised by proximity of the opposite sides of a binary opposite. Right before the fire, the mysterious library used the illusion of a ghost patrol to keep discourage potential readers; however, a few hours later, the monks are running in and out to either rescue books or read them. Jorge eats the book in a ferocious manner and looks rather clownish doing it, but just a short while ago he spoke with solemnity and dignity. When he first opened the *finis Africae*, William saw the opportunity to read and make countless interpretations and commentaries on the books, but after the fire there could be no interpretation at all.

Eco leaves one more puzzle at the end of his novel: why did William seek Aristotle's book, and why did Jorge want to destroy it? If Aristotle does show comedy as a tool of containment, as Eco described it in *The frames of comic 'freedom'*, then it is dangerous to William, but validating to Jorge.

In any case, there is one hero all of the characters overlooked: recall that in the novel, Aristotle's book on comedy is bound along with an Arabic manuscript "which hold that fools utter clever remarks that amaze even their priests and delight their caliphs..." (Eco 1984a: 467). It contains exactly what William sought, but was unfortunately overlooked due to its author being an anonymous Arab whose written language looks like fly dung to our protagonists, someone who in this case is as marginal as the fools that utter clever remarks, who is most certainly "other", the butt of mockery in classical plays...

5.3 Final thoughts: reconciling the epic and the novelistic

At various points in his work, Bakhtin opposes the authoritarian voice, or in his words the voice of epic distance, for the reason that it claims its own discourse as a complete and universal Truth. He claims that its static nature makes it a poor model of the ever-changing world of culture and society. However, any voice that speaks with specific referents in mind speaks with some degree of authority. Any sign that has a specific referent is in some ways authoritative, and any word that demands a specific interpretation is authoritative as well; in short, the 'epic' component of discourse corresponds less to authoritarianism than to reference in signification.

It may be useful to state again that in Bakhtin's essay *Epic and novel*, 'epic' and 'novelistic' began as descriptions of two different but not binarily opposed genres. The carnivalesque places these two concepts in a binary opposition, while believing that 'novelistic' discourses should prevail over the epic. Structurally speaking, this is impossible, because a binary opposition requires for both of its elements to negatively define each other. However, this is a contradiction within the concept of the carnivalesque. The epic voice does not have to be equated with the authoritarian voice, as long as it stays within its own discourse, and does not propose to become the sole discourse in any given culture.

The epic voice is necessary and inevitable, as it is inseparable from the referent of any given sign, and in fact, the Bakhtinian concepts of epic and novelistic indeed are very much dependent on each other, but not as binary opposites. The novelistic is essentially a collection of epic voices in dialogue, and the epic only risks becoming authoritarian when removed from the context of a novel, away from the dialogue of equally valid peer voices. The authority in an epic voice is essential because without it, in a purely novelistic world, signification occurs without reference. Although Eco does not believe the intentions of the author are important, he does give significance to the intention of the text (Eco 1992: 145). In other words, the author's interpretation of the work is not authoritative above other readers' interpretations, it will be in dialogue with these other interpreters' voices; however, textual intentions matter count because each word in the text has a referent specific to its context, which the text also provides.

It is not clear whether an exact model showing an open, novelistic culture as a collection of epic voices exists. However, Yuriy Lotman's semiospheric model of culture, appears as something very close, namely, in its representation of culture as collection of interdependent parts, in which each part is a fully-functioning whole. It is beyond the limits of this present work to re-evaluate the semiosphere as a combination of epic voices stratified into a novelistic structure, yet such a task may shed some new light on the semiosphere, as well as the role of reference in an open culture.

Conclusion

The master's thesis at hand suggests an evaluation on the application of Bakhtinian literary concepts in the study of culture, using Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* as a sample context. Following the delimitation of the topic, a close reading of Eco's novel analyses the interdependency of the Bakhtinian concepts of the epic and the novelistic. Eco's novel functions an example that highlights a structural contradiction in Bakhtinian aesthetics, namely in his concept of the carnivalesque, which places the epic and novelistic in an inverted binary opposition.

The formation of the epic, the novelistic and the carnivalesque began with Mikhail Bakhtin's studies on Dostoevsky's polyphonic novels. Bakhtin later expanded into general literary studies while writing the essays collected in *The Dialogic Imagination*, which introduce his unique concepts of 'epic' and 'novel'. Bakhtin characterises the epic as a well-established literary genre that distances itself from the present, taking on a finished quality that encourages its readers to act as a passive audience, rather than engaging with the work. In contrast, the novel is a relatively young genre comprised of multiple voices stratified within the work itself, which is left open to dialogue and interpretation from its readers. In his literary theory, Bakhtin's concepts of epic and novel were initially descriptive categories; however, both concepts crossed over into Bakhtin's cultural theory, where elements of authoritarianism (or the cultural centre) now correspond to the aesthetics of the epic; and peripheral, vernacular, hybrid and socially heterogeneous phenomena fell under the label of novelistic.

Later on, Bakhtin's *Rabelais and his World*, a survey of late medieval aesthetics, expanded upon his earlier concept of carnival and the carnivalesque, which politicises the cultural notions of the epic and the novelistic. Carnival initially derives from the Feast of Fools, a medieval festival in which the lay people are permitted one day for mocking the state and religious authorities. However, Bakhtin politicises this festival, making an overview of carnivalesque aesthetics, and arguing that the carnivalesque signifies rebellion against the authoritarian rule of the Church. Aesthetic elements of the Feast of Fools become politicised as well: feasting became interpreted as expressions of temporality and social growth, grotesque forms became manifestations of transgressions

of physical and social limits, and the mockery and degradation of authority figures become ways to rhetorically bring them down to earth, in order to mingle among the vernacular voices of the marketplace. Thus, Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque regards novelistic aspects of culture as politically subversive, anti-authoritarian and democratic. Bakhtin interprets the Feast of Fools itself as a brief window of social equality, and the carnivalesque as a celebration of all cultural phenomena that can be considered peripheral, vulgar, open and incomplete.

However, the concept of carnivalesque contains an inner contradiction: it places the epic and novelistic into a mutually-dependent binary opposition, and proposes for the novelistic to free itself of the epic. Since as a component of a binary opposition, the novelistic defines itself as the direct opposite of the epic, being completely free of its own image in negatives is impossible.

Umberto Eco's 1980 novel *The Name of the Rose* creates an aesthetic world based on Bakhtin's aesthetics of carnival. In fact, the novel clearly and thoroughly reveals flaws of the carnivalesque: its protagonist, Brother William of Baskerville, follows an agendum similar to that of Bakhtin in his rejection of the epic voice in his context—the solemnity of the Church, political and religious authority figures, ecclesiastical tradition including orthodox interpretations of scripture, political power and its accompanying material wealth—in favour of vernacular mockery and laughter. It should be noted that both William and Bakhtin believe (erroneously, according to Eco) that supporting the novelistic side of the epic/novel binary in a cultural context will lead them to the discovery of a single and unified Truth, or a truer representation of the world.

Eco's commentary on Bakhtin can be gleaned from William's failure to find a universal Truth in the novel. Like Bakhtin, William sees the social and cultural phenomena around him in terms of binary oppositions. In the end, he realises that in supporting the novelistic side of the binary, he had unwittingly been a proponent of the epic side as well; that is, in supporting the repressed peripheral discourses of a culture, William had accidentally validated the culture's need for creating a peripheries. The problem is not choosing a side in a binary opposition, but rather the binary configuration itself. William's error is that, in assuming the authoritarian voice of the Catholic Church tells a lie, the repressed peripheral voices must then tell some form of universal Truth.

However, only a truly authoritarian voice can claim to know a universal Truth; a novelistic culture includes a “truth” for every voice it contains. None of these are universal.

To make my argument—that Eco’s novel illustrates a structural flaw within Bakhtin’s concept of the carnivalesque—I first set out to prove that *The Name of the Rose* is a polyphonic novel. This detail is significant because polyphonic novels give the voices they contain ample freedom to express their own discourses. Since Bakhtin’s voice as a proponent of the carnivalesque is present in this work, it is important to show that the novel allowed this voice to reveal the self-defeating flaw of the carnivalesque without much tampering from the author.

Since the carnivalesque works by placing the concepts of the epic and novelistic into an inverted binary opposition, the body of this work contains a list of inverted binary oppositions corresponding with epic/novelistic. There is a brief pause from the close reading of Eco’s novel to discuss Eco’s own views on carnivalesque inverted binary oppositions, after which I point out instances in which these views manifest in the later parts of the novel. The final chapter explores carnivalesque reversals and the problem of reference; throughout the thesis, I give examples of Eco or William opposing the extreme authoritarian voice; however, the extreme novelistic voice is just as dangerous and oppressive. The work closes by suggesting an alternate model in which to systematise Bakhtin’s concepts of epic and the novelistic, to integrate them without antagonism. This model would call for a complete removal of the carnivalesque.

It is unclear and probably irrelevant whether Eco meant for *The Name of the Rose* to be read as a response to Bakhtin. Despite strongly criticising Bakhtin’s carnivalesque, Eco responds with sympathy. Bakhtin makes his points with earnesty, only he is misguided at times, and for all his cleverness, he must endure the tragedy of being undone by his own efforts to do some good. Eco did say that his novel is open to interpretations, however. In a conference on Bakhtinian studies, Caryl Emerson recalls,

Through memoirs recorded in the 1970s about the distant 1910s and 1920s, our Russian counterparts in the 1990s were living in to Bakhtin’s multilingual, still thoroughly Europeanized world. Those fifty hateful, shameful years had simply dropped away. Miraculously, Bakhtin was simultaneously a survivor and a pre-Bolshevik. (Emerson 1997: 33).

In order to ensure that his work, like the scholar himself, remains “simultaneously a survivor and a pre-Bolshevik”, it may be helpful to indicate the places in which Bakhtin’s own writings appear to work against his intentions of promoting an open, dialogic and democratic society.

While writing this thesis, I did wonder whether Eco had Bakhtin’s literary and cultural concepts in mind while working on his novel; it is obvious that Eco has read Bakhtin, but in the Postscript and interviews, says that he was inspired by Doyle and Borges, or his own thesis on medieval aesthetics. There is a possibility that Eco, like Benno in his novel, while not consciously thinking of the source, had unwittingly remembering the emotions he had felt when reading the book that was his hidden inspiration, so that when these feelings arose again, he remembered details from the book as well. Benno unknowingly plagiarises the author; maybe Eco unknowingly responds.

References

- Aristotle. 1902. *The Poetics of Aristotle*. (Butcher, S. H. trans., ed.). London: MacMillan and Co., Limited.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail M. 1981. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin* (Emerson, Caryl; Holquist, Michael, trans.; Holquist, Michael, ed.) Austin: University of Michigan Press
- Bakhtin, Mikhail M. 1984[1968]. *Rabelais and his World*. (Iswolsky, H el ene, trans.) Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail M. 1993. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. (Emerson, Caryl;) Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Baxter, David G. 1989. Murder and mayhem in a medieval abbey: the philosophy of The Name of the Rose". *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*. Vol. 3, No. 3: 170-189.
- Bruhn, J rgen; Lundquist, Jan. 2001. *The Novelness of Bakhtin: Perspectives and possibilities*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press.
- Capozzi, Rocco. 1989. Palimpsests and laughter: the dialogical pleasures of unlimited intertextuality in "The Name of the Rose", *Italica*. Vol. 66, No. 4: 412-428.
- Clark, James G. 2011. *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press.
- Cobley, Evelyn. 1989. Closure and infinite semiosis in Mann's "Dr. Faustus" and Eco's "The Name of the Rose. *Comparative Literature Studies*. Vol. 26, No. 4: 341-361.
- Coletti, Theresa. 1988. *Naming the Rose: Eco, Medieval Signs, and Modern Theory*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Cooper, Lane. 1922. *An Aristotelian theory of comedy : with an adaptation of the Poetics, and a translation of the "Tractatus Coislinianus"*. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- Critchley, Simon. 2002. *On Humour*. London: Routledge.
- Culler, Jonathan. 1981. *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Derrida, Jacques. 1976[1967]. *Of Grammatology*. (Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorti, trans.) Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Derrida, Jacques. 1982. *Positions*. (Bass, Alan, trans.) Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Derrida, Jacques. 2001[1967]. *Writing and Difference*. (Bass, Alan, trans.) London:

Routledge Classics.

Eco, Umberto. 1962. *The Open Work*. (Cancogni, Anna, trans.) Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Eco, Umberto. 1984[1980]. *The Name of the Rose and Postscript to The Name of the Rose*. (Weaver, William, trans.) Orlando: Harcourt.

Eco, Umberto. 1992. *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eco, Umberto. 2002[1959]. *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*. (Bredin, Hugh, trans.) New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Eco, Umberto. 2007. *On Ugliness*. (McEwen, Alastair, trans.) New York: Rizzoli.

Eco, Umberto. 1984. The frames of comic 'freedom'. (Sebeok, Thomas A., ed.), *Carnival!* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1–9.

Emerson, Caryl. 1997. *The First Hundred Years of Mikhail Bakhtin*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Emerson, Caryl; Morson, Gary Saul. 1990. *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Garrett, Jeffrey. 1991. Missing Eco: on reading "The Name of the Rose" as library criticism. *Library Quarterly* Vol. 61, No. 4: 373-388.

Hafez, Sabry. 1989. The Name of the Rose: time and the dialectics of parallel structures. *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* no. 9: 36-48.

Haft, Adele J., White, Jane G., White, Robert J. 1999. *The Key to "The Name of the Rose"*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Herodotus. 2003. *The Histories*. (de Sélincourt, Aubrey, trans.) Penguin Classics.

Janko, Richard. 1984. *Aristotle on Comedy: Towards a Reconstruction of Poetics II*. Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1955. The Structural Study of Myth. *The Journal of American Folklore*. vol. 68. (Myth: a symposium 270). 428–444.

Reyes-Tatinclaux, Leticia 1989. The face of evil: devilish Borges in Eco's "The Name of the Rose". *Chasqui* Vol. 18, no. 1: 3-9.

Rubino, Carl A. 1985. The Invisible Worm: Ancients and Moderns in "The Name of the Rose". *SubStance*, Vol. 14, no. 2

Sallis, Steven. 1986. Naming the rose: readers and codes in Umberto Eco's novel. *The Journal of Midwest Modern Languages Association*. Vol. 19, no. 2: 3-12.

Saussure, Ferdinand de. 1983. *Course in General Linguistics* (Riedlenger, Albert, trans.) Chicago: Open Court Publishing.

Yeager, Robert F. 1985. Fear of writing, or Adso and the poisoned text. *SubStance* Vol. 14, No. 2: 40-53.

Kokkuvõte

Probleeme Bahtini esteetikas: „Roosi nimi“ kui kriitiline uurimus karnevalist

Käesolev magistritöö on arutus Mihhail Bahtini kirjanduslike ja kultuuriliste mõistete rakendamise teemal, võttes Umberto Eco romaani „Roosi nimi“ näidiskontekstiks.

Analüüs käsitleb Bahtini mõistete 'eepiline' ja 'romaanilik' teineteisevahelist sõltuvussuhet, ja kasutab Eco romaani näitena, mis toob välja struktuurse vastuolu Bahtini esteetikas.

Bahtin alustas Dostojevski polüfoonilise romaani uurimisega. See uurimus laienes hiljem üld-kirjandusteaduslikuks lähenemiseks kogumikus, mis inglise keelde tõlgitud kui "The Dialogic Imagination", mis on neli esseed, mis toovad uurimusele lisaks Bahtinile iseloomulikud 'eepilise' ja 'romaaniliku' mõisted, asetades need üksteise suhtes binaarsesse opositsiooni. Samal ajal, kui eepika on väljakujunenud kirjandusžanr, mis distantseerib end olevikulisest ajast, ning kannab endas lõpetatuse muljet, mis mõjub lugejale, surudes ta aktiivse osaleja positsioonilt pigem passiivseks vastuvõtjaks, on romaan suhteliselt noor žanr, mis koosneb paljudest häältest, mis teoses üksteise suhtes kihistunud, ja mis on dialoogile ning interpretatsioonile avatud. Bahtini eepika ja romaani mõisted olid tema kirjandusteoorias algupäraselt deskriptiivsed kategooriad. Mõlemad mõisted kandusid aga üle tema kultuuriteooriasse, kus autoritaarsed elemendid (kultuurilises tsentris) vastavad nüüd 'eepilisele'; ja perifeerne, rahvalik, hübriidne ja sotsiaalselt heterogeenne kuuluvad 'romaaniliku' valda.

Raamatus „Rabelais ja tema maailm“, mis kujutab endast keskaegse esteetika käsitlust, laiendas Bahtin oma varasemast ajast pärit 'karnevali' ja 'karnevaliliku' mõisteid, politiseerides sellega eepilise ja romaaniliku kultuurist käsitlust. Karneval tulenes algselt keskaegsete uusaasta-pidustuste tähistamisest, mille käigus võis lihtrahvas riigi- ja kirikuvõimu parodeerida. Bahtin aga politiseerib neid pidustusi, ja pakub välja 'karnevaliliku' esteetikakäsitluse, väites, et need pidustused kujutavad endast mässu kiriku autoriteedi vastu. Bahtin tõlgendab pidustusi ajalikkuse ja sotsiaalse kasvamise avaldumisviisina. Pidustuste grotesksetes vormides manifesteerus füüsiliste ja sotsiaalsete piiride lõhkumine, ning võimukandjate narrimine ja alavääristamine kujutas endast nende

retoorilist alandamist rahvalike häälte sekka turuplatsile. Niisiis vaatleb Bahtin karnevalilikkuse-mõiste kaudu kultuuri novellilikke külgi poliitilist võimu pöörava, autoriteeti õõnestava ja demokraatlikuna. Bahtin interpreteerib keskaegseid uusaastapidustusi kui viivu hetke sotsiaalselt võrdsust, ja karnevali kui kõigi perifeersete, vulgaarsete, avatud ja mittelõplike kultuurifenomenide tähistamist. Bahtin usub, et see romaani mõiste kaudu avatud keskaegne esteetika pakub ausama käsitluse kultuurist, kui käsitlus, mis läheneb vastupidisest seisukohast kultuurilisest tsentrist.

Samal ajal kätkeb karnevalilikkuse mõiste endas sisemist vastuolu: see asetab ühelt poolt deskriptiivse 'eepilise' ja teiselt poolt 'novelliliku' teineteise suhtes sõltuvuslikku binaarsesse opositsiooni, samas kutsudes üles novellilikku end eepilisest vabastama. End binaarse opositsiooni ühe osapoolena defineerides pole 'novellilikul' võimalik end oma otsesest vastandlikust teispooldest, ehk 'eepilisest' vabastada.

Umberto Eco 1980. aastal väljaantud romaan „Roosi nimi“ kätkeb endast esteetilist maailma, mis toetub Bahtini karnevali-estetikale. Samal ajal avatakse selles ka 'karnevaliliku' puudused: peategelane, vend William Baskerville'ist hoiab Bahtini seisukohtadega sarnast joont, tõugates enda ümbert eemale ja vastandudes kõigele 'eepilisele' häälele iseloomulikule – kirikuvõimu tõsidusele, poliitilisele ja religioossele autoriteedile, kiriklikule traditsioonile ja sellega seotud pühakirjatõlgendustele, poliitilisele võimule ning materiaalsele rikkusele, eelistades sellele rahvalikku narrimist ja naeru. Oluline on märkida, et nii William kui Bahtin usuvad (ekslikult, nagu arvab Eco), et kultuurikontekstis eepilise/novelliliku binaarses suhtes novelliliku toetamine viib ainsa ja ühese Tõe leidmiseni.

Eco kommentaari Bahtini mõtetele võib tuletada sellest, et William romaanis Tõde otsides läbi kukub, või ebaõnnestub. Nagu Bahtin, näeb William end ümbritsevaid sotsiaalseid ja kultuurilisi nähtusi binaarsete opositsioonide valguses. Viimaks adub ta, et toetades novellilikku poolt, toetab ta samal ajal taipamatult ka eepilist; et toetades kultuuri mahasurutud perifeerseid diskursuseid, annab William õigustuse nende samade perifeeriade moodustamiseks. Probleem ei seisne niivõrd binaarses opositsioonis poole valimises, vaid binaarses konfiguratsioonis eneses.

Acknowledgments:

I wish to give special thanks to Lauri Linask for his thorough supervision, and to Prof. Elin Sütiste for the kind advice and gentle support. This thesis would not have been written without your help.

Non-exclusive licence to reproduce thesis and make thesis public

I, Yimeng Cui,

1. herewith grant the University of Tartu a free permit (non-exclusive licence) to:
 - 1.1. reproduce, for the purpose of preservation and making available to the public, including for addition to the DSpace digital archives until expiry of the term of validity of the copyright, and
 - 1.2. make available to the public via the web environment of the University of Tartu, including via the DSpace digital archives until expiry of the term of validity of the copyright,

Problems of Bakhtin's Aesthetics: "The Name of the Rose" as a critical examination of carnival

(title of thesis)

supervised by ___Lauri Linask, Silver Rattasepp and Mihhail Lotman

(supervisor's name)

2. I am aware of the fact that the author retains these rights.
3. I certify that granting the non-exclusive licence does not infringe the intellectual property rights or rights arising from the Personal Data Protection Act.

Tartu 21.05.2017