Shadows of Differences: *Pale Fire* and *Foucault's Pendulum*

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There is not much evidence of Umberto Eco's having read Nabokov — aside, that is, from his 1959 spoof *Granita*.[1] Purportedly written in prison by one "Umberto Umberto" and detailing the narrator's passion for octogenarian ladies ("nornettes", he calls them), the text features some moderately amusing parodies of Nabokov's style: "Granita. Flower of my adolescence, torment of my nights," and so forth.[2]

But such mimicry does not display a deep knowledge on the parodist's part, and I am not out to make a case for literary influence. Neither will I dwell on the parallels between the careers of the two authors, though there are some. Scholars and pedants both, they made their fortunes as somewhat unlikely authors of best-selling novels (turned into films), both landed on the Anglo-American literary scene from a distinctly foreign setting; and both turned out to be adept at overstepping cultural as well as linguistic boundaries.[3] Undoubtedly, both belong to the class of writers to whom (according to Nabokov) "life and library [are] one"[4]: they are encyclopedic authors, share a penchant for intertextual play, and aside from their formidable knowledge of European high literature, both have shown a marked interest in popular culture (a grudging interest in Nabokov's case).[5]

What I want to do is to concentrate on two novels, with a few digressions: Nabokov's *Pale Fire* (henceforth: *PF*) and *Foucault's Pendulum* (*FP*) by Eco.[6] Even if there is no causal link, some intriguing resemblances can be detected — not least because such detection of resemblances and links is a dominant theme in both novels. And more: the two novels seem to caution us against an overly eager pursuit of parallels. "Resemblances", we should remember, may be but "the shadows of differences" (*PF*, 265). In the end, it is for the sake of highlighting the *differences* that this exercise in comparative criticism is undertaken.

Theory as Fiction

PF grew out of Nabokov's toil as a translator of Pushkin and other Russian classics over the 1950s. Not only were his commentaries to *Eugene Onegin* (publ. 1964) finished by 1957

[1] "Nonita" in the original Italian. The English version is in Eco's *Misreadings*, trans. William Weaver (London: Jonathan Cape, 1993), pp. 7-14.

[2] *Misreadings*, pp. 7-8.

[3] Eco is no less a multilingual writer than Nabokov judging by the list of autotranslations in his Foreword to *A Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1976), pp. vii-viii.

[4] *Eugene Onegin: A Novel in Verse by Aleksandr Pushkin*, trans. Vladimir Nabokov (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1975), Vol. 2, p. 151.

[5] Nabokov's dictum that he "loathe[s] popular pulp" is apposite. See *Strong Opinions* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1974), p. 117. Nonetheless, he was not above using popular materials as subtexts. A typical pairing of high and low occurred when he told his students at Harvard that the parodies of chivalric romances in *Don Quixote* were outdated even in their time: Cervantes "is like an author today who would attack Foxy Grandpa or Buster Brown instead of lunging against Li'l Abner or the fellows in infra-red tights." See *Lectures on Don Quixote*, ed. Fredson Bowers (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983), p. 40. This is not unlike Eco's attempt to *épater* academic readers of the 1960's by comparing Schroeder (of *Peanuts* fame) to Tonio Kröger. See Eco's *Apocalypse Postponed*, ed. Robert Lumley (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994), p. 43.

[6] *Pale Fire* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1962). *Foucault's Pendulum* [orig. *Il pendolo di Foucault*, 1988], trans. William Weaver (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989). Paginal references will be given in parentheses in the text.

when Nabokov first sketched the plot of Kinbote's narrative in a letter,[7] but at the same time he was preparing the annotated editions of *A Hero of Our Time* (trans. D. Nabokov, 1958) and *The Song of Igor's Campaign* (1960). The form shared by *PF* with such scholastic efforts was described by Nabokov in his 1955 essay on translating Pushkin where he demanded "copious footnotes, footnotes reaching up like skyscrapers to the top of this or that page so as to leave only the gleam of one textual line between commentary and eternity."[8]

As everyone knows, this scheme, with its attendant notion of "literal" translation, created a schism between Nabokov and his critics, and traces of the polemic are seen on the pages of his subsequent fiction (in *Ada* and elsewhere). But while the philological issue remains as controversial as ever,[9] to my mind more was at stake than just the question of whether rhyme should be preserved when translating *Onegin*. What Nabokov was propounding was a veritable theory of literary interpretation (despite his claim that he "do[es] not believe in *any* kind of 'interpretation'").[10] Moreover, if we rephrase the matter in the harsh jargon of contemporary criticism, it was a theory based on a somewhat monumental privileging of the "original" meaning. Nabokov wrote: "The term 'free translation' smacks of knavery and tyranny. It is when the translator sets out to render the 'spirit' — and not the textual sense — that he begins to traduce his author. The clumsiest literal translation is a thousand times more useful than the prettiest paraphrase."[11]

The theoretical issue might demand a bit more pondering. For now, let us just notice that as far as *PF* is concerned all such strictures on interpretive freedom are subverted. Insisting that "it is the commentator who has the last word" (29), Kinbote would seem to emerge as a thoroughly self-parodic embodiment of Nabokov's thesis that "the pursuit of reminiscences may become a form of insanity on the scholiast's part."[12] I will return to some features of this parody below.[13]

As to Eco — a self-styled "medievalist in hibernation" who wrote his doctoral thesis on Thomas Acquinas[14] — he, too, has put his scholarly pursuits at the service of fiction. This is most obviously true of *The Name of the Rose* (1980) with its medieval setting and characters, though behind the facade of a historical novel the author is also conducting an inquiry into the nature and interpretation of signs. As Eco has noted, there is a ready-made analogy between the method of detection practised by his fictive "William of Baskerville" and the practice of a scientist and a semiotician.[15]

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[7] *Eugene Onegin*, Vol. 1, xi; *Selected Letters 1940-1977*, ed. by Dmitri Nabokov and Matthew J. Bruccoli (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989), pp. 212-213 [March 24, 1957]. See also Brian Boyd, *Vladimir Nabokov: The American Years* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991), pp. 379-380, 416-424.

[8] "Problems of Translation: *Onegin* in English." *Partisan Review* 22, 4 (1955), 512.

[9] For recent discussions, see Alexander Dolinin, "*Eugene Onegin*," in *The Garland Companion to Vladimir Nabokov*, ed. by Vladimir E. Alexandrov (New York: Garland, 1995), pp. 117-130; Harvey Goldblatt, "The Song of Igor's Campaign," *ibid.*, pp. 661-672; on *A Hero of Our Time*, see Nicholas O. Warner, "The Footnote as Literary Genre: Nabokov's Commentaries to Lermontov and Pushkin." *Slavic and East European Journal* 30, 2 (1986), 167-182.

[10] *Strong Opinions*, p. 263.

[11] "Problems of Translation", p. 296.

[12] *Eugene Onegin*, Vol. 2, pp. 32-33.

[13] For an ampler account of *PF* as a novel, see my "*Pale Fire*," in *The Garland Companion*, pp. 571-586.

[14] Umberto Eco, *Postscript to The Name of the Rose*, trans. William Weaver (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984), p. 14. For Eco's academic career and its relation to his first novel, see Theresa Coletti, *Naming the Rose: Eco, Medieval Signs, and Modern Theory* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988).

[15] *Postscript to The Name of the Rose*, p. 54. See also Coletti, *Naming the Rose*, pp. 2-3. One might notice the ubiquity of the detective motif in Eco and Nabokov: "Was he in *Sherlock Holmes*, the fellow whose / Tracks pointed back when he reversed his shoes" (PF, ll, 27-28).

In *FP* the concern with interpretation is overt.[16] Here we find Casaubon, who is the narrator as well, writing his doctoral thesis on the definitely esoteric subject of *Knights Templar*: the medieval order that, according to rumor, has continued to exist under the guise of Rosicrucians, Masons, and other secret societies (for bits and pieces of this history, see 77, 80-93, 95-102). His expertise is solicited by Belbo, an editor whose office is flooded by manuscripts on the Templars, and Casaubon becomes "a kind of private eye of learning" (224) whose job it is to gather cultural references into files of cross-referenced index cards. (We notice in passing the reoccurrence of this motif: see *PF*, 13, 18; *FP*, 225.)

With a third party (Diotallevi), Casaubon and Belbo go on to invent for their amusement an elaborate narrative involving a Knights Templar plan to gain control over the world. Proceeding from the "fundamental axiom" that "the Templars have something to do with everything" (375) they attempt to construct a network of coincidences and analogies pointing towards the secret plan, until something goes awry. What started as a private joke is leaked to a shadowy group of believers in Rosicrucian lore (called "the Diabolicals"); they set out on a pursuit to learn more, and the threesome learn that there is (mortal) hazard involved in meddling with the line separating truth from fiction: "If you invent a plan and others carry it out, it's as if the Plan exists. At that point it does exist" (619).[17]

This lesson turns out to bear directly on Eco's recent theoretical work, which has everything to do with the problem of finding the *limits* of interpretive acts.[18] Casaubon and his companions admit of no limits at all ("The Templars have something to do with *everything*"), which provides a precise counterpoint for Eco's attempt to cope with the "indisputable fact […] that *from a certain point of view everything bears relationships of analogy, contiguity and similarity to everything else*."[19] I will again return to this, but apparently Eco's novel, not unlike Nabokov's, presents us with a fictional embodiment — a huge one, to be sure — of the theoretical dicta uttered by its author. Eco writes: "To say that a text potentially has no end does not mean that *every* act of interpretation can have a happy ending."[20] *FP* does not end happily; of Nabokov's novel we may not be so certain. Let us look at the two texts more closely.

Stylistic Games

Acutely self-conscious writers both, Eco and Nabokov share a predilection for linguistic play of particular kind. What I have in mind is, first, Nabokov's tendency to play games with the alphabet — a habit capsuled in the words of a dethroned king from one of his novels: "Abdication! One third of the alphabet."[21] In *PF*, we remember, the punning play extends from the names of the royal family, King *A*lfin, Queen *B*lenda, King *C*harles to Charles *X*avier, Queen *Y*aruga, and *Z*embla. Skaters in Shade's poem cross Lake Omega "from Exe to Wye" (l. 494). The books on the shelves of Kinbote's rented house are arranged "from Amber to Zen" (83), as are his landlord's offspring: Alphina, Betty, Candida, and Dee G[oldsworth].

All but identical instances can be found in *FP* where the three heroes are aided by the computer "*A*bulafia" (named after a past master in "the science of the combination of letters",

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[16] Discussions of Eco's second novel include Brian McHale, "Ways of World-Making: On *Foucault's Pendulum*," in his *Constructing Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 165-187, and the essays by various hands in the *Foucault's Pendulum* issue of *Modern Language Notes* 107 (1992); this issue includes a metacommentary by Eco, "Reading my Readers," 819-827.

[17] Compare Kinbote on the truth value of his narrative: "My dear John […] do not worry about trifles. Once transmuted by you into poetry, the [Zemblan] stuff *will* be true and the people *will* come alive" (*PF*, 214).

[18] Umberto Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990); *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992).

[19] *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, p. 48.

[20] *The Limits of Interpretation*, p. 6; *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, p. 24.

[21] *Pnin* (London: Heinemann, 1969), p. 85.

33). The names of *B*elbo, *C*asaubon, and *D*iotallevi form a sequence that could be easily continued — despite Eco's own rebuttal that "the alphabetical series ABCD is textually irrelevant if the names of the other characters do not bring it to X, Y, and Z."[22] What would stop us from adding to the series *E*co himself, *F*oucault (who invented the Pendulum), the publisher *G*aramond, and so forth? The search for a full series is taken *ad absurdum* in the novel when the heroes program their computer to generate, among other things, a 720-item catalogue of all possible anagrams of IAHVEH (quoted on 38-40) — which again recalls *PF* with its palindromic names (Jakob Gradus, Sudarg of Bokay), paronomasia, or games of "word golf." Kinbote's report of having accomplished "hate-love in three, lass-male in four, and live-dead in five (with 'lend' in the middle)" (*PF*, 262) is matched by Casaubon's files of index cards arranged according to "associations": he suggests an associative route "from sausage to Plato in five steps" (*FP*, 225).[23]

Such echoes need not signal an influence, of course, but what they reveal is an interest shared by the two authors in the potential of artificial *systems:* the "accidents and possibilities" (*PF,* l. 629), the "swarm of all possible worlds" (*FP*, 37) that the combining of a finite set of elements (linguistic or other) brings forth. As Eco points out, this is an ancient urge: the game with letters can be traced back to the medieval Kabbalists who "maintained that the Torah was open to infinite interpretation because it could be rewritten in infinite ways by combining its letters,"[24] and a related notion, even if playfully applied, motivates his own practice as well as Nabokov's.[25]

This is the notion also underlying the two authors' games with *numbers*. Nabokov often noted that he was "fascinated by fatidic dates"; the attitude is not alien to Eco.[26] I single out the following discourse on numerological magic by Diotallevi:

> […] throughout the occult tradition 666 was the number of the Beast, and the six hundred and sixty-sixth year after 1344 is the year 2000,[27] when the Templars' revenge will triumph […]. Thirty-six knights for each of the six places makes two hundred and sixteen, the digits of which add up to nine. And since there are six centuries, we can multiply two hundred and sixteen by six, which gives us one thousand two hundred and ninety-six, whose digits add up to eighteen, or three times six, or 666.

Diotallevi would perhaps have gone on to a numerological reconstruction of the history of the world if Belbo hadn't stopped him with one of those looks mothers give children when they are acting up (*FP,* 138-139).

Elsewhere in *FP*, the digits of "1344" are reshuffled into "1314," the fatidic year when the Templars are said to have gone into hiding (101). The digits even turn up in the approximate value of *pi* (= 3,141), governing the swing of the Pendulum and evoked at various points in the narrative (1, 288-289, 599).

But don't we detect here a suspicious resemblance to the Nabokovian play with numbers — especially with his official birth date April 23 (= 23.4.)? These numerals are included anagrammatically in the famous address in *Lolita*, "342 Lawn Street;" in the number of the

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[22] "Reading My Readers," 827.

[23] "Sausage, pig bristle, paintbrush, Mannerism, Idea, Plato" (*FP,* 225). Eco uses an analogous example in *The Limits of Interpretation,* 27.

[24] *The Limits of Interpretation,* p. 51. The same point is made by Diotallevi *(FP,* 33).

[25] Compare the claim in *Bend Sinister* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1972), 60, that "all men consist of the same […] letters variously mixed."

[26] *Strong Opinions,* p. 75. A deceptively Nabokovian instance of Eco's concern with dates occurs in one of his published lectures when he illustrates the nature of "truth" with this example: "As a matter of fact, it is true that today is April 14, 1993, only within the framework of the Gregorian calendar." See *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1994), p. 88. Well, yes. According to the Julian calendar it would be April 1, and he may not be telling the truth after all!

[27] Actually: 2010. Either Eco or his character nods.

hotel room (342) shared by Humbert and Lolita, and — magically enough — in the authentic telephone number of the Nabokov home in pre-revolution St. Petersburg (given in *Speak, Memory)*: "24-43, *dvadtsat chetyre sorok tri.*"[28]
23.4. = <1+1>34 = 1314/3.141. A fluke, surely. But it drives home the point suggested by either writer: possibilities for combination are everywhere; or "with numbers you can do anything" (*FP*, 288).

Paranoia, Conspiracies, Referential Mania

The name of Kinbote's Zembla, he tells, is not derived from "the Russian *zemlya*, but [from] Semberland, a land of reflections, or 'resemblers'" (*PF*, 265). Of the latter-day followers of the Templars we are told by Casaubon: "They identified fragments of their muddled mythology as moments […] joined in a logical, irrefutable web of analogy, semblance, suspicion" (*FP*, 619).
Everyone is on the lookout for "(re)semblances" in the two novels. Casaubon and his companions base their story of the Templars on the premise that it can be linked to anything, only to find that the rule works too well. Shade keeps searching for "Some kind of link-and-bobolink, some kind / Of correlated pattern in the game" (*PF*, ll. 812-813) while Kinbote seeks — desperately — to establish connections between his narrative and Shade's poem. The result in both cases is, to borrow a metadescription from Eco's novel: "A great feast of analogies, a Coney Island, a Moscow May Day, a Jubilee Year of analogies" (*FP*, 361).
Rephrasing this in still other terms, we can relate the preoccupation with analogies, resemblances, and so forth to the theme of *paranoia* that is said to be endemic of postmodernist fiction.[29] A fundamental principle of the paranoid world view is enunciated by Belbo, and his formula has relevance for both novels: "Any fact becomes important when it is connected to another. The connection changes the perspective; it leads you to think that every detail of the world, every voice, every word written or spoken has more than its literal meaning, that it tells us a Secret. The rule is simple: Suspect, only suspect" (*FP*, 377-378).
There is also the allied theme of *conspiracies:* Shade mentions "a great conspiracy / Of books and people" (*PF*, ll. 171-172) which draws a long note from Kinbote on the team of "Shadows" trailing the Zemblan king (148-154); in *FP* Belbo is murdered by the no less sinister "Diabolicals," and at places Eco's novel reads as a veritable encyclopedia of conspiracy theories, fictional as well as real (*e.g.* the references to the infamous *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, also appropriated by Nabokov).[30]
In their deployment of such themes, Eco's and Nabokov's novels may be regarded as exemplary postmodernist texts. I would only add that Nabokov has been here before. We remember the description of *referential mania* from the 1948 story "Signs and Symbols" anticipating both Kinbote and Eco's paranoiacs:

> In these very rare cases the patient imagines that everything happening around him is a veiled reference to his personality and existence. […] Phenomenal nature shadows him wherever he goes. Clouds in the staring sky transmit to one another, by means of slow signs, incredibly detailed information regarding him. His inmost thoughts are discussed at nightfall, in manual alphabet, by darkly gesticulating trees. Pebbles or stains or sun flecks form patterns representing in some awful way messages which he must intercept. Everything is a cipher and of everything he is the theme.[31]

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[28] For more on these (and other) numerals, see my "Nabokov's Poetics of Dates." forthcoming in *Scando-Slavica* 41 (1995).
[29] This point is developed by McHale with regard to Eco's novel. See *Constructing Postmodernism*, p. 165-172.
[30] *FP*, 443, 480, 482-483. Compare Nabokov's *The Gift*, trans. Michael Scammel and Dmitri Nabokov in collab. with the author (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1963), p. 179.
[31] Vladimir Nabokov, *Nabokov's Dozen* (New York: Doubleday, 1958), p. 69.

We remember, too, that the hero of this story has a cousin, "now a famous chess player".[32] And we remember grandmaster Luzhin in *The Defense* who shares the same paranoid awareness of "combinations" constructed beyond his ken. The conclusion? Whether we call Nabokov a postmodernist or not, he is certainly a precursor and, indeed, a modelling presence behind the novelistic games played with zest by Eco and his fellow practitioners today.[33]

Theory of Interpretation

Any theory that we may extract from a novel like *PF* depends on our own interpretation of Kinbote's role as a narrator. I do not wish to rehearse the debate (to my mind unresolvable) about "authorship" in the novel.[34] Still, it seems useful to look again into Kinbote's claim that as a commentator (= interpreter) of Shade's poem he has "the last word".

The paradox of *PF*, I maintain, is that — against all odds — Kinbote has it right in the end. To be sure, he is a figure of fun and the butt of Nabokovian ironies. As we have noted, his reading of the poem stands as a parodic inversion of the demands for fidelity voiced in Nabokov's critical works. Nonetheless, Kinbote is also granted considerable imaginative control in the novel — *not* in the sense that he would go about "inventing" Shade,[35] but because in his capacity as the editor it is only he who can order the network of textual correlations between the commentary and Shade's poem.

As one instance I mention the artfully recurring motif of *azure* which makes its appearance in the opening of the poem: the emblematic bird is slain due to "the false azure in the windowpane" (l. 2). Shade employs the motif when he tells that prior to her suicide Hazel stood before "the azure entrance" of a glass-framed restaurant (l. 397). But so does Kinbote who says that the assassin Gradus first landed at "the Cote d'Azur airport" (250), stayed in "Hotel Lazuli" (*ibid.*), and that after the shooting it was Shade who lay prone "with open dead eyes directed up at the sunny azure" (295). Here the theme of falseness from the poem is actualized in the killer's error about the identity of his victim, and the notion of immortality reserved for the artist is enhanced through verbal repetition. Despite his physical death, the poet "lived on, flew on, in the reflected sky" (l. 4).

If Kinbote is the source of such stylistic recurrences, he would seem to have himself adopted the poetics of "link-and-bobolink" from Shade. It is he who establishes the pattern sought by the poet, and the novel as a whole may be read as a powerful vindication (aside from being a parody) of the interpreter's creative rights. We might even go on to claim that — in his fiction, at any rate — Nabokov is able to overcome his austere stand as a theorist, for it is only through a full-scale suppression of the original meaning of Shade's text that Kinbote is allowed to pull off his interpretive feat.

In Eco's case, again, precisely the opposite seems to be true. In other words, Eco also discusses the interpreter's capacity to create new connections — this is what *FP* is all about — but he is made anxious by the matter, and his anxiety shows.

We should remember that Eco started out as a proponent of an apparently radical theory of meaning, championing "openness" and the plurality of interpretations. In his study "The Poetics of the Open Work" (publ. the same year as *PF*) Eco lauds texts — literary as well as musical and visual — which "reject the definitive, concluded message" and, like mobiles (by Calder, for instance), "continuously create their own space and the shapes to fill in".[36] It is

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[32] *Ibid.*, p. 71.

[33] It is just, then, that at least one of these practitioners pays overt tribute to Luzhin's paranoia. See Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses* (Dover, Del.: Consortium, 1992), p. 311. Rushdie also quotes Kinbote's Zemblan nurse: "*Minnamin, Gut mag alkan, Pern dirstan*" (*ibid.*, p. 441; *PF*, 300).

[34] For a summary of the rivalling interpretations, see my "*Pale Fire*," pp. 575-576.

[35] *Pace* Boyd (*The American Years*, 444-445, 710) who misrepresents this position, I fear.

[36] Umberto Eco, *The Open Work*, trans. Anna Cancogni (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1989), p. 3, 12.

only of late that Eco has started to recant, possibly due to the advent of deconstruction and its effects on semiotic theory. As he has stated more than once, "in the course of the last decades, the rights of the interpreters have been overstressed."[37] And as a theorist Eco has striven mightily to establish what he terms "the intention of the work" (*intentio operis*) as a norm for regulating such rights.[38]

As a translator of *Onegin*, Nabokov would hardly have argued with such efforts; we have seen that he was all for rendering the original "intention" of the Pushkinian text. But the fictive uses of this issue by our two authors differ quite tellingly.

For all his stylistic dexterity in *FP*, Eco has still written a basically straightforward parable of his concerns as a semiotician. The story of his three interpreters has an unmistakably unhappy ending, and there is little reason to doubt Eco's approval of the position reached by Casaubon: "I have come to believe that the whole world is an enigma, a harmless enigma that is made terrible by our own mad attempt to interpret it as though it had an underlying truth" (639). As if to ensure the seriousness of his message, Eco even introduces the figure of Lia, Casaubon's *fiancée* and a great stickler for realism. Lia is allowed to voice statements like "archetypes don't exist; the body exists" (362).[39] And it is Lia who supplies this thoroughly corporeal reading of numerological magic: "You are one and not two, your cock is one and my cunt is one, and we have one nose and one heart […] we have two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, my breasts, your balls, legs, arms, buttocks […]" (363) — all of which may be fine for limiting interpretations, but some readers might still be reminded of Kinbote: if such pedestrian reading is all there is to it, "there is no sense in writing poems, or notes to poems, or anything at all" (*PF*, 207).

To sum up: we are left with shadows of differences. Eco started out as a radical theorist, toned down his position, and ended up preaching doom for his team of fictive interpreters. The pitch of Casaubon's last assertion that there is "nothing to understand" (*FP*, 640-641) veers close to weepy and does no credit to Eco's postmodernist posture. Nabokov, on the other hand, leaves theory behind in his fiction, gives rein to the fully subversive forces of fantasy, and once again undoes our effort to halt him at the crossroads of any previously trodden critical routes.

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[37] *The Limits of Interpretation*, p. 6; *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, p. 23. For Eco's dim view of deconstruction, see *The Limits of Interpretation*, pp. 32-37.

[38] For *intentio operis*, see *The Limits of Interpretation*, pp. 44-63.

[39] Again with full approval from Eco. See "Reading My Readers," p. 825.