

## Numero Zero Kindle Edition Umberto Eco

The idea that there once existed a language which perfectly and unambiguously expressed the essence of all possible things and concepts has occupied the minds of philosophers, theologians, mystics and others for at least two millennia. This is an investigation into the history of that idea and of its profound influence on European thought, culture and history. From the early Dark Ages to the Renaissance it was widely believed that the language spoken in the Garden of Eden was just such a language, and that all current languages were its decadent descendants from the catastrophe of the Fall and at Babel. The recovery of that language would, for theologians, express the nature of divinity, for cabbalists allow access to hidden knowledge and power, and for philosophers reveal the nature of truth. Versions of these ideas remained current in the Enlightenment, and have recently received fresh impetus in attempts to create a natural language for artificial intelligence. The story that Umberto Eco tells ranges widely from the writings of Augustine, Dante, Descartes and Rousseau, arcane treatises on cabbalism and magic, to the history of the study of language and its origins. He demonstrates the intimate relation between language and identity and describes, for example, how and why the Irish, English, Germans and Swedes - one of whom presented God talking in Swedish to Adam, who replied in Danish, while the serpent tempted Eve in French - have variously claimed their language as closest to the original. He also shows how the late eighteenth-century discovery of a proto-language (Indo-European) for the Aryan peoples was perverted to support notions of racial superiority. To this subtle exposition of a history of extraordinary complexity, Umberto Eco links the associated history of the manner in which the sounds of language and concepts have been written and symbolized. Lucidly and wittily written, the book is, in sum, a tour de force of scholarly detection and cultural interpretation, providing a series of original perspectives on two thousand years of European History. The paperback edition of this book is not available through Blackwell outside of North America.

Essays discuss poetry, communication, television, form, aesthetics, bad taste, and art

The Open WorkHarvard University Press

Beauty and ugliness are two sides of the same coin; by ugliness we usually mean the opposite of beauty and we often define the first in order to understand the nature of the second. But the various depictions of ugliness over the centuries are richer and more unpredictable than is commonly thought. The striking images and anthological quotations in *On Ugliness* lead us on an extraordinary journey through the passions, terrors and nightmares of almost three thousand years, where acts of rejection go hand in hand with touching instances of empathy, and an aversion to deformity is accompanied by seductive violations of all classical canons. With his characteristic wit and erudition, Umberto Eco draws on examples in art and literature from ancient times to the present day. Abundantly illustrated with demons, madmen, vile enemies and disquieting presences, with freaks and the living dead, *On Ugliness* is conceived for a vast and diverse readership, and is an invaluable companion volume to *On Beauty*.

In 1327, Franciscans in a wealthy Italian abbey are suspected of heresy, and Brother William of Bakersville arrives to investigate. His delicate mission is overshadowed by seven bizarre deaths that take place in the same number of days, and Brother William must turn detective to sort things out.

Contributi di: Alessandro Danovi, Stefano Olgiati, Sara Bertelli, Silvia Mauri, Alessandra Milani, Daniele Piacentini, Eliana Misurelli, Pier Luigi Deriu.

Daß er in den Mauern der prächtigen Benediktinerabtei an den Hängen des Apennin das Echo eines verschollenen Lachens hören würde, das hell und klassisch herüberklingt aus der Antike, damit hat der englische Franziskanermönch William von Baskerville nicht gerechnet. Zusammen mit Adson von Melk, seinem etwas tumben, jugendlichen Adlatus, ist er in einer höchst delikaten politischen Mission unterwegs. Doch in den sieben Tagen ihres Aufenthalts werden die beiden mit kriminellen Ereignissen und drastischen Versuchungen konfrontiert: Ein Mönch ist im Schweineblutbottich ertrunken, ein anderer aus dem Fenster gesprungen, ein dritter wird tot im Badehaus gefunden. Aber nicht umsonst stand William lange Jahre im Dienste der heiligen Inquisition. Das Untersuchungsfieber packt ihn. Er sammelt Indizien, entziffert magische Zeichen, entschlüsselt Manuskripte und dringt immer tiefer in ein geheimnisvolles Labyrinth vor, über das der blinde Seher Jorge von Burgos wacht ...

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