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METAPHORICAL SEMIOTICS AND THE CRIME SCENE: READING "*THE NAME OF THE ROSE*" THROUGH THE LENS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the integration of metaphor within semiotic frameworks for criminal investigations, mainly as represented in Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*. Physical traces, viewed as signs, are crucial for solving crimes, and according to Charles Peirce's concept, these indices are causally linked signs. However, this study highlights how metaphor also plays an essential role in the interpretive structure of the narrative. The metaphorical dimension enables a richer understanding of the plot and its philosophical implications. Through a mixed-method approach combining semiotic analysis and literary interpretation, this paper examines crime scenes in the novel, demonstrating how metaphors alongside indices, icons, and symbols enhance investigative reasoning. Ultimately, it argues that metaphors serve as rhetorical devices and epistemological tools that deepen the interpretive process in literature and forensic practice.

1. Introduction

Investigating crimes is a complex task that requires understanding and focus from the investigator, as it involves dealing with an act committed in the past by one or more individuals whose goal is to hide every clue that could lead to them. While the crime scene serves as a witness to the act, it is a silent witness, indicating actions without speaking. Thus, it is essential for the investigator to skillfully interrogate the place before listening to testimonies or understanding the victim's relationships and habits. The first step should always be to rush to the scene, preserve it, and observe its clues. Every crime scene has clues, whether spontaneous or misleading, and the investigator's task is to scrutinise them to interpret their meanings and conclusions. Therefore, no investigation can be performed without semiotics, as semiotics aid in interpreting linguistic and nonlinguistic signs. Moving beyond the arbitrariness of the relationship between the signifier and the signified, as proposed by Saussure and adopting Charles S. Peirce's triadic division, we find that some types of signs directly indicate their subject through causality (the index). Such is the type we see in a crime scene, even if the criminal has attempted to hide the traces. For example, a forensic scientist would not conclude that a body found floating on water died of drowning without an examination, nor would an investigator who finds a fingerprint on a glass believe it belongs to someone denying the act unless it matches the perpetrator's.

Semiotics, especially forensic semiotics, play a critical role in interpreting crime scenes by analysing the signs and clues left behind. The complexity of forensic semiotics lies in its ability to provide continuity between real crimes and their fictional representations, and it draws heavily on Charles S. Peirce's theory of abduction, which

is essential for investigators to hypothesise on the basis of clues (Danesi, 2019). Similarly, understanding and interpreting clues through semiotics in crime investigations requires inferential reasoning, including hypothetico-deductive methods. This helps investigators link traces of evidence, such as fingerprints, to potential perpetrators through well-structured semiotic analysis (Schuliar & Crispino, 2013). Moreover, signs at a crime scene serve as vital information, and investigators use a semiotic approach to infer what those signs imply, ontologically and normatively. Peircean inferential processes guide detectives in scrutinising the scene for clues that lead to the criminal, even when misleading attempts have been made (Sørensen et al., 2017).

However, the application of semiotics in criminal investigations extends beyond literary or fictional settings and is increasingly recognised in modern forensic practices worldwide. As specialised branches, forensic semiotics offer valuable tools for decoding the complex web of signs present in criminal activities (Danesi, 2019).

In addition to its scientific and analytical dimensions, the novel reveals how metaphor enriches the understanding of the crime scene as a narrative structure. A metaphor such as "the world is a book" frequently evoked by William transforms the act of investigation into an interpretive reading process. This figurative perspective underscores the importance of metaphor in literary texts, where interpreting a metaphor contributes to interpreting character motivations, moral conflicts, and broader philosophical themes. By incorporating metaphor as a foundational semiotic tool, this paper aims to bridge the gap between theoretical semiotic frameworks, figurative language, and practical investigative techniques, demonstrating how metaphors enhance literary comprehension and the effectiveness of crime-solving endeavors.

2. Research Objectives

Given the importance of examining and interpreting signs at a crime scene, this research aims to do the following:

1. Analyse the role of semiotics in crime scene investigations, focusing on how signs (indices, icons, symbols) function within the investigative process.

2. This study demonstrates the applicability of Charles Sanders Peirce's and Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theories in modern criminal investigations beyond their introductory applications.

3. Assess the generalizability of semiotic analysis in crime scene investigations to international contexts, highlighting its relevance in global forensic practices.

4. We expand the literature review to include key works on forensic semiotics and the function of metaphor in crime interpretation, thereby situating this study within the broader academic discourse on semiotic and figurative analysis.

3. Problem Statement

Given the importance of examining and interpreting signs at a crime scene, this research aims to observe criminal investigators' work at the scene by linking clues to their interpretations and assessing the accuracy of these interpretations in solving the crime puzzle. We chose the "monastery crimes" in the novel *The Name of the Rose* because it is a narrative that praises signs and their role in revelation, and it is among the seminal works of one of the contemporary semioticians. This leads us to the following problem:

What is the role of clues in the crime scene in the success of the investigation? Moreover, to what extent did Eco defend against discerning and interpreting signs, and how does the metaphorical structure of the novel enrich our understanding of both the investigative process and the literary depth of the narrative?

4. Signs and Semiotics
Sign

The concept of a sign and its associated study, semiotics or semiology, stems from the Greek roots *Simeon* (sign) and *logos* (science). Ferdinand de Saussure coined semiology, whereas Charles Sanders Peirce introduced "semiotic" as the English equivalent. In Arabic contexts, this term has been translated in various ways, including "science of signs," "semiotic sinology," and "evidence science," reflecting its interdisciplinary applications.

Semiotics

Ferdinand de Saussure described semiotics as the science that studies the life of signs within society. His model emphasises the binary relationship between the *signifier* (the form of the sign) and the *signified* (the concept it represents). This dual structure shows the inseparability of form and meaning, likened to two sides of a single coin (Thellefsen, 2024). Ogden and Richards (1923) later expanded this model into a triadic model

by adding the *referent*, the actual object or entity to which the sign refers. This enriched model helps explain the interaction between words, ideas, and real-world objects (Untoro & Rahyono, 2023).

Charles Sanders Peirce, however, provided a more extensive and logical categorisation of signs. For Peirce, semiotics is a branch of logic, ensuring clarity in thought and guarding against misinterpretation. He defined a sign as "something that stands for something else to someone in some capacity" (Dascal, 1987, p. 20). Peirce's triadic model consists of the following:

- **Icon**: A sign that resembles its object (e.g., portraits, maps).
- Symbols: Signs connected to their object through social conventions or rules (e.g., language, numbers).
- **Index**: A sign directly connected to its object through a causal or existential relationship (e.g., smoke as a sign of fire, footprints as a sign of presence).

The *index* is most critical for forensic investigations. It serves as the anchor between physical reality and interpretive insight. In crime scenes, indices such as bloodstains, broken glass, or disturbed objects provide tangible leads that connect investigators to the sequence of events. Peirce's emphasis on indices helps distinguish between accurate clues and red herrings, signs intended to mislead.

Metaphors and the Semiotic Function of Signs

In the context of *The Name of the Rose*, signs serve as investigative leads and take on metaphorical functions that deepen the literary experience. For example, the labyrinthine library is an indexical space (where clues are found) and a metaphor for knowledge, confusion, and interpretive challenges. William's recurring statement that "the world is a book" underscores how signs are analytical tools and narrative devices that transform reality into text.

Thus, understanding signs in this novel requires dual awareness: forensic precision to read indices as clues and literary sensitivity to interpret metaphors as representations of philosophical and theological tensions. The use of metaphor extends the role of semiotics from logical deduction to symbolic imagination, enabling a richer understanding of both the text and the crime it contains.

5. Crime scene
Concept of the Crime Scene

The crime scene is defined as the location from which physical evidence is extracted, aiding investigators in their search for the perpetrator of the crime. It serves as a potential location for the reenactment of the crime and may also encompass areas where the crime was planned, the weapon was hidden, and where the perpetrator fled. The extent of the crime scene can extend beyond the immediate vicinity of the criminal act to include secondary locations relevant to the crime's execution and aftermath. For example, the discovery of a body may lead to the actual site of the crime, as the criminal act could occur in one place, with the body subsequently moved for deceptive purposes, concealed, or if the victim managed to move away from the original scene postinjury (Ji, 2023).

Crime scenes are typically classified as follows:

- **A. The actual crime scene**: The immediate location of the crime. This scene may include direct physical evidence such as bloodstains, fingerprints, or weapons. It may involve a single site or a series of interconnected spaces.
- **B. Anticipated crime scene**: A location identified in advance by suspects or law enforcement as a potential site of criminal activity. This category is often informed by informant intelligence or behavioural profiling.

Elements of the Crime Scene

Every crime scene comprises three essential components: location, time, and person. These elements function semiotically as signs that the investigator must interpret within a structured framework.

- **Location**: This reveals the setting of the criminal act, offering contextual clues regarding how the criminal entered and exited, what was taken, and what was left behind. It may also hold metaphorical significance. For instance, in *The Name of the Rose*, the monastery functions as a literal setting and a symbol of intellectual repression.
- **Time**: Time is recorded through the sequence of the crime report, the investigator's arrival, and, when applicable, the victim's estimated time of death. These markers allow the reconstruction of events and the validation of alibis. Symbolically, time in the novel serves as a metaphor for the decay of knowledge and the urgency of uncovering hidden truths.

• **Person**: This element refers to the actors involved in the victim, perpetrator(s), and possible witnesses. Testimonies and interpersonal connections form a vital layer of semiotic interpretation. In Eco's narrative, the identity of monks and their roles within the monastery provide clues laced with symbolic and theological significance.

Thus, the crime scene in real and fictional contexts is more than a static space; it is a dynamic narrative structure filled with signs to interpret. Metaphorically, it acts as a textual page upon which the events are written, erased, and rewritten. Understanding its layout, chronology, and human elements allows the investigator and the reader to engage in an interpretive process that blends logical deduction with symbolic reading.

6. Interpreting the Crime Scene: Forensic Evidence and Metaphorical Meaning

The crime scene is crucial for revealing how the crime was committed and its motives, possibly revealing the criminal's identity and personality. It serves as the silent witness to the crime, conveying its testimony through material traces rather than verbal declarations. In doing so, the crime scene becomes a site of interpretation, its scattered items, stains, and marks functioning as signs that need decoding.

Contemporary investigators increasingly rely on scientific methods to extract and interpret such evidence. Fingerprints, DNA, footprints, and tire tracks are indices in Peirce's classification, as they exist in a causal relationship with the events or individuals they reference. These indices are the building blocks of investigative inference.

Indices in the Crime Scene

Every crime scene contains physical traces, regardless of how meticulously the criminal may attempt to eliminate them. The indicators can vary in form and implications:
• A chair and noose might metaphorically suggest themes of despair and suicide.
• The index of broken doors and scattered objects forced entry and resistance.
• Stab wounds in the back signal a surprise attack.
• Two coffee cups imply the presence of a second party, raising questions about relationships and betrayal.
• Grass stains on a body found in a car may indicate the actual scene of the murder elsewhere.
• Facial disfigurement or hand removal symbolically conveys an attempt to erase identity, often pointing to a personal connection between the victim and the killer.

The metaphorical undertone of these indices enriches their interpretive weight. For example, a severed hand may not only indicate an effort to obscure identity but also metaphorically sever the connection between the past (the victim's life) and the present (the crime scene).

Time sensitivity further compounds the importance of crime scene analysis. Traces degrade: wind can erase tires or shoe prints; rain may wash away blood or DNA. If the victim survives initially but dies later, critical testimony or bodily evidence may be lost. Therefore, investigators must act swiftly and meticulously to preserve the site, cordoning off the area, cataloguing and photographing the evidence, and recording the scene's state before altering it.

In *The Name of the Rose*, such practices are reflected in William's methodical observation of environmental and material signs. His semiotic interpretation mirrors the investigator's responsibility to read the crime scene not just as a physical space but also as a metaphorical narrative, each trace, a word in the story the scene tells. Understanding the crime scene as an indexical and metaphorical field enables more profound insight into the crime and the text.

7. Methodology

This paper employs a mixed-method approach, combining semiotic analysis with descriptive analytics to examine the crime scenes depicted in Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*. The methodological aim is to tease the intricate relationships between signs and investigative processes, particularly how metaphor and semiotics intersect in resolving fictional crimes.

7.1 Data collection

The primary source for this study is Umberto Eco's novel *The Name of the Rose*. It was meticulously reviewed to extract crime scene descriptions, indexical traces, iconic representations, symbolic codes, and investigative techniques employed by William of Baskerville. This selection process ensured a comprehensive and targeted dataset reflecting the narrative's forensic and literary dimensions.

7.2 Semiotic analysis

Using Charles Peirce's triadic model of signs, icons, indices, and symbols, the study identifies and interprets the types of signs present at each crime scene. The focus is placed on indices (e.g., bloodstains, footprints, and environmental disturbances), and their causal relationships and significance in moving the narrative and investigation forward are examined. Particular attention is given to metaphorical signs and how objects, settings, or conditions convey deeper figurative meaning (e.g., the labyrinth as a metaphor for epistemological confusion).

7.3 Descriptive-Analytical Method

The crime scenes, indicators, and deductive sequences are catalogued and systematically analysed. Each scene is broken down to reveal patterns, such as recurring investigative strategies or consistent uses of metaphor. This method permits the classification of the types of clues used and the symbolic systems that underpin the investigative work in the novel. For example, the recurrence of black ink as both a literal poison and a metaphorical marker of forbidden knowledge is recorded and interpreted.

7.4 Interpretive Strategies

William of Baskerville's deductive reasoning is examined in detail, particularly how he triangulates signs, testimonies, and prior knowledge to generate hypotheses, a process aligned with Peirce's abductive reasoning. These strategies parallel how a literary reader interprets metaphor in narrative, suggesting that William's role as a detective mirrors the reader's role as an interpreter.

7.5 Comparative Analysis

This study compares Eco's fictional representation of semiotic investigations with real-world forensic semiotics. Techniques used by William, such as reconstructing crime scenes from environmental clues, are aligned with modern investigative practices (e.g., forensic mapping, behavioural profiling). The analysis considers how metaphor enriches this comparison by providing a literary model for understanding interpretive complexity.

7.6 Methodological considerations

This research acknowledges that *the name of the rose* is a work of fiction that operates on multiple interpretive levels: historical, philosophical, and symbolic. Therefore, the analysis treats the novel as a narrative artifact and a semiotic laboratory. The combined semiotic-metaphorical method enables an enriched view of the fictional crime-solving process, offering valuable insights for literary theory and forensic epistemology.

8. Semiotics of the Crime Scene in *the Name of the Rose*
"The Name of the Rose"

The name of the rose is a novel by Italian author Umberto Eco (1932–2016), renowned for his scholarly contributions to semiotics, the philosophy of language, and literary theory. Among his most influential works are *Open Work* (1962), *The Role of the Reader* (1979), and novels such as *The Prague Cemetery*, *Foucault's Pendulum*, and *Numero Zero*. His debut novel, *The Name of the Rose*, published in 1980, received critical acclaim, including the Strega Prize (1981) and the Médicis Prize (1982). Translated into numerous languages, the novel has inspired adaptations, including a notable film. It has been the subject of extensive academic discussion, particularly by Eco in *The Limits of Interpretation* and *Postscript to The Name of the Rose*.

Title and Content

Eco's choice of title, *The Name of the Rose*, is intentionally ambiguous and invites interpretive plurality. He acknowledged the rose symbol as polysemous, capable of conveying many meanings, and perhaps none definitively (Eco, 2006). The title acts as an interpretive threshold, framing the novel as an open text and positioning the reader as an active interpreter.

In addition to being a historical detective novel, *the name of the rose* is a rich intertextual narrative that combines history, theology, philosophy, and literary theory. In a 14th-century benedictine monastery, the story is narrated by Adso, a young novice who recounts a seven-day investigation with his mentor, William of Baskerville. Their arrival at the monastery coincided with the apparent suicide of a monk, sparking a chain of mysterious deaths. The abbot enlists William's help to uncover the truth.

While unravelling crimes, William and Adso are drawn into the monastery's labyrinthine library, a metaphor for knowledge, secrecy, and the complexity of truth. The investigation culminates in the revelation that the murders are connected to a lost second book of Aristotle's *Poetics*, specifically his treatise on comedy. The book's pages were poisoned, killing anyone who read them. Ultimately, the library burns down, and the blind librarian responsible for the crimes perishes in the fire.

This narrative intertwines semiotic logic and metaphorical structure. Clues are encoded in language, symbols, and spatial design. The physical investigation parallels the intellectual pursuit of meaning, and William's deductive method reflects Eco's vision of interpretation as a fusion of logic and imagination. In this way, *the name of the rose* is a literary model for how signs and metaphors operate in unison, inviting the reader into a semiotic labyrinth where each sign must be read literally and figuratively.

9. Semiotics and Their Role in Unveiling William

From the beginning of *The Name of the Rose*, Umberto Eco highlighted the importance of signs as vehicles of revelation and tools for interpretation in the pursuit of knowledge. These ideas mirror Eco's academic contributions to semiotic theory and reflect his broader cultural and philosophical concerns. Although Eco himself does not appear as a character in the novel, his views on signs and meaning are embedded in the dialogue and actions of William of Baskerville.

This semiotic awareness is demonstrated early in the novel when William deduced the direction, colour, and even the name of the abbot's lost horse upon arrival at the monastery. His insight stuns Adso, who soon learns that "the world always speaks to us in signs" and that the key is to interpret them well (Eco, n.d.). William's observations of hoofprints in the snow and hair caught on branches are indices in the Peircean sense. These signs serve as proxies for absent objects, initiating a process of interpretation grounded in logic and inference.

First Crime Scene: Adelmo's Suicide

The first death William and Adso encountered was that of the young monk Adelmo, who was discovered dead at the base of a tower. Initially, classified as a suicide, the circumstances raise suspicion. The abbot, uncertain cause, nevertheless permits a sacred burial, hinting at ambiguity. William and Adso begin their analysis with the available indicators:

- Traces of collapsed earth over straw.
- The straw was mostly free of snow despite a recent snowstorm.
- There were no signs of moisture or snow inside the library, despite harsh winds.
- High, thick-glass windows in the library, which were rarely opened.
- Torn, ice-covered condition of Adelmo's body.
- A stone structure forming a makeshift ladder at the base of a wall.

Indicators at the Crime Scene

As William investigates, he emphasises that indicators are not definitive but suggestive signs to be interpreted in context. Testimonies from other monks, particularly Berengar, who last saw Adelmo alive, contribute to the interpretive framework. William considers both physical indices and narrative testimonies to form a coherent hypothesis.

The key deductions include:

- Adelmo was likely in a distressed mental state, potentially due to guilt over a sexual encounter.
- He left the choir, passed the cemetery, and headed toward a secluded part of the monastery.
- He likely threw himself from the wall, not the tower or library window.
- The rocks below acted as fatal landing sites; the landslide later displaced his body.
- The position of the straw and the absence of snow accumulation suggest that the collapse occurred after the fall.

Rejection of the alternative hypothesis

William carefully dismisses the theory that Adelmo was thrown from the library:

- If the windows were open, the wind would have forced snow into the room.
- The windows were structurally impractical for body disposal.
- No traces indicated interior disturbance.

This deductive reasoning reflects what Peirce called the "dynamic interpretant," wherein the interpreter moves beyond the immediate significance to explore layered meanings. William's process exemplifies the

transition from signs as mere representations to functional elements in reconstructing events. In Eco's narrative, these signs operate on both the forensic and metaphorical levels, reinforcing the novel's meditation on truth, interpretation, and the elusive nature of meaning.

10. Semiotic Interpretation

- **Indexical Signs**: Traces and physical evidence serve as indices indicating the events leading to Adelmo's death.
- **Interpretation Process**: William deduced that Adelmo committed suicide by jumping from the wall, using ladder-like rocks to ascend. The lack of snow on the straw indicates that the body fell before the storm. The absence of water inside the library suggests that the windows were not opened, countering the possibility of murder from within.

Connection to Semiotic Theory

- **Peirce Indices**: The physical traces causally linked to the event exemplify Peirce's concept of indices.
- **Inferential reasoning**: William's method aligns with hypothetico-deductive reasoning, forming hypotheses on the basis of the interpretation of signs (Schuliar & Crispino, 2013).

11. Second Crime Scene: The Murder of Venantius

Venantius, a monk and Greek scholar, had conversed with William shortly before his death. The next day, the pig herders found his body submerged head-first in a large vat of pig blood, with his legs sticking out in a cruciform shape. The ground was covered with snow, and the sky was clear.

Indicators at the Crime Scene:

- The face showed no swelling.
- Deep human footprints appeared in otherwise undisturbed areas.
- Some tracks were less pronounced, suggesting that they had been partially snowed over.
- A continuous trace led toward the dining hall.
- No wounds or bruises were visible on the body.
- A black substance was found on the fingers of his right hand.

William's immediate directive was to preserve the crime scene. He deduced key details through interpretive analysis:

- **No facial swelling** contradicted drowning, as confirmed by Severinus, indicating that Venantius died before submersion.
- **Snow as a recording surface**: William noted that snow "leaves obvious writings of human bodies" (Eco, n.d., p. 128).
- **Deep footprints in untouched areas** suggest that an individual has dragged a heavy object.
- **Shallow tracks** imply that they predate the morning snowfall.
- **A continuous trace to the dining hall** implied a dragged body from the library, not a death at the scene.
- **The absence of external wounds** supported the hypothesis of poisoning.
- **The black residue** was revealed to be poisoned, which was later confirmed by Berengar's similar death.

Eco reinforces the semiotic dimension when he writes, "the beings of the world... are like an open book..." (Eco, n.d., p. 129), warning that traces do not always point to their expected meanings. The criminal may strategically manipulate signs to mislead the investigator.

The decision to move the body away from the library, a location too sacred or secretive to reveal as a crime scene, implies intentional deception. This reinforces the notion that semiotic interpretation is an ongoing negotiation between appearance and meaning.

A confession by Remigio confirmed parts of William's hypothesis. He saw the body in the kitchen near a broken cup and wrongly assumed that it was where the body was discovered. This finding suggests that Venantius died from stomach poisoning after returning from the writing room and entering the kitchen to drink. Malachia, the librarian and one of the few with full access to the monastery's inner spaces, likely moved the body to the blood jar.

William's method again reflects Peirce's dynamic interpretant linking signs, spatial context, testimonies, and causal logic. The scene is both literal and metaphorical: a cruciform corpse in a vessel of blood symbolises

sacrificial punishment and concealed truth. Thus, Eco fuses forensic and symbolic reading, challenging readers in decoding the layers of significance embedded in the signs.

12. Semiotic interpretation (second crime scene)

- **Indexical and Iconic Signs**: Footprints and black substances are indices, whereas the body's cruciform position in the blood vessel is an iconic sign symbolising sacrificial or religious punishment.
- **Interpretation Process**: William infers that Venantius was already dead when placed in the vat, supported by the lack of facial swelling and evidence that the body was dragged from the library.

Connection to Semiotic Theory

- **Semiotic Gap and Inferential Processes**: Incomplete or misleading signs highlight the semiotic gap described by Sørensen et al. (2017).
- **Abduction**: William uses abductive reasoning, offering the most plausible explanation on the basis of semiotic analysis (Eco, 1980/2006).

13. The Third Crime Scene: The Murder of Berengar

Berengar was found dead in a monastery bath. His body showed signs of swelling, and there was a black substance on his fingers and tongue, indicating possible poisoning. The water around the bath was undisturbed, and his clothes were found neatly beside it.

Indicators at the Crime Scene:

- Swollen face and tight stomach.
- Naked body in the bathtub.
- There is no water trace or evidence of struggle.
- Black substance on his fingers and tongue.

William's Interpretation:

- The condition of the body indicated drowning, yet the poison traces suggested death by ingestion.
- Berengar entered the bath voluntarily, likely to relieve stress from being pursued.
- The poison came from the book's pages or cup absorbed via the fingers and ingested by reflex.
- Severino confirmed the nature of the poison and admitted to its earlier disappearance, which was likely stolen.

Semiotic Interpretation

- **Indexical Signs**: The body's state and black substance indicate the cause of death.
- **Interpretation process**: William deduced that the poisoning was linked to Berengar's handling of the forbidden book.

Connection to Semiotic Theory

- **Forensic Semiotics**: The causal chain of signs and events supports Danesi's (2019) principles of forensic semiotic analysis.

14. The fourth crime scene: The murder of Severino

Severino, the monastery's physician, was found with his head smashed inside his laboratory, which had been ransacked. A metal shaver bearing a cross was found nearby, bloodied and broken. Books and vessels were scattered across the room.

Indicators at the Crime Scene:

- The head was wound with blood and hair on a broken shaver.
- Torn books, displaced bindings.
- Leather gloves on the victim.
- The window was closed, and there were no fresh tracks in the snow.

William's Interpretation:

- Severinos are killed by blunt trauma, not poisoning, which is supported by the absence of black residue and head wounds.

- Gloves suggested awareness of poisonous dangers in books.
- Vandalism refers to a frantic search for a specific book.
- The criminal failed to take the book, which was likely still in the lab.
- Malachi had motive and access; he arrived before the others.

Outcome:
- Remigio was wrongfully convicted, on the basis of heretical documents, that he was hiding.
- William correctly suspected Malachi, who later retrieved and read the poisonous book.
- William's failure to search near the lab window allowed Pancio to find the book first.

Semiotic Interpretation
- **Indexical Signs**: Blunt-force trauma, scattered materials, and broken tools are direct indices of violent action.
- **Interpretation process**: William used spatial and causal cues to identify the motive and the perpetrator.

Connection to Semiotic Theory
- William's reading of the crime scene illustrates layered semiotic reasoning, moving from surface signs to deeper motives and concealment tactics.
- The analysis aligns with Eco's and Peirce's emphasis on the interpretant, especially the dynamic interpretant, where meaning evolves through contextual reasoning.

15. Relation to Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)

The integration of semiotic analysis *into the name of the rose* can be deepened through the lens of conceptual metaphor theory (CMT), as formulated by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). According to CMT, metaphors are not just stylistic flourishes but cognitive tools that structure human thought. They allow abstract concepts to be understood in terms of more concrete experiences. This perspective is particularly relevant to Eco's novel, where crime scenes, investigations, and signs often function as metaphors for more profound epistemological questions.

For example, the recurring metaphor "the world is a book" aligns closely with CMT's structural metaphors, framing the investigation as a reading process. The monastery's library is a physical knowledge repository and a conceptual metaphor for the labyrinthine nature of truth. Similarly, the poisoned book operates both as a literal murder weapon and a metaphor for the dangers of unchecked knowledge, a conceptual metaphor of "KNOWLEDGE IS DANGEROUS."

William's reasoning process exemplifies how metaphor guides interpretive behaviour. His use of abductive logic, anchored in semiotic theory, is enriched by metaphorical reasoning patterns. CMT reveals how William maps concepts such as "SEARCHING FOR TRUTH" onto spatial metaphors such as "ENTERING A LABYRINTH" or "PIECING TOGETHER A PUZZLE." These conceptual structures shape how William and the reader understand and navigate the narrative.

Thus, CMT complements Peircean semiotics in the novel by explaining how metaphors influence the cognitive frames that guide interpretation. In Eco's layered narrative, metaphor becomes a crucial cognitive and interpretive tool, demonstrating how abstract philosophical ideas are grounded in concrete investigative actions. This conceptual grounding further reinforces the fusion of logic and poetics, which defines William's investigative method and the novel's broader philosophical project.

16. Semiotic Interpretation (Fourth Crime Scene)
- **Indexical signs**: A head wound and a broken shaver with blood and hair indicate violent struggle.
- **Interpretation process**: William concludes that Severino was murdered during a frantic search for the forbidden book and that the scene was staged to mislead investigators.
- **Connection to Semiotic Theory**
- **Misleading Signs**: The deliberate scattering of materials represents an effort to generate false indices, echoing Eco's warning that signs may not always point to true intentions (Eco, 1980/2006).
- **Heuristics and Inferences**: William's interpretive approach relies on navigating between genuine and deceptive indicators, aligning with heuristic strategies in modern forensic analysis (Schuliar & Crispino, 2013).

17. Application to Modern Criminal Investigations

Contemporary forensic methodologies incorporate semiotic principles to better interpret physical and digital evidence. Modern crime scene analysis, whether examining blood patterns or digital metadata, depends on understanding these patterns as meaningful signs embedded in context (Leone, 2020). William's methods of analysing indices, triangulating with testimonies, and hypothesising causes are reflected in current practices.

For example, interpreting bloodstain patterns is a semiotic process grounded in Peircean indices, enabling analysts to reconstruct actions and trajectories. In digital forensics, symbols such as IP addresses or login patterns can indicate identity or motive, mirroring Saussure's view of symbols as arbitrary but rule-governed.

Moreover, modern investigations consider the possibility of misdirection. Staged crime scenes or planted evidence challenge investigators to distinguish between misleading and reliable signs, reinforcing the importance of interpretive awareness (Sørensen et al., 2017).

18. Generalizability and International Context

Semiotic analysis is adaptable across investigative contexts, offering a universal method to interpret clues, symbols, and indicators. While cultural variations may influence the meaning of certain signs, the logic behind indexical, iconic, and symbolic classification remains valid across societies. Investigators with semiotic training can better navigate unfamiliar cultural signs, improving accuracy and contextual awareness.

Global collaboration in criminal justice increasingly relies on shared semiotic frameworks to decode cross-cultural signs. Interpreting regional body language, local crime patterns, or subcultural symbols requires a grounded understanding of Saussurean and Peircean semiotics. This framework is essential in combating international crimes such as cyberterrorism and trafficking, where messages are encoded through specialised and culturally informed sign systems.

19. Discussion

The analysis of Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* reveals the crucial role of semiotics in both fictional and real-world investigations. Semiotic theory, particularly Peirce's triadic model, offers a nuanced method of interpreting crime scene evidence and linking it to broader investigative hypotheses. The novel demonstrates how signs, whether traces (indices), representations (icons), or codes (symbols), function in tandem to tell the story of a crime.

Indices as the Core of Investigative Work

Indices remain the foundation of forensic inquiry. William's ability to decode physical signs, such as footprints, stains, and spatial arrangements, demonstrates how signs function as empirical tools for reconstructing past events. The interpretation of these signs in *The Name of the Rose* mirrors real-world practices where investigators must decode events from residual evidence (Schuliar & Crispino, 2013).

Semiotic theory enhances this practice by offering interpretive flexibility. Peirce's concept of the dynamic interpretant allows investigators to rethink the meaning of signs over time. This becomes especially important when faced with deception, as in Venantius's case, where outwards appearances concealed the actual method and motive of murder.

Interpreting the Role of Icons and Symbols in Investigations

Icons and symbols are equally important. Visual cues, spatial diagrams, and object placements form iconic structures that help investigators simulate and test hypotheses. Eco's narrative uses these semiotic layers to guide William's thinking, and similarly, forensic experts today rely on visual reconstructions, 3D models, and symbolic interpretations to process crime scenes.

Symbols, which are more abstract and culturally dependent, require additional interpretive tools. In Eco's novel, the secret book is not just a weapon but a cultural artefact layered with symbolic meaning. Similarly, modern investigators face encrypted communication, subcultural symbols, or media-rich data sets that must be decoded through cultural literacy and semiotic expertise (Ardhianti et al., 2019).

Forensic Semiotics in the Global Context

The generalizability of forensic semiotics positions it as a powerful tool for international collaboration. Across jurisdictions, signs function similarly, even if their expressions differ. With transnational crime increasing, semiotic training becomes essential for interpreting diverse forms of evidence and bridging cultural gaps.

For both tracking symbols used by global criminal networks and reconstructing crimes through satellite and digital data, the semiotic method remains indispensable. From William of Baskerville's fictional inquiry to today's forensic labs, integrating semiotic theory into investigative processes empowers investigators to move beyond static data, engaging meaningfully with the narratives that evidence seeks to reveal.

20. Challenges and Future Directions of Semiotic and Metaphorical Analyses in Investigations

While semiotics, significantly when enriched by metaphorical interpretation, provide a powerful lens for understanding crime scenes, their application has limitations. A key challenge lies in the inherent subjectivity of sign interpretation. Unlike empirical forensic techniques such as DNA testing or ballistic reports that yield measurable and repeatable results, semiotic analysis involves interpretive reasoning that may differ among investigators. In *The Name of the Rose*, William repeatedly revises his theories in light of new signs, embodying the recursive and sometimes ambiguous nature of semiotic reasoning.

Challenges of Interpretation and Context

The clarity and availability of signs significantly impact the efficacy of semiotic analysis crime scenes where evidence is minimal, tampered with, or misleading present difficulties for reliable interpretation. Furthermore, as Eco's novel illustrates, signs may be deliberately constructed to mislead, creating metaphorical mazes that obscure rather than illuminate truth. These scenarios require the investigator to engage with indices and symbols and understand the underlying metaphorical structures that may suggest concealment or irony.

Another constraint is the cultural specificity of many signs. Understanding symbols and metaphors, particularly in international or cross-cultural investigations, requires a sophisticated awareness of local traditions, languages, and histories. For instance, religious metaphors in *The Name of the Rose* are comprehensible only within the context of medieval theology. Likewise, modern investigators must navigate culturally bound signs such as gang tattoos, ritual symbols, or regional gestures, which demand expertise in symbolic literacy (Akinwande, 2019).

Future of Semiotic and Metaphorical Analysis in Forensic Science

The future holds significant potential for advancing forensic semiotics through technological integration. Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning tools are increasingly used to detect patterns and decode signs, whether in surveillance footage, digital communication, or forensic linguistics. These tools can expedite the semiotic process by identifying recurring patterns in visual or textual data. However, despite these advancements, metaphorical and contextual interpretation remains a uniquely human capability. Machines may detect that "the world is a book" is a metaphor, but only a human investigator can unpack its implications in a forensic or philosophical context.

As cybercrime increases, the semiotics of the virtual world demand renewed attention. In cyber investigations, signs are primarily digital: IP addresses, metadata, digital signatures, and timestamps. These data points act as indices, but their arrangement and interpretation often rely on symbolic understanding. Moreover, the digital environment introduces new metaphors such as "digital footprints" or "phishing", shaping how crimes and criminals are conceptualised.

Conclusions

The semiotic exploration of *The Name of the Rose* reveals that effective criminal investigation hinges on empirical observation and an interpretive approach. William of Baskerville's crime-solving method underscores the foundational role of indices that speak through causality to reconstruct the sequence of events. His success lies in his ability to read the crime scene as one would a text, guided by forensic and philosophical logic. In this sense, Eco transforms the investigation into a metaphor for epistemological inquiry, where each clue becomes a word in the larger narrative of truth-seeking. Indicators at crime scenes, whether blood trails, disturbed snow, or the absence of expected signs, are not merely passive remnants of criminal acts. They act as active agents in uncovering truth, provided that they are read carefully. Eco, a semiotician by training, infuses William with the interpretive skills necessary to traverse a labyrinth of signs, some genuine, others deliberately misleading. The crimes of Venantius and Severino, in particular, exemplify the dual role of signs: as conveyors of truth and as instruments of deception. The novel thus illustrates how the investigator must navigate between surface and depth, between fact and meaning, and between presence and absence.

The metaphor deepens this framework by transforming the crime scene into a stage where abstract ideas take on a material form. The library becomes a metaphor for the mind, the poisoned book for forbidden

knowledge, and the snow-covered ground for the palimpsest of human action. Through metaphor, Eco teaches that investigation is not just about identifying who committed the crime but also about understanding how meaning is constructed, concealed, and revealed. Furthermore, the novel emphasises relevant investigative practices in modern forensics: the need to preserve the crime scene, the significance of time and environmental conditions, and the triangulation of physical indicators with testimonies. Forensic semiotics in fiction and real life demonstrate that clues are not static data points but parts of an evolving story. Their interpretation demands technical expertise and contextual, narrative, and metaphorical sensitivity.

In a world where crimes increasingly inhabit physical and digital spaces, the fusion of semiotic theory and metaphorical analysis becomes even more critical. Whether through footprints in the snow or data trails on a server, the signs left behind continue to speak. Moreover, as Eco's novel reminds us, we must learn to observe and read to uncover their truth.

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