

Foucault's pendulum essay



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In the book Foucault's Pendulum by an Italian philosopher, critic and novelist Umberto Eco which was published first in 1988 and its translation appeared later which was done by William Weaver the book is divided in segments numbering about ten. It mostly refers to things like the alchemy, the Kabbalah stone and the theory of conspiracy.

The title of the book refers to a pendulum which was designed by French who was a physicist known as Leon Foucault. It was for the demonstration of the earth's rotation which is significantly symbolic in the novel.

The conspiracy or the plot is all about some friends Belbo, Diotallevi and Cassaubon who were working for a publishing company known as Vanity in the city of Milan. Going about their job they came across manuscripts on theories of conspiracies of the occult. They saw they can do better and furthermore it can be more fun, so they invented their own for fun

As time went by Belbo, Casaubon and Diotallevi became obsessed with the so called Plan to an extent that they forgot it was game. Worse came to worst when other adherents of other conspiracies knew about their 'Plan' and took it very seriously even later on they came to believe that Belbo has the key to a certain treasure the Knights Templar which was lost. Some other plots are also made to boost the theme of their 'Plan'. Belbo's experiences in Italy when he was a child in the time when 2nd world war was being fought justified his actions and the love Lorenzo Pellegrini and the constant want to stay away from any thought of failure.

In the case of Casaubon, the novel portrays him as a narrator who is in hiding for fear. The time of closure of the Parisian Museum (Musée des Arts

et Metiers). His fears grows mostly when he believes members of an underground society have taken Belbo hostage and chances are now that they are looking for him and thus decides to have a little stay in the museum . Casaubon who was a student in Milan in the 1970s, met Belbo when he was doing a thesis on the Knights Templars history while the latter was an editor in a publishing firm . Their friendship is boosted when Belbo invites his new found friend to read a manuscript of a non-fiction novel or book on the templars . In their meeting Casaubon meets Belbo's friend and colleague Diotallevi, who is a cabalist . The book they come across authored by a Colonel Ardenti is claiming that hidden code of a manuscript has given out a secret plot of then templars to rule the world or take it over

This conspiracy is for the revenge of killings of the leaders of the Templar by the King of France who disbanded their order. Colonel Ardenti adds that the guardians of the secret treasures were the Templars . The secret treasure was also thought to have the Holy Grail which the author postulates to be radioactive. According to the Colonel's theory, after the Roman Catholic and the French disbanded the Templars on heresy basis, some of them escaped and had cells around the world. They are mooted to be meeting at intervals in some places to exchange information concerning the Holy Grail . In the future or some time later the cells will unite to discover the location of the Grail and have a dominion over the whole world . The Colonel also asserts that the Templars were to take the world over in 1944 but the plan was interrupted. In the twist of events the Colonel Ardenti mysteriously disappears Belo and Casaubon meets him. The two are later

on investigated by a state investigator who tells them that his job is to investigate revolutionaries and people hinted to be in the occult

Casaubon later on meets a woman from Brazil named Amparo and they had a romantic relationship forcing him to leave Italy and follow her in Brazil spending two years there . In Brazil he learns about the Caribbean and their spiritualism . He meets a man named Aglie who seems to be knowledgeable on Occults. While he was still in Brazil, his friend Belbo sends him a letter telling him that he has gone to a meeting of occults . Casaubon and his lover also attends another meeting in Brazil. Being a Marxist, Amparo was later troubled when her religious and spiritual ideologies were strongly contradicted by the Occult rituals ending their relationship and Casaubon returns to Italy.

Returning to Milan, he begins to work as researcher (freelance) giving him an opportunity to meet another woman called Lia they fell in love and have a child . In his quest for a permanent job, Casaubon is hired by his friend's boss a Mr. Garamond to do research on metals the company is manufacturing . Mr. Garamond also is the owner of the Manuzio a publishing company which later came up with the idea of publishing Occult books for the intention of attracting more authors. In the course of the publications, the three friends became deeply submerged in the manuscripts of the occult which had connections on different historical happenings and also they were able to make Aglie a reader

Beginning with Ardeni's manuscript, they came up with the "The Plan" developing it into a web of connections which was so intricate. Their first trial by Belbo's personal computer which they

had nicknamed Abulafia was used to randomly rearrange the texts. They used Abulafia's programs and files in creation of those connections and in inspiring the Plan which in the long run they ended up creating the Mary Magdalene theory of conspiracy which is at the centre of the Holy Blood and the Holy Grail.

Abulafia was of much use especially when the trio reached a more intricate mystery than they could solve. The evolution of the plan is slow but they later involved by the Knights Templar's who have the knowledge of some energy currents called the telluric which occurs during crusades. The Templars are later on destroyed and their members went into cells located in Europe and in the Middle East. According to the original theory of the Colonel, the Templar's meet occasionally in different places to share the plans sections slowly giving rise to the genuine one. It is at this stage that they will unite and use the telluric powers to own the world. The alleged instruments that they use is the Foucault's Pendulum and a map.

Even though the Plan at times is unworkable, the three editors becomes more involved used to their game to an extent that they think the conspiracy is a reality tale given that the colonel has disappeared with the original manuscript which is coded and nobody can give an explanation. Lia later on comes up and gives a interpretation which is somehow mundane, and tells the husband that document is just a list of deliveries and persuades

Casaubon to give up on the game as she could see some negative impacts upon him. Diotallevi also came to conclude later on that his cancer disease is because of the The Plan , he believes that his situation is brought about by a spiritual punishment by getting involved in mysteries

The three friends posted Aglie their plan of the occult telling him it is not theirs that somebody else presented to them . In that list they had organizations as the Rosicrucian's, Paulicians, Templars and the Synarchists. Another one which came up was the Tres but it was fictional. It was brought about twist Agle's mind. Belbo had to privately go to Aglie and describe to him the ' Plan' and also tells him he has the secret map of the Templar which he refuses to show making Aglie an angry man. Belbo is later framed by Algje as a terrorist and pushing him to ask for help from a De Angelis who is also a wanted man after a failed car bomb attempt thus he refuses to get involved. Casaubon receives the distress call fro Belbo and decides to trace him to Paris. He decides to make Aglie and his associates meet in the museum where the pendulum is . Aglie's people appears at the agreed hour and Belbo is also questioned on what he knows. Aglie and his people are angry because Belbo has much knowledge on the plan than them, so they try to force out the information . He tells them that the plan was a hoax and nonsensical, so they started rioting in which Lorenza is seriously stabbed and they hanged Belbo on the Foucault's Pendulum. In the ensuing confusion Casaubon escapes narrowly through the Paris city sewers and to the countryside where Belbo had grew up. He later learn that his friend Diotallevi died at mid-night of cancer related complications on the eve of St. John,

coinciding with the hour Belbo succumbed to the stabs and probably due to the fears that maybe the other group is after him .

The book ends sadly and we are told how Casaubon later meditated on the happenings inside the book, we are told he developed fears and delusions that he will be captured maybe by the Tres and he might also undergo the same treatment and humiliation his friend Belbo underwent through on failure to give any clue or any information they might feel they need. On reaching the

Farmhouse where his friend Belbo grew up. He found a kind of a diary and finds out that Belbo has had some experiences when he was twelve of age and has had some understanding of signs . In Casaubon's perception Belbo's behavior led him to create the Plan which eventually lead to his death. Which also inspired the need to recapture its meaning which he felt was lost.

Most books of this type mostly focus on the mysteries and puzzles to be solved and most of their chapters begin with quotes from books of esoteric. The author tends to avoid this kind of pitfall giving a blind eye on mysteries surrounding the Knights Templar. Even though the book is a conspiracy, it majors mostly on the characters development and their gradual transition to editors Belbo; in this entire book is a theme which is recurrent given that its narration is done by another person Casaubon who brief us with the files in Abulafia. The passages written mostly major in Belbo's life as a child, and his never ending feeling of failure and his deep rooted feeling for Lorenza

In this book Casaubon is portrayed as somebody who is scared thus he looks down upon himself and unworthy he is a known scholar and he never rests in

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his quest for knowledge. His character pushes him to take part in some unexplainable events. Belbo in the other way is somebody who is there to seek his internal peace allowing himself to be submerged and finally get consumed by the ' Plan' which they themselves made.