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Seminal- influential

Pointing out his novels, Mukund mentioned that he became astoundingly famous after the publication of The Name of the Rose. From a famous academic, he went on to become a famous novelist though he had written many more scholarly works (20) than novels (5).

Umberto Eco corrected that he had written over 40 non-fiction pieces.

Amazed at hearing about Eco’s over 40 scholarly articles, one of which was on the study of signs (semiotics), he asked if he was bothered when people remembered him as the famous novelist.

Umberto Eco replied to Mukund by accepting that yes, it did bother him being identified as a novelist. Umberto, on the other hand, identified himself with the academic community because he considered himself a university professor who wrote novels only on Sundays. He also attended academic conferences as opposed to Pen clubs and writer’s meetings. But on the other hand, Eco accepted that he was well-aware that by writing novels, he was reaching a wider audience because one million people would not obviously be interested in stuff on semiotics.

Mukund changed the topic and mentioned that The Name of the Rose was a very serious novel and still it managed to attract a large audience. It dealt with detective stuff and also metaphysics, theology and medieval history. He asked Umberto if he was at all surprised by his success.