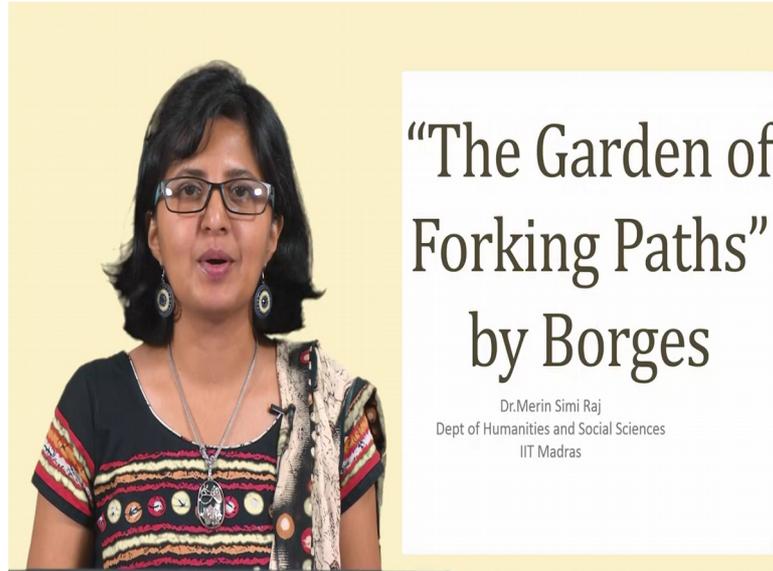


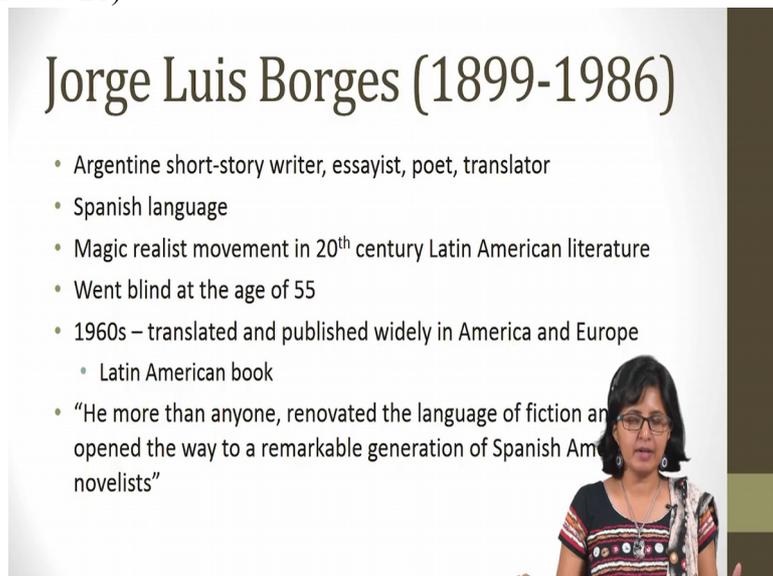
**Introduction to World Literature**  
**Professor Doctor Merin Simi Raj**  
**Department of Humanities and Social Studies**  
**Indian Institute of Technology Madras**  
**Lecture 06**  
**The Garden of Forking Paths by Borges - Part I**

(Refer Slide Time: 00:11)



Good morning everyone. I am happy to welcome you to today's session where we talk about renowned short-story by Borges titled The Garden of Forking Paths.

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Borges was born in 1899 and he lived until 1986. He is considered as one of the best storytellers in the twentieth century and his works have now received much critical acclaim and international attention.

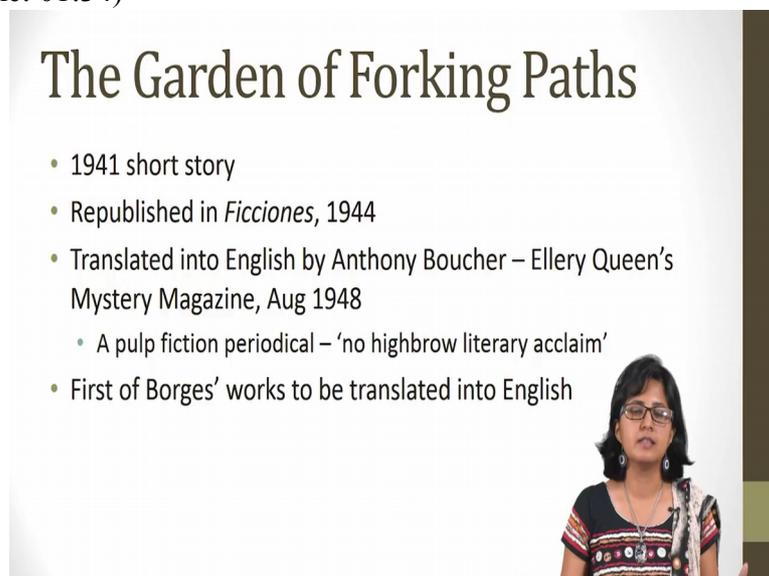
He was an Argentine short-story writer, an essayist, a poet and translator. He wrote in Spanish language and the works that are available to us are in the form of the translations from Spanish to English.

He is said to have been one of the pioneers of the Magic realist movement in the twentieth century Latin American literature. Except he we went blind at the age of 55. But the kind of output, literary output that he left behind was prolific.

By 1960s, he was a well-known figure in the international literary scene. His works began to be translated and published widely in America and Europe. This could also be seen as part of the Latin American book.

It is said about Borges that he, more than anyone, renovated the language of fiction and that has opened the way to remarkable generation of Spanish American novelists. He is certainly considered as one of the greatest storytellers and the best short-story writers who had ever lived.

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The Garden of Forking Paths

- 1941 short story
- Republished in *Ficciones*, 1944
- Translated into English by Anthony Bonner – Ellery Queen’s Mystery Magazine, Aug 1948
  - A pulp fiction periodical – ‘no highbrow literary acclaim’
- First of Borges’ works to be translated into English

A small video inset in the bottom right corner of the slide shows a woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a colorful patterned top, speaking.

The story that we are today looking at, The Garden of Forking Paths, it was originally written in 1941. This was republished in 1944 in Borges collection of short stories titled *Ficciones*.

It was translated into English by 1948 and the translation was done by Anthony Boucher. The translation appeared first in Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine which was not a high-brow literary magazine but it was a pulp fiction periodical.

It is just another irony of the literary history and criticism that the work which is initially published as a detective fiction in one of the pulp fiction periodicals went on to become one of the greatest canonical works ever. This incidentally was also first of Borges work to be translated

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into English. The story itself is written in first person narrative. It is in the form of the deposition. There are multiple perspectives from which we can access this short story.

It has lent itself to a lot of modern critical, theoretical practices. It is seen as the work that pre-dated post-modernism even before post-modernism actually began in the 1960s. It is considered as one of the earliest representations of magic realist narrative.

Deleuze and Guattari, their framework of the Rhizome can also be used to talk about this work, the fragmentariness with which the story is narrated and the labyrinthine structure in which the plot unfolds, those are the things which have received utmost attention as far as the critical acclaim and response is considered.

We however begin taking a look at the story by doing a close reading of this work. It is not a, the kind of a story which would readily give away its meaning or its summary. When you go through the story yourself, you will realize that it employs an unconventional narrative form.

And that is not the form of a conventional story. It does not begin somewhere and it does not have the usual elements which are part of a story.

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## The Garden of Forking Paths

To Victoria Ocampo

In his *A History of the World War* (page 212), Captain Liddell Hart reports that a planned offensive by thirteen British divisions, supported by fourteen hundred artillery pieces, against the German line at Serre-Montauban, scheduled for July 24, 1916, had to be postponed until the morning of the 29th. He comments that torrential rain caused this delay - which lacked any special significance. The following deposition, dictated by, read over, and then signed by Dr. Yu Tsun, former teacher of English at the Tsingtao Hochschule, casts unsuspected light upon this event. The first two pages are missing.

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... and I hung up the phone. Immediately I recollected the voice that had spoken in German. It was that of **Captain Richard Madden**, Madden, in Viktor Runeberg's office, meant the end of all our work and - though this seemed a secondary matter, or should have seemed so to me - of our lives also. His being there meant that **Runeberg had been arrested or murdered**. Before the sun set on this same day, **I ran the same risk**. Madden was implacable. Rather, to be more accurate, he was obliged to be implacable. **An Irishman in the service of England**, a man suspected of equivocal feelings if not of actual treachery, how could he fail to welcome and seize upon this extraordinary piece of luck: the discovery, capture and perhaps the deaths of **two agents of Imperial Germany**.

I went up to my bedroom. Absurd though the posture was, I closed and locked the door.



To appreciate this work better I would like you through a close reading of this story. It will also help you to identify different elements and different segments which would, the many parts which would make the whole.

Soon after the title *The Garden of Forking Paths*, we find this to Victoria Ocampo. Victoria Ocampo was a South American herself but she was also the, an activist and also a patron of what is, some considered as the, Golden period of Argentina's literary age.

And the work begins in the form of a historical narrative. There is the reference to the history of the World War; there is a citation from page 212. It talks of certain events which had happened during the First World War.

We get to know that through the age, through the year which is given here, 1916 and we know that this, this story is in the form of a deposition and this, like these prefatory remarks

would tell us the following deposition dictated by, read over and then signed by Doctor Yu Tsun.

He is the one who is narrating this. He is the former teacher of English and it also tells at the outset by way of the some details given by the manuscript editor that the first two pages are missing.

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I went up to my bedroom. Absurd though the gesture was, I closed and locked the door. I threw myself down on my narrow iron bed, and waited on my back. The never changing rooftops filled the window, and the hazy six o'clock sun hung in the sky. It seemed incredible that this day, a day without warnings or omens, might be that of my implacable death. In despite of my dead father, in despite of having been a child in one of the symmetrical gardens of Hai Feng, was I to die now?

Then I reflected that all things happen, happen to one, precisely now. Century follows century, and things happen only in the present. There are countless men in the air, on land and at sea, and all that really happens happens to me... The almost unbearable memory of Madden's long horseface put an end to these wandering thoughts.

In the midst of my hatred and terror (now that it no longer matters to me to speak of terror, **now that I have outwitted Richard Madden,** now that my neck bankers for



So the narration begins almost from the middle of the sentence where Yu Tsun, our narrator Doctor Yu Tsun who was a former English teacher, he begins to narrate this deposition.

And he is recalling a telephonic conversation at the outset which is that of Captain Richard Madden. And Richard Madden and we are also being told that Viktor Runeberg, he had been arrested or murdered and there is a footnote, there is an end note which we can see over here.

And this is again yet another thing which is not really part of a short story, not conventionally part of a short story but when we come towards the end of the story,

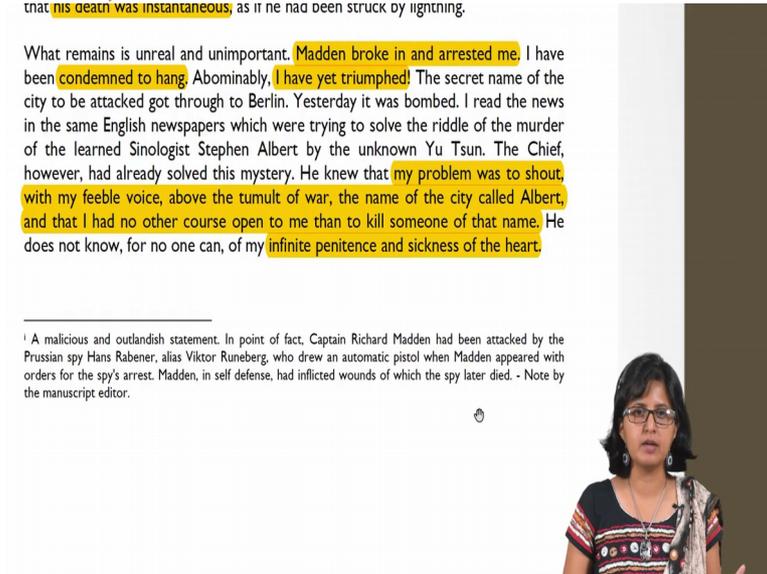
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that **his death was instantaneous**, as if he had been struck by lightning.

What remains is unreal and unimportant. **Madden broke in and arrested me**. I have been **condemned to hang**. Abominably, **I have yet triumphed!** The secret name of the city to be attacked got through to Berlin. Yesterday it was bombed. I read the news in the same English newspapers which were trying to solve the riddle of the murder of the learned Sinologist Stephen Albert by the unknown Yu Tsun. The Chief, however, had already solved this mystery. He knew that **my problem was to shout**, with my feeble voice, above the tumult of war, the name of the city called **Albert**, and that I had no other course open to me than to kill someone of that name. He does not know, for no one can, of my **infinite penitence and sickness of the heart**.

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<sup>1</sup> A malicious and outlandish statement. In point of fact, Captain Richard Madden had been attacked by the Prussian spy Hans Rabener, alias Viktor Runeberg, who drew an automatic pistol when Madden appeared with orders for the spy's arrest. Madden, in self-defense, had inflicted wounds of which the spy later died. - Note by the manuscript editor.



we find this end note here, just like you would find in a research paper.

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So we also get to know that this entire story in the form of deposition is made, made available to us by this manuscript editor who is not named. So the story needs to be understood, the facts and the main representations needs to be seen in this context.

This right at the outset, we get a taste of how unconventional this narrative is and how it presents fiction as if it is real, as if it is research material.

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... and I hung up the phone. Immediately I recollected the voice that had spoken in German. It was that of **Captain Richard Madden**. Madden, in Viktor Runeberg's office, meant the end of all our work and - though this seemed a secondary matter, or should have seemed so to me - of our lives also. His being there meant that **Runeberg had been arrested or murdered**. Before the sun set on this same day, **I ran the same risk**. Madden was implacable. Rather, to be more accurate, he was obliged to be implacable. **An Irishman in the service of England**, a man suspected of equivocal feelings if not of actual treachery, how could he fail to welcome and seize upon this extraordinary piece of luck: the discovery, capture and perhaps the deaths of **two agents of Imperial Germany**?

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And at the outset itself Yu Tsun, our narrator is also telling us that he runs the same risk of being arrested or getting arrested or being murdered.

And who is Captain Richard Madden? He is an Irishman in the service of England and it is also, there is also a reference to agents of Imperial Germany.

So we get to know that the one who is already died, Viktor Runeberg and Yu Tsun the narrator both of them are agents of Imperial Germany. They are currently working as a spy in England. Where exactly the location is, we will get to know shortly.

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In the midst of my hatred and terror (now that it no longer matters to me to speak of terror, **now that I have outwitted Richard Madden**, now that my neck hankers for the hangman's noose), I knew that the fast-moving and doubtless happy soldier did not suspect that I possessed the Secret - the name of the exact site of the new British artillery park on the Ancre. A bird streaked across the misty sky and, absently, I turned it into an airplane and then that airplane into many in the skies of France, shattering the artillery park under a rain of bombs. If only my mouth, before it should be silenced by a bullet, could shout this name in such a way that it could be heard in Germany... My voice, my human voice, was weak. How could it reach the ear of **the Chief**? The ear of that sick and hateful man who knew nothing of Runeberg or of me except that we were in Staffordshire. A man who, sitting in his



Here we also get to know that he has a Chief. He is working, Yu Tsun is working under a Chief and there is a certain information that he needs to pass on to the Chief.

And this is how the Chief is being described towards the end of the first page. The ear of that sick and hateful man who knew nothing about Runeberg or me except that we were in Staffordshire.

Staffordshire is in England, so this is the setting in England in Staffordshire and the year is 1916, this is during the period of First World War where our narrator Yu Tsun is working as a spy for Germany.

And now he is being pursued by Richard Madden who is an Irishman himself but he is now working for England. And Yu Tsun as name itself suggests, he is Chinese.

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useless but compromising keys to Runeberg's office, the notebook, a letter which I decided to destroy at once (and which I did not destroy), a five shilling piece, two single shillings and some pennies, a red and blue pencil, a handkerchief - and a revolver with a single bullet. Absurdly I held it and weighed it in my hand, to give myself courage. Vaguely I thought that a pistol shot can be heard for a great distance.

In ten minutes I had developed my plan. The telephone directory gave me the name of the one person capable of passing on the information. He lived in a suburb of Fenton, less than half an hour away by train.

I am a timorous man. I can say it now, now that I have brought my incredibly risky plan to an end. It was not easy to bring about, and I know that its execution was terrible. I did not do it for Germany - no! Such a barbarous country is of no importance to me, particularly since it had degraded me by making me become a spy. Furthermore, I knew an Englishman - a modest man - who, for me, is as great as Goethe. I did not speak with him for more than an hour, but during that time, he was Goethe.

I carried out my plan because I felt the Chief had some fear of those of my race, of those uncountable forebears whose culmination lies in me. I wished to prove to him that a yellow man could save his armies. Besides, I had to escape the Captain. His hands and voice could, at any moment, knock and beckon at my door.

Silently, I dressed, took leave of myself in the mirror, went down the stairs, spoke



And knowing that he is being pursued by Richard Madden we find that Yu Tsun is developing a plan. And we do not get to know what the plan exactly is. The entire story is about this plan unfolding.

And as the first step of this plan we find Yu Tsun going through the telephone directory. He picks up the name of one person who is capable of passing on the information. How? We would get to know as the story progresses.

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Silently, I dressed, took leave of myself in the mirror, went down the stairs, sneaked a look at the quiet street, and went out. The station was not far from my house, but I thought it more prudent to take a cab. I told myself that I thus ran less chance of being recognized. The truth is that, in the deserted street, I felt infinitely visible and vulnerable. I recall that I told the driver to stop short of the main entrance. I got out



And there is a brief reflection about why he is doing this. Why is he doing this spy work? And he says that he is not doing it for Germany.

No! Such a barbarous country is of no importance to me, particularly since it had degraded me by making me some, making me become a spy. Furthermore, I knew an Englishman, a modest man, who for me was as great as Goethe. I did not speak with him for more than an hour but during that time he was Goethe.

Towards the end of the story we will get to know that he is referring to a person whom he would meet and who would become central to the way this story unfolds. And something that we reserve this suspense, something that we hold on to now, it is reserved towards the end of the story.

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I was going to the **village of Ashgrove**, but took a ticket for a station further on. The train would leave in a few minutes, at eight-fifty. I hurried, for the next would not go until half past nine. There was almost no one on the platform. I walked through the carriages. I remember some farmers, a woman dressed in mourning, a youth deep in Tacitus' Annals and a wounded, happy soldier.

At last the train pulled out. A man I recognized ran furiously, but vainly, the length of the platform. It was **Captain Richard Madden**. Shattered, trembling, I huddled in th



He also pointedly and very directly tells us why he decided to carry out this plan. That is because he wished to prove that a yellow man could save his armies.

He is giving us some inside information about the many stereotypical notions that the Germans had of the Chinese and here is Yu Tsun a Chinese man who is working as a German spy in England and he is doing this, he is carrying out this plan to meticulous perfection even at the cost of many things.

It is because that he wanted to prove to his Chief who is German that yellow man can save his army, that the yellow man could save the German army. So we do find a subtle work of racism and subtle ways in which racist superiority gets asserted here.

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At last the train pulled out. A man I recognized ran furiously, but vainly, the length of the platform. It **was Captain Richard Madden**. Shattered, trembling, I huddled in the distant corner of the seat, as far as possible from the fearful window.

From utter terror I passed into a state of almost abject happiness. I told myself that the duel had already started and that I had won the first encounter by besting my adversary in his first attack - even if it was only for forty minutes - by an accident of fate. I argued that so small a victory prefigured a total victory. I argued that it was



He decided to go to the village of Ashgrove. That is the detail that he was looking at in the telephone directory we get to know.

But just when the train is about to leave the platform, he also realizes much to his shock that Captain Richard Madden is pursuing him. Though he feels elated that he has won the first encounter, he realizes that Madden is right

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fate. I argued that so small a victory prefigured a total victory. I argued that it was

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not so trivial, that were it not for the **precious accident** of the train schedule, I would be in prison or dead. I argued, with no less sophism, that my timorous happiness was proof that I was man enough to bring this adventure to a successful conclusion. From my weakness I drew strength that never left me.

I foresee that man will resign himself each day to new abominations, that soon only soldiers and bandits will be left. To them I offer this advice: Whosoever would undertake some atrocious enterprise should act as if it were already accomplished, should impose upon himself a future as irrevocable as the past.

Thus I proceeded, while with the eyes of a man already dead, I contemplated the fluctuations of the day which would probably be my last, and watched the diffuse coming of night.



behind him.

And the narrow escape that he had at that point of that time from Richard Madden, he describes that as a precious accident.

He reaches

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Thus I proceeded, while with the eyes of a man already dead, I contemplated the fluctuations of the day which would probably be my last, and watched the diffuse coming of night.

The train crept along gently, amid ash trees. It slowed down and stopped, almost in the middle of a field. No one called the name of a station. "Ashgrove?" I asked some children on the platform. "Ashgrove," they replied. I got out.

A lamp lit the platform, but the children's faces remained in a shadow. One of them asked me: "Are you going to Dr. Stephen Albert's house?" Without waiting for my answer, another said: "The house is a good distance away but you won't get lost if you take the road to the left and bear to the left at every crossroad." I threw them a coin (my last), went down some stone steps and started along a deserted road. At a slight incline, the road ran downhill. It was a plain dirt way, and overhead the branches of trees intermingled, while a round moon hung low in the sky as if to keep me company.

For a moment I thought that Richard Madden might in some way have divined my desperate intent. At once I realized that this would be impossible. The advice about turning always to the left reminded me that such was the common formula for finding the central courtyard of certain labyrinths. I know something about labyrinths. Not for nothing am I the greatgrandson of Ts'ui Pen. He was Governor of Yunnan and gave up temporal power to write a novel with more characters than



Ashgrove station and just when he gets out of the train, much to his surprise, there are group of children who are playing and one of them walks up to him and asks are you going to Doctor Stephen Albert's house?

This is something that would take the reader also by surprise because he is a spy. No one knows about his plan. And it is the plan that he made up, that he conceived when he was sitting in that hotel room and going through that town, telephone directory.

And how on earth did those children come to know that he is going to Stephen Albert's house? They also taken it for granted that he is going to Stephen Albert's house and without waiting for any response, they gives out the, they give out the directions to Stephen Albert's house.

And now we also know that he was actually looking up Doctor Stephen Albert's house address and number when he was going through the telephone directory.

Look at the way

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A lamp lit the platform, but the children's faces remained in a shadow. One of them asked me: "Are you going to Dr. Stephen Albert's house?" Without waiting for my answer, another said: "The house is a good distance away but you won't get lost if you take the road to the left and bear to the left at every crossroad." I threw them a coin (my last), went down some stone steps and started along a deserted road. At a slight incline, the road ran downhill. It was a plain dirt way, and overhead the branches of trees intermingled, while a round moon hung low in the sky as if to keep me company.

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Under the trees of England I meditated on this lost and perhaps mythical labyrinth. I imagined it untouched and perfect on the secret summit of some mountain; I imagined it drowned under rice paddies or beneath the sea; I imagined it infinite.



the directions have been given. He catches on something very significant and seemingly material, from the way the directions given, the one of the children tells him the house is good distance away but you won't get lost if you take the road to the left and bear to the left at every crossroad.

And this direction which asks him to keep to the left, that provokes, that invokes a different kind of a memory in his mind. We find that he associates that immediately with a certain common formula for finding the central courtyard of certain labyrinths as he puts it.

And that makes him to make another random association of that of Tsui Pen. And he also reveals a little more intimate personal details about him including his reference that not for nothing am I the great grandson of Tsui Pen.

And who was Tsui Pen? He was the Governor of Yunan and gave up temporal power to write a novel that more characters than there are in Hung Lou Meng and create a maze in which all men would lose themselves.

He spent thirteen years on these oddly assorted tasks before he was assassinated by a stranger. His novel had no sense to it and nobody ever found his labyrinth.

This fact is extremely important. It is one of those passages which also gives away the summary of the story in a certain way. It tells up there is a certain prophetic nature, a certain foreshadowing of the events that are to follow in this passage.

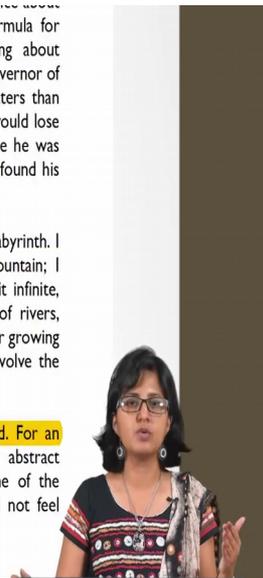
We will certainly come back to it after we go through the entire story to see this connection, so which are given to us in different points as the story progresses. It is up to the reader to ultimately make these connections and tie up the loose ends.

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acceptance instead of one I received that and made an impression. The sense about turning always to the left reminded me that such was the common formula for finding the central courtyard of certain labyrinths. I know something about labyrinths. Not for nothing am I the greatgrandson of Ts'ui Pen. He was Governor of Yunnan and gave up temporal power to write a novel with more characters than there are in the Hung Lou Meng, and to create a maze in which all men would lose themselves. He spent thirteen years on these oddly assorted tasks before he was assassinated by a stranger. His novel had no sense to it and nobody ever found his labyrinth.

Under the trees of England I meditated on this lost and perhaps mythical labyrinth. I imagined it untouched and perfect on the secret summit of some mountain; I imagined it drowned under rice paddies or beneath the sea; I imagined it infinite, made not only of eight-sided pavilions and of twisting paths but also of rivers, provinces and kingdoms . . . I thought of a maze of mazes, of a sinuous, ever growing maze which would take in both past and future and would somehow involve the stars.

Lost in these imaginary illusions I forgot my destiny - that of the hunted. For an undetermined period of time I felt myself cut off from the world, an abstract spectator. The hazy and murmuring countryside, the moon, the decline of the evening, stirred within me. Going down the gently sloping road I could not feel fatigue. The evening was at once intimate and infinite.



And this knowledge to which we are made privy to, that he is the grandson of Tsui Pen and that there is a certain obsession with labyrinths, about a certain novel, about a maze which Tsui Pen was supposedly writing.

These will become extremely important as the, as the narrative progresses. He spent some time thinking about this mythical labyrinth totally oblivious to the fact that he is actually fleeing now.

There is Captain Richard Madden who is pursuing him. He can get arrested. He also runs a risk of getting killed and here we find Yu Tsun in spite of these meditating about the mythical labyrinth. And suddenly also realizes, lost in these imaginary illusions I forgot my destiny, that of the hunted.

He is back to the contemporary. He is trying to find his way to Stephen Albert's house

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The road kept descending and branching off, through meadows misty in the twilight. A high-pitched and almost syllabic music kept coming and going, moving with the breeze, blurred by the leaves and by distance.

I thought that a man might be an enemy of other men, of the differing moments of other men, **but never an enemy of a country**; not of fireflies, words, gardens, streams, or the West wind.

**Meditating** thus I arrived at a high, rusty iron gate. Through the railings I could see an avenue bordered with poplar trees and also a kind of summer house or pavilion. Two things dawned on me at once, the first trivial and the second almost incredible: the music came from the pavilion and that music was **Chinese**. That was why I had accepted it fully, without paying it any attention. I do not remember whether there was a bell, a push-button, or whether I attracted attention by clapping my hands. The stuttering sparks of the music kept on.

But from the end of the avenue, from the main house, a lantern approached; a lantern which alternately, from moment to moment, was crisscrossed or put out by the trunks of the trees; a paper lantern shaped like a drum and colored like the moon. A tall man carried it. I could not see his face for the light blinded me.

He opened the gate and **spoke slowly in my language**.



given the nature of his work being a spy which is a very uncertain occupation. And given the political, historical background of those times which is the First World War.

We also find him ruminating about the idea how enemies are made and his own thoughts, his own observations on those things.

I thought that a man might be an enemy of other men, of the different moments of other men, but never an enemy of a country, not of fireflies, birds, gardens, streams or the West wind.

We do find Yu Tsun at least momentarily meditating upon the futility of the task that he is about to embark on. He is there caught in that moment in time because there are certain countries who are being presented as enemies of one another.

The spy work that he is doing and the mission that he is about to complete now in, in Stephen Albert's house, those are all part of this large creation of countries being enemies of one another.

Those are all after-effects and they are all even victims under this circumstance which presents different nations as enemies. And he quite rationally but in a futile way questions what the fundamental basis is of these creations of enmity, these constructions of enmity?

And meditating thus

(Refer Slide Time: 16:25)

I thought that a man might be an enemy of other men, of the differing moments of other men, **but never an enemy of a country**; not of fireflies, words, gardens, streams, or the West wind.

**Meditating** thus I arrived at a high, rusty iron gate. Through the railings I could see an avenue bordered with poplar trees and also a kind of summer house or pavilion. Two things dawned on me at once, the first trivial and the second almost incredible: the music came from the pavilion and that music was **Chinese**. That was why I had accepted it fully, without paying it any attention. I do not remember whether there was a bell, a push-button, or whether I attracted attention by clapping my hands. The stuttering sparks of the music kept on.

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He opened the gate and **spoke slowly in my language**.

"I see that the worthy **Hsi P'eng** has troubled himself to see to relieving my solitude. No doubt you want to see the garden?"

Recognizing the **name of one of our consuls**, I replied, somewhat taken aback.



we find him arriving at his destination and he is listening to Chinese music which he is also surprised about.

And, and we find him entering

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the music came from the pavilion and that music was **Chinese**. That was why I had accepted it fully, without paying it any attention. I do not remember whether there was a bell, a push-button, or whether I attracted attention by clapping my hands. The stuttering sparks of the music kept on.

But from the end of the avenue, from the main house, a lantern approached; a lantern which alternately, from moment to moment, was crisscrossed or put out by the trunks of the trees; a paper lantern shaped like a drum and colored like the moon. A tall man carried it. I could not see his face for the light blinded me.

He opened the gate and **spoke slowly in my language**.

"I see that the worthy **Hsi P'eng** has troubled himself to see to relieving my solitude. No doubt you want to see the garden?"

Recognizing the **name of one of our consuls**, I replied, somewhat taken aback.

"The garden?"

"The garden of forking paths."

Something stirred in my memory and I said, with incomprehensible assurance:

"The garden of my **ancestor** Ts'ui Pen."



the house of Doctor Stephen Albert. He opened the gate and spoke slowly in my language. And we find that, again much to the reader's surprise, Stephen Albert was also expecting Yu Tsun.

But of course he has not really understood who Yu Tsun is; he refers to him as Hsi Peng. I see that the worthy Hsi Peng has troubled himself, has troubled himself to see to relieving my

solitude. No doubt you want to see the garden? And that is the name of one of their consuls, Yu Tsun recognizes.

Remember there is a connection that he had already referred to of his great grandfather, Tsui Pen being the governor of a certain province and possession which he also gives up to pursue his certain another things, about a novel and a maze.

And there is the reference to the title here, the garden of forking paths. And this may seem very bizarre and surreal to the reader. But we find that it stood something in Yu Tsun's memory.

Now we find him making a reference

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"I see that the worthy Hsi Peng has troubled himself to see to relieving my solitude. No doubt you want to see the garden?"

Recognizing the name of one of our consuls, I replied, somewhat taken aback.

"The garden?"

"The garden of forking paths."

Something stirred in my memory and I said, with incomprehensible assurance:

"The garden of my ancestor Ts'ui Pen."

"Your ancestor? Your illustrious ancestor? Come in."

The damp path zigzagged like those of my childhood. When we reached the house, we went into a library filled with books from both East and West. I recognized some large volumes bound in yellow silk-manuscripts of the Lost Encyclopedia which was edited by the Third Emperor of the Luminous Dynasty. They had never been printed. A phonograph record was spinning near a bronze phoenix. I remember also a rose-glazed jar and yet another, older by many centuries, of that blue color which our potters copied from the Persians . . .

Stephen Albert was watching me with a smile on his face. He was as I have said



again to his great grandfather Tsui Pen and this garden, the garden of forking paths; that is what Albert is referring to is the garden of his ancestor Tsui Pen.

And story takes a complete turn and twist from this point of time onwards. We find a turning point. This moment could be identified as a turning point.

And we find Stephen Albert also getting very interested in meeting someone who is the blood relation of this illustrious ancestor.

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printed. A phonograph record was spinning near a bronze phoenix. I remember also a rose-glazed jar and yet another, older by many centuries, of that blue color which our potters copied from the Persians . . .

Stephen Albert was watching me with a smile on his face. He was, as I have said, remarkably tall. His face was deeply lined and he had gray eyes and a gray beard. There was about him something of the priest, and something of the sailor. Later, he

4

told me he had been a missionary in Tientsin before he "had aspired to become a Sinologist."

We sat down, I upon a large, low divan, he with his back to the window and to a large circular clock. I calculated that my pursuer, Richard Madden, could not arrive in less than an hour. My irrevocable decision could wait.



And soon after we get into a little more details of Stephen Albert he also introduces him, the story also introduces him as a Sinologist which also explains his interest and his knowledge in what is Tsui Pen, a Chinese man had done in one of the early decades

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We sat down, I upon a large, low divan, he with his back to the window and to a large circular clock. I calculated that my pursuer, Richard Madden, could not arrive in less than an hour. My irrevocable decision could wait.

"A strange destiny," said Stephen Albert, "that of Ts'ui Pen - Governor of his native province, learned in astronomy, in astrology and tireless in the interpretation of the canonical books, a chess player, a famous poet and a calligrapher. Yet he abandoned all to make a book and a labyrinth. He gave up all the pleasures of oppression, justice, of a well-stocked bed, of banquets, and even of erudition, and shut himself up in the Pavilion of the Limpid Sun for thirteen years. At his death, his heirs found only a mess of manuscripts. The family, as you doubtless know, wished to consign them to the fire, but the executor of the estate - a Taoist or a Buddhist monk - insisted on their publication."

"Those of the blood of Ts'ui Pen," I replied, "still curse the memory of the monk"



As in when they sit down to talk about things which are not even remotely connected to what Yu Tsun does, not related to work; not related to spy work. They are talking about Tsui Pen, and a Chinese ancestor.

They are talking about novels, gardens and mazes but at the back of his mind, Yu Tsun also realizes that he is actually waiting for his pursuer Richard Madden to arrive and there is barely an hour for him.

Now I want you to see this connection with one of the earlier statements that

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sinologist.

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"Those of the blood of Ts'ui Pen," I replied, "still curse the memory of that monk. Such a publication was madness. The book is a shapeless mass of contradictory rough drafts. I examined it once upon a time: the hero dies in the third chapter, while in the fourth he is alive. As for that other enterprise of Ts'ui Pen . . . his Labyrinth . . ."

"Here is the Labyrinth," Albert said, pointing to a tall, laquered writing cabinet.

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Yu Tsun makes, about an hour that he has spent with an Englishman.

And now we get to know that that Englishman is Stephen Albert and he is being equated with getting the greatest literary master from Germany.

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"A strange destiny," said Stephen Albert, "that of Ts'ui Pen - Governor of his native province, learned in astronomy, in astrology and tireless in the interpretation of the canonical books, a chess player, a famous poet and a calligrapher. Yet he abandoned all to make a book and a labyrinth. He gave up all the pleasures of oppression, justice, of a well-stocked bed, of banquets, and even of erudition, and shut himself up in the Pavilion of the Limpid Sun for thirteen years. At his death, his heirs found only a mess of manuscripts. The family, as you doubtless know, wished to consign them to the fire, but the executor of the estate - a Taoist or a Buddhist monk - insisted on their publication."

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There is a reference to an irrevocable decision.

The decision has already been made. We get to know, we will get to know later that the decision was made the moment he started going through the telephone directory to identify that one person who could pass on a significant piece of information to his Chief in Germany.

And he is again referring

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...of the... of the... of the...

I thought that a man might be an enemy of other men, of the differing moments of other men, **but never an enemy of a country**; not of fireflies, words, gardens, streams, or the West wind.

**Meditating** thus I arrived at a high, rusty iron gate. Through the railings I could see an avenue bordered with poplar trees and also a kind of summer house or pavilion. Two things dawned on me at once, the first trivial and the second almost incredible: the music came from the pavilion and that music was **Chinese**. That was why I had accepted it fully, without paying it any attention. I do not remember whether there was a bell, a push-button, or whether I attracted attention by clapping my hands. The stuttering sparks of the music kept on.

But from the end of the avenue, from the main house, a lantern approached; a lantern which alternately, from moment to moment, was crisscrossed or put out by the trunks of the trees; a paper lantern shaped like a drum and colored like the moon. A tall man carried it. I could not see his face for the light blinded me.

He opened the gate and **spoke slowly in my language**.

"I see that the worthy **Hsi Peng** has troubled himself to see to relieving my solitude. No doubt you want to see the garden?"

**Recognizing the name of one of our consuls**, I replied, somewhat taken aback...



to that irrevocable decision, what irrevocable decision we will get to know only towards the end.

We find Stephen Albert and Yu Tsun speaking at length about Tsui Pen, how he left his highly successful life and career to pursue something seemingly absurd to write a novel, to create a maze. And this novel was totally incomprehensible.

And in the words of Yu Tsun, those of the blood of Tsui Pen, they still curse the memory of that monk who had in fact; you know revived one of the manuscripts which was found.

Such a publication was madness. The book was the shapeless mass of contradictory rough drafts. I examined it once upon a time. The hero dies in the third chapter, while in the fourth he is alive.

This is the clear reference to the post-modern narrative form which Borges himself was very fascinated in exploring. As introduced in the outset of the lecture, this is about the predates the event of post-modernism within the critical ambience.

There was not much discussion of post-modernism when Borges was writing this short story but we get to know that this is the story which gets conveniently situated in the post-modern rhetoric.

And this is one of the giveaways in this short story where there is a reference to another work which is written in a post-modern way.

There is a reference to another work which is totally incomprehensible because there are contradictory things happening because it is a series of narration which defies all kinds of logical reason.

And we find him continuing to talk about

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rough drafts. I examined it once upon a time: the hero dies in the third chapter, while in the fourth he is alive. As for that other enterprise of Ts'ui Pen . . . his Labyrinth . . ."

"Here is the Labyrinth," Albert said, pointing to a tall, laquered writing cabinet.

"An ivory labyrinth?" I exclaimed. "A tiny labyrinth indeed . . .!"

"A symbolic labyrinth," he corrected me. "An invisible labyrinth of time. I, a barbarous Englishman, have been given the key to this transparent mystery. After more than a hundred years most of the details are irrecoverable, lost beyond all recall, but it isn't hard to image what must have happened. At one time, Ts'ui Pen must have said; 'I am going into seclusion to write a book,' and at another, 'I am retiring to construct a maze.' Everyone assumed these were separate activities. No one realized that the book and the labyrinth were one and the same. The Pavilion of the Limpid Sun was set in the middle of an intricate garden. This may have suggested the idea of a physical maze.

"Ts'ui Pen died. In all the vast lands which once belonged to your family, no one could find the labyrinth. The novel's confusion suggested that it was the labyrinth.

Two circumstances showed me the direct solution to the problem. First, the curious legend that Ts'ui Pen had proposed to create an infinite maze, second, a fragment of a letter which I discovered."



the labyrinth. Labyrinth is the key image and a symbol. In most of Borges' short stories, he likes to playfully use the idea of labyrinth to situate his fictional enterprises.

And we find this continuing obsession getting exemplified in this story The Garden of Forking Paths as well. And Stephen Albert, he refers to himself as a barbarous Englishman

who have been, who has been the key to solving the mystery of this labyrinth which Tsui Pen created in the first place.

And we are also being given certain important information such as Tsui Pen's book and the labyrinth being one and the same.

How this

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has the implication in this narration and in the larger scheme of things is something we shall come back to look at, at a later point.

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Two circumstances showed me the direct solution to the problem. First, the curious legend that Ts'ui Pen had proposed to create an infinite maze, second, a fragment of a letter which I discovered."

Albert rose. For a few moments he turned his back to me. He opened the top drawer in the high black and gilded writing cabinet. He returned holding in his hand a piece of paper which had once been crimson but which had faded with the passage of time: it was rose colored, tenuous, quadrangular. **Ts'ui Pen's calligraphy was justly famous.** Eagerly, but without understanding, I read the words which a man of my own blood had written with a small brush: **"I leave to various future times, but not to all, my garden of forking paths."**



And there is letter, a fragment of a letter rather which Stephen Albert refers to and he identifies that fragment of a letter written by Tsui Pen as a key to understanding this novel and also the maze, the garden that Tsui Pen initially wanted to create.

We have reference to Tsui Pen's calligraphy being justly famous, which also implies that he was perhaps a very relevant statesman initially and a well-known artist in his Province and he remembered, recall the way Tsui Pen was initially introduced. He was a Governor of Yunan, a province in China.

He gives that up, he gives that possession, he gives that status to pursue certain meaningless things and he is seen as a, as a crazy fellow. He is seen as someone who went down deep into madness, because the product, the novel that he created was in a deep mess of incomprehensible things.

And Tsui Pen, whether Tsui Pen was famous for his achievements, all for these seemingly erratic choices that he made in his life that is something that we do not get to know.

But we do find that in the course of this story we find Yu Tsun, the narrator finding a newfound respect for his ancestor whom he had referred to, dismissively in, at the outset of the narration.

And here we come at to look at this letter which Steven Albert is referring to. It has these significant words. I leave to various future times, but not to all, my garden of forking paths.

This is another key which can be used to open and reveal the meaning of the text; if at all the text has the central meaning.

And this is an oft-quoted statement from Borges writings as well, and the next few

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I handed back the sheet of paper in silence. Albert went on:

"Before I discovered this letter, I kept asking myself how a book could be infinite. I could not imagine any other than a cyclic volume, circular. A volume whose last page would be the same as the first and so have the possibility of continuing indefinitely. I recalled, too, the night in the middle of **The Thousand and One Nights** when Queen Scheherazade, through a magical mistake on the part of her copyist, started to tell the story of The Thousand and One Nights, with the risk of again arriving at the night upon which she will relate it, and thus on to infinity. I also imagined a Platonic hereditary work, passed on from father to son, to which each individual would add a new chapter or correct, with pious care, the work of his elders.

"These conjectures gave me amusement, but none seemed to have the remotest application to the contradictory chapters of Ts'ui Pen. At this point, I was sent from **Oxford** the manuscript you have just seen.

"Naturally, my attention was caught by the sentence, 'I leave to various future times, but not to all, my garden of forking paths: I had no sooner read this, than I understood. **The Garden of Forking Paths** was the chaotic novel itself. The phrase 'to various future times, but not to all' suggested **the image of bifurcating in time, not in space**. Rereading the whole work confirmed this theory. In all fiction, when a man is faced with alternatives he chooses one at the expense of the others. In the almost unfathomable Ts'ui Pen, **he chooses - simultaneously - all of them**. He thus creates various futures, various times which start others that will in their turn branch out



passages, they tell us about the painstaking efforts that Stephen Albert had undertaken to understand this text.

There is a reference to The Thousand and One Nights, a text which Steven Albert thinks is useful in trying to analyze the works that of Tsui Pen.

He also refers the manuscripts that he received from Oxford indicating the scholarly attention that he had been paying for this work and again

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the night upon which she will relate it, and thus on to infinity. I also imagined a Platonic hereditary work, passed on from father to son, to which each individual would add a new chapter or correct, with pious care, the work of his elders.

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"Fang, let us say, has a secret. A stranger knocks at his door. Fang makes up his mind to kill him. Naturally there are **various possible outcomes**, Fang can kill the intruder, the intruder can kill Fang, both can be saved, both can die and so on and so on. In Ts'ui Pen's work, all the possible solutions occur, each one being the point of departure for other bifurcations. Sometimes the pathways of this labyrinth converge. For example, you come to this house: but in other possible pasts you are my enemy



the reiteration of the point that he had made earlier, The Garden of Forking Paths was a chaotic novel itself.

The maze and the novel, the garden and the novel, they are one. They are not two separate things. The significance of this identification is something that we need to take a look at in detail shortly and he begins to unpack this phrase to various future times but not to all.

And Stephen Albert is trying to explain to Yu Tsun that this refers to the image of bifurcating in time and not in space. He is talking about the possibility of choosing different time slots at the same time.

And this perhaps is the cause of contradictions in the novel. These kinds of narrations are certainly part of many post-modern narratives.

We do have novels which do not begin anywhere, storylines which cannot depict each other and it is a certain kind of a foreshadowing in that sense that this story and the story that is referring to, is doing over here. Stephen Albert also

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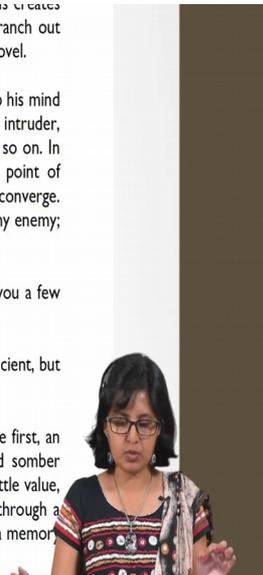
unimaginable to him, he chooses - simultaneously - all of them. He thus creates various futures, various times which start others that will in their turn branch out and bifurcate in other times. This is the cause of the contradictions in the novel.

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"If you will put up with my atrocious pronunciation, I would like to read you a few pages of your ancestor's work."

His countenance, in the bright circle of lamplight, was certainly that of an ancient, but it shone with something unyielding, even immortal.

With slow precision, he read two versions of the same epic chapter. In the first, an army marches into battle over a desolate mountain pass. The bleak and somber aspect of the rocky landscape made the soldiers feel that life itself was of little value, and so they won the battle easily. In the second, the same army passes through a palace where a banquet is in progress. The splendor of the feast remained a memory throughout the glorious battle, and so victory followed.



refers to the various possible outcomes.

When you come to the end of the story we will know that this by extension can be used to talk about the many choices that the narrator Yu Tsun is also taking at different points of time. From the moment he realizes that he needs to flee, from the moment that he realizes that Stephen/Richard Madden is pursuing him, there are a set of choice; there are a series of choices that he takes.

And based on the choices he takes the outcome could be different. But the real-life scenario like that of Yu Tsun's, one can only make one choice. Only that one single choice is available to you. Only that, only the implications of the choice which is made is available to you.

But the story that Stephen Albert is referring to, the story that Yu Tsun's ancestor Tsui Pen attempted to write refers to, they are talking about the possibility of inhabiting different futures and had all futures at the same time. And engage with all possible outcomes at the same time.

And this is what perhaps differentiates the life that narrator Yu Tsun is leading from that of a fictional narrative that his ancestor Tsui Pen had tried to create and recreate.

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With proper veneration I listened to these old tales, although perhaps with less admiration for them in themselves than for the fact that they had been thought out by one of my own blood, and that a man of a distant empire had given them back to

6

me, in the last stage of a desperate adventure, on a Western island. I remember the final words repeated at the end of each version like a secret command: "Thus it

We go through a section where Stephen Albert is reading out certain segments from this, the older novel, the one written by Tsui Pen and we find him, Yu Tsun

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me, in the last stage of a desperate adventure, on a Western island. I remember the final words, repeated at the end of each version like a secret command: "Thus the heroes fought, with tranquil heart and bloody sword. They were resigned to killing and to dying."

At that moment I felt within me and around me something invisible and intangible pullulating. It was not the pullulation of two divergent, parallel, and finally converging armies, but an agitation more inaccessible, more intimate, prefigured by them in some way. Stephen Albert continued:

"I do not think that your illustrious ancestor toyed idly with variations. I do not find it believable that he would waste thirteen years laboring over a never ending experiment in rhetoric. In your country the novel is an inferior genre; in Ts'ui Pen's period, it was a despised one. Ts'ui Pen was a fine novelist but he was also a man of letters who, doubtless, considered himself more than a mere novelist. The testimony of his contemporaries attests to this, and certainly the known facts of his life confirm his leanings toward the metaphysical and the mystical. Philosophical conjectures ta



attentively listening to this narration, this rendition and Stephen Albert also refers

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I proposed various solutions, all of them inadequate. We discussed them. Finally Stephen Albert said: "In a guessing game to which the answer is chess, which word is the only one prohibited?" I thought for a moment and then replied:

"The word is chess."



to a brief history of novel in China.

He talks about the thirteen years which others think Tsui Pen had wasted in writing a novel. And he also refers to how in your country the novel is an inferior genre. In Tsui Pen's period it was a despised one.

Here we also need to be attentive to the genre under which this work, The Garden of Forking Paths was also initially labeled. It was seen as common detective fiction.

And detective fiction was considered as an inferior genre for a long time. It was not considered as the kind of writing which would require a profound depth and philosophical nature which were part of the other well-known, well-written works.

So detective fiction was the kind of genre with which *The Garden of Forking Paths* was associated with. In spite of that we find that the novel, the short story went on to become one of the canonical works.

So here is the reference to the history of the novel in different parts of the world and we do find these scholarly discussions also enriching the understanding of this short story.

And now Stephen

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the only one prohibited?" I thought for a moment and then replied:

"The word is chess."

"Precisely," said Albert. "The Garden of Forking Paths is an enormous guessing game, or parable, in which the subject is time. The rules of the game forbid the use of the word itself. To eliminate a word completely, to refer to it by means of inept phrases and obvious paraphrases, is perhaps the best way of drawing attention to it. This, then, is the tortuous method of approach preferred by the oblique Ts'ui Pen in every meandering of his interminable novel. I have gone over hundreds of manuscripts, I have corrected errors introduced by careless copyists, I have worked out the plan from this chaos, I have restored, or believe I have restored, the original. I have translated the whole work. I can state categorically that not once has the word time been used in the whole book."

"The explanation is obvious. The Garden of Forking Paths is a picture, incomplete yet not false, of the universe such as Ts'ui Pen conceived it to be. Differing from Newton and Schopenhauer, your ancestor did not think of time as absolute and uniform. He believed in an infinite series of times, in a dizzily growing, ever spreading network of diverging, converging and parallel times. This web of time - the strands of which approach one another, bifurcate, intersect or ignore each other through the centuries - embraces every possibility. We do not exist in most of them. In some you exist and not I, while in others I do, and you do not, and in yet others both of us exist. In this one, in which chance has favored me, you have come to my gate."



Albert is referring to *The Garden of Forking Paths*, the original work by Tsui Pen as an enormous guessing game. He asks Yu Tsun this important question which, this important question which also resolved the riddle that the story is.

In the guessing game to which the answer is chess, which word is the only one prohibited? I thought for a moment and then replied the word is chess.

And he uses this as a key to unlock the meaning of this text and then he goes on to say I have translated the whole work. I can state categorically that not once has the word time been used in the whole book.

He is referring to this whole book, the whole novel which he has been researching on for the last many years. And he states categorically that the one word

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of paradox, in which the subject is time. The rules of the game forbid the use of the word itself. To eliminate a word completely, to refer to it by means of inept phrases and obvious paraphrases, is perhaps the best way of drawing attention to it. This, then, is the tortuous method of approach preferred by the oblique Ts'ui Pen in every meandering of his interminable novel. I have gone over hundreds of manuscripts, I have corrected errors introduced by careless copyists, I have worked out the plan from this chaos, I have restored, or believe I have restored, the original. I have translated the whole work. I can state categorically that not once has the word time been used in the whole book.

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7



that is not mentioned in this entire work is time. And time becomes the significant thing to unlock to the meaning of this work as well.

And there are references to Newton and Schopenhauer, and this is certain thing that we shall come back to later, look at to understand

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network of diverging, converging and parallel times. This web of time - the strands of which approach one another, bifurcate, intersect or ignore each other through the centuries - embraces every possibility. We do not exist in most of them. In some you exist and not I, while in others I do, and you do not, and in yet others both of us exist. In this one, in which chance has favored me, you have come to my gate. In another, you, crossing the garden, have found me dead. In yet another, I say these very same words, but am an error, a phantom."

7

"In all of them," I enunciated, with a tremor in my voice. "I deeply appreciate and am grateful to you for the restoration of Ts'ui Pen's garden."

"Not in all," he murmured with a smile. "Time is forever dividing itself toward innumerable futures and in one of them I am your enemy."



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Once again I sensed the pullulation of which I have already spoken. It seemed to me that the dew-damp garden surrounding the house was infinitely saturated with invisible people. All were Albert and myself, secretive, busy and multiform in other dimensions of time. I lifted my eyes and the short nightmare disappeared. In the black and yellow garden there was only a single man, but this man was as strong as a statue and this man was walking up the path and he was Captain Richard Madden.

"The future exists now," I replied. "But I am your friend. Can I take another



it in a certain context of historical times.

Stephen Albert discusses with Yu Tsun the possibilities of their, Stephen Albert and Yu Tsun sharing different futures in different possible, sharing different relations in different possible futures.

But nevertheless Yu Tsun responds to him in gratitude and says, in all of them, in all that futures that I possibly share with you I deeply appreciate and I am grateful to you for the restoration of Tsui Pen's

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"The future exists now," I replied. "But I am your friend. Can I take another look at the letter?"

Albert rose from his seat. He stood up tall as he opened the top drawer of the hi

garden.

And as and when

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Albert rose from his seat. He stood up tall as he opened the top drawer of the high writing cabinet. For a moment his back was again turned to me. I had the revolver ready. I fired with the utmost care; Albert fell without a murmur, at once. I swear that his death was instantaneous, as if he had been struck by lightning.

What remains is unreal and unimportant. Madden broke in and arrested me. I ha

this profound discussion is going on, about past, about history, about novels, about time, about the meaning-making process which is extremely important as an ancient text like Tsui Pen's Garden of Forking Paths is concerned

In the middle of this discussion again we find Yu Tsun getting jolted back into reality where Captain Richard Madden is pursuing him.

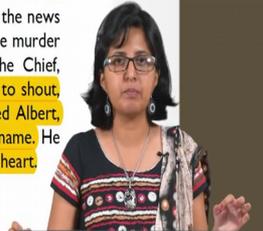
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infinite people in this room and myself, secreted, busy and marbled in each dimension of time. I lifted my eyes and the short nightmare disappeared. In the black and yellow garden there was only a single man, but this man was as strong as a statue and this man was walking up the path and he was **Captain Richard Madden**.

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What remains is unreal and unimportant. **Madden broke in and arrested me**. I have been **condemned to hang**; Abominably, **I have yet triumphed!** The secret name of the city to be attacked got through to Berlin. Yesterday it was bombed. I read the news in the same English newspapers which were trying to solve the riddle of the murder of the learned Sinologist Stephen Albert by the unknown Yu Tsun. The Chief, however, had already solved this mystery. He knew that my problem was to shout, **with my feeble voice, above the tumult of war, the name of the city called Albert, and that I had no other course open to me than to kill someone of that name**. He does not know, for no one can, of my **infinite penitence and sickness of the heart**.



So this is, this is the kind of magical realism that Borges is using.

We are being transformed from one kind of a narration to a totally different kind of one, from a surreal magical realist kind of narration to a more realistic grounded thing in a very seamless fashion. We do not even know, we do not, the reader do not get to feel that the shifts were random or absurd.

And here Yu Tsun is jolted back to this reality that Captain Richard Madden is pursuing him and what happens next will take the reader with shocking surprise.

Albert rose from his seat. He stood up tall as he opened the top drawer of the high writing cabinet. For a moment his back was again turned to me. I had the revolver ready. I fired with utmost care. Albert fell without murmur at once. I swear that his death was instantaneous as if he has been struck by a lightning.

What an anticlimax a reader would make! Here we are in the middle of the discussion which talks about a certain ancestor, a certain work on which Stephen Albert was researching and we all of a sudden find, after expressing his gratitude to Stephen Albert we find Yu Tsun killing Stephen Albert.

And we do not have any context for this killing, we think. But now again I want you to go back and look at the first part of the story where at the beginning, Yu Tsun is looking for a name, a name, a person who would pass on this significant information to Chief

And he is talking about a certain mission that he needs to complete, a plan that he needs to execute

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"Precisely," said Albert. "The Garden of Forking Paths is an enormous guessing game, or parable, in which the subject is time. The rules of the game forbid the use of the word itself. To eliminate a word completely, to refer to it by means of inept phrases and obvious paraphrases, is perhaps the best way of drawing attention to it. This, then, is the tortuous method of approach preferred by the oblique Ts'ui Pen in every meandering of his interminable novel. I have gone over hundreds of manuscripts, I have corrected errors introduced by careless copyists, I have worked out the plan from this chaos, I have restored, or believe I have restored, the original. I have translated the whole work. I can state categorically that not once has the word time been used in the whole book."

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so that he can convey certain information and also prove to the Chief, to the German Chief that a yellow man can save the German armies.

So how does this plan work out? And towards the end

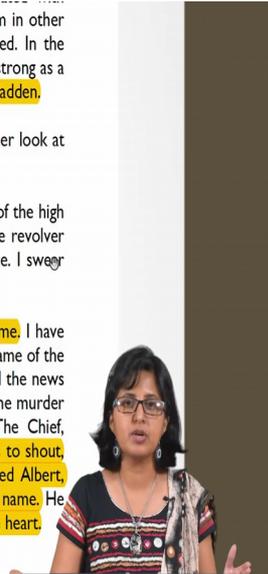
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invisible people. All were Albert and myself, secretive, busy and multiform in other dimensions of time. I lifted my eyes and the short nightmare disappeared. In the black and yellow garden there was only a single man, but this man was as strong as a statue and this man was walking up the path and he was **Captain Richard Madden**.

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we do not find any more riddles. And now we find after death of Stephen Albert, the story comes to almost an abrupt end. I read to you the final paragraph.

What remains is unreal and unimportant. Madden broke in and arrested me. I have been condemned to hang. Abominably, I had yet triumphed! The secret name of the city to be attacked got through to Berlin. Yesterday it was bombed. I read the news in the same English newspapers which were trying to resolve the riddle of the learned Sinologist Stephen Albert by the unknown Yu Tsun. The Chief however had already solved this mystery. He knew that my problem was to shout, with my feeble voice, above the tumult of war the name of the city called Albert and I had no other course open to me than to kill someone of that name. He does not know, for no one can, of my infinite penitence and sickness of the heart.

In this final paragraph we get to know that it is such a brilliantly crafted story. Now many of the things which appeared to have happened at random, now it begins to make sense to us.

The entire puzzle begins to fit into its place. When Yu Tsun was going through the telephone directory he had in this mind this piece of information which needed to be passed on to his Chief. That was the name of this city named Albert. Albert is a city.

And this, how he passed this information on to the Chief. The one plan that he had in mind was to find the name of above, to find a person of the same name Albert and then kill him. Captain Madden is already pursuing him.

And it is fairly certain that Richard Madden will either kill him or get him arrested. So in that case, since he already knows that there is no escape for him.

The least he could do is to shout out the name of this city through the name of the person that he assassinates and make this a major event, a news so that it will also reach his Chief.

The things that happened in between, the brief encounter that Stephen Albert had with Yu Tsun; that perhaps was not within the plan.

But we do find that also sitting in very well to take the plot ahead and also allowing us to engage in a plot discussions which are not otherwise not part of this story which is about spy work, about murder, about wars, about giving informations, the information of the spy to the one who had commissioned him.

So it is a kind of story which brings in these otherwise disconnected elements in a seemingly connected fashion.

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## Authorial voice

- Many
- Anonymous historian
- Manuscript editor
- Yu Tsun, the narrator
- The author himself?

Looking at the story we will realize that there are many authorial voices here. That anonymous historian, the manuscript editor, Yu Tsun the narrator and even the author himself, so how reliable are these many voices given that this is in the form of deposition?

There is, one cannot ignore even this possibility that being a spy, Yu Tsun is perhaps trying to make up some of those things? May be those are figments of his imagination?

But still given that Yu Tsun is a dying man, he is awaiting his death sentence, he knows his certain future which is, which is perhaps you know few more hours or days, given that he knows he is about to die, perhaps we also need to take him more seriously given that it is also a note from a dying man.

We also need to take a look at some of the important aspects which have been critically looked at from the context of this work. That we shall be doing in the following session. We wrap up the discussion for today. I thank you for listening and I look forward to see you in the next session.