

INVENTORY

Book: The Library of Babel

Author: Borges, JorQe Luis.

Pages:113-118

<1> 'Scene'

Library

-The universe (which others call the Library) is composed of an indefinite, perhaps infinite number of hexagonal galleries.

-Men often infer from this mirror that the Library is not infinite—if it were, what need would there be for that illusory replication?

-Like all the men of the Library, in my younger days I traveled; I have journeyed in quest of a book, perhaps the catalog of catalogs.

-I declare that the Library is endless.

-Let it suffice for the moment that I repeat the classic dictum: The Library is a sphere whose exact center is any hexagon and whose circumference is unattainable.

-First: The Library has existed ab æternitate.

-That discovery enabled mankind, three hundred years ago, to formulate a general theory of the Library and thereby satisfactorily solve the riddle that no conjecture had been able to divine—the formless and chaotic nature of virtually all books.

-In all the Library, there are no two identical books.

-The librarian deduced that the Library is 'total'—perfect, complete, and whole—and that its bookshelves contain all possible combinations of the twenty-two orthographic symbols (a number which, though unimaginably vast, is not infinite)—that is, all that is able to be expressed, in every language.

-Infidels claim that the rule in the Library is not 'sense,' but 'non-sense,' and that 'rationality' (even humble, pure coherence) is an almost miraculous exception.

-For while the Library contains all verbal structures, all the variations allowed by the twenty-five orthographic symbols, it includes not a single absolute piece of nonsense.

-There is no combination of characters one can make that the divine Library has not foreseen.

-I suspect that the human species—the only species—teeters at the verge of extinction, yet that the Library—enlightened, solitary, infinite, perfectly unmoving, armed with precious volumes, pointless, incorruptible, and secret—will endure.

-The certainty that some bookshelf in some hexagon contained precious books, yet that those precious books were forever out of reach, was almost unbearable.

-Let me be tortured and battered and annihilated, but let there be one instant, one creature, wherein thy enormous Library may find its justification.

-I will be bold enough to suggest this solution to the ancient problem: The Library is unlimited but periodic.

Hexagon

-From any hexagon one can see the floors above and below—one after another, endlessly.

-The arrangement of the galleries is always the same: Twenty bookshelves, five to each side, line four of the hexagon's six sides.

-One of the hexagon's free sides opens onto a narrow sort of vestibule, which in turn opens onto another gallery, identical to the first—identical in fact to all.

-Now that my eyes can hardly make out what I myself have written, I am preparing to die, a few leagues from the hexagon where I was born.

-Idealists argue that the hexagonal rooms are the necessary shape of absolute space, or at least of our perception of space.

-Let it suffice for the moment that I repeat the classic dictum: The Library is a sphere whose exact center is any hexagon and whose circumference is unattainable."(Borges-The-Library-of-B...)

-Each wall of each hexagon is furnished with five bookshelves.

-One book, which my father once saw in a hexagon in circuit 15-94, consisted of the letters M C V perversely repeated from the first line to the last.

-At that period there was much talk of The Vindications—books of apologire and prophecies that would vindicate for all time the actions of every person in the universe and that held wondrous arcana for men's futures.

-For four centuries, men have been scouring the hexagons...

-Thousands of greedy individuals abandoned their sweet native hexagons and rushed downstairs, upstairs, spurred by the vain desire to find their Vindication.

-They were spurred on by the holy zeal to reach—someday, through unrelenting effort—the books of the Crimson Hexagon—books smaller than natural books, books omnipotent, illustrated, and magical.

-On some shelf in some hexagon, it was argued, there must exist a book that is the cipher and perfect compendium of all other books, and some librarian must have examined that book.

-How was one to locate the idolized secret hexagon that sheltered Him?

-I know districts in which the young people prostrate themselves before books and like savages kiss their pages, though they cannot read a letter.

<2> 'Physical elements and characters'

Bulbs

-Light is provided by certain spherical fruits that bear the name 'bulbs.' There are two of these bulbs in each hexagon, set crosswise.

-The light they give is insufficient, and unceasing.

Staircase

-Through this space, too, there passes a spiral staircase, which winds upward and downward into the remotest distance.

-I have seen them about their tasks: they arrive exhausted at some hexagon, they talk about a staircase that nearly killed them—rungs were missing—they speak with the librarian about galleries and staircases, and, once in a while, they take up the nearest book and leaf through it, searching for disgraceful or dishonorable words.

-In earlier times, there was one man for every three hexagons. Suicide and diseases of the lung have played havoc with that proportion. An unspeakably melancholy memory: I have sometimes traveled for nights on end, down corridors and polished staircases, without coming across a single librarian.

-Those who believe it to have limits hypothesize that in some remote place or places the corridors and staircases and hexagons may, inconceivably, end—which is absurd.

<3> number

20, 5, 32, 410, 40, 80, 25, 22, 15-94, 500, 90, 2

In *The Library of Babel*, The author focuses on the infinite nature of knowledge and meaning, that is, the huge chaotic 'scene' in which also emerges highly structured 'staircases' 'light bulbs' and other ordered

objects. They begin to be arranged in combinations according to these numbers. So in exploring the problem no matter how large the context is, we need to draw the line between chaos and order before we continue to think and evolve the scenario. I classified them according to the theme of the article and the important ‘performance’ elements.

reference

Jorge Luis Borges, ‘The Library of Babel’, Collected Fictions, [1944] 1998