

Borges-The Garden of the Forking Paths

I. The Narrative Structure

A. The Narrator

The story is narrated through a statement produced by character named Dr. Yu Tsun, a former professor of English in the Hochschule, at Tsingtao. It is narrated through his first person perspective.

B. Narrative Techniques

This story is based on the events a German spy of Chinese ethnicity encounters. During the story he experiences events in his present, but often turns to his inner thoughts. For instance, when Tsun travels to find Stephen Albert, he recalls the directions he is given and relates them to his memory of a story about his ancestor's supposed labyrinth. The continuous lefts reminded him of the idea of getting through a maze only to find himself in the middle, or his destination. After reminiscing with his thoughts, he finds himself back in the physical world with a mission to complete. So, the narration goes through the interleaving path of the narrator's mind and experiences. Through these ideas many connections are made through the story. As example, his ancestor's idea of maintaining his secret of his labyrinth, and the fact that Tsun had to keep his secret for the Germans hidden.

Another aspect of Borges writing involved the use of foreshadowing. There would be some cases where we could tell something was going to happen, but really did not know exactly what. For instance, Tsun talks about the "one" bullet left in his revolver. Also, the reader knows that Madden was chasing him. Could this mean that he was going to kill him? Well, I had an idea that he would use it on someone, and Tsun did in order to relay his message.

II. Reader Experience

By looking at the title, "The Garden of the Forking Paths," I made assumptions as to how the story was going to develop. I figured that there was going to be some idea portrayed which progressed through various directions. As I read the story, my assumption was not entirely correct. The idea behind this narrative revolved more around irony rather than different motives. For instance, Tsun had to kill an innocent man, the one who solved his ancestor's mysteries, in order to relay his secret to the Germans. Also, as reading through the story, I could see a lot of references to mazes. For instance, Tsun comes across a mission in which he encounters many obstacles, and continues to find himself with new objectives.

Borges writing seemed to lead us in a way that showed the main character having to deal with different problems(i.e. Tsun has to relay a secret, he has to escape Madden, he finds himself trying to understand his ancestors "labyrinth.") Although Tsun gets caught up in all of these things, the story still progresses in a linear fashion, with a beginning and an end.

Overall, I really enjoyed the twists involved within the story. I never knew exactly what was going to happen, but always had the anxiety to find out.