

---

Senior Projects Spring 2017

Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects

---

Spring 2017

## The Library in Literature

Hannah Madelene Richter Livant  
*Bard College*, hl0587@bard.edu

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj\\_s2017](https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj_s2017)



Part of the [Children's and Young Adult Literature Commons](#), [Literature in English, Anglophone outside British Isles and North America Commons](#), [Literature in English, North America Commons](#), [Modern Literature Commons](#), and the [Other English Language and Literature Commons](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 License](#).

---

### Recommended Citation

Livant, Hannah Madelene Richter, "The Library in Literature" (2017). *Senior Projects Spring 2017*. 205.  
[https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj\\_s2017/205](https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj_s2017/205)

This Open Access work is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been provided to you by Bard College's Stevenson Library with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this work in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@bard.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@bard.edu).

The Library in Literature

Senior Project Submitted to  
The Division of Languages and Literature  
of Bard College

by  
Hannah Livant

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York  
May 2017



## Acknowledgements

Thank you to Ms. H and Ms. Ellis for allowing me to pop out of your desks and become an Assistant Librarian. Thank you to Mary Ellis for knowing magic is real, being my friend and teaching me to never surrender myself, alongside a mountain of other skills.

Thank you to my mom and dad who supported me (and who got me to teach myself to read at 2!) and my friends, the Berkeley Carroll Library for letting me rest in your stacks, the library for helping me with my senior project. Finally, thank you to Marisa Libbon—without your support I would have truly thought this year the impossible. Additional thanks to Lauren Curtis for reading this project

Here's to reading!





## Table of Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Introduction.....  | 1  |
| Chapter 1- The Construction of the Library: The Underground and the Labyrinth..... | 6  |
| Chapter 2: Library as Representative of Place.....                                 | 30 |
| Chapter 3: Themes of the Literary Library in Pre-Enlightenment Library History ... | 49 |
| Conclusion.....  | 70 |
| Bibliography.....  | 75 |

The library stands there waiting and watching. Little worlds lie on each shelf, representing every eon, every thinker, every visitor who happened to find them, read them, flip through their pages. With a library one can access almost any information. Stories are shared and given to all who are able to look for them, knowledge is passed down, one hand to another, one thought to the next. Shelves stand, mountains of concepts, and one walks through the valleys searching, yearning.

I have wandered and searched myself, lurking in my own high school library, popping out of the librarian's desk until I was assistant librarian, sitting in the stacks, trying to read my library from A-Z and Z-A, and above all, dreaming.

The image of the library in literature lies in direct contrast to the image of the modern library. The discourse surrounding the modern library came about during the Enlightenment and evolved from the Enlightenment ideal that all knowledge could to be defined. However, the imagery surrounding the library in literature is one of a chaotic, dangerous, magical, vast library latent with the power of discovery. This theme is repeated so often in literature it becomes necessary to analyze it to understand its significance in relation to the library and additionally its function.

Borges' short story the "Library of Babel" is the story that first captured my imagination and is where this project began. The "Library of Babel" is a short story in which the narrator verbally explores the infinite, repeating corridors of the library (which is his universe) and in the process seeks to figure out the laws and semantics of the library. This connection between the library, the infinite, and the universe is established at the beginning of the story when the narrator says, "The universe (which others call the Library) is composed of an indefinite,

perhaps infinite number of hexagonal galleries.”<sup>1</sup> The library here exists both as a universe within the story and as an exploration of our own universe. The narrator postulates the laws of the library at the end of the statement saying,

I say that it is not illogical to think that the world is infinite. Those who judge it to be limited postulate that in remote places the corridors and stairways and hexagons can conceivably come to an end—which is absurd. Those who imagine it to be without limit forget that the possible number of books does have such a limit. I venture to suggest this solution to the ancient problem: The Library is unlimited and cyclical. If an eternal traveler were to cross it in any direction, after centuries he would see that the same volumes were repeated in the same disorder (which, thus repeated, would be an order: the Order). My solitude is gladdened by this elegant hope.<sup>2</sup>

This story is a multi-genre story. Like most of Borges’ other stories in *Labyrinths* or *Collected Fictions* it experiments with the methods of narration. While it is not a story like “Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius” which pretends to be the account of a scholar who has discovered documents of a fictional world named Tlön, “The Library of Babel” has many innovative techniques of storytelling. The two that are relevant to this project are the concepts of limited infinity and the simulacrum. A simulacrum is an image which is a reflection of a place, person or object.

In the “Library of Babel,” the library functions as a Simulacrum. Jonathan Stuart Boulter in his article “Partial Glimpses of the Infinite: Borges and the Simulacrum,” describes types of simulacrum that Borges uses. The one useful to this project is the second one which is:

The reflection, the simulacrum, is the uncanny spot of the neutral. It is neither a self-contained or self-containing ontology nor merely a reflection of an a priori ontology; it is

---

<sup>1</sup> Jorge Luis Borges and Andrew Hurley, "The Library of Babel." in *Collected Fictions*. (New York: Penguin, 1998), 112.

<sup>2</sup> Borges, “Library of Babel”, 118.

neutral, neither one thing nor another: the simulacrum is a liminal space of process and becoming.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, the Simulacrum is a space where an object can take on a thematic representation.

However, Boulter also notes that,

If the subject or object can be simulated to the point where the simulation is more real than the original, what happens to the ontological viability of the idea or origin, originality, totality or infinitude? The simulacrum serves to erase any idea differences between the finite and the infinite, between the copy and its original.<sup>4</sup>

In other words, the simulacrum is not just an exploration and embodiment of a theme, but, in its existence, becomes the reality.

In the “Library of Babel,” Borges writes that there is a mirror in the Library and that,

Men often infer from this mirror that the Library is not infinite-if it were, what need would there be for that illusory replication? I prefer to dream that burnished surfaces are a figuration and promise of the infinite.<sup>5</sup>

Here, Borges shows his use of the simulacrum as represented by the mirror. Some think that because there is a textual representation of an object the interpretation cannot be definite, truthful, or real. Borges states, however, that the “burnished surfaces” are a “promise.” While it is hard to create a one-to-one comparison the concept remain that the literary exploration of an object holds all the interpretations that are possible. Yet, when some of these themes are repeated over and over again, it shows both that they are commonly accepted and that they become our reality. In the case of the library in literature, the prominence of themes of secrecy, chaos, hiding,

---

<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Stuart Boulter, “Partial Glimpses of the Infinite: Borges and the Simulacrum,” *Hispanic Review*, Vol.69, No.3, (Summer 2001): 360.

<sup>4</sup> Boulter, *Partial Glimpses*, 360.

<sup>5</sup> Borges, “Library of Babel”, 112.

discovery, mystery, and magic, demonstrate that there is a truth to these themes in comparison to the way we view the modern, inorganically organized library.

The themes that we will explore in this project are not necessarily invented by the texts that we will read but instead hold these themes in the collective consciousness. The collective consciousness being ideas that a society holds out in the automatic mindset. In being so common, these themes are passed from person to person. In addition to being popular they are similar across cultures demonstrating how common these themes are.

In this project we will be looking at the “literary library”— the library within a fictional work—and how its descriptions cast a lens on the “library”: any library that exists in our contemporary world. We will also be closely analyzing “themes,” that is the common qualities found across literary representations of these libraries. However, we will also be looking at these themes in relation to the modern library and how the literary library effects our own library.

In order to fully understand how the literary library contains these themes this project will move from the close lens to the broad lens. First we will move from a close literary analysis of the literary library’s themes followed by a historical comparison to demonstrate how these themes exist in the modern library. Exploring this concept is essential to understand our own identity: as individuals and as a society.

Chapter one will analyze the physical construction of the literary library. In particular it will discuss the underground library and the labyrinthine library which reflect the themes of the powerful, chaotic, underground library and the discovery of the hidden. Chapter two will then examine how the literary library is representative of its owner, and the world in which it exists. It will seek to highlight this literary analysis by explaining how the themes from chapter one are

also represented in the reflections of the world. It will also discuss the simulacrum and how, if the literary library can represent the literary world and people within it, then can the literary library can represent our library and our world. Chapter three will seek to demonstrate that the literary library does represent qualities that existed in the library's history. It will summarize the history of the library and demonstrate where these historical themes are represented in our text. It will then seek to explain why.

Alberto Manguel states in his book *The Library at Night* that "If every library is in some sense a reflection of its readers, it is also an image of that which we are not, and cannot be."<sup>6</sup> The library is in its own way a universe that delineates the boundaries of our own reality. By organizing information, we as humans decide what goes into our sphere of knowledge. However, the way that we explore and discover information and how we educate ourselves is also dependent on the books we keep in a library. By analyzing the literary library, and discovering the themes that lie in opposition to the conceptualization of our own libraries, we discover truths about the world. We might even realize that which lies ready to be discovered within ourselves, and how we might even be more mysterious, dangerous, chaotic and more varied that we would like to admit.

---

<sup>6</sup> Alberto, Manguel *The Library at Night*, (New Haven: Yale UP, 2009), 107.

Chapter 1: The Construction of the Library:  
the Underground and the Labyrinth

In exploring the library's function in literature, it becomes first necessary to look to the physical construction of the library to understand its qualities. These qualities are key to understanding the library's role in society. The physical construction both of the library and the literary library is what guides the library user in navigating their surroundings, discovering books and more about themselves in the process.

In the literary library, the library's physical construction represents the library's function as a place of concealment, of discovery, and of hidden power. Two main physical constructions that are common in the depiction of the literary library are those of the underground library, and the library as a labyrinth. In *The Angel's Game* and *The Shadow of the Wind*, both by Carlos Ruiz Zafón; *The Name of the Rose* by Umberto Eco; *Lirael* by Garth Nix; and the short story, "The Library of Babel." by Jorge Luis Borges, the underground is used to emphasize the library's role as a place of hidden, dangerous, and undiscovered knowledge. The underground here is defined as the physical space in the caverns of the earth or under the street (crust) level of everyday society. The labyrinthine construction of the library is used to convey the vast expanse of knowledge within a library, and acts as a symbol of the perpetual creation of new knowledge based on the library's contents.

The representation of the library in literature is one that is chaotic, organic, mysterious powerful, and laden with the promise of discovery is in direct contrast with the depiction of the modern library; one which is fastidiously organized. Discourse surrounding the modern public library is one of scientific organization. It is organized under labeled systems, such as the Library of Congress, the Dewey Decimal, Colon Classification, or the Universal Decimal Classification system. In the Library of Congress system, one always knows that books on Indian Mythology

are in the B's, books on books are in the Z's, literature is in the Pr's-Ps's and the scientific books are in the Q's. The Library of Congress system is supposed to promote easy navigation, neat searching, and stems the Enlightenment era belief that all knowledge that exists is classifiable. However, the frequency with which the aforementioned themes are present in literature speaks in opposition to this organized image.

The underground library is a place of discovery and of dangerous knowledge. In many of the representations of the library in fiction, there are entire libraries and parts of the library that are located underground. Because the spaces of the underground library exist under the perception of the everyday (out of sight out of mind!), the underground library functions as a place of hidden knowledge. The library's underground potential is akin to going into a museum or a library and knowing that the stacks that you see are not the only ones present; rather that there are known unknowns: knowledge that one knows is present but whose contents and locations are obscured.

The first example of an underground literary library's construction representing its quality of hidden knowledge is in *The Shadow of the Wind* and *The Angel's Game* by Carlos Ruiz Zafón. *Shadow of the Wind* is set during postwar Barcelona and follows a young boy named Daniel who discovers a mysterious book in the Cemetery of Forgotten Books. The Cemetery of Forgotten Books is an underground library dedicated to saving books that the world wishes to let die out. Daniel figures out that someone is burning all of the author's books.

*The Angel's Game* features this same library, though the plot centers around David, a sick author who makes a deal with the potential devil in prewar Barcelona that he gains his health back if he writes the devil a religious text. Both novels feature the Cemetery of Forgotten Books

as a setting as the city falls into and then recovers from the Spanish Civil War. Both were periods in which freedom of speech was threatened.

The Cemetery of Forgotten Books is a place where if books are hated, banned, hunted, burned, scorned, or lost in the expanse of time they find their places amongst these stacks. Like its charges, The Cemetery of Forgotten books lays hidden away under the streets of Barcelona. It exists hidden beneath the “remains of palaces, churches, prisons and hospitals,”<sup>7</sup>.

The exact physical layout of the Cemetery of Forgotten books is only partially known, but parts of the underground structure are still being discovered which emphasizes the hidden nature of the library. The keeper of the library, Issac, tells David that inside of the library a “tunnel was discovered leading from the bowels of the labyrinth to the basement of an old library that nowadays is sealed off, hidden in the ruins of an old synagogue in the Jewish quarter.”<sup>8</sup> The connection between the themes of the underground, secret and discovery is being emphasized in this discovery. These entrances to the library are underground and only known to invited members. Yet, some of these entrances lie in secrecy and are not visible to the eye. These clandestine entrances lie in “ruins” or in a “basement” of other libraries. They are not likely to be seen except by those who are willing to wade through the ruins of society to find them. But sometimes they even lie unknown to those who are patrons of the library. The placement of the entrances also emphasizes that the hidden entrances are built in the “remains” for a library that saves the “remains” of hunted books. There are still parts of the library that are being discovered by its patrons, parts that are unknown even to those who know of its existence. Isaac states that

---

<sup>7</sup> Carlos Ruiz Zafón, *The Angels' Game* (London: Pheonix, 2009), 124.

<sup>8</sup> Zafón, *The Angel's Game*, 124.

the underground existence of the Cemetery began, “during the time of the inquisition,” when “people who were learned and had free mind would hide forbidden books in sarcophagi, or bury them in ossuaries all over the city to protect them trusting that future generations would dig them up.”<sup>9</sup> Thus, the hidden nature of the library is supported by its placement under the earth.

This origin story also connects the underground with the theme of the dangerous book. This is a theme that centers around books that are banished because of their threatening and challenging nature to certain ideas. For instance, the secretive, underground nature of the Cemetery of Forgotten Books came about during a time of intellectual persecution. The supporters of the inquisition considered these books dangerous to their principles and in seeking to destroy them, caused them to be banished underground. Books considered dangerous are thus buried underground, drawing a connection between the underground and the persecuted knowledge that becomes too dangerous to be hidden out of sight to continue living. These tomes die in the public eye in order to live hidden away. Their death is in the eyes of the public while they live clandestinely, “under churches, prisons and hospitals.” This is why the cemetery must exist underground: to keep threatened knowledge safe from those who would destroy it. The library exists in the “ruins” to protect books that would be ruined by the world.

The Cemetery of Forgotten Books’ hidden nature in connection to its physical construction is emphasized even before the reader encounters the library. Daniel, the protagonist of *The Shadow of the Wind*, is permitted inside only after he is forbidden to tell his friends what he will encounter there. He enters, guided by his father through an old wooden door. Daniel describes his impression of the Cemetery of Forgotten Books as a place where, “A labyrinth of

---

<sup>9</sup> Zafón, *The Angel's Game*, 124.

passageways and crammed bookshelves rose from base to pinnacle like a beehive woven with tunnel steps, platforms, and bridges that presaged an immense library of seemingly impossible geometry.”<sup>10</sup> The first descriptions of the library are ones of unknown and impossible shapes. It has “tunnels, steps, platforms, and bridges,” which is language of city architecture, rather than an underground library. The library is also described as a “beehive,” which denotes that it consists of many rooms and maze like passageways that are only understood by those who frequents the library often. These descriptions of the Cemetery of Forgotten Books show the volume of banned knowledge that has been barred from society and hidden in these depths. The Cemetery is a city of “tunnels, steps, platforms, and bridges,” of bookshelves that create a dizzying maze of books. A whole city of books beneath the ground has been deemed too dangerous. There are so many banned books that the library no longer following the tidy, urban planning rules of the surface. Its chaotic, mysterious, layout is in contrast to regular city laws. The bookshelves are “crammed,” and rise “from base to pinnacle,” Every description reflects the sheer multitude of undiscovered, lost knowledge, whose own place is in the underground city of its own making. The underground passageways are “a labyrinth.” These threatened books constitute their own city crammed with crammed books which symbolizes the sheer unwanted knowledge of the world that people feel threatened by, that lies under the crust of the earth

Not only is the library hidden away permanently, but David is told that the library used to be entered by an underground “tunnel.” The initial entrance to the unknown and dangerous was through the underground. The connection is clear: to access the forbidden and the dangerous, one must enter underground.

---

<sup>10</sup> Carlos Ruis Zafón, *The Shadow of the Wind*, trans. Lucia Graves, (New York: Penguin, 2004), 5.

When entering the library, Daniel's father emphasizes why the library and its secret underground existence is important. He says,

This is a place of mystery, Daniel, a sanctuary. Every book, every volume you see here, has a soul. The soul of the person who wrote it and of those who read it and lived and dreamed with it. Every time a book changes hands, every time someone runs his eyes down its pages, its spirit grows and strengthens. This place was already ancient when my father brought me here for the first time, many years ago. Perhaps as old as the city itself. Nobody knows for certain how long it has existed, or who created it. I will tell you what my father told me, though. When a library disappears, or a bookshop closes down, when a book is consigned to oblivion, those of us who know this place, its guardians, make sure that it gets here. In this place, books no longer remembered by anyone, books that are lost in time, live forever, waiting for the day when they will reach a new reader's hands. In the show we buy and sell them, but in truth books have no owner. Every book you see here has been somebody's best friend. Now they have only us, Daniel. Do you think you'll be able to keep such a secret?<sup>11</sup>

This statement reveals several key characteristics of this library. Primarily, the underground nature of the library is one of hiding away. The underground construction keeps these books safe because the underground, which is beneath one's normal gaze is naturally hidden. The other is that these books share power. Whether the books are really dangerous or not, the danger is in the eye of the beholder. These books gain power from being dangerous in their contents and being a record "of those who read it and lived and dreamed with it." What is hidden in the underground is that which is not wanted, or is persecuted by normal society. In post-war Barcelona many of these books are the result of people persecuted for knowledge. This connection is implied because of the book's connection to human experience, knowledge and the unknown of new knowledge. Mr. Sempere, Daniel's father, emphasizes that books are important because they contain not just knowledge but also their experience interacting with people's souls. Because books are keepers of the human soul, they are the link between the inner human and the outside

---

<sup>11</sup> Zafon, *Shadow of the Wind*, 4.

world. The library is therefore important because it contains all of these different experiences of human kind. Libraries contain books which have the thoughts, the experiences, and the touch of every person they have interacted with. They also hold the known and more importantly the unknown. Libraries contain humanity's dreams and knowledge. They carry the past and the potential future. Most importantly libraries, in carrying the spirit—that is the ideas and dreams of humanity- of books, allows for the potential discovery of new knowledge. There is the possibility of discovering the known, the unknown and the known that has become unknown.

In *The Angel's Game* by Carlos Ruiz Zafón, the author David is also introduced to the Cemetery of Forgotten books, by Mr. Sempere's father, in order to hide his own book. He, however, is introduced not in order to understand its existence, like Daniel, but to protect his own book, which is reviled by the public. When he enters the library, Isaac the librarian greets him and tells him of the Cemetery's past and in doing so emphasizes the mysterious nature of the library. He says that:

None of us, not even the eldest, knows exactly when it was created or by whom. It's probably as old as the city itself, and has been growing with it, in its shadow. We know the building was erected using the remains of palaces, churches, prisons and hospitals that may once have stood here. The origin of the main structure goes back to the beginning of the eighteenth century and has not stopped evolving since then. Before that, the Cemetery of Forgotten Books was hidden under the tunnels of the medieval town. Some say that, during the time of the inquisition, people who were learned and had free mind would hide forbidden books in sarcophagi, or bury them in ossuaries all over the city to protect them trusting that future generations would dig them up" and also that "In the middle of the last century a long tunnel was discovered leading from the bowels of the labyrinth to the basement of an old library that nowadays is sealed off, hidden in the ruins of an old synagogue in the Jewish tunnel...It's inaccessible at present, but we imagine that for a long time the tunnel was one of the main entrance routed in this place.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Zafón, *Angel's Game*,124.

The underground nature of the library is often connected with brief imagery which is present in Isaac's explanation. This in turn is knowledge of internment into the ground. The Cemetery of Forgotten Books holds knowledge that was given a "funeral." The books were hidden in "sarcophagi" which are buried under the ground. Their "death," is in the eyes of the public who wishes to change their perception of reality by eliminating knowledge that is too dangerous. Like burying bodies to keep them out of sight, the books are given a death underground. This connection to death further connects the underground imagery with the theme of the dangerous, powerful and chaotic library. In addition, the Cemetery of Forgotten Books exists in the basement of houses and hidden away from those who persecuted its contents.

In the Cemetery of Forgotten Books, two types of library construction are present. The first is, of course, the underground. The second is the labyrinth. In the library, the underground tunnel was connected to a "labyrinth," which intricately connects the two different types of library structure that hold the dangerous and unknown. As we will discuss later, the labyrinth represents discovery of discovery, hidden knowledge and the unending process of discovery. Thus, the underground nature that is representative of mystery and danger is accompanied by themes of hidden knowledge and discovery.

Another novel in which the connection between the underground, the dangerous and the unknown is present, is in *Lirael* by Garth Nix. *Lirael* is novel about a girl struggling to find her place in a magical society, who is frustrated because she feels excluded by her own society because of her differences. She cannot see into the future like her fellow Clayr, and feels excluded from their society, so she begs for a job in the massive library that contains all of the Clayrs' knowledge from the past to the present. In the Clayr's library, the underground spaces of

the library are known to contain forgotten artifacts from previous eras of the Clayr society. Like the Cemetery of Forgotten books, the Clayr's library is built into the underground. It is stated that

Lirael:

Knew the general layout well. The Library was shaped like a nautilus shell, a continuous tunnel that wound down into the mountain in an ever-tightening spiral. This main spiral was an enormously long, twisting ramp that took you from the high reaches of the mountain down past the level of the valley floor, several thousand feet below.<sup>13</sup>

Like the Cemetery of Forgotten Books, this library is built into the foundations of the city. Both libraries contain knowledge that is unknown and forgotten. Both of the library's contents exist in a place that is known to exist, yet is unknown in content and layout. The Clayr know that information about of their own society exists in the underground parts of the library but the meanings of these items are unknown. Similarly, Lirael knows the general layout of the library, but not the specifics of what lays in each room or even the exact specifics of construction. She knows that there is an "enormously long, twisting ramp" and that it goes "down past the level of the valley floor" but other than the nautilus shell layout of the library Lirael only knows that the library has rooms that "had not been used for centuries," and that "no one now knew how to use." She knows that there were "rooms of total darkness, swallowing up the light and anyone foolish enough to enter unprepared." The one aspect that Lirael knows about the library is that it is mysterious and dangerous, but she does not know the exact layouts or contents of its structure. She knows that this mysterious knowledge exists and it titillates her interests. She wishes to know more about these unknown mysteries. Lirael knows that, like the Cemetery of Forgotten books, the Clayr's library is seemingly "continuous," "twisting," and stretches downward

---

<sup>13</sup> Garth Nix, *Lirael Daughter of the Clayr*, (New York: HarperCollins Publisher Inc., 2001), 74-75.

reaching deeper and deeper into the mountain along the staircase, but she does not know the specifics of what lies in the caverns below.

Like in the Cemetery of Forgotten Books, which houses the unwanted books that have become unknown, the Clayr's library holds the unknown and the dangerous (at least to the general public). It holds them in the depth of the mountains "underneath" the public's consciousness. The library is said to hold:

Books of magic and mystery, knowledge both ancient and new. Scrolls, maps, spells, recipes, inventories, stories, true tales, and Charter knew what else. In addition to all these written works, the great Library also housed other things. There were old armories within it, containing weapons and armor that had not been used for centuries but still stayed bright and new. There were rooms full of odd paraphernalia that no one now knew how to use. There were chambers were dressmakers' dummies stood fully clothed, displaying the fashions of bygone Clayr or the wildly different costumes of the barbaric North. There were greenhouses tended by sendings, with Charter marks for light as bright as the sun. there were rooms of total darkness, swallowing up the light and anyone foolish enough to enter unprepared.<sup>14</sup>

This is another case in which the forgotten is held in bowels of a library. The items held are "bygone" and originate from different lands even as far as the "barbaric North." There are rooms that have "armor that had not been used for centuries but still stayed bright and new." These items are often in "rooms of total darkness which reflects the public's awareness of these items. They have been forgotten by the public's knowledge and are both literally and figuratively, in the dark. The library holds the objects that are unknown and fallen out of usage. Their presence is known but their use forgotten.

Finally, like the Cemetery of Forgotten books, Lirael's library is potentially dangerous. While the Cemetery of Forgotten Books held books that were dangerous to those who wished to destroy them, the library in *Lirael*, like the Cemetery of Forgotten Books contains dangerous

---

<sup>14</sup> Nix, *Lirael*, 74-75.

objects and harmful creatures. In Lirael's universe, people use magic called Charter Magic that is summoned using artificial marks and whistles that one summons to the mind. But the magic that is rarely used by humans is called Free Magic, which is the wild magic of murderous beasts and necromancers who bring force men back from the grave when they are supposed to stay in death. While the library is filled with appropriate charter magic it also houses free magic creatures such as the stilken, a murderous creature that Lirael accidentally awakens and holds information about such creatures in the books in the caverns. The deeper one goes into Lirael's library the more unknown and potentially dangerous the knowledge. As such, monsters and free-magic lay on each lower level but the deeper one goes the more dangerous they become. Librarians have alarms that they can ring if anything unknown attacks them while they work their rounds. This demonstrates the nature of the library as one that is known yet unknown, mysterious and dangerous.

The structure of the underground library is common and not just in literature. It is not unusual for libraries historically to be places of hiding and discovery. Modern libraries and museums typically have stacks that are inaccessible to the public and frequently stored underground. The Widener Library at Harvard University is one in which Matthew Battles author of *Library: An Unquiet History* roamed once upon a time. He says:

Among Widener's dusty stacks are tunnels: one leads to the government document depository, in which I have read Indian censuses recording how many houses are made of mud and grass, or how many basket weavers and hide tanners reside in each village in Uttar Pradesh or Kashmir. Another tunnel leads to the stacks that hold the theater collection and the "X-cage," which hides items in odd sizes and formats, on paper deemed too fragile for the open stacks, or of a nature too salacious for the eyes of the undergraduates of various eras.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Matthew Battles, *Library an Unquiet History*. (New York: Vintage, 2004), 5.

Here, Battles finds the forgotten and the uncommon, underground. He discovers the “X-cage,” which hides items in odd sizes and formats, on paper deemed too fragile for the open stacks” and information about far away nations such as “Uttar Pradesh or Kashmir.” These items are “too salacious for the eyes of undergraduates of various eras,” a characterization that emphasizes the mysterious and potentially dangerous nature of the documents. The storing of items of a delicate or mysterious nature underground is a quality shared by the Clayr’s library that houses items of, “odd paraphernalia that no one now knew how to use,” and of “bygone Clayr.” The underground houses the uncommon and the unknown. It is out of sight and public knowledge.

Another famous example of books that are dangerous and thus hidden in a library occurred in the Vatican Library. In the Medici era, the Medici ran a semi-public library where they would demonstrate their power through their collection. They would hire scholars to do research. However:

The scholarship made possible by such a comprehensive symmetry did not always benefit the church. Lorenzo Valla used the new kind of scholarship fostered by the library to show that the Donation of Constantine--a document that allegedly showed that the first Christian emperor had given Rome to the church--was a fraud and forgery. The Donation of Constantine, however, was the foundation of papal claims to authority over Rome..... He hid {the book}, according to a frustrated French reader, in the deepest and most obscure part of the Vatican library.” In the counter-Reformation, Sirleto discovered what librarians have long known: that the best place to hide books, often is the library.’<sup>16</sup>

As in the case of the Cemetery of Forgotten Books, the hiding place is not just in the library but the library itself. Thus, this connection has made its way into literary culture. Though Sirleto was threatened by the Donation of Constantine, he chose not to destroy the book that threatened the church’s power but rather, decided to hide it in a collection so vast that it would take a very

---

<sup>16</sup> Battles, *Library*, 83.

trained eye to find it again. Losing books within a library occurs today too. Books that are misshelved or placed behind stacks of other books become easily lost and librarians are sent like adventurers in the stacks to recover them, much like William and Adso searching for Aristotle's lost book in the library of *The Name of the Rose*.

Both the theme of the underground, the forbidden, the unknown, the powerful, and the hidden in the library are prominent themes in Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*. Like the Cemetery of Forgotten books, the Aedificium is entered through an underground entrance. Adso and William first access the Aedificium through the underground of the catacombs. Like the Cemetery of Forgotten Books, both libraries are forbidden to those who do not belong (in the Aedificium monks of a lesser clearance and outsiders cannot access the library and in The Cemetery of Forgotten books one must be initiated by one who knows of the Cemetery before hand.). Both novel's also emphasize their library's hidden, underground nature through the language of death. The first instance of the connection between death and the forbidden in *Name of the Rose* is seen when Adso and William first cross through the catacombs to enter the Aedificium. They run into a coded note that is written in pagan imagery. This alchemical imagery would have been typical for scientists of the time but is the boundary between science and magic which for monks of certain orders would not be permitted to read. This note in the catacombs represents the threshold between the known and the unknown. The library is known but the mystery of what lies within is unknown. Thus, one entrance is within the catacomb, the place that straddles life and death, that is to say the known and the unknown.

The Aedificium is also a library of dangerous contents as it holds many topics that are forbidden topics for monks. At one point in their exploration of the library, William and Adso

encounter a book on mythological creatures. William says that the unicorn in said book was a part of a “book which speaks of fantastic animals and beasts living in distant lands was part of the catalogue of falsehoods spread by the infidels...”<sup>17</sup> Here one sees that William acknowledges that this creature is considered one of magic. However, when Adso makes a case for it being an animal that is “noble” William states that some “believe that it’s a fable, an invention of the pagans.”<sup>18</sup> He states that the pagans created these animals but that “it’s not certain the animal doesn’t exist.”<sup>19</sup> This demonstrates the known that is unknown. He knows of the unicorn but does not know if it is real. The knowledge that lies in the library is often unknown as seen in *Lirael* and in *Shadow of the Wind*. While the topic is known to William, these books hold pictures of mythological creatures. The monks would know little about this topic, because they do not belong to their Christian knowledge. Despite this, the answers to what these creatures they are lies hidden in the Aedificium. Another such case of dangerous knowledge existing in the library occurs when Adso has dreams of a woman approaching him and seducing him. He first reads of the women in a book which he says:

Seemed of the Hispanic school... The colors were violent, the reds suggested blood or fire... Here the artist had dwelled at greater length on the woman’s form. I compared her face, her bosom, her curving thighs with the statue of the Virgin I had seen with Ubertino... at a certain point I could no longer understand what distinguished them. I again I felt an inner agitation?<sup>20</sup>

Here, Adso encounters women, passion and love which are forbidden to him. The colors of the book “reds suggested blood or fire” suggest passion- a subject which is forbidden to Adso

---

<sup>17</sup> Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose*, (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), 315.

<sup>18</sup> Eco, *Name of the Rose*, 315.

<sup>19</sup> Eco, *Name of the Rose*, 315.

<sup>20</sup> Eco, *Name of the Rose*, 241.

because of his religion. He then later diagnoses himself with love sickness sneaking away again after uncontrollably dreaming about these women. He finds the explanation for his “agitation” again in a book in the library He says that “My eye fell on a book, not large but adorned with miniatures far removed (luckily!) from the subject...”<sup>21</sup> The book *Speculum amoris* (sight of love) tell Adso that “I had only to see that book and I was forced to say, “De te fabula narratur.” and I discovered I was more sick with love than I had believed.”<sup>22</sup>

Adso finds himself finding the answer to his inner quarrel in the library. His affliction is forbidden to act upon in the laws of the knowledge and thus, proof that the Aedificium holds dangerous contents that are unknown and often forbidden, such as fantastic beasts and love. Finally, The catacomb entrance of the Aedifium further cements the connection between these themes and underground, death and the dangerous, forbidden, mysterious knowledge that is hidden there.

The Labyrinth is another structure that is essential to the construction of libraries in literature. It represents productions of knowledge and the non-linear path of discovery that comes with the library. Famously, Borges uses the labyrinth like passageways of the Library of Babel as a simulacrum of the universe in his story “The Library of Babel.” The *Oxford Index* describes the labyrinth as:

A complicated and elaborate arrangement of passages or pathways in which it is easy to get lost and difficult to find the way out. The best-known labyrinth is the legendary example in Crete that was inhabited by the Minotaur who was eventually killed by Theseus with a little help and a ball of string from King Midas' daughter Ariadne. Egyptian labyrinths are also known and the tradition of creating mazes as open-topped labyrinths was widespread in the ancient world. They

---

<sup>21</sup> Eco, *Name of the Rose* 322.

<sup>22</sup> Eco, *The Name of the Rose* 322.

probably represent dancing grounds on which were performed intricate dances representing the passage of the soul from life to death and back again.<sup>23</sup>

While the labyrinth is often used very literally in fiction, it can also represent the soul's journey to find the path that it is meant to take through a number of choices and possibilities.



(Pic 1)<sup>24</sup>

Famously, the meditation labyrinth is one of self discovery. In such labyrinths, one walks the pathways of a labyrinthine pattern in order to reflect on the self (Pic 1). As one walks, the mind wanders knowing that, like Theseus and the minotaur, one will exit the end of the labyrinth having faced and reflecting upon the unknown. Put simply, one will discover parts of the self that are unknown before wandering the labyrinth. One faces the known and unknown like one does the minotaur in that one knows that the minotaur is in the labyrinth but not where in the labyrinth it is. Though one knows they will encounter it by the end, the known is the presence of thought

---

<sup>23</sup> "Labyrinth" Oxford University Press. Accessed 14 Dec 2016 <http://oxfordindex.oup.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20111108134159379>

<sup>24</sup> Marie Harwichport, Marie Accessed 14th December 2016 <http://www.labyrinthguild.org/images/labyrinths/harwichport.jpg>.

in the meditation labyrinth but the reflection of self is the unknown process for one does not know the result one will have upon walking through it.

Finally, one will discover the self when one walks through the known unknown. Because of this the labyrinth can be a passage with many paths the labyrinth is often used as a means to reflect on life with similar unknown multiplicity of paths. It is a constant path of self-realization and reflection. In this vein, the labyrinth, like the underground library, represents themes of the library. The labyrinth, in particular in the literary library, represents the library's ability to help one find themselves and how one journeys on the path of finding and creating new knowledge by like Borges, using the limited infinity, that is to say by making known from unknown.

In *The Angel's Game*, David uses the labyrinth-like Cemetery of Forgotten Books to hide himself away and in the process discovers what he has become. He enters the Cemetery of Forgotten Books to deposit a book that he wrote entirely out of his own passion but is hated by the general public. He has signed a deal, with the potential devil and seeks to "bury" his book in the library. If Mr. Sempere's words come back into effect that, "every volume you see here, has a soul. The soul of the person who wrote it and of those who read it and lived and dreamed with it."<sup>25</sup> David's book contains his soul because it contains his hopes, dreams, and passions for his life. But as these hopes fall apart and his book is rejected, he wanders the labyrinth trying to bury the part of himself of which the world does not approve. David says he "climbed the steps until I reached a landing that led into three different tunnels", reached a landing, walked past books for "almost half an hour,"<sup>26</sup> after which he puts his book into the shelf and turns seeing himself in a

---

<sup>25</sup> Zafón, *Shadow of the Wind*, 4.

<sup>26</sup> Zafón, *Angels's Game*, 124.

mirror. He senses but does not recognize the madness and obsession that is growing fast within him. He says that he,

Felt the presence behind me, and turned to find the man in black, his eyes fixed steadily on mine. At first I didn't recognize my own eyes in the mirror, one of the many that formed a chain of muted light along the corridors of the labyrinth. What I saw in the reflection was my face and my skin, but the eyes were that of a stranger. Murky dark and full of malice.<sup>27</sup>

He wanders the labyrinth to lose himself in the form of his book and in the process loses the ability to see his inner self at all. This is supported by the mirror in this scene that reflects his image until he cannot physically see himself. He is a “stranger” to himself and is “murky dark and full of malice.” Physically he remains the same but recognizes that his “eyes were that of a stranger.” The theme of a mirror is a common one within a library. Both the Library of Babel and the Aedificium contain a mirror which in the latter scares Adso to see himself wandering through the dark. The mirror is a reflection of reality or the self.

The eyes are thought to be windows to the soul and David is unable to see what he is or what he has become. The library is forcing him to recognize this fact with a mirror. But he also recognizes new stirrings within himself. He finds his new self, deep within the labyrinth. In depositing his book into the library he loses himself. But not soon after, he finds a book that is “dark, with no visible title on the spine... The words of the title, which seemed to have been branded onto the cover, were blurred, but on the fourth page the same title could be clearly read: *Lux Aeterna D.M.*”<sup>28</sup> The pages are gibberish and he soon learns that he has chosen the book written by the last tenant of his apartment who went mad by dealings with his mysterious boss.

---

<sup>27</sup> Zafon, *The Angels's Game*, 127.

<sup>28</sup> Zafón, *Angel's Game* 126-127.

By choosing this book David is following in his progenitor's footsteps. He is losing a grip on who he is by letting his madness rule him but he is finding a new part of himself by discovering the path of someone who came before. The process of wandering the labyrinthine library brought him to this exact book, and let him recognize what he has become. His journey within the labyrinth like passage of the library is representative of this process of this self-recognition.

As in the case of learning more about the self, the labyrinth is a symbol of the process of the creation of knowledge. If books contain the dreams and the souls of humans, Gary P. Radford's article "Positivism, Foucault, and the Fantasia of the Library: Conceptions of Knowledge and the Modern Library Experience" speaks as to the important quality of the labyrinth within the library. He states that:

From the Foucauldian viewpoint, the fantasia of the library is the experience of the labyrinth, of seeking connections among texts as well as their contents. The practices of the library institutionalize particular arrangements of texts, but Foucault argues that one can work within this to create new labyrinths, new perspectives, and ultimately, new worlds. The library becomes an instrument of possibility rather than a place where possibility seems exhausted.<sup>29</sup>

In other words, the structure of the labyrinth in a library is one of discovery and revitalization of the way we view knowledge. The labyrinth is a way to discover the self because by discovering new books we are looking within human history to discover ourselves. Each time we go to the library we are seeking the unknown. We are looking for a story or information we have never heard before or a part of ourselves we do not know. The modern library is organized and is thought to have a structured order of the known knowledge of the universe. But the library is

---

<sup>29</sup>Gary P. Radford "Positivism, Foucault, and the Fantasia of the Library: Conceptions of Knowledge" *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy*, Vol. 62, No.4 (October 1992), 420.

dangerous because it holds the unknown. The more we seek our own discovery in books the more our knowledge grows and so does the perpetuation of knowledge. One also makes new knowledge as we explore old stories hoping to uncover our own new take on old knowledge coming back again and again in scholarly discussion. By “seeking connections among texts” one creates more knowledge out of the texts that are already there. The way we make new ideas (unknown that becomes known) out of old knowledge (known that becomes unknown) is out of the labyrinth-like way of using the library.

The idea that a library is used to produce new knowledge from older texts corresponds with the idea of the limited infinity that Borges uses in “The Library of Babel” The Library is introduced as:

The universe (which others call the Library) is composed of an indefinite and perhaps infinite number of hexagonal galleries with vast air shafts between, surrounded by very low railings. From any of the hexagons one can see, interminably, the upper and lower floors. The distribution of the galleries is invariable. Twenty shelves, five long shelves per side, cover all the sides except two; their height, which is the distance from floor to ceiling, scarcely exceeds that of a normal bookcase.<sup>30</sup>

This language is one of the unknown. The library is “indefinite” and contains “perhaps infinite number of hexagonal galleries” rather than a known “infinite number.” The library’s construction is thought to be known but the way it functions is not. After much speculation the narrator concludes that “I venture to suggest this solution to the ancient problem: *The Library is unlimited and cyclical*. If an eternal traveler were to cross it in any direction, after centuries he would see that the same volumes were repeated in the same disorder (which, thus repeated, would be an

---

<sup>30</sup> Jorge Luis Borges, *Labyrinths* (New York: New Directions Publishing Corp, 1983), 51.

order: the Order).”<sup>31</sup> This quote reveals a lot about the labyrinth-like perpetuation of new knowledge and how it relates to the underground. If the “Library is unlimited and cyclical,” then the Library of Babel uses the same construction of knowledge to produce new books. It has a base knowledge upon which new knowledge, or in the case of the story, books, rooms and shelves are created. Its materials (and in the creation of new knowledge read subject) come up again and again in different variations. However, the perpetuation of new knowledge comes from the construct of accepted knowledge that we will call “base constructed knowledge” because it serves as a starting point to base the rest of the knowledge that we use to shape our own perception of the universe.

The ordering of the modern library is meant to fool us into the thought that the universe’s knowledge is sorted and orderly. The base constructed model is instead used to make a jumping off point, off of which new knowledge can come. Knowledge is not orderly, certain, or true. As one dives deeper into the library—whether physically or metaphorically—the more dangerous, mysterious and hidden the discoveries. The more one visits the library (the public space) the more one immerses themselves in the inner thought (the spirit of the book), and the more one produces the new knowledge which becomes outer (in forms of new books, new thoughts, new creations). In partaking in this process, and recognizing these themes that we have found in literature it redefines how we think of the world. Thus, by using the labyrinthine library we creates a process through which variations of knowledge are produced adding to the labyrinth of knowledge and experience. The library is the intermittent zone where this can occur and the “Library of Babel” is a model that shows this process. This is what Borges calls “cyclical yet

---

<sup>31</sup> Borges *Labyrinths*. 58.

infinite.” The production of new knowledge from a shared constructed base. However far one travels from the original knowledge or room in the library the explorer is forced to come under “the same volumes” repeated in “the same disorder.” In doing so, there is created a bigger world and concept from which the explorer hopes to base an order and shape her own perception of the universe. The narrator speaks to this by saying “(which, thus repeated, would be an order: the Order).” This ties in directly with Radford’s analysis of the space of the library in post-Foucault analysis. One must wander the labyrinth to produce this knowledge and discover new knowledge via the underground, the hidden, the dangerous and the unknown.

“The Library of Babel” uses the device of the simulacrum to understand the universe through the setting of the infinite library. As stated in the introduction, Jonathan Stuart Boulter, in his article “Partial Glimpses of the Infinite: Borges and the Simulacrum,” describes types of simulacrum that Borges uses. He names several types of simulacrum but the one that stands out is the second type that he describes as,

The reflection, the simulacrum, is an uncanny spot of the neutral. It is neither a self-contained or self-containing ontology nor merely a reflection of an a priori ontology; it is neutral, neither one thing nor another: the simulacrum is a liminal space of process and becoming.<sup>32</sup>

But he also notes that, “If the subject or object can be simulated to the point where the simulation is more real than the original, what happens to the ontological viability of the idea or origin, originality, totality or infinitude? The simulacrum serves to erase any idea differences between the finite and the infinite, between the copy and its original.”<sup>33</sup> In this case, the role of the library

---

<sup>32</sup> Jonathan Stuart Boulter, “Partial Glimpses of the Infinite: Borges and the Simulacrum,” *Hispanic Review*, Vol.69, No.3, (Summer 2001): 360.

<sup>33</sup> Boulter, *Partial Glimpses* 360.

in fiction is one of a simulacrum. One thinks it is a reflection of reality thus, but it becomes reality because it contains the seeds of truths of what is the reality of the library in the public conscious. Earlier it was mentioned that the library is ordered in order to create the sense of organization. It is perceived as sterile, as academic, as fixed, and as boring, a place to be shushed. But the library's form in fiction is a way to produce a simulacrum that becomes a reality in the collective conscious. If it is a simulacrum then it becomes our reality because like how "Borges posits that the double of the original "contains" aspects of the original and thus, in Baudrillard's own terms, is a perfect simulation of (or nostalgic return to) the origin."<sup>34</sup> The construction of the library in fictions thus, contains the unspoken truths of how we perceive the library.

Thus, the role of the physical structure in these literary sources contain key aspects than of how one perceives the library is a place of hidden, dangerous, exciting knowledge in addition to a place of unending creation of knowledge. The library in fiction through the construction of the underground and the labyrinth, demonstrates these connected themes and demonstrate a truth of the library. The library contains the unknown, the dangerous, the chaotic and the hidden. These themes represented by the underground and the labyrinth demonstrate how these themes are used to understand discovery of the self, process of creation knowledge, and the unknown-known. It is as Borges would have stated: cyclical and yet infinite.

---

<sup>34</sup> Boulter, *Partial Glimpses*, 362.

## Chapter 2: Library as Representative of Place

In the previous chapter, we examined the physical construction of the literary library and what it indicated about the qualities these literary libraries possessed. In this chapter, I will take a closer look at *The Name of The Rose* by Umberto Eco, and *A Series of Unfortunate Events* by pen-named Lemony Snicket to examine the similarities between the literary library, the institution and the people to which these libraries belong. The literary library in its description contents, and construction, reflects the personality of the each library's owners, and the world in which each library exists.

The Library in *Name of The Rose* is a example of the library reflecting the world in which it exists. The Aedificium in its description, placement in relation to the Abbey and contents, is a reflection of the Abbey. The Abbey is a place of divine worship and knowledge far removed from society. It is hard to access, except by those who arrive seeking something specific (like William and Adso), yet it contains knowledge that is not easily accessible. This nature is represented in the Abbey's description as an impregnable and out of the way structure located on the side of a mountain.

The Aedificium like the Abbey, is far removed, distant and in addition is as hard to access for the monks of the Abbey, as the Abbey is for the rest of the world. In the first chapter of *The Name of the Rose*, Adso, the narrator, describes his first impression of the Abbey. He says that,

While we toiled up the steep path that wound around the mountain, I saw the abbey. I was amazed, not by the walls that girded it on every side, similar to others to be seen in all the Christian world, but by the bulk of what I later learned was the Aedificium.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose*, (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), 21.

The Abbey is out of the way of society. According to Adso, the way to reach it is up a mountain, which already is a place one must labor to cross, but also one must drudge “up the steep path,” which “wound around the mountain,” This denotes that it is hard to follow the path and ascend up the side of the mountain. Just as the spiritual path is twisted, curved and hard to follow. The path itself is “steep,” It would be difficult for anyone to reach the Abbey casually. The path, if not perilous, is then at the very least exhausting and difficult to follow. Thus, in the first sentence describing the Abbey, Adso is primarily emphasizing the out-of-the-way nature of the Abbey both in spiritual calling and in physical placement in comparison to regular civilization.

Adso further remarks on this closed off nature of the Abbey when he talks of the walls that “girded it on every side,” The Abbey is cut off not just by its location, which is up a path that is “steep” and on an “incline,” but also by its own design. The inhabitants of the Abbey have built a fence to keep it all in—or most out. Adso remarks that it is “similar to others to be seen in all the Christian world,” The fence and the separate nature is one that expresses its seclusion from everyday society.

Adso is also emphasizing the connection between the divinity of the Abbey and the difficulty of a spiritual life. Because the Abbey is a spiritual center it is also very secluded from the main world because of its “divine knowledge,” In the aforementioned quote, Adso designates the Abbey as a place of intangible and spiritual knowledge. Primarily, he states that the Abbey is on a mountain. Being so high in altitude denotes in the Christian tradition that the Abbey is closer to God and heaven. Thus, by being at a mountain top the Abbey is cut off from the regular society by being closer to God. To follow a path of spiritual knowledge, one has to know what they want. The path is “winding,” and hard. Because spiritual knowledge is so hard to obtain, it

makes sense that the Abbey would be in an out of the way place as it is a city of a Christian God, it would be set apart from the sin of the world. The Abbey's cloistered and divine nature is alluded to on the same page when Adso states that the octagonal shape of the building

expresses the sturdiness and impregnability of the perfect form, which expresses the sturdiness and impregnability of the City of God), whose southern sides stood on the plateau of the abbey, while the northern ones seemed to grow from the steep side of the mountain, a sheer drop, to which they were bound. I might say that from below, at certain points, the cliff seemed to extend reaching up towards the heavens.<sup>36</sup>

The Abbey itself is “impregnable,” by regular society and exists as a “City,” of divine belief running by itself. It stands “sturdy,” and even the “cliff seemed to extend reaching up towards the heavens.”

However, the Aedificium is to the Abbey what the Abbey is to the mountain. The Aedificium in its initial description reflects the aforementioned out of the way nature of the Abbey itself. During Adso's description of the Abbey, he is foreshadowing the relationship of the Aedificium to the Abbey. The Aedificium is on top of the Abbey, as the Abbey is on top of the mountain. Its contents are vast and qualify as a “city,” of sorts—or a world. Later the library is found out to be organized by places of the world. The Aedificium is in this way a world within itself. It is also, like the Abbey, “walled in,” and protected by a head librarian. Thus, those without a specific purpose are not able to access the library unless they are seeking something specific. In the first quotation above, Adso remarks that the “bulk,” of the building is what he “later learned was the Aedificium” and its odd placement within the Abbey. Thus, the library is a place of spiritual knowledge removed from the rest of the Abbey such as the Abbey is removed from the rest of society. Finally, the Aedificium is a big “bulk,” on the building just as the Abbey

---

<sup>36</sup> Eco, *Name of the Rose*, 21.

is a big bulk on the side of the mountain. Thus, the Aedificium's description and placement in relation to the Abbey reflects the Abbey's own description and placement in contrast to the world.

The Aedificium itself is a mecca of cultural and spiritual knowledge. Its contents represent traits of the monks of the Abbey. The Aedificium accomplishes this by making direct comparison between the variety of origins of the books and the worldly nature of the monks within the library. William, in conversation with the Abbot, states that the Aedificium has:

more books than any other Christian library. I know that in comparison with your cases, those of Bobbio or Pomposa, of Cluny or Fleury, seem the room of a boy barely being introduced to the abacus. I know that the six thousand codices that were the boast of Novalesa a hundred or more years ago are few compared to yours, and perhaps many of those are now here. I know that your abbey is the only light that Christianity can oppose to the thirty-six libraries of Baghdad, to the ten thousand codices of Vizir Ibn al-Alkami...I know many of the monks living in your midst come from other abbeys scattered all over the world. Some stay here a short time, to copy manuscripts to be found nowhere else and to carry them back then to their own house.<sup>37</sup>

This passage addresses two key ways in which on how the Aedificium represents the Abbey and its inhabitants. The Aedificium contains "more books than any other Christian library," which means it is a large library in comparison to other Christian libraries. It has more knowledge in it than the "thirty-six libraries of Baghdad," or the "ten thousand codices of Vizir Ibn al-Alkami," but mainly it has monks "from other abbeys scattered all over the world," The books and codices come from all over the world just as they monks of the Abbey. William and Adso meet monks from all over the world, such as ones who are persecuted in the outside world like William's old acquaintance Umbertino who fled from Vienne whereafter:

his star at court had waned, he had to leave Avignon, the Pope had this indomitable man pursued as a heretic who per mundum discurrit vagabundus. Then, it was said, all trace of him was lost.

---

<sup>37</sup> Eco, *Name of the Rose*, 33.

That afternoon I had learned, from the dialogue between William and the abbot, that he was hidden here in this abbey.<sup>38</sup>

Like Umberto, monks who are persecuted come to the Abbey in order to hide amongst others like themselves, much like Aristotle's manuscript was hidden amongst the other books. Each monk and book is different in origin but similar in form (for books) or calling (for monks). Umberto was "hidden here in this abbey," and remained hidden for he toiled amongst the other monks just as Aristotle's lost book was hidden amongst the other books.

Just as the Abbey is forbidden to all but those who have business there, the Aedificium is forbidden to those who do not have a specific purpose. The Abbot explains to William that while he "can move freely through the whole abbey, as I have said. But not, to be sure, on the top floor of the Aedificium, the library,"<sup>39</sup> Like the Abbey, which towers above the rest of the world but is remote and forbidden to those who do not seek spiritual enlightenment, the top floor of the Aedificium is forbidden to those who do not have a purpose.

The Abbot justifies this by saying that:

not all truths are for all ears, not all falsehoods can be recognized as such by pious soul; and the monks finally, are in the scriptorium to carry out a precise task, which requires them to read certain volumes and not others, and not to pursue every foolish curiosity that seizes them, whether through weakness of intellect or through pride or through diabolical prompting.<sup>40</sup>

In the history of the library forbidding access to books without purpose was a common practice. Idle tarrying was thought to be counterproductive. However, In the Aedificium, it is a means to the end of keeping the monks from diversion and distraction. Much like a divine life makes one give up idle pleasures, the Aedificium is set up so that monks give up their curiosity

---

<sup>38</sup> Eco, *Name of the Rose*, 53.

<sup>39</sup> Eco, *Name of the Rose*, 33.

<sup>40</sup> Eco, *Name of the Rose*, 37.

to casually peruse. This limited access to the library is reflective of the monks within the Abbey. One cannot exist in the Abbey if one does not seek to join the order.

Access to the Aedificium also restricted because of books that contain “falsehoods,”

The Abbot states that,

Monsters exist because they are part of the divine plan, and in the horrible features of those same monsters the power of the Creator is revealed. And by divine plan, too, there exist also books by wizards, the cabalas of the Jews, the fables of pagan poets, the lies of infidels. It was the firm and holy conviction of those who founded the abbey and sustained it over the centuries that even in books of falsehood, to the eyes of the sage reader, a pale reflection of the divine wisdom can shine. And therefore the library is a vessel of these too. But for this very reason, you understand, it cannot be visited by just anyone. and furthermore...a book is a fragile creature, it suffers the wear of time, it fears rodents, the elements, clumsy hands.<sup>41</sup>

In relation to for the library, the Abbott forbids casual access because the library contains “monsters,” Here he refers to the books that contain magical theory and are written by “pagans,” However, the Abbey also contains “monsters,” like Jorge who would murder the whole Abbey to protect his lost book. He hides amongst those like him: a murderer amongst his fellow monks just like books lie amongst similar books but vary in content. Books and monks “suffer the wear of time,” by coming in and out of fashion with the church, but both call the Abbey and Aedificium their home and protector, safe as long as they stay within their walls. Christianity is constantly in and out of favor and can be taken down by the actions surrounding a single book. In *The Name of the Rose*, it is the discovery of Aristotle’s manuscript that is the cause of the murders and results in the burning of an entire Abbey.

Thus, the library in itself is a reflection of the Abbey. It is closed off and hard to access without a purpose, but is a large place close to God where books from all over the world come

---

<sup>41</sup> Eco, *Name of the Rose*, 37-38.

together to create a place of intangible knowledge. However, both the Abbey and the Aedificium are fragile and subject to destruction by the power of one or two monsters that lie within.

Both the Aedificium and the libraries in *A Series of Unfortunate Events* are representative of the people and the worlds in which they exist. In this same vein, these libraries represent the qualities of their owners. While many of the libraries seem organized they hold qualities of a much more chaotic society than is previously known. The world of *The Series of Unfortunate Events* is one of secrets, wordplay, angry artists, secret organization, three very unhappy children and very specialized libraries. In the following paragraphs, we will first examine the contrast between libraries and personality (examining how the kinder individuals the children feel at home with have bigger, more comfortable and more interesting libraries than crueler individuals), and then investigate how the libraries represent the world in which that the Baudelaire orphans live.

Klaus, Sunny and Violet Baudelaire, become orphans when their home burns down one day and they are doomed to travel from foster family to foster family as they are pursued by their money-hungry “relative,” Count Olaf, pursues them from home to home. At each home they go to the three children find different libraries that are more of a home and a resource than the people to whom they are sent. Each child has a special trait: Klaus enjoys reading, Violet loves inventing and Sunny is enjoys cooking and biting objects with her shiny, baby-teeth. Before their parents perished in a terrible fire, the Baudelaire’s originally came from a loving home where their interests were fostered and they could read in luxury. In the first book of the series, *A Bad Beginning*, the narrator (and the author) Lemony Snicket, describes their library as “an enormous

library in their mansion, a room filled with thousands of books on nearly every subject,”<sup>42</sup> The library is big—big enough to fit three children comfortably—and it has lots of books, which demonstrates a wide worldview. It is a place filled with lots of information “on nearly every subject,” in which children are allowed. The library has “nearly every subject,” which demonstrates that this library contains whatever the children could ask for. It is a place where they are their interests are accepted and fostered. A library with “nearly every subject,” represents the loving family they were a part of where there were seemingly no boundaries and access to information was not limited. The library is “enormous,” and thus, equipped for a family. It is a place that demonstrates inquiring minds, since it has “thousands of books.” In short, it is comfortable, a state that represents of the comfort of the Baudelaire’s in their family life. The children are able to access every book and the flourishing of their library represents the flourishing of their family life.

The “thousand of books,” is also a representation of the comfort of mind that the children have. They have access to books with potential answers to anything they could ask. They perceive everything to be known or easy to understand in their own home. However, this reflects the three’s state of ignorance about the evils of the world. They have access to “nearly every subject,” yet they do not know of their parents ties with VFD, the dangerous organization that plagues their lives and puts them in constant danger. Ironically they have access to tons of information and perceive their family to be perfect yet, despite being surrounded by the comfort of knowledge are ignorant to the grim undercurrent within their own home.

---

<sup>42</sup> Lemony Snicket, *The Bad Beginning*, (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), 3.

After being forced into Count Olaf's care, the children take refuge in Justice Strauss' household. Justice Strauss' library represents her kindness, intellect and how at home the three children feel with her. It is described as one that is:

Not a public library, but a private library; that is, a large collection of books belonging to Justice Strauss. There were shelves and shelves of them, on every wall from the floor to the ceiling, and separate shelves and shelves of them in the middle of the room. The only place there weren't books was in one corner, where there were some large, comfortable-looking chairs and a wooden table with lamps hanging over them, perfect for reading. Although it was not as big as their parents' library, it was as cozy and the Baudelaire children were thrilled.<sup>43</sup>

This library is being thrown in to direct comparison to the Baudelaire's parent's library. Like their home library, Justice Strauss' library has a "large collection," of books. There are so many there are, "shelves and shelves of them in the middle of the room." This is a place where the children feel comfortable with a person whom they feel relatively happy and "cozy." It is not their home, so it is not as "big," a library as their own, but since Justice Strauss welcomes them almost as a mother, they feel that the library is as "cozy," or comfortable. The quality of "cozy," represents how the three feel Justice Strauss' house to be almost a home. Justice Strauss's multitude of books shows that in addition to being kind she is an informed person. While Justice Strauss is not their parents, she is the adult that they feel the safest with.

In contrast, Count Olaf is the main villain of the series. He is abusive, cruel and the three never feel at home with him. Consequently his home has no library. His house is unwelcoming in stark contrast to Justice Strauss' home and cozy library. It is depicted as:

the dirtiest they had ever seen, and a little bit of mud from outdoors wouldn't have made a bit of difference. Even by the dim light of the one bare lightbulb that hung from the ceiling, the three

---

<sup>43</sup> Snicket, *The Bad Beginning*, 37-38.

children could see that everything in this room was filthy, from the stuffed head of a lion which was nailed to the wall to the owl of apple cores which sat on a small wooden table.<sup>44</sup>

The grime of the house reflects Count Olaf's gross villainy. His brute personality and greed shines through his facade of kindness. Towards the beginning of *The Bad Beginning*, he suggests the Baudelaire fortune be used to spruce up his house. When Mr. Poe states that the Baudelaire fortune can not be used until Violet is of age, Count Olaf "turned to Mr. Poe with a glint in his eye like an angry dog."<sup>45</sup>

Count Olaf is an angry man. He is cruel and violent, hitting Klaus when Klaus complains there is only one bed for the three children. Count Olaf's anger is depicted like an animal. When angered only has a "glint" in his eye like an "angry dog." He is like an animal who cannot control their negative emotions and who could attack under slight pressure. Further, Count Olaf is cunning for he does not show this anger to Mr. Poe—a man who is in charge of the children's file. The anger only manifests as a "glint." Thus, Mr. Poe does not see this viciousness. Because of all of these reasons there is no sign of a library in his house.

Other libraries are representative of the places they are located, such as a library that contains only grammar books owned by their neurotic Aunt Josephine, plush comfy library filled with snake books for their herpetologist Uncle Monty (another trusted adult), or a mostly empty library at a factory where the three do not feel at home, or a inaccessible library at the Prufrock preparatory school where they are separated from living with the other students in a shack. In each case, the library reflects the level of comfort the three feel in their surroundings.

---

<sup>44</sup> Snicket, *The Bad Beginning*, 22-23.

<sup>45</sup> Snicket, *The Bad Beginning*, 23

The last library in the series that the orphans find is one hidden from society. It used to belong to their parents and is hidden away in a tree. This library is the one where the three felt most at home. It represents not just their life with their parents but a home for them as well. It contains structure for their interests and represents their finding of a “home,”—or as close to as home as they will receive:

the Baudelaire orphans followed, wondering what secrets they would find at the root of the tree that sheltered such a mysterious place. First Violet, and then Klaus, and then Sunny stepped down through the gap into the secret space. It was dark underneath the roots of the tree, and for a moment the Baudelaire orphans tried to adjust to the gloom and figure out what this place was, but then the middle Baudelaire remembered the flashlight... The Baudelaire orphans were standing in a space much bigger than they would have imagined, and much better furnished. Along one wall was a large stone bench lined with simple, clean tools, including several, sharp-looking razor-blades, a glass pot of paste, and several wooden brushes with narrow, fine tips. Next to the wall was an enormous bookcase, which was stuffed with books of all shapes and sizes as well as assorted documents that were stacked, rolled, and stapled with extreme care. The shelves of the book case stretched away from the children past the beam of the flashlight and disappeared into the darkness, so there was no way of knowing how long the bookcase was, or the number of books and documents it contained. Opposite the bookcase stretched an elaborate kitchen with a huge potbellied stove, several porcelain sinks, and a tall humming refrigerator... Finally, in the center of this enormous space were two large, comfortable reading chairs, one with a gigantic book on the seat, much taller than an atlas and much thicker than even an unabridged dictionary, and the other just waiting for someone to sit down. Lastly, there was a curious device made of brass that looked like a large tube with a pair of binoculars at the bottom, which rose up into the thick canopy of roots that formed the ceiling.<sup>46</sup>

The children here find a perfect library as their last library. It has a place for all of them. For Klaus there is an “enormous bookcase, which was stuffed with books of all shapes and sizes as well as assorted documents that were staked, rolled, and stapled with extreme care.” This suits Klaus, because he wishes for a library with tons of different books on lots of different subjects. He is a researcher and well-read on many subjects, so a library for him must be filled with “assorted documents,” and books that are of all “shapes and sizes.” It is well organized as the documents are “stacked, rolled, and stapled with extreme care,” representing an order that he craves in his life, his skills as a researcher and a knowledge of the world.

---

<sup>46</sup> Lemony, Snicket *The End*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), 203-206.

For Violet there is “a large stone bench lined with simple, clean tools, including several, sharp-looking razor blades, a glass pot of paste, and several wooden brushes with narrow, fine tips.” This space allows Violet to experiment. For Sunny there is “an elaborate kitchen with a huge potbellied stove, several porcelain sinks, and a tall humming refrigerator.” Finally there is “a gigantic book on the seat...just waiting for someone to sit down,” which represents the answers that each child wished to find. Finally they each receive comfort from the books as they finally receive knowledge from their parents world of secrets. It is a perfect library that represents each one of their interests and since it is made by their parents it’s as close as they can get to their original library and a home. The library represents their dreams of family, knowledge, their past, and their interests. In the library being perfect in terms of their interests, comfortable and just big enough for the three of them, they find a place in the world. They are most at ease because the library is comfortable. It has nothing that is secretly hidden unlike their original home. The many books represent this knowledge and the comfortable chairs represent their finding a place. This place is the one that is the most home to them as they have their interest and each other.

However, the world the Baudelaire’s live in is much more chaotic than they previously thought. Like Eco’s *Aedificium* which seems organized but holds Aristotle’s secret manuscript the libraries in the *Series of Unfortunate Events* represent a world which seems orderly but is chaotic and filled with the unknown. At first the Baudelaire’s believe their world to be known to them. They can navigate each section and know what it is for. After Count Olaf strikes Klaus across the face, the three go to complain to Mr. Poe. During their walk is described as orderly and divided by business:

After walking through the meat district, the flower district, and the sculpture district, the three children arrived at the banking district, pausing to take a refreshing sip of water at the Fountain of Victorious Finance. The banking district consisted of several wide streets with large marble buildings on each side of them, all banks.<sup>47</sup>

The city is split in an orderly fashion, like a Library of Congress organization system. There is one district for meat, one for flowers, one for sculptures, and one for banking, each with themed city features and construction. The Fountain is perfectly themed for its district. It is named for “Victorious Finance,” and all the buildings are constructed so that they are relevant to the categorization of the city. Thus the city is sorted neatly and known.

Each building the children visit in the banking district are “all banks,” and all are “large marble buildings.” This represents the neat and orderly nature of the city. Each bank belongs to the banking district, each shop to the shopping district, so on and so forth. Everything is the same and known to the children.

However, the actuality of the city is much more messy and dangerous. The Baudelaire children discover that their world holds secrets such as the mysterious society of VFD that their parents were a part of. This organization was split in a schism and its members were left to the survivors to pick up the pieces. Based in and around the city the organization breaks the neat boundaries of the city that the children thought they knew. In *The Ersatz Elevator*, the three orphans descend into a dark elevator, and walk along a discovered tunnel until they emerge in another part of town—under their old house.

---

<sup>47</sup> Snicket, *The Bad Beginning*.

It was not true that the three children were ghosts, of course. They were not spooky creatures who had risen from the center from the earth, but three orphans who had hoisted themselves out of the hallway.<sup>48</sup>

The underground represents the chaos which lay unknown in their old life. By following the tunnel and emerging in their own home, the three understand that what they thought they had known about their old life was more troublesome than they had previously thought. Sunny, Klaus and Violet's previous understanding of their own city is negated with this discovery. Their old home, safe and known, becomes one that holds the unknown. Klaus states in the *Grim Grotto*:

Remember when our parents were so angry over the spoiled atlas?...I don't think that's the only reason they were mad...I took that atlas down from the top shelf—one I could only reach by putting the stepladder on top of the chair. They didn't think I could reach that shelf...That's where they kept books they didn't want us to find...I was interested in the atlas, but when I removed it from the shelf there was a whole row of other books...I was too interested in the atlas to investigate any further, but I remember thinking it was strange...that our parents had hidden those books. That's why they were so angry, I think—when they saw the atlas on the window seat, they knew I'd discovered their secret.<sup>49</sup>

Their library, which used to seem so accessible that they believed they knew all of the contents, was rearranged so that the three children would be discouraged to find the secret books. Their parents put these books out of reach. They are only accessible by extreme effort such as “putting the stepladder on top of the chair.” Their parents whom the children believed they knew so well had “hidden those books,” and even took precautions to hide them behind another layer of books. It was not just one secret tome. Their parents had many secrets demonstrated by a “whole row of other books,” that lie hidden behind other books. Like the tunnel the library, the house and the family which was seemingly one dimensional, and had a chaotic yet unknown undercurrent.

They had not expected their own parents to hold secrets or to hide books from them. Places the

---

<sup>48</sup> Lemony Snicket, *The Ersatz Elevator*, (New York: Harper Collins, 2002), 206.

<sup>49</sup> Lemony Snicket, *The Grim Grotto*, (New York: Harper Collins 2004), 264-265.

three had visited previously have many unknowns such as Briny Beach under which there is a submarine that explores the waters searching for secrets, piloted by a man who knew their family's secrets.

The biggest unknown in the Baudelaire's world is the organization of VFD. The members and the organization's subversive nature is hidden in their libraries. For instance, their Aunt Josephine's is a rather simple woman whose only passion is grammar. She is thought to have no connection to VFD and her own library consists entirely of books on grammar. Her library seems to reflect her one dimensionality. However, when she is kidnapped, she puts a code into her notes (a simple shifting cypher), and the children use her library to solve it. In doing so they recognize the depth of her hidden knowledge. They find books under her bed on subjects other than grammar and learn later of her family's involvement in VFD. Josephine's library seems to reflect a simple person with simple interests but the use of her library and the discovery of her hidden books hints are her deeper involvement in VFD.

Like the world the children live in, the organized libraries they encounter turn out to be more chaotic than they appear. Sometimes even orderly systems are not as organized or simple as they seem. The children discover this in *The Hostile Hospital* where they work for a semi-blind librarian named Hal in order to access the files in the hospital's library. The three are looking for answers to the mystery in their lives and believe that these answers could lie in such a well organized library. In the Hostile Hospital they make up their minds to go there:

“Sunny's right,” Klaus said. “In the Library of Records, we might even solve the mystery of that underground passageway that led from Jerome and Esmé Squalor's apartment to the ashy remains of the Baudelaire mansion.”

“Afficu,” Sunny Said. She meant something like “And the only way we’ll get into the Library of Records is if we talk to Babs, so it’s a risk we have to take.”<sup>50</sup>

By knowing what is unknown in their world the three look to official libraries to find organized and authentic information. However, they learn that it’s not as organized as they previously thought. Hal tells them that the way to sort information. He says:

“First, you remove the paper clips and put them in the bowl. Then you glance at the information and figure out where it goes. Remember, try to read as little as possible.” He paused, unclipped a small stack of paper. . . .”You only have to read a few words to see that these paragraphs are about the weather last week at Damocles Dock, . . . So you would ask me to unlock cabinets in aisle D, for Damocles, or W, for weather, or even P, for paragraphs. It’s your choice.

“But won’t it be difficult for people to find that information again?” Klaus asked. “They won’t know whether to look under D, W, or P.”

“Then they’ll have to look under all three letters,” Hal said. “sometimes the information you need is not in the most obvious place.”<sup>51</sup>

This demonstrates that even in an organized system there is more than one way to find information. Even in the most organized of systems there can be chaos as there is no one way to sort knowledge. The known can be unknown simply by sorting it differently. Hal sheds light on the organization of the world in which they live seemingly orderly, yet actually chaotic. Often information covers more than one topic and it’s not always obvious where to sort it. The location in which we sort information is the way that one makes up how they perceive their world to be. In other words, what part of the information is the most important?

Here, the children learn that though they are looking for straight ahead answers, their world is more complicated than they could think. Their own story is tangled up with those of their parents, with other members of the organization, of villains who pursue them, and even people who they do not know. Their knowledge is used to solve situations they might not be in.

---

<sup>50</sup> Lemony Snicket, *The Hostile Hospital* ( New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 55.

<sup>51</sup> Snicket, *Hostile Hospital* 66-67.

While this library is technically organized, it is not organized under a system that lends itself to easy access or discovery. Just as the Baudelaires have a hard time finding accurate information in the world around them, so too is it hard to find clear information in the hospital's library. It is chaotic in its organization with information sorted in multiple locations.

Thus, the library is a representation of the people who frequent it and the world in which it is situated. In *The Name of the Rose*, the Aedificium shares many similarities to the Abbey itself and the monks that inhabit it. Its closed off nature, represents the reclusive nature of the Abbey and its contents represent the monks in their diversity. In *The Series of Unfortunate Events*, the libraries are havens to the Baudelaires, welcoming them more than any adult to whom they are traded. These libraries reflecting the personalities of their owners and representing the chaos that occurs beneath the seemingly organized surfaces of these libraries. In knowing that this is true, we must question our own library. Since, the library in literature is representative of the textual world it exists in than is the literary library a reflective of the library in our own world? If the orderly library in both these novels turned out to be more chaotic, even in a system of organization, our own library must be more chaotic and organized. Literature often holds themes from our world and in exploring them these themes become in the manner of a simulacrum, our reality.

In the introduction we discussed that a library is an identity. The way that we structure our libraries shows how we wish ourselves to be defined and how we wish to view our world. These themes, must then be more present in our own library than we previously thought and are actually found in the history of the library.

### Chapter Three: Themes of the Literary Library in Pre-Enlightenment Library History

The literary libraries we have studied in the previous two chapters are ones that maintain themes from the pre-Enlightenment history of the library. These themes such as the secret library, the underground library and bibliophage in response to the dangerous library exist in contrast to the modern library's image. The current iteration of the library is a product of the Enlightenment and the Renaissance eras. Discourse surrounding the modern library as an organized, scientific and catalogued place is one that bloomed from the Enlightenment era (approx. 1650-1701)<sup>52</sup> ideology that all knowledge should be classifiable. In the Enlightenment, authors such as Diderot who wrote new encyclopedias entitled *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*<sup>53</sup> marked a shift in the way humanities thinkers sought to attempted to define all of humanity's knowledge. It was part of a trend in as Avihu Zakai stated in his chapter in the book *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, "The "enlightened age" witnessed the replacement of religion by reason as the main agent for providing "objective truths" about the world in which human life is set. The supremacy and primacy of divine revelation were attacked."<sup>54</sup> Today we define our society in this manner. We want definitions and hard facts about the world in which we live and if anything remains unknown, we seek to define it.

---

<sup>52</sup> Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica "Enlightenment" Published Aug 15th 2015 <https://www.britannica.com/event/Enlightenment-European-history>, Accessed April 27th 2017.

<sup>53</sup> "The Encyclopedia of Diderot and d'Alembert" Accessed Dec. 5th 1994 <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/d/did/>

<sup>54</sup> Avihu Zakai, "4—The Age of Enlightenment", *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards* (Massachusetts, Cambridge University Press, 2007), 81.

The way a library is organized and sorted is the way one defines who they are; as an individual, as a society and as a species. Alberto Manguel, author of *The Library at Night* states that “If every library is in some sense a reflection of its readers, it is also an image of that which we are not, and cannot be.”<sup>55</sup> So through organization of knowledge, man defines the parameters of the world in which he lives. The referential nature of the library stems from the organized concept that one can define and know one’s universe in its entirety by defining the organization and classification of knowledge thus defining the boundaries of its reality. This concept persists in the library field to this day through fields of library science its organizational system.

In contrast, the literary library reflects the pre-Enlightenment library which holds many of the “messier,” more dangerous and chaotic themes discussed earlier in this project. The process in which the public library came into being is a history of power struggle, hidden knowledge, traded knowledge and discovery. Because of this history, themes such as the underground library, lost books and manuscripts, burning of libraries (biblioclasm) and vast labyrinthine libraries are present in such texts as *Lirael* by Garth Nix, *Shadow of the Wind* and *The Angel’s Game* both by Carlos Ruiz Zafón, *The Name of the Rose* by Umberto Eco and “Library of Babel” by Luis Borges, in addition to various other texts who we will not be able to analyze in this project.

In this chapter we will first discuss a brief survey of the history of the public library to identify these pre-Enlightenment era thematic echoes in the literary library. Then we will focus on specific themes and their counterparts in the literary library.

---

<sup>55</sup> Alberto, Manguel *The Library at Night* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2009), 107.

The history of the library varies from culture to culture, with some similarities between cultures. In this chapter we will look mainly at the western library with some limited attention to other important cultures who made important strides in the library field such as the East (China) and Egypt. However, there is a cross influence amongst different libraries in the evolution of public libraries because as libraries spread in number and expanded in size, during the monastic era for example, cultures interacted more as monks traveled to other lands to copy manuscripts. This travel led to cultures interacting more frequently. In terms of the library's evolution, this resulted in an exceedingly similar historical evolution as the library approached the modern era.

The public library's main roots can be traced back to Greece, Rome, Egypt, and China. In the pre-Renaissance era, the library was mainly a place that functioned like a college. Thinkers would gather and discuss the extensive academic documents collected in these facilities. Libraries were a place for research and learning not for common citizen. The first recognizable library that would be recognizable to us today, came about in the Renaissance when being well read (the self-made man) became a common ideal, and both academic and casual content were available to all. There were recognizable public libraries in Rome but the contents of these libraries were usually of a quality that was much less academic than the research libraries which as in the Aristotelian tradition were used as places of research and thought. There did exist more public libraries that were more for the people than for scholars that were implemented under Augustus' rule. These Roman public libraries were placed in the public baths in Rome. Matthew Battles of *The Library: An Unquiet History* writes that during the Augustine era:

The emperors didn't only put libraries in then private palaces and temples; they also gave them to the people of Rome. In Augustus's reign, public baths—part of the “bread and circus” largesse with which the imperial city contented the masses—included libraries among their amenities. Although these libraries followed the imperial layout with opposed reading rooms for the two languages, it's likely that they contained more familiar and classical literary works and fewer arcane legal, scientific and medical treatises than the royal collections did. Whereas the books of Alexandria are reputed to have met their end in the furnaces of public baths, the public library itself seems to have originated in the bathhouse.<sup>56</sup>

These libraries were more focused on the hobbies of the public, including reading literature.

Contents of the library were made up of more “familiar,” with “fewer arcane legal, scientific and medical treatises.” The content was accessible to and understandable for the people.

Despite the Augustan Roman libraries, the ancient Chinese library was more similar to the pre-Augustan library in that it was mainly for scholars. As one of the world's most ancient cultures, China's evolution of the public library occurred earlier than the Romans or the Middle East's, because T'sai Lun is credited with inventing paper as early as C. 105 AD<sup>57</sup>. Scrolls and books were then organized into libraries for the scholarly. But control of these libraries, as we will address later, was essential in controlling of such a large nation. Much like in other nations, the poor were often illiterate because Chinese as a written language takes a long time to become literate in. Written resources were restricted for mostly scholars or an upper class. Control of the contents and who accessed them was an essential piece of complete power

Egypt held another crown jewel of the modern library's predecessors. This library was called the Library of Alexandria. It sought to collect knowledge from all over the world. The Library of Alexandria was essential in gathering knowledge from around the world. Unlike the

---

<sup>56</sup>Battles, Matthew. *Library: An Unquiet History* (New York: Norton, 2003), 48.

<sup>57</sup>J.L. Keays “13 Pulp and Paper” in *Canadian Woods: Their Properties and Uses*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1981), 303-319  
and  
“Paper” last updated 11/8/2007, “<https://www.britannica.com/technology/paper>”

Chinese, the Alexandrian library was filled with contents made of papyrus—a library filled with scrolls rather than books and was a forerunner in the way one thinks and conceives the library today both in its modern iteration and in literature. The Ptolemies sought to gain knowledge from all over the world and in seeking it out gathered varied literature from all over the world. Later in this chapter we will discuss the Ptolemies of ancient Egypt and their gathering of knowledge for the library of Alexandria.

The next important chapter in library history, after the ancient period, occurred during in the monastic period. Monks fiercely sought out and guarded knowledge in order to make their libraries as big as possible. The monastic library was filled with books chained to lecterns, that were copied from all over the world. Battles cites the monastic tradition with saving certain types of knowledge. He states,

In the tenth century, a Syrian monastery led by Moses of Nisibis preserved some 250 manuscripts. Many of these were in Syriac...Moses had collected the books of these authors and others just in time, for the invading Turks nearly destroyed the Syriac tongue along with its speakers...Much of what remains of Syriac literature, however, was preserved in the collection Moses made."<sup>58</sup>

Here, one sees that because of the monastic orders, sometimes whole collections of languages were saved. Battles and Schnapp state that even early monasteries would participate in this saving tradition. They say that “Athos was a base for monastic activity perhaps as early as the fourth century AD, predating the exertions of Cassiodorus and Benedict. Famously inaccessible, the “holy mountain” preserved a vast trove of codices, relics, and works of Byzantine art”<sup>59</sup> Because of the lengths that monks traveled to copy literature, books from the East and West were

---

<sup>58</sup> Battles *Library*, 58-59

<sup>59</sup>Matthew Battles and Jeffrey T. Schnapp, *The Library Beyond the Book*, (China, Harvard University, 2014), 65

being shared across cultures at an increased rate. While not all monasteries were concerned with saving books, enough were to place the theme in the literary genre. Thompson of *The Medieval Library* does warn his readers that it is more the act of writing that was valued in most cases than the content of the books and that “few were preserving books, other monks were allowing them to perish through neglect or actual destruction.”<sup>60</sup> However, while this might be the case for many monks, the amount of copying and preserving books from other cultures was enough to save many literary manuscripts and books that might have been lost forever if it was not for the monastic tradition.

Monastic gathering and copying of knowledge closely at some points emulated the behavior of the the Greeks who sought to confiscate copies of books at harbors for their own libraries in an attempt to gain knowledge and thus power for their nation in that by gathering manuscripts the monks produced libraries of varied content from around the globe. This tradition was responsible for a the spread of knowledge by constructing a library and increased possibility of having a lost book survive as a copy lost in the stacks.

This setting of the monastic library and the theme of lost books are depicted in *The Name of the Rose*. In the Terce of the First Day, William states that the Aedificium has:

more books than any other Christian library. I know that in comparison with your cases, those of Bobbio or Pomposa, of Cluny or Fleury, seem the room of a boy barely being introduced to the abacus. I know that the six thousand codices that were the boast of Novalesa a hundred or more years ago are few compared to yours, and perhaps many of those are now here. I know that your abbey is the only light that Christianity can oppose to the thirty-six libraries of Baghdad, to the ten thousand codices of Vizir Ibn al-Alkami...I know many of the monks living in your midst come from other abbeys scattered all over the world. Some stay here a short time, to copy manuscripts to be found nowhere else and to carry them back then to their own house<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> James Westfall Thompson *The Medieval Library* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 31.

<sup>61</sup> Eco, Umberto. *The Name of the Rose*. (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), 33.

In Chapter Two of this project, I analyzed this passage to show that the books of the library were representative of the Abbey's monks by showing the widespread nationality of the books in the library that represented the monks of the Abbey's own various origins. The Aedificium was a representation of the Abbey because the Aedificium reflected the Abbey's state of being and place in the world through its physical features.

However, there is also a historical precedent which makes William's words accurate. In *The Name of the Rose*, the Aedificium hosts books from all over the world. This is an accurate feature of the library because in the monastic tradition monks copied religious text from all over the world to bring back to their own libraries.<sup>62</sup> Here William states the monastery has "more books than any other Christian library" which might be hyperbole emphasizes far away these monks would travel for knowledge. The Aedificium had "a short time, to copy manuscripts to be found nowhere else and to carry them back then to their own house." Like the historical monastic libraries, this Aedificium in an out of the way monastery has books from authors all around the world. Adso and William even decode that the organization and order of the library is organized by nation. William states:

"Read your map carefully. Keep reading the letters of the rooms that follow, in order of access."

... "So the plan of the library reproduces the map of the world?"

"That's probable. And the books are arranged according to the country of their origin, or the place where their authors were born, or as in this instance, the place where they should have been born.

---

<sup>62</sup> Battles, *Library*, 56-60.

The librarians told themselves Virgil the grammarian was born in Toulouse by mistake; he should have been born in the wester islands. They corrected the errors of nature.”<sup>63</sup>

Here William understands that these books are “arranged according to the country of their origin” which shows the widespread nature of book collection and adds that it could be “where their authors were born” denoting an educational background that showed the monastic learned nature. In copying manuscripts, monks learn of the classical world.

In the Aedificium lies Aristotle’s lost book. The loss of Aristotle’s manuscript in the Aedificium has a historical precedent. As in a real monastic library where monks copied books from scrolls from the ancient world, so do these fictional monks copy books from all over the world and as such, books thought to be destroyed, in actuality, had the possibility of surviving via monastic copy. Additionally, books were frequently lost in libraries such as the Donation of Constantine. As aforementioned, under the Medici’s library, scholars conducted research and consequently discovered that the Donation of Constantine (a document which gave the Vatican power over Rome) was a forgery. When the scholar Sirleto discovered this fact, he hid it The Donation of Constantine in the Vatican library knowing the Vatican library was so vast no-one would find the manuscript for a long time.<sup>64</sup> To this day library books are hidden and lost within libraries. During my work in Bard College’s Stevenson Library, workers are given a list of books once a term to search for within the library itself. There is slim chance of finding these books for usually they are lost within the stacks themselves or tucked away behind other books making it near impossible to find. Sirleto had uncovered a truth that is based around a theme explored in

---

<sup>63</sup> Eco, *Name of the Rose* 313-314.

<sup>64</sup> Battles, *Library*, 80.

chapters 1-2 and seen in *The Angel's Game*, *Name of the Rose*, and *Shadow of the Wind*: the library holds secrets. Because of its secret nature it is the perfect place to hide a manuscript.

In *Name of the Rose*, the discovery of Aristotle's lost book is made more believable because Aristotle's works were already supposedly missing from the Alexandrian library as they were legendarily buried to save them from the Greeks. They were said to be dug up in their waterlogged state and copied. Battles states that

Like all Greek Lyceums of the time, the libraries of Alexandria took Aristotle's Peripatetic school as their immediate inspiration. Aristotle had been Alexander's tutor, and the name of his school came to denominate the followers of his rationalist philosophy...Some ancient sources claim that Aristotle's own library was transported to Alexandria, where it became the seed collection from which the great library grew. The great Greek geographer Strabo, however, who seems to have known the library well, tells that Aristotle's books had been buried in a hole in Athens, to keep them from being claimed by the Attalid kings, the rulers of Athens, who wanted them for their library at Pergamum. Later the books—water damaged, worm eaten—were dug up and sold to the book collector Apellicon, who in trying to collate and amend the damaged scrolls introduced many inaccuracies. His library would be claimed by the Roman general Sulla, who took Athens from the forces of King Mithridates VI in 88 B.C. He had the library packed up and sent back to Rome, where the books were split up, copied incorrectly, and all but lost<sup>65</sup>

While there is no proof of the validity of this legend, it shows the constant the theme of the lost and hidden books. This theme is one that is reflected in literature. Because Aristotle's manuscripts were actually lost in history the concept that a lost manuscript of Aristotle could find its way into a monastic library is not implausible. This is especially true because these manuscripts were copied "incorrectly" and "split up." The lore that Aristotle's books would manage to end up in another land one that is still in the literary mythos. This mythos combined with a reflection of the history of the monastic tradition where books were copied and transported, makes of a plot that is believable. Knowing that these books were in fact "dug up and sold to the book collector Apellicon, who in trying to collate and amend the damaged scrolls

---

<sup>65</sup> Battles, Matthew. *Library*, 26-27.

introduced many inaccuracies.” and that” the books were split up, copied incorrectly, and all but lost” works with the monastic tradition of copying books to make the plot of the Aristotelian legend believable in *Name of the Rose*. It is entirely possible that someone carrying a copy or a true copy of Aristotle’s manuscript would have brought it to their own monastery, in this case the Aedificium, and left it there in secret.

The last era in our brief summation of library history, is the Renaissance and the Enlightenment where the model of our modern library emerges. It was really in the Renaissance that the idea of the public library boomed. In the era of the self-made man, the importance of knowledge and it’s accessibility was essential. In the era of artistry and apprenticeships the library was popular destination. In the Roman Augustine library, literature was considered a hobby. In the Renaissance however, literature became academic material. Literature and similar arts were considered necessities that had to be learned for were essential tools for learning one’s trade. The Medicis in particular owned a whole literature library where they would hire researchers to do work and the Medicis would reap the products of the scholar’s discoveries. In addition, when the public visited this library they would be reminded of the Medici’s wealth and power. By witnessing the wealth and means to assemble and maintain such a library. By this period in history, the public had access to this wide variety of sources, and wider range of potentially academic documents.<sup>66</sup>

These are the roots of the public library as it is in today's society. But it is not as if the Library sprung into being without conflict. In these periods that were just discussed the history of the library is one that is marked by the struggle for power. During these struggles is where

---

<sup>66</sup> Battles, *Library*, 68-69.

themes that are reflected in literature of the dangerous library, the chaotic library, the secret library and biblio-phage are shown to have counterparts in the pre-Enlightenment history of the library. The following are a few examples of such power struggles and how their examples have themes that are echoed in, *The Name of the Rose*, *The Shadow of the Winds*, and *The Angel's Game*.

To reiterate for a third time Alberto Manguel's statement in *The Library at Night*, "If every library is in some sense a reflection of its readers, it is also an image of that which we are not, and cannot be."<sup>67</sup> By controlling the contents of a library, one has power over its readers' public identity. This is especially true if the library is a reflection of the identity of a nation or the source of education for its people. This makes the library a source of power for those who can wield its content.

One case in which the library is a source of power for the common man who cannot afford books by providing free access to knowledge. It is free education and the tool against ignorance. Andrew Carnegie was one who understood this concept so well that he built many public libraries because of their influence on his success. Manguel states that Andrew Carnegie himself pondered, "What is the best gift which can be given to a community?"<sup>68</sup> and answered "A free library occupies the first place."<sup>69</sup> Manguel explains that "Carnegie's beginnings, as he himself was quick to remind his listeners, were desperately poor. Two men exerted the greatest influence over his childhood in Scotland...found time to create with his fellow-weavers a small

---

<sup>67</sup> Manguel, *The Library at Night*, 107.

<sup>68</sup> Manguel, *The Library at Night*, 97. Citing Carnegie.

<sup>69</sup> Manguel, *The Library at Night*, 97. Citing Carnegie.

communal library in Dunfermline...”<sup>70</sup> and that Carnegie’s work, “In the railroad offices,... ended early in the evening, leaving the boy time “for self-improvement. In downtown Pittsburgh, Carnegie discovered a free public library founded by a certain Colonel Anderson “for apprentices for whom school was not an option.’ ”<sup>71</sup> Carnegie said that he ” became fond of reading. I reveled week after week in the books. My toil was light, for I got up at six o’clock in the morning, contented to work until six in the evening if there was a book for me to read.”<sup>72</sup>

The free library provided a resource for Carnegie. He “got up at six o’clock in the morning, contented to work until six in the evening” -12 hours!- “if there was a book for me to read,” and because it was a free resource, he could learn about the world to no cost to him. This knowledge provided access to the world and provided a vision of what he could become. Carnegie’s attributed this access to his successfulness and and happiness which would not have been achieved because of his “poor” upbringing. Carnegie would not have had the chance to gain the knowledge that provided him a lift in life without the public library. The freedom of the library provided him with power through free knowledge.

The Greeks certainly knew that libraries were power. They were constantly on the hunt for books to make what the Medici’s had later: the indebted patronage of scholars. Battles of the book states that:

By bringing scholars to Alexandria and inviting them to live and work, at royal expense, among an enormous store of books, the Ptolemies made the library into a think tank under the control of the royal house. The strategy it implications of a monopoly on knowledge—especially in

---

<sup>70</sup> Manguel, *The Library at Night*, 96-98.

<sup>71</sup> Manguel, *The Library at Night*, 98. Citing Carnegie.

<sup>72</sup> Manguel, *The Library at Night*, 98-99.

medicine, engineering, and theology, all among Alexandria's strengths—were not lost on the Ptolemies. They ordered the confiscation of the books of visitors to the city, which were copied for the libraries (though sometimes the originals were kept, too), adorned with a tag that read “from the ships.” In an attempt to stop the growth of the libraries at Rhodes and Pergamum, both of which threatened Alexandria's preeminence, the city's rulers banned the export of papyrus. The move backfired, however spurring the Pergamenes to invent parchment (*charta pergamenu*), which for its strength and reusability would prove to be the preferred writing medium in Europe for more than a thousand years”<sup>73</sup>

Earlier we discussed that the Library of Alexandria was one of the most innovative libraries of the time based on the breadth of knowledge from all over the world. However, the only reason they gained that many scrolls was through force. The Ptolemies would demand books of those who got disembarked ships coming into their harbor which led to the residents of Alexandria burying books and hiding them to keep them from being confiscated on the way to and back from Rhodes and Pergamum. Alexandrians also knew that their library functioned as a “think tank” that created new knowledge from older knowledge. Thus, to control power of knowledge and to stop any opposition and competition the Ptolemies would ban the export of parchment. Historian Edward Alexander Parsons states that after the search for books that Battles mentioned before, “Copies were made and given to the rightful owners with some other compensations if not too much trouble was made, but the originals were retained for the Library”<sup>74</sup> This is a forceful means in which the later monks did not participate, but was a traditional method of collecting books that produced strong results. In addition, to ransacking ships, the Ptolemies “ransacked the four quarters of the countryside for literary manuscripts and records of every kind. Manuscripts were acquired in every way, honestly and otherwise, by

---

<sup>73</sup> Battles, *Library*, 29.

<sup>74</sup> Parsons, Edward Alexander *The Alexandrian Library* (The Elsevier Press, Amsterdam, London, New York 1952), 163.

private purchase or unscrupulous force”<sup>75</sup> Here one sees that the collection of knowledge is power. The Ptolemies recognized this for they used their strength to collect manuscripts to rival other cities intellectual power causing book merchants to speed to them to sell their wares. Thus, in intellectual control they also maintained the biggest collection of knowledge while also gaining economic control.

The Medici family used knowledge in a similar way. Their library provided resource for researchers but also used these same researcher for their own benefit as a “think-tank.”<sup>76</sup> The library itself was a claim to power in its contents. In *Library: An Unquiet History*, Matthew Battles states that:

The historian Lisa Jardine puts the role of the library in the Medici family’s rise from merchants to princes in clear terms: “One of the distinctive ways they made this transition was by turning a private interest in expenditure on rare and finely produced books (ancient and modern) into a reputation for civic benevolence...” Jardine identifies the four types of books the Medicis acquired, each of which established the family’s public persona in specific ways first of which established the family’s public persona in specific ways:”...“books establishing a family reputation for patronage of the humanistically arcane” “books establishing a family aura of probity and ‘good practice’ “classical tradition books which are ‘precious,’ “books establishing a traceable genealogy of acquisition”<sup>77</sup>

The Medici’s ensured their power over knowledge by profiting off of their scholars’ discoveries. The content of their library was a way of demonstrating their familial power. In their library they held books which were used in “establishing a family aura of probity”, “precious” books, and books that showed their families “traceable genealogy of acquisition” that others would know of their wealth in the process of finding and obtaining books. Like the Ptolemies they sought to create a think-tank while imparting their prowess on the general public. Thus, when they were

---

<sup>75</sup> Parsons *The Alexandrian Library*, 163.

<sup>76</sup> Battles, *Library*, 68-69.

<sup>77</sup>Battles, *Library*, 68-69.

loaned out as a resource to scholars and the general public, the scholars would be in a debt of knowledge to the Medici family and constantly reminded of their prowess.

Knowledge and the access to knowledge is also dangerous to those who wish to rule a population. Access to knowledge can threaten a dictator faster than heat causes bacteria to grow and spread over a potato left in the sun. The Nazis knew that in order to spread their ideal Aryan identity, to spread fear of and to reap destruction of Jewish culture book burnings were essential in deleting a culture's identity while spreading fear into the opposition. Nazis would raid libraries and burn the books in public to create and perpetuate fear while simultaneously erasing and editing the identity of a population. To reiterate what Alberto Manguel states in his book *The Library at Night*, "If every library is in some sense a reflection of its readers, it is also an image of that which we are not, and cannot be."<sup>78</sup> The Nazis sought to control the identity of the German populous' identity by getting rid of the books and libraries that were contrary to their ideal nationality. They forced the identity of a nation by promoting libraries of their own biased material and by eliminating libraries with "unsatisfactory" books. In addition by burning as many books as possible they spread fear into the people who would read them which enforced their military power Battles quotes a German newspaper that states that,

The whole civilized world was shocked when on the evening of May 10 1933 the books of authors displeasing to the Nazi's including even those of our own Helen Keller, were solemnly burned on the immense Franz Josef Platz between the University of Berlin and the State Opera on Unter den Linden...

All afternoon Nazi raiding parties had gone into public and private libraries, throwing on to the streets such books as Dr. Goebbels in his supreme wisdom had decided were unfit for Nazi Germany.<sup>79</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> Manguel *The Library at Night*, 107.

<sup>79</sup>Battles, *Library*,164. Citing German Newspaper

These books burnings occurred at places of learning to demonstrate control of the academic and places of national thought. Not even “private libraries” were safe for library is place of identity. The Nazis felt that in order to change the individual they also had to change their thought. They are actively replacing identity. They threw out books of “Helen Keller” who the newspaper states is “our Helen Keller” indicating that the nation prizes her as a spokesperson. The Nazi’s here are actively attempting to change the identity of a nation by editing and destroying libraries both public and private.

Similarly, in China, the General Shi Huangdi burned books when he came into power<sup>80</sup>. While Shi Huangdi was no Hitler, Battles states that, “His aim, the same chronicles tell, was to destroy all Chinese literature, all history, all philosophy written before the founding of his dynasty.”<sup>81</sup> To destroy records of “all history” is to make the statement that by your rule history starts with your rule. It eliminates the shared record of a people collected in a library and prevents opponents from accessing any intellectual material that could contradict you. Li Shi was another Chinese leader who ordered bibliophage of libraries upon starting his rule. He explained that

In the past the empire was fragmented and in confusion and no one was able to unite it. Therefore the feudal rulers rose up side by side all of them declaiming on antiquity in order to disparage the present, parading empty words in order to confuse the facts. Men prided themselves on their private theories and criticized the measures adopted by their superiors..I therefore request that all records of the historians other than those of the state of Qin be burned.<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> Battles, *Library*, 164.

<sup>81</sup> Battles, *Library*, 33.

<sup>82</sup>Battles, *Library*, 34. Battles quoting Li Shi.

The repercussions of a library attacked in time of conflict, war or intolerance by acts of bibliophagy has its counterpart in the underground, hidden library. Both bibliophagy and the hidden library are themes that emerge from these historical struggles for library power. They are themes that are also depicted in *Shadow of the Wind*, *Angel's Game* and *Name of the Rose*.

The secret library is one that is depicted in the novel *Shadow of the Wind* in the library of The Cemetery of Forgotten Books. *Shadow of the Wind* is set in post war Barcelona right after their Spanish Civil War (1939-1936)<sup>83</sup> During the war many people were innocently locked up in the Montjuic prison, persecuted for their speech, and killed for their ideas. Most famously the writer Lorca was killed for his poetry, a casualty of the war and a symbol of literary intolerance.<sup>84</sup> In Barcelona after the civil war as censorship was slowly and people were coming back to their normal life, there was still tension in the country. Mr. Sempere states that the Cemetery of Forgotten books are ones that are threatened by being forgotten or being persecuted. He states,

Every book, every volume you see here, has a soul. The soul of the person who wrote it and of those who read it and lived and dreamed with it. Every time a book changes hands, every time someone runs his eyes down its pages, its spirit grows and strengthens.... When a library disappears, or a bookshop closes down, when a book is consigned to oblivion, those of us who know this place, its guardians, make sure that it gets here. In this place, books no longer remembered by anyone, books that are lost in time, live forever, waiting for the day when they will reach a new reader's hands. In the show we buy and sell them, but in truth books have no owner. Every book you see here has been somebody's best friend. Now they have only us, Daniel. Do you think you'll be able to keep such a secret?<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> James, O'Connell, "Spanish Civil War." Encyclopedia Americana. Scholastic Grolier Online. <http://ea.grolier.com/article?id=0364780-00> (accessed April 25, 2017).

<sup>84</sup> Silver, Philip W. "García Lorca, Federico." Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia. Scholastic Grolier Online. <http://gme.grolier.com/article?assetid=0116090-0> (accessed May 2, 2017).

<sup>85</sup> Carlos Ruiz Zafón and Lucia Graves, *The Shadow of the Wind*, (New York, Penguin, 2004), 4.

Books being hidden under the ground is nothing new in terms of historical themes. The hidden books that are portrayed in *Shadow of the Wind* are common as a theme in this novel as it was in *Name of the Rose*. Books were often buried underground to avoid being stolen as we saw in the case of Aristotle's manuscripts or even the people who hid their books from the ransacking Ptolemies. In the Cemetery of Forgotten Books, these books are only given another shot at life if one of the patrons picks one as his or her own. In being buried they, like the books of Aristotle, were safe but they give up their ability to be read by humans. Their existence here is a result of power struggle and intolerance. Some are just forgotten but many are "consigned to oblivion" by those in power. In holding books that have been banned this library is dangerous for they hold the identity, contents and experiences of those who wrote them. If the "soul of the person who wrote it and of those who read it and lived and dreamed with it" are contained in a library, then the hidden library holds the forgotten and persecuted people of a society. Similar to during the Nazi rule, this library holds the identity of a people, who were through force, were made to change their identity. The hidden library holds the past, and holds safe the original identity of a people.

This is also seen in the *Angel's Game* for David hides his past book there which is the remnants of his past self. He gives up his identity for the world does not accept it. The library then holds a piece of his history and identity. In saving this the dangerous books lie in wait for someone to uncover their story.

For books and libraries have power. They are "people" or the experience of people; the dreams, the hopes, the beliefs, and the story. Often the danger of library's and bibliophage is linked where in the case of the Nazis, libraries were burned because they contained threads of

opposition against them. This theme is seen particularly in *The Name of the Rose*. Jorge, a monk of the order discovers Aristotle's manuscript and rather than give it up when William and Adso he sets the library on fire. Then when "the old man could feel it very easily, so he knew with absolute certainty where the fire was; he flung the Aristotle into it...The Aristotle, or what had remained of it after the old man's meal, was already burning"<sup>86</sup>. Jorge rather than surrender his rare manuscript that he has worked so hard to protect and murdered for, sets not just it but the whole library on fire. The book is "dangerous"—evidence of Jorge's murders. Because the book stands to be discovered and the library is a casualty. The book no longer hidden had its danger in its rare and hidden nature but in being uncovered sets the whole of the Aedificium alight. Thus, literature holds these themes that existed in pre-Enlightenment history. These libraries are more chaotic, shifting, secret. These themes are also ones that exist in our literature in reflection of our history across cultures. Thus, there is a historical precedent for these themes.

The fact that these themes have spread into a multitude novels across different nations, such as the Spanish-gothic *Name of the Wind*, *Angel's Game*, Magical YA: *Lirael*, Spanish Meta-fiction: Borges *Library of Babel*, Italian historical-mystery: *Name of the Rose* in addition to many other texts we haven't even discussed in this project such as *The Invisible Library* by Genieve Cogman (a book about librarians who rescue books from other dimensions.), Japanese modern fiction Murakami's *The Strange Library* (a book where a young boy is locked up under the library and meets a dream-like young girl who helps him escape from the underground jail), and even non-fiction areas of books share such themes as the labyrinth-like library, the buried library, the magical library. The persistence and repetition of these themes show the truth of the

---

<sup>86</sup> Eco, *Name of the Rose*, 484.

library's nature. It is the repetition of themes that demonstrate the commonality in the way that society perceives the library.

Even in Non-Fiction authors perceive the library in this manner. Battles acknowledges that he feels this state of wandering the labyrinth like knowledge of the library. He states that he knows that when he reads ,

Like one of Borges's lost librarians, I explore the library's intertwined relationship of fancy and authenticity, of folly and epiphany, of the Parnassian and the universal. My method in the pages that follow mirrors that of Eugene Gant: I pick up a volume—perhaps it's Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*—and something I read there leads to the lyrics of Callimachus or the letters of Seneca. Keeping a finger stuck among those pages, I follow a trail that leads from Cassiodorus to Francis Bacon, from Caliph Omar to Jonathan Swift and John Stuart Mill. I drop one passage to follow another, threading my way among ranges of books, lost among the shelves. In many places, the volumes are thick with dust, pocked with the holes left by insects, which are almost as hungry for books as I.<sup>87</sup>

He knows that the way one walks the library, is in a free form way where one discovers the self.

But he recognizes the truth and constancy of the themes such as the lost book, and the underground library that exist and persist in the everyday library. He also knows his own motivation for writing a book and that in the underground secret library. He states that

You will find this book, as well as many others listed in these notes, in the bibliography section of the library (it will probably have to be a fairly large library, I'm afraid). In LC libraries, they'll be in the Zs; in Dewey libraries, you'll find them in the 010s (bibliographies) and 020 (library science). Other systems abound; in Widener, the Zs are neighbors to the Old Widener bibliography class, the Bs. These two classes of books about books, two stories beneath Harvard Yard in Widener's sepulchral C level, make up the secret arcadia of many a Harvard librarian; their precinct has been my hunting grounds these past few years, and is the true and original source of this book.<sup>88</sup>

Even Battles in a non-fiction last words in the bibliography section of his book states that he expects his book to be “two stories beneath Harvard Yard” in a “sepulchral C level” which is a “secret arcadia.” The secret of the underground library is something that permeates into the every

---

<sup>87</sup> Battles, *Library*, 20.

<sup>88</sup> Battles, *Library*, 225.

day. He sees the library as an unknown, underground, secret, mysterious library. He even acknowledges that each modern library even has a different organization system demonstrating that even our organized systems vary from library to library. In one type of library the book will “be in the Z’s” in Dewey’s the “010’s,” the Old Widener bibliography class “the B’s but all of which is “underground” next to the Widener” “Z’s”. For Battles, a large unknown library is just under the surface and while one thinks of the library as scientific and organized the possibility of discovery, of magic, of the unknown is in actuality around every corner. This is the “true and original source of this book.” Even in his non-fiction bibliography Battles acknowledges that these themes are how he perceives his own library. These are the themes that have persisted throughout time in pre-Enlightenment history that are found again here in both literature and the every day.

Thus, these themes of the literary library the chaotic, secretive library, the lost book, the underground library, dangerous library’s and bibliophage are all interconnected in the history of the library. By observing that these themes are reflected from pre-Enlightenment history, these themes are given a validity. They not only exist in fiction but they exist in the story of history. The literary library is a mirror of history and thus, we can be assured of the existence of these qualities.

## Conclusion

“I have always imagined that Paradise will be a kind of library.”<sup>89</sup>

—Jorge Luis Borges

Let's walk into our library again. Shelves are still there: mountains of stories, concepts and ideas. The books are still sorted and classified. The tomes stand as before. An eon of writing, stories and information lay before you and these are just the books that we are lucky enough to still have. You walk to the Ps, the Q's, the Z's, the B's, but unlike before, we now recognize that this library, while organized, is not as we previously thought. In contrast to before, we now know it to be chaotic, mysterious and latent with the possibility of discovery. We know it to be messier, vaster, and more confusing. Oh yes, you can still find what you are looking for generally by following the call numbers, but it's not the place we end up, but the journey of using the library what matters. It's the searching for a book in one section and finding it in another, the perusal of the shelves and finding a book hidden there that you wish to read. It's the finding of a manuscript that is rare, the connection with a book that you read, the discovery of its history that betrays the qualities that we had previously thought to only exist in the literary library. And it is the way that we perceive the library in contrast to its image that allows us to realize that by understanding the library one understands the self and the world in which we live in.

---

<sup>89</sup> "Quotable Quote, Quotes, Borges." Goodreads. <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/7572-i-have-always-imagined-that-paradise-will-be-a-kind>.

Throughout this project, we have explored that the representation of the library in literature is seemingly in direct contrast to the image of the modern library. The discourse surrounding the modern library came about during the Enlightenment and evolved from the Enlightenment ideal that all knowledge could be defined. However, the imagery surrounding the library in literature is one of a chaotic, dangerous, magical, vast, library that is latent with the power of discovery. These themes are repeated so often in literature it becomes necessary to analyze them to understand its significance in relation to the library and additionally its function. But one question still lingers from the project. If we now know that the modern library harbors the themes of the underground library, the hidden library, the powerful library, the discovered library, the chaotic, messy library and the magical library are themes that are present within our own library, what does this say about us? If we can understand that the texts act as a simulacrum and a holding vessel for our conceptions of the library what does that say about the bigger picture?

It is as Borges once stated:

Music, feelings of happiness, mythology, faces worn by time, certain twilights and certain places, want to tell us something, or they told us something that we should not have missed, or they are about to tell us something; this imminence of a revelation that is not produced is, perhaps, 'the aesthetic event.'<sup>90</sup>

---

<sup>90</sup> "Quotable Quote, Quotes, Borges." Goodreads. <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/116473-music-feelings-of-happiness-mythology-faces-worn-by-time-certain>

The library and its themes, “want to tell us something,” about ourselves, the way we discover our knowledge and the way we perceive the world in which we live.

So far, in this project we have analyzed the literary library to find themes of chaos, danger, discovery, the hidden, and the magical. We have found that the library reflects the people who use it, and that the construction of the underground and the labyrinth hold the aforementioned qualities in their description.

To me, each of the physical qualities of the literary library can be applied to the library, the self and the world. Each has its own interpretation but for me each one of these themes in the library are themes that we must address within ourselves and the physical construction of the library is how these themes are within us. If the underground represents the hidden, then the prominence of the underground theme in the library represents the qualities in ourselves that are open to discovery—traits that are powerful and we might perceive as dangerous. But what lies within us must be worth wandering through the labyrinth and diving into the underground. We wander the labyrinth like paths of the library in order to discover something about ourselves. Like the books in the Cemetery of Forgotten Books these parts of us can be hidden or forgotten about, or like the book that Daniel picks up these qualities may be unknown but ignite a passion in us that will take us on a journey of discovery. We wander the labyrinth like paths of the library in order to discover something about ourselves.

This is empowering. How many systems have told you that there is only one path for your interests? That in order to be successful, you have to have a path picked out for yourself before you were old enough to experience that path? Or has anyone ever boxed you into one

interest thinking that we are done discovering who we are when we have found one thing we are passionate about? That that activity defines your whole being?

In the library, we seek ourselves and in finding books we further our interests and discover bits of ourselves that lie as hidden as Aristotle's manuscript.

The library beckons. It is a universe, and the tool which we use to define our understanding of reality. It beckons you to explore it, to find the Aristotle's hidden manuscript, the book that was hidden because of its power. It calls you to find that in the shelf and find it in yourself, for you are more powerful and latent with the power of discovery. We are simultaneously humans that are known and unknown. If our literary library represents our own library and our library represents ourselves than we are more magical, more powerful and more mysterious than we ourselves believe.

And what does it say about our world? In the modern library, we classify knowledge under one system and perceive our world as known. Like Hal's library in the *Hostile Hospital*, we know that even under organization there is chaos and there is the transcendence of subjects. We might discover new knowledge from old but that new information might be classified under a few of our different categories. Discovery is still present in our world and so too is confusion. Subjects are not as separate as we might imagine and our knowledge is always fitting together in new ways. The way these pieces fit together make new perceptions and show that the world is more mysterious, magical and latent with the potential of discovery than we thought. There is always something new to find, to think about and to do: infinity from limited material.

Finally, it shows us that the library is identity. The books we use and the way we organize our knowledge speaks to our concept of reality. Once one realizes that our concepts of reality are

often set up by our own creation, recognition of our modern library's organizational system is recognition of our own need to define our own boundaries, our own laws of living as it were. If through the modern library we perceive ourselves as knowing, seeking individuals some of these classification does not go away with the new discovery of the library as a chaotic, space. It is rather we recognize the traits of the chaotic, mysterious library as innate traits that the library possesses.

So the next time you walk into the library whether in literature or in life, do not be intimidated by numbers or classifications. You are a knight ready to embark on a quest, a wanderer searching the darkened stacks for potentially hidden books. Get ready to be lost in the labyrinth, to wander through the multiplicity of history and stories that await, to dive into the depth of the underground not knowing where you are, for you might find yourself that you did not know existed on the shelf. Discovery waits for you.

## Bibliography

- Battles, Matthew. *Library: An Unquiet History*. New York: Norton, 2003.
- Battles, Matthew and Schnapp, Jeffrey T. *The Library Beyond the Book*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press: 2014.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. "The Library of "Babel." In *Labyrinths*. New York: New Directions Publishing Corp, 1983.
- Boulter, Jonathan Stuart. "Partial Glimpses of the Infinite: Borges and the Simulacrum." *Hispanic Review*, Vol.69, No.3, Summer 2001, 355-377.
- Campbell, Joseph. *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space, Metaphor as Myth and as Religion*. New York: Harper and Row, 1986.
- Describe, Marie. *Harwichport*<http://www.labyrinthguild.org/images/labyrinths/harwichport.jpg>, Web. 14 Dec. 2016.
- Eco, Umberto. *The Name of the Rose*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983.
- The Encyclopedia of Diderot and d'Alembert*. Accessed Dec. 5th 1994 <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/d/did/>.
- Keays, J.L. "13 Pulp and Paper." In *Canadian Woods: Their Properties and Uses*, 303-319. Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1981.
- Mangel, Alberto. *The Library at Night*. London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.
- Nix, Garth. *Lirael, Daughter of the Clayr*. New York: HarperCollins Publisher Inc., 2001
- O'Connell, James. "Spanish Civil War." *Encyclopedia Americana*. Scholastic Grolier Online. <http://ea.grolier.com/article?id=0364780-00> (accessed April 25, 2017).

*The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Oxford University Press. Accessed 14 Dec. 2016.

*Oxford English Dictionary*. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.

*Oxford Index, The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Archaeology*. Oxford University Press. Accessed 14 Dec 2016.

Parsons, Edward Alexander. *The Alexandrian Library*. Amsterdam: The Elsevier Press, 1952.

"Quotable Quote, Quotes, Borges." Goodreads. <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/116473-music-feelings-of-happiness-mythology-faces-worn-by-time-certain>.

Radford, Gary P. "Positivism, Foucault, and the Fantasia of the Library: Conceptions of Knowledge" *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy*. Vol.62, No.4 October 1992, 408-424.

Silver, Philip W. "García Lorca, Federico." Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia. Scholastic Grolier Online. <http://gme.grolier.com/article?assetid=0116090-0> (accessed April 25, 2017).

Snicket, Lemony, and Brett Helquist. *The Austere Academy*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2000.

---. *The Bad Beginning*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1999.

---. *The Carnivorous Carnival*. New York: HarperCollins, 2002.

---. *The End*. Illustrated by Brett Helquist. New York: HarperCollins, 2006.

---. *The Ersatz Elevator*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2002.

---. *The Grim Grotto*. Illustrated by Brett Helquist. New York: HarperCollins, 2004.

---. *The Hostile Hospital*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2002.

---. *The Miserable Mill*. 70th ed. New York: HarperCollins, 2012.

---. *The Penultimate Peril*. Illustrated by Brett Helquist. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2005.

---. *The Reptile Room a Series of Unfortunate Events*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1999.

---. *The Slippery Slope*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2004.

---. *The Vile Village*. (#7). New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2001.

---. *The Wide Window*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2000.

Thompson, James Westfall. *The Medieval Library*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939.

Zafón, Carlos Ruiz, and Lucia Graves. *The Angel's Game*. London: Phoenix, 2009.

---. *The Shadow of the Wind*, New York: Penguin, 2004.

