

Utter agreement

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 07 May 1999

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/1621>

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Jonathan Laidlow — 07 May 1999, 12:39

Ah Nigel, as I'm off to join the Ascians on Sunday and will not be on Urth again until June, I thought I'd offer a revision of my last comments to you.

Don't worry - I haven't been driven off by the frightening reaction to my 'infamous' posts. not really. I just need a holiday.

I don't think you need to refute my posts on modernism/. I'm entirely in agreement with you. I don't think that modernism suggests a disassociation with the 'real' in any way. Rather, it's an attempt to reconnect with it in a new and interesting way. 'Realist' fiction presupposes an easy connection with exterior reality. Modernist fiction sees that any connection with reality is problematic, and attempts to find a new solution.

By stating that he was a Modernist I really wanted to draw the discussion away from analysing the cryptic surface details (important though they are) and towards the implications of these details on the greater story. When I stated that I couldn't picture Severian I was trying to argue that the actual details of his appearance are less important than the resonances of the way he is described, and the things he actually does.

I think one of the mistakes in Peter Wright's Foundation essay (despite my agreement with him on many points) on Wolfe's God-Games is that while proposing that the BotNS plays with metafictional games he then approaches the hieros family behind those games in a quasi-realist way: they are JUST aliens messing with Urth's collective head. He can't accept the implications of the religious imagery, or the story about the cock and the archangel (who is closer to God, but knows no more than the animals what his intentions are): that, as you so correctly say 'the possibility remains that it may still serve a greater, divine, purpose.'

I intend to write some kind of longer essay for the website or elsewhere on what I really mean by Wolfe's Modernism. I seem to have been so misunderstood because of my ill-chosen words that I ought to clarify it with a full examination of theories of modernism in SF.

Have a great May everyone, talk to you all in June.

Jonathan

Carry on Torturer

Frankie Howerd IS the Autarch

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