

more on modernism (fair warning!)

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 26 Oct 1999

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Daniel Fusch — 26 Oct 1999, 23:26

Alex,

Thanks for clarifying that. You're right; "Ulysses" and "The Sound and the Fury" are the most frequently taught works of modernist fiction, although we should probably add "Light in August" and make it a threesome.

(snip)

"It is certainly possible to be a Modernist and a science fiction writer, and because of these concerns it is where Wolfe is probably best categorized. But, for purposes of analysis, I actually think that how little he uses the tools commonly associated with modernism is interesting."

I'll keep on insisting that the tools that one can use in modernism are as variable as the individual authors are--and that the most often seen examples (Ulysses and The Sound and the Fury) are simply the most extreme examples of modernist experimentation. Faulkner has been known to write books with normal sentence structure. And, of course, there are the plethora of other modernist writers whose sentences are normal but whose styles of narration are not. So to speak of how little Wolfe uses the tools commonly associated with modernism is only to speak of how Wolfe does not sound like Joyce or Faulkner. But Joyce and Faulkner are not the only modernist writers.

Therefore, a modernist criticism of Wolfe can still be very insightful. Or at least a criticism of the metafiction; I just find it hopelessly interesting to examine Wolfe's investigation of the art of storytelling.

But having said all that, I realize I am probably arguing a moot point. After all, I don't seem to be trying to convince anyone of anything other than the fact that a modernist perspective on Wolfe's work can be particularly interesting. But that is subjective; it may that a modernist perspective is not particularly interesting to everyone else.

So...my apologies for torturing everyone with this long-winded discussion of modernism. And my apologies (to echo alga) if I seem pompous.

As for Borges...I will seek out his work at once!

Now...what's this about racism?

Daniel