

# Calvino, Wolfe and languages

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 24 Feb 2000

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/2137>

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Thomas Jeenicke — 24 Feb 2000, 16:01

Alex David Groce wrote (message dated 22 Feb 10:04:54):

"If On a Winter's Night a Traveler" was translated into English by William Weaver ... If I recall, a genre science fiction pastiche is, unfortunately, not among the half-begun books that it contains.

That ist right, but the fragments of books in "If On a Winter's Night a Traveler" (certainly a better translation than my terrible try) are in my opinion not, in the first line, examples of genres, rather they are instances of themes, or topoi. Most fragments (e.g. the 5th one) can't be attributed to a certain genre, but for all one can find a theme (in the case of the 5th it would something like "brutal violence"). - Wolfe's works altogether also can't be attributed to a certain genre - or it would be a genre description so broad, that it would not be very useful. It is easier to characterize Wolfe by the themes he returns to again and again (like "memory" or "rebirth"). Back to the question if there is a influence of Calvino on Wolfe: To finally settle this, one must know which of Calvino's books were when translated into English (and I don't know that). Or can Wolfe speak (or at least understand) Italian? It would generally be an interesting question which languages Wolfe is versed in. To speak a foreign languages is a cultural influence which should not be underestimated.

Thanks to all who provided and provide information, to all who contribute to this list (or the Whorl list) and who are patient with a newcomer to this list whose skill in English is far from perfect!

Thomas