

literary analogy

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maa32 — 25 Feb 2002, 20:16

I was just sitting around reading Borges' Selected Non-fictions when I came across his review of Eberhard's chinese fairy tales. Does this sound familiar or what?!

"The problem is simple. The European fairy tale, and the Arab, are all conventional. A ternary law rules them The Chinese Fairy tale, however, is irregular. The reader begins by finding them incoherent. He thinks that there are too many loose ends, things that don't come together. Later - perhaps suddenly - he discovers why these gaps exist. He realizes that these vagaries and anacoluthons imply that the narrator totally believes in the reality of the wonders that he tells. Reality is neither symmetrical nor schematic." (Borges 183).

an anacoluthon is a sudden shift in direction like "Good coffee. Thank God for Fidel Castro" or "I should kill you, but I have a cricket game to play."

Does that sound like one of Wolfe's novels or what? Peace, Short Sun, Cerberus, etc.

Also, Wolfe once quoted Chesterton to me, saying that "Life is a million little detective stories" or something similar. I think these two ideas, one of the Chinese Fairy Tale and one of Life being a detective story, certainly inform us on Wolfe's artistic aesthetic (or at least help us to think about how we should go about reading his texts). Marc Aramini