

TWK: Able's Prose Style

The Urth list — 3 messages, 2 voices, 04 Nov 2005

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Mike Sakasegawa — 04 Nov 2005, 23:25

Hello all. I'm relatively new to the list--I posted briefly as Hitsuji a couple of years ago and then dropped out. Anyway, I recently finished reading The Wizard and had a question.

As far as I noticed, Arthur never once uses a contraction in the prose portions of his letter to Ben. It seemed odd to me, because his dialogue uses as many contractions as you would normally see in a 20th century American teenager's speech, but I was unable to spot a single instance of a contraction in the prose. I was wondering if anyone thought there was any significance to that.

-Mike

Bob Miller — 06 Nov 2005, 02:42 · in reply to Mike Sakasegawa

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Mike Sakasegawa — 06 Nov 2005, 19:43 · in reply to Bob Miller

Contractions are a perfectly legitimate grammatical construction, and given the first person perspective and the characterization evident in the narration, it struck me as odd that there were no contractions to be found. Since it stood out to me so much in TWK, I feel like I would have noticed if they had also been absent from the other Wolfe works that I've read, but I don't recall that being the case. I'll investigate further when I get the chance.

-Mike

On 11/5/05, Bob Miller wrote:

That comment about the lack of contractions is probably apropos now, Mike. All it really means is that GENE Wolfe is not an incompetent writer or does not deliberately use bad grammar. <chuckle> I well remember being dropped from an A to a C in an inclass essay because I used a couple contractions. My ego still smarts from the ruler to it.

Bob