

Modernism in "The Day of the Locust" (1939) by Nathanael West



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(Dr. Fausto Jenkins Sr.)

MODERNISM IN "THE DAY OF THE LOCUST" (1939) BY NATHANAEL WEST



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GRIN Verlag Jan 2009, 2009. Taschenbuch. Book Condition: Neu. 213x147x2 mm. This item is printed on demand - Print on Demand Neuware - Seminar paper from the year 2003 in the subject American Studies - Literature, grade: 1,7, University of Frankfurt (Main), course: Decadence and Modernism in the Late 20th Century American Cinema, 22 entries in the bibliography, language: English, comment: Double spaced , abstract: Jonathan Veitch asserts in the preface of his book American Superrealism that critics have had problems in placing Nathanael West within the literature of the 1930s and American literature in general. They understood him for example as 'a poet of darkness', as 'an apocalyptic writer', as 'a homegrown surrealist', as 'a writer of the left' , as a 'universal satirist' , in a way as 'the prototype of the contemporary Jewish-American novelist' (Wisker 1-2) or as a realistic writer (Martin, see Roberts). Although some of these characterizations are contradictory, they all fit because they reflect different facets of the author, or rather his work. West combined all these elements and probably even several others in his writings. His 'style was never constant. At times his pictorial technique closely resembles collage [but also] cartoon strips, movies, and several different schools of painting, as well as such non-graphic visual arts as the tableau and the dance.' (Reid 9) Taking the (though not planned) final result of his development as a writer, his last book The Day of the Locust (1939) as an example, I want to show in my essay that at least one of West's books does not 'fall between the different schools of writing' (Wisker 2), as he once noted. He is certainly a representative of modernism, the 'literary movement' and 'point of view' of his time (see O'Conner) not only because a 'struggle for...



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