

Wolfe's FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS

The SF-Lovers list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 07 Jun 1985

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rti-sel!wfi — 07 Jun 1985, 19:22

donn at utah-gr.UUCP (Donn Seeley) writes:

I give up. After going through the book for the twentieth time or so, I still have to admit that Gene Wolfe's THE FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS is my favorite work of sf, and very possibly my favorite book, period. I have found something new every single time I've read it, which I think is the greatest and most difficult gift an author can make to a reader. On this pass I finally figured out what Number Five's real name is. In retrospect I probably should have guessed it sooner, but that would have taken some of the fun and suspense out of it! Has anyone else had this experience?

The Fifth Head of Cerberus is also close to being my favorite SF work, although Lem's Solaris and certain other works by other authors are also contenders. It's an infinitely rich and rewarding book, but reading Wolfe is definitely work. You've certainly beat me on the number of readings; I've read it three times. It's a book I recommend to anyone I talk to about SF.

Wolfe's short stories are also first-rate; check out The Death of Dr. Island And Other Stories And Other Stories. Actually, I can't think of anything he's written that I haven't enjoyed, including the mainstream novel Peace (at least it appears to be mainstream).

At the risk of starting more flames in the group on quality and SF (-:), my opinion is that Fifth Head of Cerberus is his best work, but I've only read the Book of the New Sun once so I haven't really gotten into it. I'd be interested in hearing from other people in the group on F. H. of C; does anyone else share our high opinion of this book?

-- Bill Ingogly

ucbcad!kalash — 10 Jun 1985, 04:08 · follows rti-sel!wfi

At the risk of starting more flames in the group on quality and SF (-:), my opinion is that Fifth Head of Cerberus is his best work,

It is close, but for sheer breadth I like "The Book of the New Sun" better. They are both absolutely amazing works.

group on F. H. of C; does anyone else share our high opinion of this book?

While I normally do not make responses of 'I agree' (I mean what is the point?), I can not resist. "Fifth Head" is one of the great books of SF, and I can do no better than quote Anatomy of Wonder:

"These summaries cannot touch the complexity, meaning and sheer beauty of these excellently written stories."

Joe Kalash

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