

Swanwick on Wolfe

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 03 Nov 1999

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Nicholas Gevers — 03 Nov 1999, 11:25

In the course of an interview I've been conducting with him, Michael Swanwick has some interesting things to say about Wolfe:

- 1) "he is, I honestly believe, the finest writer in the English language alive today."
- 2) On how 5HC helped inspire Swanwick's Nebula-winning novel STATIONS OF THE TIDE:

MS: "It would be hard to exaggerate the impact THE FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS, and particularly the title novella, had on me when I first read it. Not just the extraordinary beauty of the prose but the wit and economy of Wolfe's solutions to any number of technical problems. If I didn't know Gene was an engineer, I think I'd be able to guess from that work. It has the same lean elegance that really first-rate engineering has.

"So there's definitely a debt. As I was writing, in fact, I thought of the bureaucrat [the novel's protagonist] as looking like Gene Wolfe. Gardner Dozois once compared Gene to Dashiell Hammett's Continental Op, a man so ordinary-looking that if you looked away for an instant he could disappear into a crowd without a trace. I wanted that sense of someone who's unremarkable superficially and yet, inside, he's ... Gene Wolfe!"

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Marc Coleman — 03 Nov 1999, 13:21 · follows Nicholas Gevers

I'd highly recommend Stations Of The Tide to anyone who has not read it.
marc

At 11:25 AM 11/3/1999 -0800, you wrote:

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