

Linked short stories

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 17 Apr 1998

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adam louis stephanides — 17 Apr 1998, 11:01

On Thu, 16 Apr 1998 William H. Ansley wrote:

One may excuse Wolfe (and I am well aware that he needs no excuse from me) by saying that his stories hold up by themselves and the references to other of his works are a reward for careful readers. This is certainly true, but Wolfe seems to have mastered writing a set of related pieces that complement each other so well that their whole is very much greater than the sum of their parts better than any other writer I can think of. (In fact, does anyone else know of *any* other writer who does this?) It seems a shame then that these stories or novellas are first published separately. The Fifth Head of Cerberus is a perfect example of this at its best. The novellas all work separately quite well but together they form a most remarkable work.

A recent example of this (though on a lesser aesthetic plane than Fifth Head) is two short stories, "Bluesberry Jam" and "Ain't You Most Done?" The first of these appeared in an anthology whose title I forget, whose theme was music in science fiction IIRC; the second appeared in an anthology of Sandman (the Neil Gaiman comic character) prose stories, entitled "The Sandman: Book of Dreams" or something like that. The two stories depict, in part, the same events from the perspective of two different characters; but they give quite different pictures of what is "really" going on.

--Adam