

cover artists

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 05 May 1998

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/560>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

Dan Parmenter — 05 May 1998, 15:07

Speaking of Don Maitz and the covers, isn't there also a series of covers for the British versions that are by someone else? I saw them once at an SF convention, and the only one that stuck out in my mind vividly was CLAW, which was, I believe, a depiction of Severian above the mines of Saltus, with all manner of archeological junk surrounding him.

Does anyone have scans of the British covers? I remember them being quite good, but I'm disinclined to buy new copies just to see 'em again.

I still think that Maitz could have done a better job depicting fuligin. Perhaps as an artist he preferred the challenge of depicting a black cloak under different lighting conditions (the four covers depict light growing brighter) to simply showing a blackness the color of soot.

The Maitz covers certainly fail to convey to the casual reader just what they're in for. It's pretty difficult to explain to someone that one of your favorite books looks (on the surface) like yet another sword and sorcery epic. But of course in addition to everything else, it *is* a story with quite recognizable fantasy and SF motifs so perhaps any other cover would be unfair too. Nevertheless, despite its many awards, I'm not sure if the general readership of SF responds to it that well. My first real exposure to the series occurred around the time that Wolfe was the guest of honor at Boskone (a Boston SF convention) in 1984. Several members of the committee admitted that they didn't even like Wolfe's writing! There's a particular segment of SF readership that calls itself "literary fandom" that seems to openly despise any SF that attempts to go much beyond space opera which makes it that much harder for "literary" SF to be accepted. The fanboys don't like it and serious literary critics won't even look at it (because it's SF). I remember literally begging a coworker to at least read the first story in FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS so she would see that there's good SF (a possibility she wouldn't entertain). She never did. But don't get me started on the uselessness of "genre" or we'll be here all night.

D