

The Ring and the Claw

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 06 Jan 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/2887>

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 Rabin — 06 Jan 2002, 18:28

With respect to the recent discussion on Tolkien's influence on Wolfe, I'd like to propose that the Claw of the Conciliator is, in some respects, a Wolfean reversal of the One Ring:

The Ring is the lingering talisman of evil; the Claw is a talisman of good. The Ring weighs Frodo down; the Claw sometimes presses Severian onward. The Ring enslaves; the Claw heals. The Ring makes invisible; the Claw gives light. Frodo wants to conceal the Ring from its owner and destroy it; Severian wants to restore the Claw to its (perceived) owners and preserve it. The Ring is secret; the Claw is (presumably) displayed on the altar of the Pelerines.

There are also similarities:

Both objects are accidentally acquired by the respective protagonists. Both objects are a burden to their bearers.

I'm not sure that this list shows anything more than a shared "ancient talisman" motif, but I've always at least found Severian's sense of pressure from the Claw reminiscent of Frodo's experience with the Ring.

-- Dan Rabin