

The Ring & The Claw

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 07 Jan 2002

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Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 07 Jan 2002, 19:59

Dan Rabin wrote:

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:

Well, while I don't think I would go so far as this (in the sense of Wolfe deliberately doing so), I think you make (the beginnings of) an interesting case for a comparative discussion of the books, especially wrt a structuralist/poststructuralist discussion of the similar & different ways the two objects fill the paradigm of "ancient, powerful talisman."

Let's add to your list of similarities:

Both objects come into the protagonist's hands by seeming chance. Both objects give the possessor power "according to his stature." Both objects are ultimately destroyed during a battle with an enemy who seeks to take it from the protagonist. Neither object looks extraordinary to a casual viewer.

And to the reversal list:

The Ring is destroyed by seeming chance; the Claw is destroyed by petty malice.

Frodo finds himself unable to give up the Ring; Severian finds that the "owners" will not accept (the remains of) the Claw.

matthew.malthouse — 08 Jan 2002, 12:11 · follows Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

On 07/01/2002 19:59:07 Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote:

And to the reversal list:

The Ring is destroyed by seeming chance; the Claw is destroyed by petty malice.

You might say that the ring is destroyed by the malice as well as the greed of Gollum.

Baldanders is greedy for many things (technology, sensation, etc) but actually disdains the claw, another reversal.

Matthew

Michael Straight — 08 Jan 2002, 15:30 · follows matthew.malthouse

On Mon, 7 Jan 2002, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote:

Let's add to your list of similarities:

Both objects give the possessor power "according to his stature."

Does the claw give power to anyone but Severian?

(I guess you can still make the comparison if you say only Severian has the stature to use the claw's power, but it doesn't fit quite as well.)

-Rostrum