

Endagered Species

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 14 Jul 1997

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Joel Priddy — 14 Jul 1997, 15:39

I'm still working out my whole Wolfe-women thinga-ma-dookey in typically slow, plodding fashion. Upon closer inspection and slower reflection I'd been leaning towards it having more and more to do with the perception of the particular protagonists. It seems most apparent in `_New_Sun_` but much less so in `_Long_Sun_`. This is in equal proportion to the difference between Severian and Silk.

But then...

With the recent discussion of `_Endangered_Species_` I stumbled on this in the Introduction, where he is describing his reader:

"You are both a woman, amused by men, and a man, enthralled by women. You realize that it is only in our own time that life has become easy enough to permit a handful of us to abrogate our ancient alliance..."

What the hell?

What is he saying here? I assume that the alliance he refers to is the co-existence of men and women in society for purposes of procreation. For my fellow non-English majors out there, "abrogate" means to abolish or treat as nonexistent.

Certainly between population size and technology life has become easy enough in the past century to allow Feminism and Gay Rights to become mainstream issues. Not having to build a large family/work force as a matter of survival has given us all sorts of luxuries in the realms of sex and gender. But I don't think this would be described as an abrogation of our ancient alliance. He doesn't say "re-negotiate," as in a shift of power between men and women. So, is he talking about the two sexes going their separate ways? Monks and nuns? Amazons and Spartans?

Wolfe's a husband and a father, so he must consider interaction between the sexes to be beneficial (not that I want to delve too deeply into his personal life here).

Any ideas? Am I just missing some obvious point?

cephalothorax