

Urth sacrifice

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 12 Feb 2001

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Dan Rabin — 12 Feb 2001, 21:23

Matt asks,

(5) What does the following passage mean:

"It was the magnetism that drew others to him that caused his embryo to be put aboard the lander. That was the work of Pas's scientists, as Pig's size and strength were. (Recalling the Red Sun Whorl that it became, I cannot but wonder whether it did not sacrifice too much for us.)" (RttW p. 96)

The phrase in the parentheses really mystifies me. What does the first "it" refer to? What became the Red Sun Whorl? Is he merely talking about Urth itself? Is he talking about Silk's embryo? Is he talking about Pig's size and strength? Is he talking about the work of Pas's scientists? I just don't get it.

And what is the second "it" referring to? What sacrificed too much for us? I assume he is referring to the first "it" as well, which means I still don't have a clue.

I take the parenthesis to mean that Urth looks very weak with its dying sun, yet it is the original Short Sun Whorl from which the _Whorl_ was sent out. Urth can no longer accomplish such wonders as building the _Whorl_, so the speaker is imagining that creating the _Whorl_ sapped Urth of its vitality somehow.

Being exhausted by a magical creation is a common motif in the fantasy tradition, I believe.

-- Dan Rabin

*This is WHORL, for discussion of Gene Wolfe's Book of the Long Sun.