

Quetal and the Eden Story

The Urth list — 2 messages, 1 voices, 27 Nov 2002

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Charles Reed — 27 Nov 2002, 21:49

James Wynn wrote:

Crush concedes:

Sadistic, yes. But not in that way. I can hardly argue with the author. And with this light thrown on the subject, I cannot divine any consistent narrative value to Quetzal's story of A-man and Wo-man.

Oh, but there is narrative value: it casts the the inhumis in a new light that allows us to understand them better. This might be a little over the top, and might seem like I'm taking myself a bit too seriously, but I was feeling a little creative, so I thought I'd have a go at writing something fun:

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In the beginning were the inhumis, who were as the beasts of the field: mindless and ignorant, even of the darkness in which they dwelt. And they were content, walking in their gardens in the midst of Creation.

And it came to pass that one of the inhumis, forever known to the rest of his race as Father Quetzal, partook of the fruit swirling inside the limbs of a strange two-legged creature, and his eyes were opened and filled with the light of knowledge. And Quetzal shouted with joy for all the wisdom he had gained.

Yet even as his shout died upon the fields and forests of Creation, he felt his wisdom diminish, slipping away as blood through a vein. And he knew with the certainty of the setting sun that he must eat without end of the miraculous fruit if he would not fall back among the darkness and the beasts.

Then did he weep bitter tears, for himself and for all of his race still living in the darkness. But when his tears dried, he looked upon Creation and lo, he was become as subtle as a serpent, cunning and ruthless.

Then did he lure others of his race to the miraculous tree whose branches sagged with the fruit of knowledge. And they did climb the tree and feast, but they did not forget the ignorance from whence they climbed.

Therefore did they strive unceasing, seeking always for a way to carry the fruit back to their homes in the midst of Creation, that they might reap it like grain and grow ever stronger in the light of their knowledge and wisdom.

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Notice that I've allowed Quetzal to become the serpent, which is the "character" in the A-man and Wo-man story Quetzal seems to be identifying with. The above is certainly a bit of a stretch, but I think it sort-of hangs together, both with the Eden story and with what we know about the inhumis.

Here's the non-poetic version:

1. Whorl arrives in system, sends down a lander to Green.
2. Neighbors make sure the inhumis feed on the colonists so that they might judge the colonists' worth. Note that the Neighbors play no part in the above story, because the inhumis are ignorant of their presence.
3. Quetzal was one of the inhumis who fed on the colonists and boarded the lander before it took off on its return voyage to the Whorl.
4. Quetzal arrives on the Whorl, eventually learns of the Plan of Pas and that it is no longer being carried out.
5. Quetzal uses every trick he knows to carry out the Plan of Pas.

In a sense, Quetzal is sort-of a twisted Moses figure: leading his people on the Whorl (who aren't really "his people" at all) to the promised land of Green -- but the promised land is not the land of milk and honey for the humans, it is the land of milk and honey (i.e., renewable sources of intelligence) for the inhumis.

It's also a very interesting parallel (if you buy into my theory) that Quetzal has gone to Whorl to bring back food and wisdom (human blood) for his people, and that Horn has gone to the Whorl for much the same reasons. (food = pure corn, wisdom = Silk).

Opinions?

Charles

Charles Reed — 27 Nov 2002, 21:53 · follows Charles Reed

I meant "Quetzal and the Eden Story" -- not "Quetal"

Dad gum spelling.