

Moses(es) of the Whorl

The Whorl list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 04 Apr 1997

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m.driussi — 04 Apr 1997, 04:15

Joseph Campbell, in THE MASKS OF GOD: OCCIDENTAL MYTHOLOGY, quoting Freud's MOSES AND MONOTHEISM:

"We cannot escape the impression that this Moses of Kadesh and Midian, to whom tradition could even ascribe the erection of a brazen serpent as a healing god, is quite a different person from the august Egyptian we have deduced [mantis note: a refugee from the court of heretic pharaoh Ikhnaton], who disclosed to his people a religion in which all magic and sorcery were most strictly abhorred. Our Egyptian Moses differs perhaps no less from the Midian Moses than the universal god Aton [mantis note: focal point of Ikhnaton's heretical monotheism] differed from the demon Yahweh [mantis note: Arabian volcano god] on his divine mountain."

Two Moseses, one brazen snake on a stick. But let's face it, that snake has two aspects, too: healing/beneficial and destructive/frightful. Oops, and two gods, or names of God: Yahweh (focus of the "J Text") and Elohim (focus of the "E Text").

Campbell breaks down the Moses story into the following elements:

- "1. a cruel, unnamed, fairy-tale pharaoh, persecuting a people . . . (Tyrant-Ogre motif),
2. has a daughter, also unnamed, who finds a baby in a basket on the waters of the Nile . . . (modified Virgin Birth motif, with inverted Infant Exposure: from humble to noble household);
3. a Midianite priest of Kadesh, who is to become the hero's father-in-law (named Reuel in J Text, Jethro in E);
4. has seven daughters (magical 7: seven celestial spheres, colors of the rainbow, etc.),
5. who are met at the well by a desert fugitive from Egypt who has just killed an Egyptian;
6. he marries one and becomes the shepherd of his father-in-law. . . ;
7. the voice of Yahweh in the burning bush commits to this shepherd the cosmic task of rescuing his people from the clutches of the Tyrant Ogre; after which there follows
8. his magical contest, assisted by his suddenly present brother Aaron (Twin Hero theme), against the priests and magicians of Egypt (shaman contest), culminating in
9. the Plagues of Egypt . . . and
10. the Exodus (Magic Flight motif, Passage through Water, Dissolution of Underworld Power at

Threshold, Boon of Spoil from Underworld, etc.)."

These points match up to THE BOOK OF THE LONG SUN in a fairly straight forward manner.

1. We will take pharaoh in his strictly governmental aspect as being the Ayuntamiento or Calde Tussah, rather than get messy with pharaoh's divine status (which links into the Nine).

2. Nameless daughter of Viron, right. Well that's clear--almost paint by number. <g>

3. Hero's father-in-law, interesting angle on the head clerk of the Juzgado.

4. Seven daughters. Well, at this point, the original story seems to imply rather special powers for Jethreuel . . . no matter, since our clerk has only one daughter (to the best of our knowledge)--but she's Hyacinth and very special. (Maybe two-in-one, but not seven-in-one.)

5. Ah, a fork in the road: Moses the adopted nobleman versus Moses the outlaw. Silk gets to be the adopted nobleman (with the high-to-low social status in its usual mode) and Auk, he kicked a man to death, once. But I also want to interject that Father Brown has his thief buddy, too (what was his name--Flammbeau?). Silk meets Hyacinth at a well of sorts (at Ermine's) . . . does Auk ever meet Chenille at a well?

6. "Shepherd of his father-in-law"--now see, that implies that Reuejethro is somehow kinda sorta standing in for something bigger, ranging from "the People" on up to God Himself. But for our purposes, we'll just let it be "Silk for Calde."

7. Burning bush into burning fig tree. Check. This element also covers Silk's first enlightenment and probably a few other scenes scattered throughout the series. Note that the burningbush tells of how when time to go comes along, just asking the Egyptian women for jewelry will give the Hebrews the goods(forgive me but I can't quite catch the meaning of this); whereas Comely Kypris tells her Sun Street Irregulars to rob the Palatine, and they do, and guess what--cards are needed for repairing the landers! (Now =that= I can grasp!)

8. Hmmm. Snake and stick tricks.

9. The Plagues of Egypt is what they're gonna git on the Whorl if'n they don't land sumbuddy rite kwik!

10. Magic flight would be when the floater takes off.

Well, enough fooling around. I think that Silk is one Moses, Auk is another (and/or he is Aaron), and Quetzal is a third (since he dies before getting to the promised land), but Q is also the snake on the stick (and of the stick), healing and frightening at the same time, since that brazen serpent god (healing totem/magical staff) also died in Exodus, making way for the transcendent god.

=mantis=

Questions or problems to whorl-owner at lists.best.com

Derek Bell — 04 Apr 1997, 14:46 · follows m.driussi

In message <199704040643.WAA08675 at lists1.best.com>, m.driussi at genie.com writes:

[an excellent summary of mythic/religious connections with the whorl]>

Well, enough fooling around. I think that Silk is one Moses,

I agree - the Moses who led the Israelites saw the promised land, but didn't reach it. Silk sees the (new) short sun and does not land with Horn's lander. (The difference is, we don't know Silk's fate.)

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I'm still a little puzzled by Quetzal's comment about the story of the apple and the temptation: "perhaps he wanted them to get into his tree" (I think). Is that a comment that the snakes' motives might have been misconstrued. (Likewise Q's motives if he were to be found out to be an inhumus.)

I'm also intrigued by Chenille - she seems to have some unusual capabilities. For instance, when the knife was thrown by Kypris and it hit the spot that it had been in before, it struck me that Chenille's own reflexes/muscular control must have been **very** precise. She is Silk's sister, but I seemed to have missed most of the clues about her parentage. Could she have cold one programming? Could one or **both** of her parents have been cold ones? (Ditto Silk?)

About the description of Oreb's flight where he was going to get revenge on Tick - I had the idea of Horn interviewing Oreb and trying to translate his speech! Unlikely, I know, but it amused me greatly!

Tercel

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