

Horn's height and 8-legged elephants

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 21 Dec 1999

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Yves Meynard — 21 Dec 1999, 21:52

I thought I'd muddy the (too-) quiescent waters...

The hypothesis that Horn is actually in Silk's body is appealing; yet it seems contradicted by the very beginning of NtLS:

"With a slight shock of insight, Silk realized [...] that Horn's [...] eyes were very nearly level with his." (p.15)

Horn isn't even fully grown then (or is he?). Yet OBW states that Horn has grown quite noticeably (I can't find the figure he gives -- it is in cubits, which confuses the issue further, but I think to recall a good 6 inches were implied). Perhaps (gasp!) Wolfe is being inconsistent, perhaps this isn't Silk's body, or perhaps I'm just hopelessly confused. Any thoughts?

On another matter: animals native to Blue have names that either *appear* made up (what's the etymology of "hus"?), or that are descriptive, in which case they are portmanteau words ("felwolf", "breakbull", "leatherskin"). This does not apply to cows and elephants. It is mentioned that cow embryos were brought aboard the landers. Is the same true of elephants? I would tend to assume so, since otherwise wouldn't another name have been chosen? "Olifants", "Mamouths", whatever? But how come they have eight legs and twin trunks? I recall Wolfe expressing credence in a form of Lamarckism, whereby living beings would evolve to fit an existing environment (but not "of their own will"). Could this be an explanation?

Again, any thoughts (or contemptuous put-downs :-)) are welcome.

Yves Meynard

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