

Short sun foreshadowing in Exodus

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 31 Mar 2000

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David Wells — 31 Mar 2000, 12:16

Have the foreshadowing phrases in the last few pages of Exodus been discussed? During my (perhaps sketchy) flit through the archives I couldn't find anywhere they had, so, in no particular order:

1) [Horn writes, in the first person for almost the first time]

"Here I close my defense, having (as I hope) satisfied the demands of my critics"

??? Any ideas what this means ???

2) [describing Silk] "a man well above average height, with a clear, somewhat pale complexion, bright blue eyes, and straw-colored hair which would never lie flat. A slender man, but not a slow or weak one. He will have a scar upon his back where the needle left it, and may have faint scars on his right arm, left by the beak of the vulture [...]"

Hmmm. So why does Horn decide to describe Silk so carefully during the last few words of his epic chronicle(*)? And what is this "not a slow or weak one" business about? Given that the Book of Horn is essentially a religious tract/gospel it may be that he feels motivated to provide believers with a "messiah identikit" to warn them against Silk-pretenders. (It would be ironic if this backfires... It assumes that Silk's spirit doesn't switch bodies. You see what I mean). [Is there a precedent for this in religious/mystical writings, by the way? I.e. "ye shall know him by this..."?]

3) "[Horn speaking] 'He [Sinew] should be home by this time'. [a few sentences later...] something dark flitted between Horn and the whorl that had been his, and he shuddered"

This seems to me to be a comparatively clear foreshadowing of a Sinew/inhumu "meeting".

4) Somewhere not long before the end of Exodus (sorry, couldn't find it) Horn comments, I think, that the inhumu are "no more intelligent than dogs". I found this very interesting at the time, because

- it seemed to me to suggest that the colonists were in for a hard time. Since we know that Quetzal had managed to reach a senior rank in the Whorl's (curiously Catholic :-)) ecclesiastical hierarchy, the wildly-unrealistic prejudice (as I took it at the time) that they were extremely unintelligent seemed to bode poorly for the colonists.
- on the other hand it could have been a keen satire on organized religion. Which would have been very amusing. But unlikely given the context...

But now this also seems like foreshadowing. (?)

Comments?

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(*) I was tempted here to use the word "fable". Hmm...

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