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Melville Davisson Post's Uncle Abner Stories, or the Recreation of Virginia as the Biblical Promised Land with Abner as its Prophet

Suzanne Bray

- 1 On June 3rd 1911, *The Saturday Evening Post* published the first of Melville Davisson Post's most successful series of stories. This tale, entitled "The Broken Stirrup-Leather" (now known as "The Angel of the Lord"), was the first to feature the unique cattle-trading and Bible-quoting detective from the foothills of the Appalachians, Uncle Abner. A further seventeen mysteries followed in the same magazine until 1918, when they were all published in the collected volume *Uncle Abner: Master of Mysteries*. In 1927 and 1928 *The Country Gentleman* published four more Uncle Abner tales to complete the collection.
- 2 The Uncle Abner series was amazingly successful. *The Saturday Evening Post* at the time had circulation figures which "inched upwards towards the two million figure" (Norton 37) and Post would receive \$1000 per story (Hayden 6). The author and critic Willard Huntington Wright esteemed the stories highly, considering that Uncle Abner was "one of the very few detectives deserving to be ranked with that immortal triumvirate, Dupin, Lecoq and Holmes" (55) and, although Julian Symons believes that "the attraction the stories have for Americans simply does not exist for others" (90), this is hardly borne out by the facts. "The Wrong Hand" was one of the very few American stories chosen by Dorothy L. Sayers for her *Third Omnibus of Crime*, while John Dickson Carr considered "The Doomdorf Mystery" "one of the most brilliant short detective stories in the history of detective fiction" (281), an opinion shared by the American critics Blanche Colton Williams (302) and Grant Overton (41).
- 3 This paper will take the view that the success of the Uncle Abner series is based not so much on the detective plots, as on the atmosphere and setting of the tales told. In fact, the Abner corpus corresponds to both types of short story series identified by J.F.

Benedetto: “the single character series” and also “the common setting series.” Everything revolves round Abner and yet, the location, ethos and other recurring characters all play an important part in the mysteries. Forrest Ingram, in his 1971 innovative study of the short story cycle, claims that “the elements of the cycle [themes, leitmotifs, settings and characters] tend to form together, a composite myth” (21). In this series, the “composite myth” is that of the still undivided Virginia as a parallel country to the biblical Promised Land in which Uncle Abner, like an Old Testament prophet, dispenses divinely inspired wisdom to a people for whom the law is often a distant and intangible reality. Post creates this myth not only through his descriptions, situations and characters, but equally through the language of his stories. After a general overview of how Abner’s world is presented to the reader, the first story in *Uncle Abner: Master of Mysteries*, “The Doomdorf Mystery,” will be taken as an example to point out the resemblances between its atmosphere and worldview and those of the narrative parts of the Hebrew Scriptures.

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- 4 Seeing connections between the United States of America and Israel in the Old Testament was hardly new in 1911. According to Elizabeth Stephens, from the very beginning of the founding era the early pilgrims “thought of America as biblical prophecy come to life” (9) and knew their Scriptures in detail. Samuel Langdon’s election sermon in New Hampshire in 1788 presented “The Republic of the Israelites as an example to the American States” (Sandoz ch. 32), while, five years earlier, the president of Yale University had hailed the new nation as “God’s American Israel” (King 207). In fact, in colonial America, the population “constantly drew parallels between themselves and the people of Israel and Judah” (Kirk 46). Well over a century later, just as Post was writing his first story, President Woodrow Wilson could still explicitly declare that knowledge of the Bible was a source of progress in freedom and democratic ideals, and claim, with no fear of contradiction, that “nothing makes America great except ... her acceptance of those standards of judgement which are written large upon the pages of revelation” within it (5).
 - 5 Melville Davisson Post believed that he was living in “the great age of the short story,” which was to the American people of his day “what the drama was to the Greeks,” a way to “reach the whole people” (Post, “Mystery Story” 22). In his attempts to do this, he could rely on having “a biblically literate readership” (Bottum 1), accustomed to hearing their own nation likened to the people of the Old Testament, for whom the world of Uncle Abner would appear almost nostalgic, similar to the land of their grandparents.
 - 6 The setting for the stories is the remote, western lands of Virginia during the middle years of the 19th century, before the civil war. The reader is told that “the government of Virginia was over the Alleghenies” (Post, *Uncle Abner Mysteries* 148) and that “its arm was short and feeble” (8), leaving these more isolated areas very much to themselves. The people who had settled there “held the lands west of the mountains against the savages” and “were efficient and expeditious” (8). Post describes them as “iron men” (148) keeping the peace in their immense, fertile country. The law is known to exist, but could not always be relied upon to act fast enough or to prevent injustice. Post even anchors his fictional communities in his own family history. Old Nathaniel Davisson, who plays an important part in “Naboth’s Vineyard” was “a real-world great-granduncle of Post” (Nevins 199), while Doomdorf’s peach trees and illicit distillery are situated “between the

Crown's grant to Daniel Davisson and a Washington survey" (Post, *Uncle Abner Mysteries* 7). This context is, in fact, not dissimilar to the biblical colonisation of Canaan when "the Israelites struck roots in their new home as settlers and farmers, in continuous fighting with their neighbours and feuds among themselves" (Keller 170), as each tribe took over a section of the land.

- 7 Biblical archaeologist Werner Keller explains: "Real pioneer work was done by the Israelites in the mountains. Uninhabitable areas, districts without springs or streams were opened up" (170). All this sounds not unlike the settlers in the Appalachians. Politically too, there were similarities. In the time of the biblical Judges, "the tribes functioned as a loose confederation of states, with strong central leadership arising only when the nation was threatened by an external enemy" (Spiro), a situation not unfamiliar to the inhabitants of Virginia in the early years. Another resemblance may be found in the religious context. Although the Hebrew pioneers believed more or less in the God of Israel, many pagan Canaanite cults remained in the land and, during the period of the monarchy, even the rich and powerful were tempted by the worship of Baal and other divinities who offered them power or fertility. Others did not believe in anything at all. In the same way, the remote west of Post's Virginia, while theoretically Christian, contains people, like Evlyn Byrd in "The Mystery of Chance" or Gaul in "The Wrong Hand," who reject the scriptural faith and others, like Cyrus Mansfield with his "pagan notions" (Post, *Uncle Abner Mysteries* 197) or Dix's wife who "tapped on wood to appease the witches" (307), who stick to the never fully abolished superstitions and occult practices known to their European ancestors.
- 8 Within this still quite primitive community, living off the land and close to Nature, everything echoes the Old Testament world. The titles of the stories: "Naboth's Vineyard," "The Tenth Commandment," "The Angel of the Lord," all help to create a certain atmosphere. The good people the reader meets have, for the most part, "stern Scriptural beliefs" (Post, *Uncle Abner Mysteries* 50) and even the baddies, like the murderous Dix (44) or the lustful Vespasian Flornoy (215), use biblical allusions to justify or conceal their crimes. The narrator too, usually Abner's nephew Martin, is at home in this world. For him, the profligate Blackford died a sudden death like "a vengeance of God in the Book of Kings" (50), while the local people looked into the village hall as if they had been "before the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite" (51), where, as most of Post's first readers would have known, the Angel of the Lord stopped spreading the plague throughout Israel and King David built an altar in thanksgiving (*New International Version Bible*, 2 Samuel 24). The central character in this peculiar world is Abner, whose name in Hebrew means "Father of Light" and whose role is to shed light on the mysteries which confront the community. It is generally supposed that the model for Abner was the author's father, Ira Carper Post, to whom *Uncle Abner: Master of Mysteries* was dedicated and who has been described as "a man upright in his relationships with others ... one of shrewdness and good intelligence ... Deeply religious... [gaining] considerable respect for his extensive biblical knowledge" (Norton 9).
- 9 Joseph Bottum has described Abner as an "American archetype." He is a man "of huge personality" (Roberge), described in the text as "one of those austere, deeply religious men who were the product of the Reformation" (Post, *Uncle Abner Mysteries* 33). His nephew portrays him as having "a big iron frame, a grizzled beard and features forged out by a smith" (148). But Abner's most notable characteristics are that he has "the thundering voice of an Old Testament prophet" (Grosset) and that he himself "relies

heavily on the Old Testament" (Norton 117). In fact, all the stories contain "a sort of biblical parallelism, in which either the crime or the detection reproduces a precedent or principle from the Bible" (Bottum). This is particularly explicit in the last four stories where the narrator informs us that Abner "used to illustrate the mystery in events with example cases taken from the Scriptures" (Post, *Uncle Abner Mysteries* 237) and that he understood literally the beginning of the Book of Job, where Satan is described as "going to and fro in the earth and walking up and down in it" (Job 1.7, qtd in Post, *Uncle Abner Mysteries* 237), fearing that he might meet "the ancient Enemy with his bag of Tares, sowing the land" (237). Although this sentence contains a reference to Christ's words (Matthew 13.25), such New Testament allusions are rare. In fact, Abner clearly indicates his preference for the Old Testament worldview in a speech to the villain Smallwood:

"I have read St. Paul's epistle on charity," he said, "and, after long reflection, I am persuaded that there exists a greater thing than charity—a thing of more value to the human family. Like charity, it rejoiceth not in iniquity, but it does not bear all things or believe all things, or endure all things; and, unlike charity, it seeketh its own... Do you know what thing I mean, Smallwood? I will tell you. It is Justice." (Post, *Uncle Abner Mysteries* 80)

- 10 Abner's God is therefore, as his nephew explains, "the God of the Tishbite [the prophet Elijah], who numbered his followers by the companies who drew the sword" (148), "an exacting Overlord," whose "requisitions were to be met with equanimity" and who "did not go halves with thieves and issued no letters of marque" (74). Abner himself considers that he "belong[s] to the church militant" (33) in the most literal sense of the word. When the crowd in Roy's Tavern makes fun of him for reading the Bible in public, he fights them and wins. After the fight, nephew Martin informs the reader that "Abner paid Roy eighteen silver dollars for the broken chairs and table, and he was the only man in the tavern who could ride a horse" (33), so it may be assumed that the others were too badly injured. And yet, Abner's use of violence is rare, his usual weapons being words.
- 11 However, if the aura around Abner is indeed, as Francis Nevins has stated, "thunderously prophetic" (195), he is by no means the only prophet in the country. In "Naboth's Vineyard," "Bronson, who preached Calvin, and Adam Rider, who travelled a Methodist circuit" both join Abner and Father Donovan "who had a little flock beyond the river valley and was as poor and almost as humble as his Master" (Post, *Uncle Abner Mysteries* 231) in standing up for justice. In "The God of the Hills," the prophet Adam Bird is, according to Philip Grosset, "quick to denounce the ungodly with even more zeal than Abner." Bird explicitly claims that "the Word of the Lord came to [him]" (Post, *Uncle Abner Mysteries* 259) as he cried out to God for justice for the dispossessed orphan. But the role of the prophets, Abner included, is above all to call God's and Man's attention to the injustices of this world, which they do with confidence, for they all believe in the Providence of God.
- 12 Most critics of the Uncle Abner tales state with confidence that "the central theme of all the stories is the Providence of God" (Grosset), which may be defined, according to Evangelical theologian Walter Elwell, as "the sovereign, divine superintendence of all things, guiding them toward their divinely predetermined end in a way that is consistent with their created nature, all to the glory and praise of God" (Elwell). Elwell (as would the clearly Calvinist Uncle Abner) explains: "this benevolent control of all things by God is the underlying premise of everything that is taught in the Scriptures" (Elwell). In practice this means that in Abner's Virginia: "wrong may triumph over man-made laws ... but right must win under the timeless Providence of God" (Williams 301). It also means that

all things in creation are made in such a way that justice will eventually be done and that evil will receive the punishment it deserves. This principle is illustrated in most of the stories. The profligate Blackford who “had been predestined to an evil end by every good housewife in the hills” (Post, *Uncle Abner Mysteries* 50) was knifed by the father of the woman he had seduced and abandoned. Equally, ill fortune was guaranteed to any man who tried to “gather every head of wheat” (135) and neither left anything for the gleaners nor offered the first fruits to God. This is the “hidden law” of the story which bears that name and which is explained by Abner to the avaricious Betts:

This is a mysterious world. It is hedged about and steeped in mystery. Listen to me! The Patriarchs were directed to make an offering to the Lord of a portion of the increase in their herds. Why? Because the Lord had need of sheep and heifers? Surely not, for the whole earth and its increase were His. There was some other reason, Betts. I do not understand what it was, but I do understand that no man can use the earth and keep every tithe of the increase for himself. They did not try it, but you did! (142)

- 13 A similar hidden law works so that Judge Bensen, who covets and steals lands to which he has no right, like Ahab and Jezebel in the Old Testament, is not only denounced but his blood is, like Jezebel's, licked up by dogs in what Abner sees as “the fulfilling of prophecy” (275).
- 14 A kind of dramatic irony comes into play for those who mock God's Providence, like Vespasian Flornoy. Confident that he will succeed in turning his dead brother's adopted daughter into his slave mistress, Flornoy taunts Abner, jesting that the girl had been sold into slavery in childhood “by a sardonic fate” and then saved by “the ever watchful Providence of God,” who had arranged for his brother to adopt her and provide for her (215). The girl is once again in trouble after her benefactor's death and Flornoy likens Abner to “the Providence of God” who comes to try and save her “by the interposition of the will of heaven” (217). The irony comes from the fact that Flornoy's taunting turns into reality, as Abner is enabled to understand how Flornoy killed his brother and thus to set the girl free.
- 15 Abner's complete confidence in the Providence of God in fact determines all his opinions and courses of action. The falsely accused man should not fear to come to trial, the victim of a crime should not take the law into his own hands, as God is sovereign and right will prevail. More controversially, Abner also has this attitude to the abolition of slavery—God can be trusted to sort out the problems of the South at the right time as long as men do not start taking the law into their own hands:

“The situation in this republic,” he said, “is grave, and I am full of fear. In God's hands the thing would finally adjust itself. In God's slow, devious way it would finally come out all right. But neither you, Mansfield, nor the abolitionist, will leave the thing to God. You will rush in and settle it with violence. You will find a short cut of your own through God's deliberate way, and I tremble before the horror of blood that you would plunge us into.” (203)
- 16 In addition to these theological themes, Post also creates his Old Testament atmosphere through his use of style and language. As Grant Overton has observed, “the prose style, by its brevity and by a somewhat biblical diction, does its part to induce in the reader a sense of impending justice, of a divine retribution on the evildoer” (44). There is no doubt that this form of diction is produced on purpose, not least because Post's style in his other short stories is completely different. Moreover, Post often referred to “the great example of the King James translation of the Hebrew Scriptures”—by which we understand the Old

Testament, since the New Testament was originally written in Greek—as showing “how literature can always be simple, noble and of the highest order and yet plain to everybody” (Post, “The Blight” 26). It seems clear, therefore, that Post did consciously copy this style, both in his “economical sentence structure” (Norton 119) and also in his use of a slightly archaic vocabulary. C.S. Lewis has noted that William Tyndale’s literary qualities, which later marked the King James version, were “economy ... lucidity and ... rhythmical vitality” (132), all of which are evident in the Abner corpus, as are numerous biblical expressions. For example, in this short passage from “The Angel of the Lord,” we can both note the compact phraseology and identify numerous allusions:

“Twice,” said Abner, “the Angel of the Lord stood before me and I did not know it; but the third time I knew it. It is not in the cry of the wind, nor in the voice of many waters that His presence is made known to us. That man in Israel had only the sign that the beast under him would not go on.” (Post, *Uncle Abner Mysteries* 46)

- 17 First of all, the expression “the Angel of the Lord,” rather than just “an angel” or “a messenger,” is found many times in the Old Testament. The Angel of Lord appears to Hagar, Abraham, Moses, Balaam, Gideon, Manoah and even to the whole people of Israel. Abner is specifically referring to the Balaam story (Numbers 22.22-38) and comparing himself to the prophet, referred to here as “the man in Israel,” as can be seen by his identification of “sign that the beast under him would not go on.” Balaam’s ass refused to continue along the road because the Angel of Lord was blocking it and he could not pass. In addition, Abner claims that it is not in “the cry of the wind” nor “the voice of many waters” that the Angel’s, or the Lord’s, presence can be discerned. The first reference here is to the prophet Elijah in 1 Kings 19, standing on the mountain and listening for God. Elijah discovers that God was not in the cry of the wind or the roar of the earthquake, but rather in the “still small voice” that followed them. The “voice of many waters,” on the other hand, comes from the New Testament in the Book of Revelation where God’s voice is described in this way as He announces the coming judgement (Revelation 1.15 and 14.2). Although, for these last two examples, the context in which the words appear in the Bible is completely different from that of the Abner stories, the use of such easily recognisable expressions helps create the biblical atmosphere.
- 18 The first story in *Uncle Abner: Master of Mysteries*, “The Doomdorf Mystery,” provides an excellent example of how Post works in the whole series. Although it is not the first chronologically, Post chose to place it first in his volume as it enables the reader to get to know, right from the start, not only Abner, but also other frequently recurring characters like the less astute Squire Randolph and Abner’s nephew Martin, who acts as narrator. This tale of a bootlegger’s bloody demise is also one of the best-known of the stories and one which contains most of the main themes to be found in the series. In 1924, Grant Overton considered that no one who had read it when it first came out in 1914 could possibly have forgotten it (41). Blanche Colton Williams went as far as to say that “for unity, strength and integration of detail no better story has been written” (302). The scene is set in the usual isolated area: “the government of Virginia was remote” (Post, *Uncle Abner Mysteries* 8), and the hardy inhabitants, confronted with any form of evil, “had long patience, but when that failed they went up from their fields and drove the thing before them out of the land, like a scourge of God” (8).
- 19 Into this pleasant, rural community comes the outsider, Doomdorf, who has “no Southern blood in him” (7). He plants peach trees and distils an illicit peach liquor, which has “the odours of Eden and the impulses of the devil in it” (8). Like the snake in the original Eden,

he causes chaos and destroys the harmony which previously existed, leading many into drunken and disorderly behaviour and some even to death. Bronson, a local prophet, “who preached the invective of Isaiah as though he were the mouthpiece of a militant and avenging overlord; as though the government of Virginia were the awful theocracy of the Book of Kings” (9), denounces Doomdorf and prays that God will send “fire from heaven to destroy him” (13). For Bronson, a precedent exists in the Old Testament when “Elijah killed the captains of Ahaziah and their fifties” with fire from heaven (2 Kings 1.9-15). Impatient on account of God’s apparent lack of response, Bronson decides to take action himself and “cut down [the] groves of Baal and to empty out th[e] abomination”—his use of the term “cut down [the] groves of Baal” indicating most probably that he saw himself in the role of Gideon in the Book of Judges (Judges 6.25), or even possibly that he thought he was obeying the Lord’s command to the Children of Israel as they entered the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 7.5). Bronson therefore makes his way towards Doomdorf’s property at exactly the same time as Squire Randolph, the local justice of the peace, who, accompanied by Uncle Abner, plans to take legal action against the offending Doomdorf. Bronson arrives first. Doomdorf’s slave mistress informs him that her master has not left the room where he had gone to sleep after lunch and the elderly prophet knows, by divine inspiration, that “the Lord has heard [his] prayer and visited his wrath upon Doomdorf” (Post, *Uncle Abner Mysteries* 13), and therefore that Doomdorf is dead.

- 20 When Randolph and Abner arrive and ask where Doomdorf is, Bronson replies: “Surely... he covereth his feet in the summer chamber” (9). As Joseph Bottum has pointed out: “even for the biblically literate readership of Post’s time, this is a rather cryptic way of announcing that Doomdorf is dead,” and yet it accentuates the Old Testament atmosphere of the tale. The reference is to the story of the assassination of Eglon, King of Moab, by the courageous Judge Ehud in the Book of Judges (Judges 3.24). Eglon’s servants see that the door is locked, (for Ehud had locked it before taking flight), and say to themselves “Surely he covereth his feet in the summer chamber,” a Hebrew euphemism for emptying his bladder, which would explain the locked door. However, Randolph and Abner are faced with a dilemma, as it is not against the law to pray for someone to be destroyed, neither is it illegal to stick pins into a voodoo doll of Doomdorf, as his mistress has done. The corpse is inside a locked room with no possible access through door or window, and no one seems to have killed the man. Once again, it is Abner’s belief in the Bible and in the “mysterious justice of God” (Post, *Uncle Abner Mysteries* 19) which provides the solution. Abner remembers the Bible verse: “He that killeth by the sword must be killed by the sword” (Revelation 13.10), once again from the Book of Revelation, and applies it to the mystery. Abner extracts from this verse a general principle: “It is the weapon in our own hands that finally destroys us” (Post, *Uncle Abner Mysteries* 12), claiming that, through the Providence of God, this is “a mandatory law” beside which “there is no room ... for the vicissitudes of chance or fortune” (12). Doomdorf had killed others with his peach liquor; it would therefore be the source of his own destruction. This was in fact the case, as the sun shining in through the window onto Doomdorf’s bottle of liquor focuses the light onto the trigger of Doomdorf’s own gun, which shoots him dead.
- 21 For Joseph Bottum, “The Doomdorf Mystery” is “a story about getting God wrong.” In his opinion:

Randolph disbelieves in divine influence on events, the circuit rider Bronson—“who preached the invective of Isaiah as though... the government of Virginia were the awful theocracy of the Book of Kings”—considers prayer a weapon of vengeance, and Doomdorf’s mistress pathetically attempts to conjure the divine with

sympathetic magic. Only Abner sees the right role of God's providence in human affairs.

- 22 However, this does not entirely fit the text. When Randolph exclaims: "The thing is impossible!... Men are not killed today in Virginia and by black art or a curse of God" (18), Abner replies: "By black art, no ... but by the curse of God, yes, I think they are" (18). The Providence of God is such, in Abner's world, that the prophet Bronson's prayer for justice may be heard, bringing God to intervene in the affairs of men and restore harmony to the community. The childlike mistress's final words that, with Doomdorf dead, "the good God will be everywhere now" (17), are not intended to be entirely false.

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- 23 The narrator in "The Doomdorf Mystery" declares that "it is a law of the story-teller's art that he does not tell a story. It is the listener who tells it. The story-teller does but provide him with the stimuli" (15). This concept is similar to that of Ingram's "composite myth," where the elements provided enable the reader to imagine a fictional world in which the, sometimes incredible, events of the stories have their own reality. Melville Davisson Post always insisted that "the short story is a work of art. It is not a segment of human experience. It is a finished product of a certain sort of skilled labourer" (Post, "Mystery Story" 21). This study has attempted to demonstrate how Post, using cultural and biblical allusions, which would be familiar to his readers, and writing in a language they would associate with the King James Bible, evokes the fictional world of a community in the rural west of Virginia in the middle of the 19th century, a world readers will have heard of and therefore one they can easily construct in their imaginations. In this context, Abner, the bringer of light is enabled to raise questions of truth and justice and of the very nature of God, Man and the real world. And yet, Abner is not Post. Very far from the life and experience of the rural cattle-breeder, Melville Davisson Post was a sophisticated, educated and well-travelled lawyer who, according to his biographer, "from the Christian teachings gathered in his youth ... as a young man turned to consider agnosticism and paganism, then myth and mysticism in the early years of his writing career ... and finally returned to a detached but serious consideration of Christianity" (Norton 45).
- 24 However, there is a connection between the Providence of God as Abner understood it and the epitaph Post composed for himself: "The universe toils in some tremendous purpose. Be not disheartened because the understanding of that purpose is denied you ... go forward with a high face. The mysterious energies of God labour to some divine perfection" (Norton 62). In the Uncle Abner stories, readers enter a biblical and yet American world, governed by the Providence of God, which Abner and other prophetic figures interpret for them and for the other characters. For Post, if a short story, primarily designed to entertain the reader, is sufficiently well written as to become a work of art, "it also ennoble him" (Post, "The Blight" 21). Abner's world was most certainly designed to do so.

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ABSTRACTS

La série *Uncle Abner* de Melville Davisson Post est un des recueils de nouvelles américaines les plus appréciés et ayant eu le plus de succès durant la première moitié du XX^e siècle. Cet article montre que le succès de cette série n'est pas tant dû aux intrigues policières qu'à l'atmosphère et au cadre dans lesquels les histoires se déroulent. Post présente la Virginie—encore indivisée—comme un pays semblable à la Terre Promise dans lequel Uncle Abner, tel un prophète de l'Ancien Testament, délivre des conseils d'inspiration divine à un peuple pour qui la loi est souvent une réalité distante et immatérielle. Post crée ce territoire mythique non seulement grâce à ses descriptions, situations et personnages, mais également grâce au langage qu'il utilise. Après une introduction générale de la manière dont le monde d'Abner est présenté au lecteur, la première nouvelle d'*Uncle Abner: Master of Mysteries*, intitulée « The Doomdorf Mystery » sera analysée et mettra en avant les similitudes entre l'ambiance, le discours et la vision du monde de cette nouvelle et des parties narratives des Écritures hébraïques.

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