

Gnostic point of view [Digest urth.v030.n102]

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John Bishop — 01 May 2001, 13:30

I think "Gnostic point of view" means the following:

1) The literal "gnosis": the idea that since most people are illiterate or semi-literate peasants and artificers, they can't understand abstractions and complexities, and so are told the truths of religion in the form of pretty stories about people and fish and so on. But for those who can understand, there is a real knowledge beyond the pretty fables.

2) The coding: that real knowledge is encoded in the pretty fables for any perceptive, alert reader to see, because it was put there on purpose for that reason.

3) The knowledge itself, part 1: that the God of the Testament is just another created being of great power, a demiurge, and the real creator is behind and above him; part 2: that the world of the senses is therefore not real, not the world created by God in the stories, but something less; we live in an imitation world created by an imitation God (the demiurge).

4) Body issues: that therefore the body is imperfect like the world it belongs to and to be "risen above", cue chastity, mortification and so on.

5) Moral inversion: that the demiurge is evil, or at least non-good, we therefore live in a world created by Satan.

Anyway, that's Gnosticism and some associated ideas, off the top of my head. All of the shades of Gnosticism would have point 1 and most point 2, but the others are less shared. Point 5 is the heresy of the Bogomils, for example.

Re "good" villains: the Draka in fiction and Rome in actual fact, with the Vikings coming in second place because even their romanticized image admits that they were a bunch of thieving, raping thugs.

-John Bishop

Kevin J. Maroney — 01 May 2001, 13:53 · follows John Bishop

At 01:30 PM 5/1/01 -0400, John Bishop wrote:

I think "Gnostic point of view" means the following:

Good summary, with one thing omitted: That every person contains within himself (or herself) the spark of the divine breath. The point of "the knowledge" and the self-abnegation is to allow that spark to rejoin the greater God outside the created world. Direct contact with the divine is both possible and difficult.

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