

Gnowing Gnostic Gnovels

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 11 May 2001

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Alice Turner — 11 May 2001, 22:07

A plea for help. I'm more and more thinking I might write something about Pullman's trilogy. I'm still reeling at the idea of Gnostic juveniles--I wouldn't have thought it remotely possible, and am going back to reread. (That first book is ***wonderful!***) Here's a question then: Aside from Crowley's books and Bloom's unfortunate novel (what was its title, mantis?) are there other *conscious* Gnostic novels, not counting ones like -Voyage to Arcturus- that seem instinctively to tap into an ancient view? (Actually I'd be interested in thoughts on the latter, too.) This is rather off-topic, so perhaps you might email me unless you sense a general interest.

-alga

Jesper Svedberg — 13 May 2001, 22:57 · follows Alice Turner

From: "Alice Turner" <akt at attglobal.net>

Subject: Gnowing Gnostic Gnovels

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Well, how gnostic must a boook be to be called gnostic? There are many books that are more or less inspired by gnostic concepts and there are also books that are inspired by things that are related to gnosticism, like neo-platonism or hermetic magic. Mary Gentle's _Rats & Gargoyles_ deals with many such concepts, but I'm not sure it's gnostic. The Encyclopedia of Fantasy's entry for "Gnostic Fantasy" mentions Roger Zelazny's Amber series, E. R. Eddison's Zimiamvia trilogy and C. S. Lewis's _That Hideous Strength_ and _The Last Battle_. The article also says that "Franz Kafka and Jorge Luis Borges can be interpreted as gloomy modern Gnostics for whom the fallen world is an endless labyrinth of texts and sophistries, without any exit to transcendence." Other works that might be of interest are H. P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu mythos, which may be inspired by gnosticism, various works by Robert Charles Wilson, for instance _Mysterium_, Philip Jose Farmer's World of Tiers series and also Guy Gavriel Kay's "Fionavar Tapestry" has a rather gnostic cosmology. You might want to search Google's Usenet archive (<http://groups.google.com>) for "gnostic" in the group rec.arts.sf.written to get some more suggestions.

Last year, I read an interesting book, _The Holy Grail_ by Malcolm Godwin, about the grail mythology. One of the theories Godwin had was that the gnosticism one one of the central

traditions behind the grail myth. It is a pretty good book, the scholarship isn't exactly impeccable and it is rather anti christian in tone, but it brings out tons of nifty ideas from the medieval grail romances that easily would fit into a Wolfe novel.

// Jesper Svedberg