



METADATA

Title: The Binary Opposition of Heaven and Hell

Other Titles: The Demonic in Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art and in Greek Popular Culture

Language: Greek

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ISBN: 978-618-5726-63-8

Subject: LAW AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, HUMANITIES AND ARTS

Keywords: Binary oppositions / Christian salvation / Paradise / Hell / Demon

Bibliographic Reference: Merantzas, C., Tsiodoulos, S., & Chouliaras, I. (2023). The Binary Opposition of Heaven and Hell [Undergraduate textbook]. Kallipos, Open Academic Editions. <http://dx.doi.org/10.57713/kallipos-181>

Abstract

Based on primary Byzantine sources and on an extremely large number of unpublished material with scenes of the Last Judgment, from Byzantine and post-Byzantine tradition, but also on oral testimonies of Greek popular culture, we examine the form of biopower constructed by the image of hell, where the fallen from paradise. It is no coincidence that in the scenes of torture the bodies in hell are sometimes represented by their secretions and therefore they become infectious bodies. In this context the nature of hell is referred as heterotopic that delimits the environment of otherness which is characterized from uncertainty and runs the risk of deflowerment Hell is the place of the demonic, which represents the discharge of the thymic, the animality of reproduction and unrhythmic sexuality, the monstrous and inhuman nature, evident

in the fantasy representation of the black-faced and winged monster with hybrid features, familiar in popular culture. The latter expresses the entanglement of sexuality and genetic abnormality which is anything but distanced from animal primogeniture. On the other hand, the salvation of heaven is indicated, in contrast to the destruction of hell, by the construction of a familiar and an alien body, an able-bodied body and a body that has lost its integrity and is miasmatic, to which are emphatically subscribed the co-demonstrations of rape practices (loss of purity). Consequently, the environment of hell, in contrast to that of heaven, makes clear the distinction between embodied and disembodied states, while heaven, for the sake of celibacy, is placed outside the narrow limits of demographic (reproductive) anguish.

