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The Gnostic and the apocalyptic ways of thinking may be said to be "incommensurable"—witness the incommensurability between John's eschatology and Paul's. And yet each of them, in its way, is able to bring to expression (more or less adequately) the same self-understanding/ understanding of existence/ ultimate reality in its meaning for us. In other words, as much as they may seem to be about different things, when I apply "my existential equivalent of a pragmatist criterion of meaning—according to which different formulations that make no difference in how one must understand oneself [in order] to appropriate them are insofar only verbally [not really] different," I incline to think not only that they are different ways of thinking and speaking about the same thing, but that they are—again, in their different ways, thinking and saying the same thing about that same thing.

In any case, the real, as distinct from merely verbal, differences between them, such as they may be, are exceedingly subtle and hard to pin down. If their purpose is to express and call for a certain self-understanding, I should say unhesitatingly that the self-understanding they call for is not different but the same.

27 April 2009