

If God became flesh, she ceased to be God

This is the essential truth of Pandeism. Instead of the simplistic idea of God becoming the flesh of an individual human being, Pandeism postulates that God became the “flesh” of the entire visible Universe at the time of the Big Bang.

The “flesh” has redolent connotations, and the more juicy aspects of it are roundly condemned by theologians. Mary-Jane Rubenstein writes in her book *Pantheologies: Gods, Worlds, Monsters*:

“As the ongoing fascination with Giordano Bruno reveals, however, and as Laurel Schneider has argued, the reason the Christian tradition has needed so energetically to protect its theological and ecclesiastical boundaries is that incarnation cannot be so tidily contained within a single man living for thirty years in occupied Palestine. “The coming to flesh completely disrupts the smooth otherness of the divine,” Schneider writes; “its separateness from the changeable stuff of earth, its abhorrence of rot, its innocence of death, and its ignorance of life or desire.” Moving even beyond Emerson’s anthropotheism, Schneider breaks divinity into the tangled spheres of the non- and more-than-human by virtue of the inherent porosity of flesh. Flesh, she argues, is inherently “promiscuous,” exhibiting an “indiscriminate interconnection with everything.” For this reason, the word-become-flesh refuses to stay still, tumbling promiscuously into the multiple “bodies,” queer “mixtures,” and intraspecies worlds from which orthodoxy tries so fiercely to guard it. In other words, the incarnation already performs the monstrous confluences of which the Christian accuses the pantheist, introducing a dark, feminized, sexualized, and changeable materiality into the very substance of God.

And although orthodoxy tries to keep such concatenations contained, Donna Haraway reminds us that the container himself is a monstrous, anti-Oedipal half-breed: "a mother's son, without a father, yet the Son of Man claiming the Father," who shows up amid sheep and goats; is kin to the colonized; violates the principle of non-contradiction; and keeps company with sex workers, the poor, and disabled. A leaky container indeed, the figure of Jesus "threatens to spoil the story, despite or because of his odd son-ship and odder kingship, because of his disguises and form-changing habits." For this reason, "the story has constantly to be preserved from heresy, to be kept forcibly in the patriarchal tradition of Christian civilization." But as this constant effort attests, incarnation keeps slipping through every effort to wall it in—perhaps most strikingly in the work of the not-executed Cardinal of Cusa. As Catherine Keller has shown, Cusa breaks the *imago dei* out of its Christic and even human confines, opening it out to the universe itself so that "every creature is, as it were, a finite infinity or created God." The result, then, is not the incarnation of God in a single body at a single point in spacetime, but rather "a pan-carnation of God equally distributed." For Cusa, God shows up just as fully in a mustard seed as in a man as in anything we might call a world.

Jean-Luc Nancy has written that atheism is the logical consequence of monotheism. Monotheism is the high horse on which Richard Dawkins rides. Nobody would be foolish enough to write a book trying to prove that the Hindu god Ganesh "does not exist". It is obvious to any intelligent person that the fascinating stories about Ganesh (Ganesa) are an important part of Indian mythology.

"Many of Ganesa's ritual preferences are explained in terms of his need to be cooled; *durva* grass, for example, is said to be a very cooling substance. Wendy O'Flaherty has discussed at length the potential for equivalence of erotic and ascetic

heat. Ganesa's demonic heat, acquired through the displaced sexual actions of swallowing or the exchange of fluids, becomes ascetic tapas through his brahmacarya status. The god is daubed in the vermilion of his own sakti; contained and containing both male and female, he renders circular the distinction between erotic and ascetic."

(Ganesh Studies of an Asian God, Robert L. Brown, Editor)