

Nietzsche's pantheism

It is not generally realized that Nietzsche's philosophy had a marked leaning towards pantheism. That this is so is made clear in the following quotes from T.K.Seung's book Nietzsche's Epic of the Soul: Thus Spoke Zarathustra:

"Robert Gooding-Williams says that his (Zarathustra's) soul is envisioned as "an omnipresent, pantheistic deity" (Zarathustra's Dionysian Modernism, p.295). In fact, Zarathustra's description of his soul in terms of cosmic attributes comes right out of Spinoza's pantheism. In his theology, the mind of God is not separate from the individual minds. The thought of God is realized in the ideas of countless individual minds. The totality of these ideas constitutes a system of ideas, the infinite idea of God, whose scope is coextensive with the world."

– from "Nietzsche's Epic of the Soul: Thus Spoke Zarathustra"

"The notion of Nature as God comes from Spinoza's pantheism, which became influential in Europe of the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. With the emergence of scientific naturalism, it became exceedingly difficult to hold on to the traditional theism, which postulates God as totally transcending the natural world. Kant was the last great German philosopher to hold on to the theistic conception of God. But most post-Kantians such as Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and Schopenhauer took it almost as their mission to convert Kant's theism to pantheism and found their inspiration in Spinoza's naturalism. In Fichte's philosophy, God is identified with the universe: the latter is nothing but the material for the realization of the former. In Schelling's philosophy, all distinctions disappear in the ultimate Nature, the mother of all things, even the distinction between God and the world. In Hegel's view, this is too crude a way to grasp the ultimate reality"

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“In Schelling’s philosophy, all distinctions disappear in the ultimate Nature, the mother of all things, even the distinction between God and the world. In Hegel’s view, this is too crude a way to grasp the ultimate reality (“All cows are black at night”). His philosophy of the Absolute Spirit is a Neoplatonic version of pantheism, which purports to display the logical emanation of all distinctions from the ultimate reality. Although the Absolute Spirit is spiritual rather than material, it is not a transcendent deity. Schopenhauer’s philosophy of the world as the cosmic will is his Hindu version of pantheism. Zarathustra’s higher men are now treading this long trail of pantheistic naturalism to institute their religion of Dionysian pantheism. In the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, Spinoza’s pantheism became a ground swell not only for philosophy but also for literature. The Romantic poetry of this period revolted against the separation of God from Nature. The German leader of this Romantic revolt was Friedrich von Schlegel, who found his inspiration in Spinoza’s identification of Nature with God. He countered the prevalent charge of atheism against Spinoza by praising the sage as “the God-intoxicated philosopher.” Goethe also enthusiastically accepted Spinoza’s concept of Nature as the infinite divine substance and praised

the infinite creativity of Nature. Hölderlin believed in the oneness of God and Nature. Novalis's pantheism led to his poetry of mysticism. In England, Coleridge became a keen student of German pantheism and mysticism. Tennyson's conception of a Great Soul is pantheistic; it fuses God and Nature into One. Wordsworth's conception of God and Nature is no different."

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