

In more recent times the healing activities of the shamans have been more and more predominant, the shaman personnel being divided into real shamans (*bögeludaghan*) and non-shamanic healers and singers. The method of healing employed tends toward a kind of group therapeutic treatment of psychic illness (*andai*), which consists of shamans, helpers, and a crowd of laymen singing and arguing with the patient as a means of restoring him to his normal psychic state. In eastern Mongolia this singing therapy has been practiced since at least the mid-nineteenth century.

[See also Buddhism, article on Buddhism in Mongolia; Shamanism, article on Siberian and Inner Asian Shamanism; Tengri; Ongon; Geser; Eriik; Ülgen; and the biography of Chinggis Khan.]

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MONISM is a term applied to a group of thinkers or to philosophical systems that emphasize the oneness or unity of reality. Thinkers ordinarily regarded as monists do not themselves use this label, and do not refer to

an agreed-upon monistic model. Unlike philosophical systems such as Platonism or Taoism, however, examples of monism cannot be identified by means of an accepted source or criterion. Moreover, in contrast to philosophical schools of thought such as pragmatism or existentialism, monism lacks an identifiable point of origin and a historical framework. In this respect, monism is a conceptual label, like idealism, realism, or determinism. It might be more appropriate to use only the adjectival form: thus, rather than regard a philosophical system as an example of monism, we should understand that, in a variety of ways, philosophical and religious systems are more or less monistic. In view of the arguable character of monism, perhaps the most useful task of the present essay would be to establish one or more definite examples of a monistic system and to abstract from such examples the specific features that render them monistic.

Philosophies frequently regarded as monistic are found in both Asian and Western traditions and are rather evenly distributed among ancient, modern, and contemporary systems. Many philosophical systems ordinarily regarded as monistic are influenced by mystical experience. Even though there are monistic systems that are not mystical, as well as mystical systems that are nonmonistic, there is a close affinity between monistic and mystical systems of thought. Most of the systems referred to in this article exhibit a mystical as much as a monistic emphasis. The decided influence of mysticism on monistic systems, as well as the considerable frequency with which mystical experience is expressed in a monistic system, would seem to be due to the unitive quality of the mystical experience itself. The great mystics, especially those of the Indian and Christian traditions, emphasize that their blissful experience of oneness with or in the divine renders all particulars insignificant, and in some cases, relatively unreal and illusory. This tendency of monistic thinking to favor unity and oneness at the expense of the particular has confined monism per se to a minority position in philosophy and religion, both Asian and Western. Even in India, ordinarily regarded as uniformly monistic in philosophic and religious outlook, the monistic system of Śaṅkara (traditional dates 788-820) is but one of several competing interpretations of the Hindu scriptures. Similarly, in the Western tradition, philosophical thinkers such as Plotinus (204-270) and Spinoza (1632-1677), and others who espouse an unabashed monism, have proven unable to gain a dominant position in the tradition. Despite significant differences, Śaṅkara, Plotinus, and Spinoza individually and collectively show the essential strength as well as the typical weaknesses of monism as a philosophical position.

Asian Traditions. Perhaps of all claimants to the label "monist," the paradigmatic system is that of the ninth-century mystic philosopher Śaṅkara, who stands in the Indian tradition as the foremost interpreter of the ancient scriptures and the creator of an original philosophy of *brahman*, the Absolute, "one without a second." Śaṅkara's *advaita* (nondual) system is one of several alternatives within Vedānta, the religious-philosophical tradition consisting in systematic exposition and speculation based on the Vedas (c. 800–400 BCE) and the Upaniṣads (c. 800–400 BCE), mystical and quasi-philosophical texts in the Sanskrit of the *ṛṣis* (seers) of ancient India.

The dialectic between Śaṅkara and his competitors, both Vedāntins and proponents of other Indian philosophical schools, has helped to establish Śaṅkara's system as a model of monistic thinking. Because his sources are evident, because his arguments on behalf of an absolute oneness of reality are systematic, ingenious, and influential, and because his interpreters and opponents have shown his position to be committed to an unambiguous epistemological and metaphysical monism, Śaṅkara serves, in Wittgenstein's terminology, as a "home base" for the "family resemblances" that monistic systems would seem to share. Whatever else monistic systems have in common, they all seem committed to a conception of reality that resembles Śaṅkara's idea of *brahman* in its oneness and in its contrast to the unreal or less real particulars of the spatial and temporal world, all of which are, according to Śaṅkara, ordinarily and erroneously experienced as separate from *brahman*.

Of the thirteen Upaniṣads that have survived and have been commented upon by sages such as Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, and Madhva, some tend toward theism, but most contain passages that have placed a definite monistic stamp on the Indian philosophical tradition. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and *Chāndogya* Upaniṣads offer some of the strongest texts for the monistic position:

Brahman indeed was this in the beginning. It knew itself only as "I am Brahman." Therefore it became all. Whoever among the gods became awakened to this, he, indeed, became that. . . . Whoever knows thus, "I am Brahman," becomes this all. (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.4.10)

Verily, this whole world is Brahman, from which he comes forth, without which he will be dissolved and in which he breathes. (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 14.1.1)

According to Śaṅkara, the concept of *brahman* in the Upaniṣads teaches that all particulars of the spatial or temporal world—all objects, thoughts, spirits, and gods (since gods are temporal, they are less than *brahman*)—are real only with respect to, only by virtue of being one

with, *brahman*. Particulars that appear real to the observer independent of *brahman* do so because of an all-pervasive ignorance (*avidyā*). Although the universal self and God (in whatever form, by whatever name) is *brahman*, the ignorant perceiver, or believer, habitually regards these and lesser entities, or appearances, as independent realities.

Śaṅkara follows the Upaniṣads in distinguishing two aspects of *brahman*, namely, *nirguṇa* (indeterminate) and *saguṇa* (determinate), and identifies Īśvara (God) as the personification of *saguṇa brahman*. In itself, (*nirguṇa*) *brahman* is beyond qualities—not only beyond description, but beyond any specificity, including the temporal nature of God. *Saguṇa brahman*, which includes everything that is not *brahman* per se—from the most ephemeral entity or musing to the most perfect concept of God—issues from *brahman*, has its reality by virtue of *brahman*, and in the end is gathered into *brahman*. Or rather, *saguṇa brahman* in all of its multiplicity is finally—or once again—realized as the one indivisible (*nirguṇa*) *brahman*, which it never ceased to be even though it most assuredly appeared to be separate from (*nirguṇa*) *brahman*. That is, *saguṇa brahman* appeared real as *saguṇa* (having qualities, particularized, pluralized) even while its true identity as *nirguṇa brahman* ("one without a second") was hidden not only from human consciousness but, presumably, even from higher beings and perhaps from God as well. Obviously, the terrible burden (or flaw) of a system that is so strongly on the side of oneness is to establish a degree of reality for particulars, which range from fleeting moments to God the creator of the universe.

The most effective alternative interpretation to Śaṅkara was provided by the South Indian philosopher-saint Rāmānuja (c. 1017–1137), who argued that the level below *brahman* must also be counted as real. Rāmānuja's position is within Vedānta, but it is closer to traditional theism as developed in the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions. Rāmānuja's criticism of Śaṅkara's *advaitist* (nondual) conception of *brahman*, however, does not lead him to deny either the *nirguṇa brahman* or Śaṅkara's contention that the reality of *saguṇa brahman* is entirely dependent on *nirguṇa brahman*. In this respect, Rāmānuja's position is closer to that of a theist who affirms, in addition to a God involved in the world, a conception of God or godhead that is beyond and ultimately unaffected by the temporal experiences of God and humanity.

The twentieth-century philosopher-statesman Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888–1975) tried to combine the merits of Śaṅkara's absolute nondualism and Rāmānuja's qualified nondualism by attempting to reconcile, in a polar relationship, the two natures of *brahman*—ab-

solutely one and beyond, on the one side, and pluralistic and particular on the other. It must be admitted that Radhakrishnan's view is very close to that of Śaṅkara except that he forcefully affirms the reality of the world. As he notes in his semiautobiographical essay *The Religion of the Spirit and the World's Need: Fragments of a Confession* (1952), his intent is to "save the world and give it a real meaning"; it is *brahman* that gives the world its true meaning, but only if *brahman* is understood in a positive relation to the world.

Radhakrishnan's metaphysics shows the influence of both Plotinus's description of the One/Intellect (*nous*)/Soul/World and Whitehead's conception of the divine in process:

[The *Taittiriya Upaniṣad*] affirms that Brahman on which all else depends, to which all existences aspire, Brahman which is sufficient to itself, aspiring to no other, without any need, is the source of all other beings, the intellectual principle, the perceiving mind, life and body. It is the principle which unifies the world of the physicist, the biologist, the psychologist, the logician, the moralist and the artist.

(Radhakrishnan, 1953, p. 59)

We have (1) the Absolute, (2) God as Creative power, (3) God immanent in this world. These are not to be regarded as separate entities. They are arranged in this order because there is a logical priority. The Absolute must be there with all its possibilities before the Divine Creativity can choose one. The divine choice must be there before there can be the Divine immanent in this world. This is a logical succession and not a temporal one. The world-spirit must be there before there can be the world. We thus get the four poises or statuses of reality, (1) the Absolute, Brahman, (2) the Creative Spirit, *Īśvara*, (3) the World-Spirit, *Hiranya-garbha*, and (4) the World. This is the way in which the Hindu thinkers interpret the integral nature of the Supreme Reality. (ibid., p. 65)

In his attempt to articulate the integral nature of the Supreme Reality, Radhakrishnan argues that *brahman* includes *Īśvara*, and *Īśvara* is the concrete manifestation of *brahman*: "There is nothing else than the Absolute which is the presupposition of all else. The central mystery is that of Being itself. We should not think that emphasis on Being overlooks the fact of Becoming" (intro. *The Brahma Sutra*, New York, 1960, p. 119). This fact of becoming is none other than *saguṇa brahman* or *Īśvara*: "The Absolute is a living reality with a creative urge. When this aspect is stressed, the Absolute becomes a Personal God, *Īśvara*" (ibid., p. 126). *Īśvara* is not something other than or in addition to *brahman*; *Īśvara* is *brahman* itself: "The creative thought 'let me be many' belongs to Brahman. It is not simply imagined in him. The energy that manifests itself in Brahman is one with and different from Brahman" (ibid., p. 142).

Despite Radhakrishnan's determination to reconcile Śaṅkara's conception of the *brahman* with the reality and value of the world, he nevertheless admits, with the Upanisads and Śaṅkara, that the absolute oneness of (*nirguṇa*) *brahman* is unaffected by God and creation:

So far as the Absolute is concerned, the creation of the world makes no difference to it. It cannot add anything to or take anything from the Absolute. All the sources of its being are found within itself. The world of change does not disturb the perfection of the Absolute.

(Radhakrishnan, in Muirhead, 1958, p. 502)

It is possible to find in some of the Buddhist schools metaphysical and epistemological teachings that seem to be examples of monism, though if one keeps in mind the aim of all Buddhist teaching—to attain enlightenment, *nirvāṇa* (eternal peace), or Buddhahood—such teachings will be seen to be only incidentally and superficially monistic. The concept of *śūnya* or *śūnyatā* as developed by Nāgārjuna (second or third century BCE) offers a vivid example of the way in which Buddhist teaching can be, though perhaps should not be, interpreted monistically. Zen Buddhism (or, in Chinese, Ch'an Buddhism) offers a second, equally ambiguous example of apparent monism. In both cases, as in the Buddhist tradition generally—to the extent that any generalization can be made accurately for the full variety of Buddhist teachings—the monism affirmed is intended primarily as a mere philosophical or conceptual stage on the way to an enlightenment experience concerning which no statements can be stable or adequate. According to Nāgārjuna, absolute reality can be positively experienced but only negatively expressed: "There is no death, no birth, no destruction, no persistence, no oneness, no manyness, no coming, no departing" (*Madhyamakakārikā* 1).

D. T. Suzuki (1870–1966), the prolific interpreter of Mahāyāna Buddhism and exponent of Zen Buddhism in the West, offers a more explicit account of the paradoxical character of the extent to which Zen may—and may not—be regarded as monistic:

We may say that Christianity is monotheistic, and the Vedānta [the dominant school of Indian philosophy, based on the Upanisads] pantheistic; but we cannot make a similar assertion about Zen. Zen is neither monotheistic nor pantheistic; Zen defies all such designations. Hence there is no object upon which to fix the thought. Zen is a wafting cloud in the sky. No screw fastens it, no string holds it; it moves as it lists. *No amount of meditation will keep Zen in one place.* Meditation is not Zen. Neither pantheism nor monotheism provides Zen with its subjects of concentration. . . . Zen wants to have one's mind free and unobstructed; even the idea of oneness or allness is a stumbling block and a stran-

gling snare which threatens the original freedom of the spirit. (Suzuki, 1974, p. 40)

The Mādhyamika (Middle Way) of Nāgārjuna and Zen Buddhism share with monistic philosophies a systematic and highly effective assault on the apparent self-sufficiency and presumed reality of all particulars, but as expressions of Buddhist spiritual wisdom, they move beyond the monistic consequence of this assault to the silence of enlightenment.

In the Chinese tradition, particularly in the writings of Lao-tzu (traditionally, sixth century BCE?) and Chuang-tzu (latter fourth to early third century BCE), the illusive but uniquely formative concept of the Tao performs a function similar to the concept of *śūnyatā* in Mādhyamika Buddhism. According to the *Tao-te ching* (*The Way and Its Power*), the poetic-philosophical text attributed to Lao-tzu but in actuality compiled by his followers in approximately the early fourth century BCE, the Tao is the unity and the creative principle underlying all particulars. In contrast to an absolute monism such as defended by Śaṅkara, the Taoism of Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu does not threaten, and in fact celebrates, the reality and value of particulars. Space and time, persons and nature, life and death, and all shades of being and becoming arise in and return to the Tao. But the Tao is not a principle or concept to be thought; it is a mysterious, ineffable reality to be experienced—and to the extent experienced, expressed only indirectly and inadequately. The Tao cannot be grasped or defined, but it can be received and hinted at by artful, seemingly effortless, action. The Tao is above concepts, above either being or nonbeing, and yet it runs through all realities named by concepts. It is the One behind the many—but not the One that can be named, thought, or delineated. Like the butterfly, which ceases to be itself when caught and mounted, human attempts to catch the Tao can catch expressions of the Tao, but not the Tao itself.

Western Tradition. There are perhaps a dozen thinkers spread throughout the history of Western thought who would likely be included in any survey of monistic systems. Among the ancient Greeks, probable candidates include Parmenides for his enigmatic but highly influential definition of reality as One. If monism were to be regarded as a theory of one kind of reality (as distinct from the more usual conception of monism as defining reality as singular), Democritus would be included for his definition of reality as consisting in atoms. Plotinus, the Neoplatonic mystic of the third century, articulated a philosophy of the One that stands as an obvious model of monistic thinking in the history of Western philosophy. The Christian period is stead-

fastly theistic—that is, maintaining a real separation between creator and creation—with the notable exceptions of the ninth-century Irish theologian John Scottus Eriugena and the fourteenth-century Rhineland mystic Meister Eckhart.

In Judaic and Muslim thought, orthodox theism and its attendant resistance to monism proved effective except for Ibn 'Arabī, the thirteenth-century Spanish Ṣūfī Muslim, who taught that God, or reality, is absolutely singular, and that the human soul is indistinguishable from God. It is important for anyone unfamiliar with Islamic thought to understand that the Muslim thinkers of the Middle Ages were using the same philosophical sources—primarily Plato and the Neoplatonists—as were medieval Jewish and Christian thinkers. Obviously, thinkers in each of these three religious and cultural traditions also drew from—and in turn influenced—their respective religious traditions. In the case of Ibn 'Arabī, his Muslim experience took the form of mysticism known as Ṣūfism. As R. C. Zaehner notes: "The introduction of Neoplatonic ideas into Sufism from philosophy was, of course, made much of by Ibn al 'Arabī who systematized them into something very like Śaṅkara's version of the Vedānta" (*Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, New York, 1969, p. 174). Although Ibn 'Arabī's system is generally regarded as heretical by orthodox Muslims, his writings—perhaps because of his vast erudition and manifest saintliness—were influential on subsequent Muslim and Christian thinkers. [See *Images*, article on The Imaginal.]

In the modern period the two most important monistic philosophers have been the seventeenth-century Sephardic Jew Barukh Spinoza, who defines reality as one substance, calling it either God or Nature, and the nineteenth-century German idealist G. W. F. Hegel, whose concept of the Absolute continues to hold its place in the modern West as the dominant monistic philosophical system. Within the present century there are at least four philosophers, all American or British, who have extended the Hegelian, or absolute idealist, variety of monistic philosophy: Josiah Royce and F. H. Bradley, who wrote at the turn of the century, and W. T. Stace and J. N. Findlay, both Hegel scholars and metaphysicians who wrote at midcentury.

Virtually all of these philosophers, religious thinkers, and mystics, as well as others who could be added to the list, can be understood as a variation or subset of one of the following five influential figures: Plotinus, Eriugena, Eckhart, Spinoza, and Hegel.

Plotinus (c. 205–270), the last great thinker of antiquity, combined a profound knowledge of Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics with an equally profound mystical experience of absolute oneness. Although Plotinus thought

that he was faithfully interpreting the philosophy of Plato, he is rightly credited with founding a new school of philosophy, that is, Neoplatonism. Moreover, although Plotinus's writings, and therefore the tenets of Neoplatonism of which he was the first and greatest exponent, were neither influenced by Christian teachings nor read by medieval Christian theologians, nevertheless they exercised a significant influence on Christian thinking indirectly through Augustine (354–430) and Dionysius the Areopagite (fl. c. 500). By the time Plotinus's *Enneads* were rediscovered by Marsilio Ficino, the fifteenth-century head of the Platonic Academy of Florence, Meister Eckhart (1260–1327?) had articulated a novel monistic system, fashioned equally by Neoplatonism and by his spiritual life and thought as a German Dominican monk. The Neoplatonic—or Plotinian—cast of Eckhart's mystical monism accounts for its distinctiveness and for his difficulties with defenders of orthodox Christian theism. A close look at Plotinus's idea of the One will show both its affinities and its ultimate incompatibility with Christian doctrine; not surprisingly, Eckhart's use of Neoplatonic monism led his writings to be censored as heretical.

Plotinus's concept of the One is comparable to, and in part derived from, the absolute One of Parmenides, the Good of Plato's *Republic*, Aristotle's First Cause, and the immanent God of the Stoics. In affirming the absoluteness and transcendence of the One, however, Plotinus is speaking from a compelling mystical experience of Unity. Throughout the *Enneads*, which Plotinus's student Porphyry arranged in six sets of nine treatises each (Gr., *ennea*, "nine"), all of his references to the One, particularly those in the final tractate (6.9), "On the Good, or the One," emphasize that the One cannot be described or characterized, but can only be pointed to as the ineffable source and goal of mystical experience. In terms comparable to the Upaniṣadic concept of *brahman*—though with a greater affirmation of the value and beauty of the individual soul and the physical world—Plotinus conceives of the One as the absolute unity and harmony underlying all particularity and all polarities. The One is the source of the other two principles, or levels, of reality, both of which exist within the One and share completely in its divinity. But the One is not less absolute for their existence. Since the second and third principles, Mind or Intellect (*nous*) and Soul, are also real (though not absolute in their own right), it is not easy, as Plotinus admits, to state in what the One, or the Unity, consists. Unity can be experienced, but not described. Plotinus tells us:

We are in search of unity; we are to come to know the principle of all, the Good and First; therefore we may not stand

away from the realm of Firsts and lie prostrate among the lasts: we must strike for those Firsts, rising from things of sense which are the lasts. Cleared of all evil in our intention towards The Good, we must ascend to the Principle within ourselves; from many, we must become one; only so do we attain to knowledge of that which is Principle and Unity. . . .

The Unity, then, is not Intellectual-Principle but something higher still: Intellectual-Principle is still a being but that First is no being but precedent to all Being: it cannot be a being, for a being has what we may call the shape of its reality but The Unity is without shape, even shape Intellectual. (*Enneads* 6.9.3)

In this tractate, Plotinus continues with a series of negative definitions: the One is not merely the Good, nor merely Mind, nor Soul, but is the indivisible source and perfect goal of all of these limited realities. While all characterizations of the One must be negative, experience of the One cannot but be overwhelmingly positive. This experience is more than an intuition or a vision; it is "a unity apprehended":

The man formed by this mingling with the Supreme must—if he only remember—carry its image impressed upon him: he is become the Unity, nothing within him or without inducing any diversity; no movement now, no passion, no out-looking desire, once this ascent is achieved; reasoning is in abeyance and all Intellection and even, to dare the word, the very self: caught away, filled with God, he has in perfect stillness attained isolation; all the being calmed, he turns neither to this side nor to that, not even inwards to himself; utterly resting he has become very rest. (*ibid.*, 6.9.11)

As this passage shows, it is difficult to separate the mystical from the philosophical assertions in Plotinus's philosophy, and in this respect, although he was not a Christian, Plotinus stands at the head of a line of Christian mystical philosopher-theologians for whom the concept of God, or the Absolute, is equally the object of mystical experience and philosophical reflection. [See Neoplatonism.]

In his work *On the Division of Nature*, for example, the Irish theologian John Scottus Eriugena (810–877) affirmed and extended several Plotinian tenets: the absolute ineffability of God—a concept expressed in Christian theological language almost identical to descriptions of the One of Plotinus; a dual process of emanation from, and return to, the One of lower stages of reality—stages that also resemble those articulated in the *Enneads*. At the same time, Eriugena also used Christian ideas as developed by Dionysius the Areopagite and Gregory of Nyssa, both of whose works he translated from Greek to Latin. For Eriugena as for Plotinus, God or the One is not only beyond human

thought, but equally beyond his own thought: God is incomprehensible even to himself because in his oneness he does not think at all. In fact, the reason for creation, which is accomplished through his ideas (*noūs* in Plotinus's system, the divine attributes in Eriugena's), is to manifest the otherwise absolute and eternally hidden nature of God. Thus, the God of Eriugena is virtually identical to the One of Plotinus in that he (or it, in view of its absolute and transpersonal nature) is the source of being and knowledge but absolutely transcends both.

Meister Eckhart (1260–1327?) drew from Eriugena, and through him from Plotinus and early Neoplatonic Christian thinkers. He developed a concept of the Absolute, or God, that he called godhead, from the two points of view developed by Plotinus and Eriugena and comparable to the unqualified (*nirguṇa*) and qualified (*saguṇa*) dual conception of *brahman* in Advaita Vedānta. According to Eckhart, God is Being per se, or all that is, but is also inexplicably above and beyond Being, totally other and absolutely one. Existence or Being can be seen from two points of view, as the mysterious source of being and as being (or creation) itself, but ultimately there is only one existence. This affirmation of absolute unity of being, on the one hand, and on the other, the idea that all beings, including the human soul, are none other than God or Being from the perspective of creation, shows why Eckhart's teaching was regarded as too monist not to be at odds with orthodox Christianity. Eckhart's conception of the unity of God follows Eriugena's negative characterization of God and resembles Nāgārjuna's conception of the ultimate as *śūnyatā*, emptiness or nonbeing. Clearly, there is a point in the monist position at which the absolute fullness and the absolute emptiness of being appear to be indistinguishable—they are equally true and equally inadequate ways of expressing the absolute otherness of the One, the ultimate ineffable source of all particularity.

The same need to see the Absolute from two perspectives—as it is in itself and as it is from the perspective of creation—recurs in the metaphysical system of Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677), according to which the Absolute is referred to as Substance, God, or Nature. These three terms are declared to be perfectly synonymous, infinite, and absolutely necessary: "God, or substance, consisting of infinite attributes, of which each expresses eternal and infinite essentiality, necessarily exists" (Proposition 11). God (or Substance or Nature) manifests itself through an infinity of attributes, two of which, thought and extension (or ideas and bodies), are intelligible to man and constitutive of his experience. These two attributes, which are capable of infinite com-

binations, are related to each other (in contradistinction to Descartes's dualism of mind and body) through their common source in the one divine Substance. Spinoza's solution to the Cartesian dualism, however, generates the same problem that attends all monistic systems—the difficulty in establishing the reality of particulars, which Spinoza refers to as modes, within the one indivisible Substance. Although Spinoza may be thought to have generated his metaphysics from a religious or mystical impulse, his conception of the divine as impersonal and absolutely necessary was clearly not influenced (except perhaps negatively) by either Jewish or Christian theological orthodoxy.

In conceiving of the world as God's manifestation of himself within his inviolable unity, Spinoza is in general agreement with other absolute monists like Advaita Vedānta (of the Upaniṣads and Śaṅkara), Plotinus, Eriugena, and Eckhart, but he is unique in attributing absolute determinism to the divine substance. On this point Spinoza is rigorously consistent even if his terminology gives the impression of inconsistency or paradox: he refers to the necessity of the divine Substance as both freedom and determinism because God is free to do what is required by his nature. God is free because of what he is—or because of the necessity which is the essential character of his existence. Since only God must be, and must be what He is, only God is free. Further, all of God's attributes and modes are what they are necessarily as part of God's essence. Without violating its unity and necessity, one can conceive of God, or Nature in polar terms, as the creator, or *natura naturans* ("Nature naturing"), and as creation, *natura naturata* ("Nature natured"), which consists in the infinite combinations of attributes and modes of the one divine Substance, God, or Nature. Within this Substance, all things that exist do so, and do so in the way that they do, because they are not other than God, and God's nature is absolutely necessary.

In the conclusion of *Ethics* Spinoza asserts that this Substance—which, it must be remembered, is the one and only reality regardless of how plural and diverse it appears to a human perspective—can be known by the third or highest form of knowledge, the intellectual love of God. This love, which is knowledge of a particular in relation to its divine cause (or divine nature), is in effect a direct knowledge of God, or Nature, in its infinity, eternity, and necessity. In this discussion of the intellectual love of God, which occurs in part 5 of *Ethics*, "Of Human Freedom," Spinoza's monistic conception of Substance (God or Nature) reveals a reverence and a personal experiential depth that would appear to be mystical even if not religious in the usual sense. While the overall force of *Ethics* would seem to represent an

atheistic monism that allows no room for the God of Western religion, the profoundly mystical love of divine necessity, which is the goal and perhaps the source of Spinoza's entire system, would seem to justify Novalis's often-quoted reference to him as "a God-intoxicated man." W. T. Stace holds to both of these interpretations and suggests that Spinoza "exhibited in himself the living paradox of being a God-intoxicated atheist" (*Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 217).

In that his philosophy of the absolute Spirit is the result of philosophical reflection rather than the product of his own mystical experience, G. W. F. Hegel is closer to Spinoza than to Plotinus or Eckhart. Hegel would also seem to resemble Spinoza in that his philosophy of the Absolute is an expression, however partial and indirect, of the experience and understanding of absolute Unity for which the great mystics, of both Asia and the West, are the primary source. In explaining the relation between mysticism and philosophy in Hegel, Frederick Copleston wisely remarks that Hegel was not a mystic and did not look to mysticism to solve the problems of philosophy, but rather "he saw in mysticism the intuitive grasp of a truth which it was the business of philosophy to understand and exhibit in a systematic manner" (*Religion and the One*, p. 135).

While Hegel's conception of the Absolute combines elements of many predecessors, including Plotinus, Eriugena, Eckhart, and Spinoza, in his original synthesis he introduces novel conceptions so as to create a uniquely profound and modern monistic philosophy. In terms similar to the conception of God in Eriugena or Eckhart, Hegel conceives of the absolute Spirit as revealing itself through spatial and temporal creation. For Hegel, however, the Absolute is neither empty nor so totally transcendent as to be characterized as nonbeing. Rather, the absolute Spirit of Hegel more closely resembles Spinoza's conception of Substance in that it is intelligible to human consciousness. In fact, it is through human rationality that the Absolute has its being: the Absolute exists through its self-knowing, which is none other than its being known through speculative philosophy. In this respect, Hegel's conception of absolute Spirit may be said to exhibit a radical temporality characteristic of process philosophy and other modern philosophical systems influenced by the theory of evolution. Spirit itself evolves through human consciousness, without which it cannot be said to be intelligible—or real, which comes to the same, according to Hegel's identification of the rational and the real.

Is Hegel's system, then, monistic? In what does his principle of unity, or oneness, consist? Since Hegel's system precludes univocal summations, two responses may fittingly be offered: in that the absolute Idea is sin-

gle, rational, and the sole reality, Hegel's system clearly resembles monistic systems such as those of Plotinus, Eriugena, Eckhart, and Spinoza; since, however, the absolute Idea cannot be thought to exist in its own right as a full or finished reality separable from the process of human consciousness by which it knows itself, there is a sense in which the One in question, the absolute Idea, is equally plural and temporal. Absolute Spirit is there in the beginning, and without it, there would be no beginning—but it is equally the case that it comes to be, or comes into being, by being thought—as all human reflection is advancing, or making real, the actual content of the divine Idea. In Hegel's view, his *Phenomenology of Spirit* was itself a significant contribution toward the self-realization of absolute Spirit.

Delineating the relationship between these two perspectives—absolute Spirit as the one source of all and as the temporal-spatial process—required thousands of torturous pages by Hegel and continues to produce countless volumes of interpretation by his followers and critics. While it might be possible to solve the problem of the one and the many in contemporary terms without recourse to Hegel, most of the important work on this problem in the present century is demonstrably traceable to one or another interpretation of the Hegelian system. The most promising effort would seem to be that of J. N. Findlay, whose Gifford Lectures, *The Discipline of the Cave* and *The Transcendence of the Cave*, given from 1964 to 1966, represent a reformulation, by phenomenological and dialectical methods, of problems first set forth by Plotinus and Hegel.

Conclusion. A survey of monistic systems ranges from the uncompromising Advaita ("nondual") Vedānta of Śāṅkara to those thinkers, such as Radhakrishnan and Hegel, who have attempted to affirm the unity or oneness of reality without jeopardizing the reality or value of the many. In this regard, Radhakrishnan's response to, and restatement of, Śāṅkara's conception of *brahman* "so as to save the world and give it a real meaning" would seem to be a telling critique of the absolute monist position: the stronger the affirmation of oneness, the more difficult it is to affirm particulars in their own right. Within the context of absolute unity, all particulars are relegated to a quasi reality. If all is *brahman*—or Being, or the Absolute, or the One by any other name—then sticks and stones, civilizations and planets, ideas and gods must all share, and perhaps lose, their distinctive reality within the all-inclusive (or all-consuming) reality of the One.

Given the extent to which a monistic system jeopardizes the reality of the ordinary world, it is perhaps not surprising that it typically has drawn its inspiration from, and in turn lends its formulations to, mystical ex-

perience. The three most formidable monistic systems—those of Śaṅkara, Plotinus, and Spinoza—are all dependent on mystical awareness, however rational may be their respective processes of articulation. In view of the monistic tendency to devalue the full range of particulars, it is understandable that throughout the history of Western thought, monism has been countered not only by orthodox theologies (of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) but equally by dominant philosophies. In Asia, and particularly in India, monism may appear to have enjoyed greater success historically, but most Asian thought systems—for example, Confucianism in China, theism and Yoga in India, and various forms of Buddhism throughout Asia—have not been monistic. Further, the remarkable influence of Advaita Vedānta in India may be due as much to its apparent mystical source and hermeneutical power as to its philosophical argumentation. The monist affirmation of the One (in whatever terminology) may well be truer than the myriad religious and philosophical positions that hold to the reality of the many, but while the vast majority of religious thinkers and philosophers fall short of mystical insight, it seems probable that in the future of philosophy and religion monism will continue to be a strongly opposed minority position.

[For a view contrasting with that of monism, see Dualism. Related ideas are surveyed in Pantheism and Panentheism, and issues raised by thoughts about the relationship between the divine and the cosmos are discussed further in Transcendence and Immanence. See also the biographies of the thinkers mentioned herein.]

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MONKEYS. The monkey is an archetypal image of the instinctual personality and the baser human propensities as well as of celestial blessings. In the ancient Mediterranean world and in the East, simians have generally symbolized sagacity and good fortune; and in the West, depravity and sin. As personifications of unconscious activity, monkeys may signify danger and degradation or an unexpected boon.

Among the Egyptian gods worshiped in the dynastic period, many of whose attributes are believed to have survived from prehistoric times, is Thoth, god of wisdom, whose emblem is a cynocephalus, a dog-headed ape or baboon. Originally held in high regard for their cunning, monkeys came to symbolize intelligence, magical powers, and ultimately wisdom. In statues, on tombs, and in countless editions of the *Book of Going Forth by Day*, a cynocephalus is depicted in the act of supplying words of wisdom to Thoth, who in turn transmits them to Osiris, god of the dead. It is in the aspect of friend of the dead that the dog-headed ape is represented in the Papyrus of Ani, seated on top of the standard of a balance as the heart of the deceased is weighed against the feather of truth. The Egyptians also believed that apes were transformed openers of the portals of heaven. As a symbol of wisdom in Greece, the monkey was associated with Hermes, god of magicians and thaumaturges, a figure that evolved into Hermes Trismegistos.

The most widespread and enduring cult of the monkey developed in India, where it figures prominently in religion and myth. Among the animals personifying gods or heroic, godlike beings with magical powers, the monkey god Hanuman, son of Vāyu the wind god and the monkey nymph Añjanā, is the most popular. Worshiped at the famous monkey temple at Vārāṇasī, Hanuman is also a village deity, a divine agent invoked as a protector against whirlwinds and as a fertility god. As a sun hero in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Hanuman comes to Rāma's aid in his battle to recover the abducted Sītā, for which help he is granted eternal life. The solar nature of the mythical monkey is repeatedly manifested in the poem, as he travels through the air, enters into darkness, and emerges from it.

The primarily Buddhist and Islamic religions of Java and Sumatra were permeated with the figure of the monkey god. A relief on the lintels of Banteay Srei, a Cambodian temple of the late tenth and fourteenth centuries, depicts the monkey king Sugrīva aided by his

captain Hanuman in battle with his rival. Whenever a hamlet was founded in western Bengal, the villagers' first duty was to erect an image of Hanuman, protector of crops and cattle and virile consort of the Earth Mother.

The ambivalent symbolism of the monkey is best exemplified in Chinese thought, where it represents both good and evil. On the one hand, monkeys connote the carnal instincts, duplicity, trickery, mimicry, transformations, mischievousness, ugliness, and conceit; on the other, they are associated with protectiveness, sorcery, thaumaturgy, and the powers of bestowing good fortune, health, and success. In Taoism, monkeys symbolize thoughts that on the meditation path must be shut off through the practice of "the binding of the monkeys." A popular representation of monkeys is in the configuration of the Three Mystic Monkeys, who in turn seal their lips, ears, and eyes against speaking, hearing, or seeing evil.

In Judeo-Christian and Islamic symbology, monkeys are unambiguously sinister. According to the Talmud, to dream of one is an ill omen, and in rabbinic lore, one of the three classes of men who built the Tower of Babel was transformed into monkeys. In Christianity, the monkey represents only the iniquitous aspects of human nature: luxury, lust, levity, unseemliness, greed, vanity, malice, cunning, idolatry, a slothful soul, and perversion of God's word. Satan was described as the *simia dei* in the Middle Ages, and the Devil is often depicted as a monkey in Christian art, with an apple in its mouth, as an emblem of the Fall, and its body in chains, signifying sin conquered by virtue. Monkeys have invariably been a malevolent sign for Muslims, and in one Islamic tale the Jews of Elath are turned into apes as punishment for fishing on the Sabbath.

Monkeys are totem animals in many traditional cultures. It is forbidden to eat or harm them in Togo; they are sacred to the Bakatta; their teeth are worn as breast ornaments by the Boróro to gain strength. Certain peoples venerate monkeys as the abode of the human soul, and one East Indian clan regards them as ancestors.

In many parts of the world monkeys are benevolent creatures, often symbolizing fertility or other good fortune. Magical ceremonies are performed in Java in which cures for sterility are invoked by making offerings to the king of monkeys. In Mesoamerican hieroglyphic writings, the monkey is represented as a symbol of sexual intercourse. It is also associated with the benevolent deity Chac, and Maya inscriptions represent the god of the North Star with a monkey head. In a Maya creation myth, the only creatures to survive the gods' destruction of their creation are the monkeys. In