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Whether Hegel is a Pantheist? Spinoza in Hegel's Pantheism

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ABSTRACT

Does Hegel embrace pantheism? He faced accusations from his orthodox peers who adhered to Pantheism, a phrase that was commonly associated with atheism during his day. This study presents a counterargument to the assertion made by several contemporary orthodox contemporaries that Hegel is pantheistic. Hegel can be classified as a semi-pantheist. The manuscript is divided into three distinct sections. In the initial segment, I examine pantheism as posited by Spinoza, the pioneering contemporary pantheist whose contributions exerted a profound influence on other German thinkers, including Hegel. In the subsequent part, an examination of Hegel's pantheism will be conducted through an analysis of the concept of God or the Absolute. In the third section, an analysis is conducted on Hegel's notion of the features of the Absolute, and a comparison is made with Spinoza's God or Nature in order to ascertain if Hegel can be classified as a pantheist. It is believed that Hegel has a dissenting stance towards conventional pantheism, particularly that of Spinoza. Therefore, it can be inferred that Hegel's pantheism differs from Spinoza's. Hegel can be classified as a semi-pantheist.

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Introduction

Whether Hegel is a pantheist? After the death of Hegel, there was a contentious debate on the religious dimension of Hegel's thought which divided into two perspectives of Hegelian: right Hegelian and left Hegelian. According to the right Hegelian perspective, Hegel can be understood as a Christian apologist who seeks to harmonize his philosophical ideas with the conventional Lutheran doctrines pertaining to the Trinity, Creation, and Incarnation (Shannon, 2017, 1). A contrasting interpretation, as articulated by various prominent commentators, posits a left Hegelian perspective wherein the individual in question is not embracing Christianity, but rather advocating for atheism. In this perspective, on the one hand, Hegel posits that the Absolute Being is identical to humanity, and further asserts that the incarnate god's appearance is merely the Lord of world history returning. On the other hand, Hegel's philosophy is perceived by some as pantheism due to the deity status attributed to the Absolute Being in natural religions. Based on these two interpretations, Hegel is considered to be in opposition to Christianity (Shannon, 2017, 1). Some modern orthodox contemporaries assert that Hegel was pantheistic[1] as atheistic[2] in Spinoza's account of pantheism[3]; this paper refutes this claim. The present manuscript is structured into four distinct sections. In the first section, I will scrutinize pantheism in Spinoza's account, the first modern pantheist whose work had a significant impact on numerous German philosophers, including Hegel. Then, I will delineate Hegel's pantheism in the second section by locating and scrutinizing his discourse on the subject in all of his writings, with particular emphasis on the Lecture on the Philosophy of Religion. In the third section, an attempt is made to address the inquiry regarding whether Hegel is a pantheist as stated in Spinoza's account by examining his concept of Absolute Being and contrasting it with Spinoza's notion of God or Nature. Subsequently, I demonstrate that Hegel's pantheism is not synonymous with Spinoza's pantheism, nor is it synonymous with atheism. In conclusion, I claim that Hegel does not align with traditional pantheism, particularly as it pertains to Spinoza's pantheism since he is a semi-pantheist.

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[1] Raymond Williamson after examining the arguments for atheism claims that Hegel is advocating pantheism (Williamson, 1984, 215-30). In the same meaning, Merold Westphal claims that, "Like Spinoza, Hegel is a pantheist…," (Westphal, 2004, p. 66), and Gerald McCool, "Pantheism had replaced the personal God of historical revelation with its impersonal Absolute Idea. The greatest proponent of modern pantheism was Hegel…," (McCool, 1989, p.92).

[2] Atheism has been accused of being pantheistic for as long as pantheism has existed. Some thinkers proposed that pantheism is atheism. Coleridge insisted that "every thing God, and no God, are identical positions" (McFarland, 1969, p. 228). In the same way, Owen (1974) argues that pantheism is equivalent to atheism…taken strictly it [pantheism] is equivalent to atheism" (pp. 69-74). Schopenhauer also contends that "that "to call the world 'God' is not to explain it; it is only to enrich our language with a superfluous synonym for the word 'world' (1951, p. 40).

[3] There are numerous studies conducted on Spinoza's Ethics, and many of them indirectly studied on pantheism. Spinoza's version of pantheism, on the other hand, is best understood as one of numerous philosophical variations on pantheistic themes, despite the fact that it has undergone the most transformation throughout history (Levine, 1994, preface, ix).

1. Spinoza on pantheism

Within this particular part, we shall scrutinize Spinoza's definition of pantheism. I will begin by reviewing some prevalent definitions of pantheism. Then, I will trace back to Spinoza, the first philosopher to defend and explain pantheism in its most comprehensive manner.

In general, Pantheism refers to the belief that the natural universe is inherently divine and deserving of reverence; alternatively, it is the belief that divinity permeates the natural universe (Garett, 1997, July 3). The belief that "God is everything and everything is a self-expression of his nature" is a broad definition of pantheism, as proposed by Owen (1974). Alternatively expressed, MacIntyre posits that all existing entities constitute a "unity," and this unity, which permeates everything, possesses a divine essence (p. 64). Michael Levine (1994) argues that pantheism refutes the notion that God is entirely distinct from the world. He states, "Pantheists deny that what they mean by God is completely transcendent" (p. 2). Somewhere else, Owen (1974) gives another more specific definition of pantheism, "'Pantheism'…signifies the belief that every existing entity is, only one Being; and that all other forms of reality are either modes (or appearances) of it or identical with it" (p. 65). According to McIntyre, pantheism is the view that "everything that exists constitutes a unity [in some sense] and…this all-inclusive unity is divine [in some sense]" (1967, 34). While there may be some disagreements on certain aspects, these scholars all concur that pantheism posits that God and the world are not distinct ontologically. In other words, pantheists believe that God is identical to the world.

> Although pantheists differ among themselves at many points, they all agree in denying the basic theistic claim that God and the world are ontologically distinct (Owen, 1974, 65).

Levine posits that the definition of pantheism is multifaceted, as distinct interpretations of the religion exist among different individuals. Hence, as stated by Levine (1994, 25), the fundamental dilemma surrounding pantheism is the definition of its nature. Spinoza, whose Ethics contained the most comprehensive analysis of pantheism, must be revisited in order to address the central question regarding pantheism.

Beth Lord (2010) contends that Spinoza attempts to persuade his audience in Part I that his fundamental concept is that all individual beings we perceive are 'modes' of being -substance and, therefore,'modes' of God; being – substance is equivalent to God; and being is one (p. 15). Indeed, Spinoza argues in part I of his book Ethics that there is a single substance that is in and of itself; all other substances are merely modes of that substance.

> BY SUBSTANCE, I mean that which is in itself, and is conceived through itself; in other words, that of which a conception can be formed independently of any other conception" (1D3)[1].

In contrast to a substance, which is self-existent or self-caused and needs nothing more to exist than itself, a mode is the affection of a substance; a mode exists in another entity – a substance. "BY MODE, I mean the modifications ["Affectiones"] of substance, or that which exists in and is conceived through, something other than itself" (1D5). This indicates that the substance determines the existence of modes. A substance exists prior to its modes; its existence is not dependent on modes. According to Spinoza, a substance that can exist in itself and through it (substance), modes or affections[2] can exist and be understood is God. "BY GOD, I mean a being absolutely infinite--that is, a substance consisting in infinite attributes, of which each expresses eternal and infinite essentiality" (1D6). Spinoza tries to show in 1P11, that God exists in the way that is defined in definition 6 of part 1 (as a substance), "God, or a substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence, necessarily exists". He then says in 1P14, that God is the only substance and there cannot be any other substance: "Besides God no substance can be granted or conceived".

The aforementioned ideas show that God's character in Spinoza's account is that God is infinite. In other words, God is clearly independent and exists necessarily. Spinoza, according to Garett (1991), maintains that the existence of something is certain if and only if it is self-caused. Garrett asserts that Spinoza's approach in all of his arguments is to establish the self-caused nature of God and deduce His existence from this, as well as the equivalence between necessary existence and self-caused.

God is independent since he can exist in himself. Unlike modes or affections that depend on God or substance for their existence, God is self-caused for his existence. Indeed, God or substance requires nothing outside himself to exist. In other words, God is independent and self-subsistence. Following this idea and Definition 11 of Part 1 brings us to the necessary existence of God. By virtue of its very nature, God is the only entity whose existence is indispensable. Self-caused beings are also unique to God. Spinoza argues that a being is self-caused if its existence is predicated solely on its own inherent qualities (P33). At this point, we come to another character of God/substance according to Spinoza, that God is non-personal. God is not a person. In part 1, Definition 7, Spinoza claims that what is free "exists from the necessity of its nature alone, and is determined to act by itself alone". As we discussed above, there is no other substance and God is its own cause and determiner of its own actions, it is possible that God is free in the sense that it is

[1] In this paper all citation from the *Ethics* as follows: 1D: Part 1, Definition; 1P: Part 1, Proposition. For example, 1D1: Part 1, Definition 1

[2] Spinoza uses the words 'mode' and 'affections' interchangeably in part I of the *Ethics*.

not constrained by any other substance to act (Lord, 2010, 35). Therefore, God alone is a free cause. However, Spinoza contends that God does not possess "free will" in the sense that it can decide what it causes (1P33). Beth Lord (2010) argues that God does not possess the capacity to determine what is brought into existence as a 'person'. God has the power or capacity to manifest that which is an intrinsic connection to its very nature. God is free since God acts from the necessity of its own nature (p. 36). In Proposition 18, Spinoza asserts that "God is the indwelling and not the transient cause of all things". God is the immanent, not the transitive, cause of all things. Moreover, according to Mike Popejoy (2019), another clue that proved Spinoza denies the personal concept of God is that there is no distinction between God and Nature in the *Ethics* (p. 27). Nature and God are one and they are used interchangeably in Spinoza's work. In other words, Spinoza does not have any kind of mental life as human beings possess and experience. Therefore, God is not a person.

These characteristics of God/Substance – infinite which include independent and necessary and non-personal explained above is a strong indication of pantheism which includes both the claim that everything that exists constitutes a unity, and that this unity is in some sense divine according to Popejoy (2019, 28). "Whatsoever is, is in God, and without God nothing can be, or be conceived" (1P15). It means that without God – the only one substance, whatsoever – modes cannot be conceived and exist. This meaning reiterates the preceding statement that the dependence of all things on God. Spinoza explains in more detail in 1P25, "Individual things are nothing but modifications of the attributes of God, or modes by which the attributes of God are expressed in a fixed and definite manner". According to these words, modes are not only dependent on God, but their existence also serves as a specific expression of the attributes of God which constitute the essence of substance in return. Modes are particular and comprise the very essence of God. Consequently, through modes – particular things, we can know more about the nature of God/substance. "The more we understand particular things, the more do we understand God" (5P24). Considering these concepts, let us analyze Hegel's perspective on pantheism.

2. Pantheism in Hegel's account

In this section, we will examine what Hegel discusses on pantheism in comparison with Spinoza's account throughout his works, especially in *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*.

From Hegel's point of view, Spinoza is an important figure in the history of philosophy. Moreover, it seems that Hegel considers Spinoza's history to be the foundation of his account of God or absolute spirit. As mentioned above, Pantheism is the view that "everything that exists constitutes a unity and this unity is divine". In the previous section, Spinoza argued that God is the all-encompassing unity that is composed of everything that exists. In his philosophy, Hegel exhibits a preference for the terms Absolute or Absolute Spirit to denote the supreme entity. However, he also employs the term God in comparable circumstances.

At the beginning of the Doctrine of Essence of the *Encyclopedia Logic*[1] Hegel writes: "God, as the unqualifiedly infinite, is not the sort of entity that there simply is and *outside of* and *next to* which there are also still other essences [i.e. beings]" (EL, §112). In a sense, the infinite nature of God renders him an intrinsic component of other entities, rather than an external entity. Near the end of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel claims that a conception of the absolute that implies something existing externally to it is empty: "Absolute essence would be but an empty name if in truth there were for it another, if there were a 'fall' from it" (PS, §780). At this point, Hegel's portrayal of the Absolute can be classified as pantheistic based on the previously established definition: everything that exists constitutes a unity, and that unity is divine.

Hegel also mentions the connection between his concept of the Absolute and God in his introduction to Part I of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*:

> God is the beginning of all things and the end of all things; [everything] starts from God and returns to God. God is the one and only object of philosophy. [Its concern is] to occupy itself with God, to apprehend everything in him, to lead everything back to him, as well as to derive everything particular from God and to justify everything only insofar as it stems from God, is sustained through its relationship with him, lives by his I radiance and has [within itself] the mind of God (PR, Vol. I, 84).

With these words, Hegel argues that God is the ultimate entity in which everything is created and exists. In other words, everything depends upon God for their existence. Indeed, everything is understood and exists through God or the Absolute. This notion is comparable to Spinoza's tenet that nothing can be granted and conceived. In the same meaning, Hegel states in the Introduction to Part III of his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* concerning "The Consummate Religion": "God himself is one in all" (PR, Vol. III, p.63). In the preface of *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel says:

> The True is the whole. But the whole is nothing other than the essence consummating itself through its development" (PS, §20).

It is evident from these passages that Hegel considers the Absolute to be the unity of all that exists, and Hegel's description of the Absolute also meets the criteria for pantheism at this juncture. Now let us explore in detail the nature and the characteristics of the Absolute - God in Hegel's account. According to Hegel, the Absolute, which is pure thought - Idea, is regarded independently of its external manifestation or self-manifestation, as stated in his work on Logic. In addition, to the extent that pure thought constitutes the "substance" of reality. It is not constrained to do so by

[1] Hereafter in this paper *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*: PR.; *Encyclopedia Logic*: EL; *Phenomenology of Spirit*: PS. *Philosophy of Mind*: PM.

anything external to it; therefore, the necessity is an intrinsic requirement of nature. The absolute inherently manifests itself in nature. "The idea can be grasped as that the *nature* of which *can only be conceived as existing*" (EL, §214). At this point, Hegel unequivocally affirms the essential existence of the Idea, and his voice is linked to Spinoza's assertion that the very essence of substance is self-caused and self-sufficient. In other words, the existence is the intrinsic nature of the substance (1P7). We can now conclude that the characteristics of the Absolute or God are essential or necessary.

Hegel also mentions independence as another characteristic of the Absolute/God throughout his work on *Religion*. When examining the notion of God in his lectures, he asserts that God is "in and for itself, embracing and containing absolutely everything, is that through which alone everything is and has subsistence… This One is the result of philosophy". Subsequently, he asserts that God is "that upon which everything is dependent and apart from which nothing other than it has absolute, true independence" (PR, Vol. 1, p. 367-368). Thus, according to Hegel, the Absolute/God is the foundation upon which all other things are built, and it exists necessarily and not through anything else. Others rely on the Absolute, whereas God's existence is independent of himself.

> This object [God] exists solely through itself and for its own sake. It is something that is absolutely self-sufficient, unconditioned, independent, free, as well as being the supreme end unto itself (PR, Vol. 1, p. 367-368).

Hegel further asserts in the *Encyclopedia Logic* that only one thing that possesses "complete, genuine independence" is God since everything is determined by himself alone – God (EL, §82). According to Hegel, true independence is the quality that distinguishes God from other things:

> The being of all these things is not of an independent sort, however, but is quite simply something upheld and maintained, not genuine independence. If we ascribe a being to particular things, it is only a borrowed being, only the semblance of a being, not the absolutely independent being that God is (PR, Vol. 1, 369).

It appears that for Hegel, the concept of "being" in its completest form is exclusive to God, as Hegel argues that only God possesses absolute independence. Hegel's assertions concerning the necessity and independence of God thus far align with certain aspects of the philosophical tradition that came before him, most notably Spinoza's account of pantheism, which posits that God is Nature, which is both necessary and independent. As Spinoza defines pantheism, we shall examine whether Hegel is a pantheist in the following section.

3. Whether Hegel is a pantheist?

In the preceding sections, I have presented several aspects or characteristics related to God or the Absolute as described in Hegel's account. With the aforementioned factors, it appears that Hegel can be classified as a pantheist. Nevertheless, it is indeed fair to classify his perspective as pantheistic in the aforementioned sense (Spinoza's pantheism). In this section, I argue against the claims put forth by several scholars that Hegel is incompatible with pantheism. Hegel does not completely adhere to pantheism. Hegel is a semi-pantheism. By doing so, I contend that atheism and pantheism are not synonymous. Following this, I illustrate how Hegel has provided an original elucidation of the characteristics of pantheism which is different from Spinoza's account regarding the nature of God as both a substance and a subject.

4. Pantheism is not atheism

Pantheism posits that God encompasses everything and everything is God. It means that the world is synonymous with God, or in some way, it is just a manifestation of his nature. According to Owen, if God and the world are synonymous, then God is nothing more than a different name for the world. Therefore, it does not possess any meaning that is unique to itself. He concludes that "pantheism is equivalent to atheism" (1971, 74). With the same meaning, Schopenhauer states that "to call the world 'God' is not to explain it; it is only to enrich our language with a superfluous synonym for the word 'world'" (Schopenhauer, 1951, 40). However, Hegel contends that the idea that pantheism and atheism are identical is a massive misunderstanding. If one were to apply such an equation, it would be assumed that a pantheist would equate God with the entirety of things as distinct and dependent. Hegel responds that such pantheism is impossible since God cannot be considered God if He does not possess the world, which comprises all things finite (PR, Vol. 1, 375).

According to Spinoza and other pantheists, God is the substance or essence of all finite things, which are merely the modes or appearances of God. This assertion was made in the first section of the article. Put simply, finite entities derive their existence from the substance, and the substance's existence is not reciprocally dependent on finite entities. Pantheists maintain that finite things contribute nothing to God, as they vanish in the substance of God. However, finite things are endowed with divine attributes (Beiser, 2005, 143-144). God's existence in the world was manifested through many modes in contrast to the atheist position that God exists independently of the world and has no existence. In addition, according to Popejoy (2019), Hegel contends that atheism takes the finite as the Absolute, whereas Spinoza does not hold this view (p. 146). This is a clear demonstration that pantheism is not an atheistic perspective, and it is also a direct rejection of atheism (Levine, 1994, 3). Now, it would appear that Hegel is a supporter of pantheism, and it

is also true that he is a pantheist, alongside Spinoza. Now, let's take a look at what Hegel himself would have perceived about this assertion.

5. Hegel is a semi-pantheist

While Hegel does argue that pantheism is not the same thing as atheism, it is important to note that he is not a pantheist in every sense of the word. There is a single substance that is the essence of all finite things, and Hegel agrees with pantheists, particularly Spinoza, that this is the case. Further, Hegel, in a manner that is comparable to that of Spinoza, acknowledges that this substance is God, who is characterized as being independent and necessary. Nevertheless, Beiser (2005) asserts that Hegel stands in opposition to pantheists regarding two fundamental aspects. First, Hegel asserts that the realm of finitude does not vanish in the Absolute (God), but rather, it is through them (finite things) that the Absolute comes into existence. Second, Hegel contends that the infinite is not only a substance but also a subject (p. 144).

Regarding the first point, Hegel mentions pantheism twice in his *Lecture on the Philosophy of Religion,* and it seems that he gives two different definitions – meanings to the word 'pantheism'. In his discussion of the concept of God in his 1827 lectures, Hegel states:

> 'Pantheism' in the proper sense means that everything, the whole, the universe, this complex of everything existing, these infinitely many individual things—that all this is God (PR, Vol. 1, 375).

This statement would mean that no one thing in this complex could be God. However, in another passage later, Hegel claims that "'Pantheism' means 'all is divine,' and amounts to the notion that everything taken singularly is God" (PR, Vol. 1, 432). This definition seems to contradict the previous definition. It means that every single thing is part of the divine; you could even say that every single thing bears the mark of the divine. But a single thing is not the divine itself in its totality (Popejoy, 2019, 143). It is very different from Spinoza's.

Second, the primary distinguishing feature that Hegel employs to differentiate his conception of God from Spinoza's is the recognition that the Absolute must be understood not solely as a substance, but also as a subject, which holds significant importance in Hegel's perspective.

Most pantheists do not believe in a "personal" God. They say there is no such thing as a "minded" Being that has the traits of a "person," like having "intentional" states and the abilities that come with that, like being able to make choices (Levine, 1994, 2). It is important to keep in mind that in Spinoza's account, God or Nature is the only substance that is not a personal being. In Part V of his book *Ethics,* Spinoza says:

> God is without passions, neither is he affected by any emotion of pleasure or pain . . . Strictly speaking, God does not love anyone (5P.17).

With the same meaning in a later paragraph, Spinoza asserts that "He, who loves God, cannot endeavour that God should love him in return". (5P.19). When I say that I think of God as personal, I mean that I think of God as having a mind, an action, or a self, comparable to how people think. If God is personal in the way that we usually use the word, then God is not infinite (substance) anymore. In another way, in Proposition 17 of Part I, Spinoza claims that "neither intellect nor will appertain to God's nature." In this statement, Spinoza means that the term intellect or will which is usually used for a person cannot apply to God. Later in the same Part, he stresses that "the intellect in function, whether finite or infinite, as will, desire, love, etc…we do not (obviously) mean absolute thought, but only a certain mode of thinking, differing from other modes, such as love, desire, …[that] requiring to be conceived through absolute thought. It must through some attribute of God which expresses the eternal and infinite essence of thought" (1P31). It is evident from this excerpt that Spinoza rejects the notion that God has specific modes of thought that are distinct from other modes. In other words, Spinoza refuses to acknowledge that God does not have any kind of mental life like human's experience. In short, Spinoza believed that God did not have a personal nature.

Hegel, on the other hand, admits that the Absolute is conceived from the perspective of substance and subject, both of which are essential to him. In the following, we will go into greater detail regarding the role that consciousness and subjectivity play in Hegel's account of the divine. According to Hegel, the all-encompassing divine is conceived of as consciousness or mind/spirit. It is at this crucial juncture that Hegel makes an effort to differentiate himself from Spinoza's pantheism (PR, Vol. 3, 62). There is a close connection between Hegel's requirement that God be conceived of as self-conscious and the fact that Hegel conceives of God not only as substance, but also at the same time as subject (Popejoy, 2019, 18).

In the preface to *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel says:

> In my view, which can be justified only by the exposition of the system itself, everything turns on grasping and expressing the True, not only as *Substance*, but equally as *Subject* (PS, §17).

Hegel contends that the Absolute (Spirit) which is active and living in the world in his account is not the absolute substance in Spinoza's.

> Hegel argued that absolute substance in Spinoza's philosophy was not yet conceived of as active, living Spirit, but only as the abstract unity of Spirit in itself (Gerrish, 1987, 450).

It appears that Hegel considers the concept of the Absolute as a substance to be overly static. Hegel claims that the discussion of the Absolute as a dynamic or living substance is picked up

when the Absolute is recognized as a subject in addition to its substance property. This means that the Absolute is the unification of substance and subject.

At the beginning of *Phenomenology*, Hegel writes: "Furthermore, the living Substance is being which is in truth *Subject*, or, what is the same, is in truth actual only insofar as it is the movement of positing itself, or is the mediation of its self-othering with itself" (PS, §18). Hegel approaches a definition of the term 'subject' in relation to the Absolute in this passage: it refers to that which acts as both the agent responsible for externalizing the Absolute and for unifying that distinction. The process of reconciling and manifesting differences at the highest level is what differentiates the Absolute as a subject and not merely as a substance.

According to Popejoy (2019), it is not the whole truth – not yet the actual truth, if we conceive the divine as substance. In other words, the Absolute or God is substance that is fallacious since it cannot achieve "the true as whole" due to the incomplete nature of the reconciliation movement. At this point, it is critical to emphasize that Hegel posits that the Absolute ought to be regarded as both substance and subject. By the substantial, Hegel means that the Absolute is in itself (PS, §§18-22). In other words, the Absolute is something that exists on its own and does not depend on any relationship with anything else, not even on showing itself to subjects (Klotz, 2020, 54).
Regarding the notion of subjectivity, according to Charles Taylor, Hegel's ideas about the "subject" refer to a way of being that is mainly self-awareness or self-knowledge (Taylor, 1975, 108). At this point, we face another character of the Absolute which is self-consciousness.

Self-consciousness as God has come up many times throughout Hegel's works and it is a key part of Hegel's unique view of God. In his thesis, when discussing God's personality, Popejoy cited Jacobi to show that self-consciousness is essential to personality:

> Jacobi states: "I have no concept of an intelligence without personality".[238] According to Jacobi self-consciousness is a necessary constituent of personality: "Unity of self-consciousness constitutes personality, and every entity which is conscious of its identity is a person."[239] Thus according to Jacobi intelligence requires some kind of personality, and this in turn requires self-consciousness. (Popejoy, 2019, 109).

According to this passage, it is impossible to conceive of a person who does not possess self-consciousness because self-consciousness is an essential component of the human identity. Consequently, given that God is a person, it is reasonable to assume that He possesses the capacity for self-consciousness or consciousness.

In *Phenomenology*, Hegel contends that a representation of God as self-consciousness distinguishes God from others which represents consciousness. "God is *thought of* as self-consciousness. The self that is *thought* of is not the *actual* self". The self is conceived or conscious is the real self since what is thought of stops being just thought of and becomes something separate

from self-knowledge only when the self creates it and sees the object's determination as its own, it sees itself in that object. "For what is *thought of*, ceases to be something [merely] thought of, something aliens to the self-knowledge" (PS, § 684). In another passage, Hegel asserts that "God is God only so far as he knows himself: his self-knowledge is, further, a self-consciousness in man and man's knowledge of God, which proceeds to man's self-knowledge in God" (PM, §564). This excerpt asserts that an essential aspect of God's nature is its self-awareness and self-consciousness.

Throughout this section, I argued that Hegel shares a similar notion with Spinoza regarding the concept of God as an independent and necessary substance. Nevertheless, the notion of God in Hegel's narrative diverges significantly from Spinoza's conception of God. Hegel's concept of God or the Absolute encompasses both substance and subject, referring to the person. The Absolute is a subject that possesses self-awareness. These aspects hold significant importance in Hegel's philosophical framework and serve to differentiate him from Spinoza. In his efforts to maintain the rationality of Christian doctrine and practices, Hegel placed great importance on the subjectivity of the Absolute (Beiser, 2005, 145). Thus, Hegel can be classified as a semi-pantheist due to his agreement with Spinoza's pantheism regarding the existence of an infinite, independent, and necessary substance.

However, he diverges from Spinoza in his understanding of God as the Absolute, which is not solely a substance, but rather a fusion of substance and subject, as well as self-awareness. Copleston says that the Hegelian system "is neither clear theism nor clear pantheism." God has to be more than all of our limited minds put together...When God shows up in and through finite consciousness as well as to finite consciousness, there must be a real difference between the two. While the limited consciousness is still around, it can't be called God because it is part of God but isn't God. In this way, I think Hegel's idea is more like panentheism than strict pantheism. (Copleston, 1946, 54–55)

Conclusion

In this paper, I argue that Hegel can be considered a semi-pantheist because his understanding of God or the Absolute closely aligns with Spinoza's, who is recognized as the first modern pantheist. However, Hegel's concept of God - the Absolute differs significantly from Spinoza's understanding of God as Nature or substance. In order to arrive at this conclusion, I partitioned my paper into three distinct sections. In the first section, an examination is conducted on Spinoza's pantheism through an analysis of the notion of God as an infinite, necessary, and independent substance, as articulated in Spinoza's seminal work, Ethics. In the second section, I am seeking Hegel's exposition on pantheism in relation to the notion of God as presented in his works. In this particular section, I argue that the notion of God as the Absolute exhibits certain attributes that align with the notion of God as nature or substance as described in Spinoza's account. In the final section, which comprises two sub-sections, an attempt is made to address the inquiry regarding Hegel's pantheistic position through an analysis of his conceptualization of pantheism. Within the first sub-section, it

is contended that Hegel refutes the notion that pantheism is synonymous with atheism. In the subsequent subsection, it is argued that while Hegel espouses the concept of pantheism, he does not exhibit the characteristics of a pantheist. I explore the concept that the Absolute or God is subjective in order to demonstrate that while Hegel's God or the Absolute and Spinoza's God exhibit certain similarities, they diverge in their understanding of subjectivity. Subsequently, I deduce that Hegel is a semi-pantheist.

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