

desire to gain a deeper insight into the very essence and meaning of the world which surrounds us, have attached themselves to the views that have found expression in the poetical and artistic representation of nature; nor is it merely accidental, it is, indeed, highly significant, that the nineteenth century, which has witnessed the ever louder proclamation of the mechanical conception, has, on the other side, witnessed the growth, in various forms, of naturalism in poetry and art: it has developed not only the mechanical, but also the poetical, interpretation of Nature.

This naturalistic tendency in poetry and fiction showed itself already in the latter half of the previous century, and this independently in the three countries which specially interest us. The greatest influence, however, which this movement has had upon philosophical thought emanated from the personality and works of Goethe, to whom we may trace back most of the attempts which have been made abroad to supplement the purely mechanical (abstract) by a spiritual philosophy of nature, which latter claims to approach nearer to her real essence than the former does. It is also notable in Goethe's conception of nature that, in spite of all the realism which is characteristic of it, the one aspect towards which it is absolutely blind is the mathematical aspect.

Following up a suggestion to which the history of philosophical thought has already led us on sundry occasions, we may say that the peculiar view of nature represented by Goethe, as well as by some of the fore-

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Goethe as  
representa-  
tive of the  
synoptic  
view.