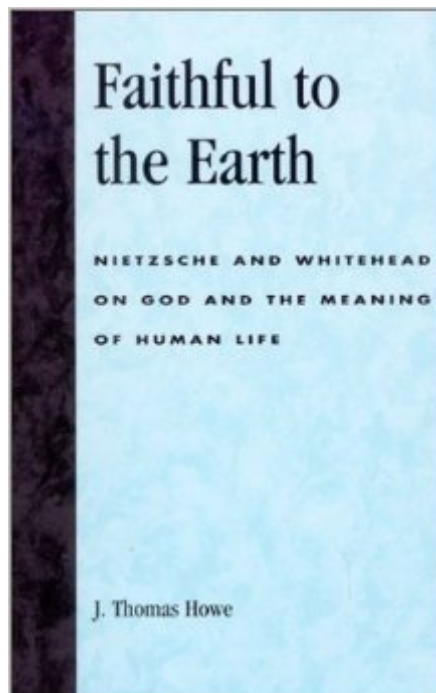


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Faithful To The Earth: Nietzsche And Whitehead On God And The Meaning Of Human Life



Synopsis

On the surface, Friedrich Nietzsche and Alfred North Whitehead represent very different positions on God and the meaning of human life. Put simply, Nietzsche is an atheist--belief in God, he argues, denies the value and meaning of human life. Whitehead says the opposite--human life finds no meaning unless God exists. Faithful to the Earth, winner of the Bross Prize for Christian Scholarship that is awarded only once every 10 years, goes way beyond contrasting the theist with the atheist. J. Thomas Howe argues that Whitehead's understanding of God lays the foundation for a religious life strikingly similar to that described in Nietzsche's tragic, but affirmative, philosophy. In Howe's eyes, the theology of Whitehead provides a doctrine of God that is not subject to Nietzsche's criticism of Christianity. For Whitehead, religious life is not opposed to life in the world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I was very excited when I learned that someone had written a book on Nietzsche and Whitehead and their common interest in process philosophy. This excitement grew as I read the chapters on Nietzsche and found that the author did an excellent job of summarizing Nietzsche's ideas and his criticism of Western philosophy. I was also impressed by the author's facility at characterizing Whitehead's philosophy, theology and non-orthodox ideas about the nature of God. With these basics covered, the author goes on to deliver a lucid comparison of their philosophies and their common roots in process philosophy. So far, so good. Unfortunately, the author took a detour in his final chapter. Rather than delve deeper into their philosophies and search for common ground between these intellectual heavyweights, the author pits the two philosophers against one another and argues that Whitehead's view is more appealing, more optimistic, more positive. Such an

assessment simply reflects the author's Apollonian views rather than a serious critique of Nietzsche's ideas. So while I believe that readers will find this book an informative introduction to these philosophers and their divergent takes on process philosophy, it will not satisfy the more discerning reader. Hopefully the author will follow up with a more in-depth analysis of Nietzsche and Whitehead and assess whether it is possible to build bridges between them. This type of digging is what Nietzsche and Whitehead called us to do. It respects the profound nature of the task. As Niels Bohr said, the opposite of a profound truth is another profound truth. So it is with the ideas of Nietzsche and Whitehead.

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