



Pantheist or Atheist: A Discourse on the Worldview of Albert Einstein

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Abstract

This paper clarified the belief system held by Albert Einstein by setting the boundaries between pantheism and atheism. Likewise, it expounded on the implications of Einstein's position on the deterministic and ephemeral nature of human existence.

Basically, the paper offered a plausible answer to the question whether Einstein was really a pantheist or was in fact an atheist. The confusion lies in the ambiguity of distinction between pantheism and atheism. To clear up the muddle regarding the worldview of Albert Einstein, an in-depth examination of the fundamental principles governing each belief system was undertaken. Since Einstein saw reality in the eyes of Baruch Spinoza, the author limited the discussion of pantheism to Spinozistic ontological argument.

Both pantheism and atheism reject the idea that an eternal perfect being called God created a universe out of nothing. This notion poses two problems in the critical minds of pantheists and atheists alike: First, the proposition that God created the universe results in a logical crisis because once accepted as valid, the principle that creation is a prerequisite of existence becomes a valid argument all the time. The validity of this argument cannot be denied in investigating the existence of God and in so doing creates a ridiculous ad infinitum sequence of creation prior to the existence of God. To propose that God has always existed and not created is being arbitrary. Second, the argument that a perfect God created the universe is logically impossible because the argument negates the very existence of God. A perfect and eternal God does not need anything and therefore, there was no time in the past when God needed to create the universe. But since it is certain that an eternal universe is existing and all things are just modifications of its structure, humanity is left with two options: that God is the universe itself (pantheism) or God does not exist at all (atheism).

The demarcation line between pantheism and atheism was drawn in the argument whether the observable intelligence in the universe is a conscious intelligence (pantheism) or just plain physical laws (atheism). The paper concluded that Einstein was a pantheist because his belief system infers conscious intelligence similar to that of Hegel and Bohm.

The worldview of Albert Einstein was further explained by discussing his beliefs on determinism and temporariness of the self as resonated in the writings of present day thinkers. Despite his seemingly pessimistic stand on the human condition, Einstein's correspondence showed his strong conviction that mankind can live a meaningful life.

Keywords

Einstein & Spinoza, Pantheism, Atheism, Determinism, Free Will, Consciousness, Ontology