

Why I hate Pantheism

Post by “Matt” of December 27, 2021 at 3:26 PM

After having had an in-depth discussion about Buddhism and Taoism with someone (and why I absolutely have no use for either of those concepts), the discussion dovetailed into pantheism. This caused me to want to do a brief evaluation of the more stoic pantheistic view of the divine.

First, let me say that it is my opinion that pantheism is pointless and indefensible. The concept of an immanent deity or universal logos is meaningless if the being itself is “indifferent” and supposedly rational. Other than giving aesthetic anthropomorphic qualities to macrocosmic processes in the universe, assigning divinity to the whole aggregate of the universe has no particular value. Since there is no evidential proof of a universal mind working behind the scenes and since this being doesn’t intercede on behalf of anyone and is not an arbiter of right and wrong, good or bad, righteousness or evil etc. there is no practical reason to assume that any sort of identification of the universe as deity has any value. If the universe is all together indifferent and nothing ever changes that (other than what we as human beings assign to what we consider good and evil) then stating that the universe is God and that God works for the “good” of all simply isn’t true and anyone pedaling that as true is a liar. An indifferent God does not care about virtue as much as it doesn’t care about evil acts.

This is just for the crowd that like to vaguely consider the universe as some sort of universal mind... From a generic stoic perspective. It really becomes much much worse for pantheism when a person decides that the god is also a moral god.

Because you now have an immanent being bearing witness to all forms of iniquity and horror that appear in nature. A pantheistic god can never be a moral god in the universe that we live in. Such a concept is absolutely indefensible. For all the evils both natural and human made, this deity is both witness and the actor of evil, because it is immanent and yet still cannot affect any change the being cannot be considered a “god” nor can it ever be considered “good” because it allows evil to happen to it and itself acts in evil ways.

Pantheism, especially moral pantheism is in my opinion reprehensible. I take more stock in the idea of a deistic or agnostic theistic approach, but again even in that realm assigning the term “good” or “righteousness” to any being that allows evil to prosper while never interceding is also a serious dilemma.

Post by “Pacatus” of December 27, 2021 at 4:18 PM

Well, a proposition that the universe is (1) indifferent, (2) divine and (3) "works for the common good" seems to end up in a *reductio ad absurdum* -- unless (3) is strictly the outcome of randomness, even a "divine" randomness (whatever that might be).

But people can hold views that are contradictory without being liars. People can cling to beliefs that turn out to be logically inconsistent for many reasons -- sometimes, for example, in dealing with addictions, or past childhood traumas. Cognitive dissonance is not necessarily deceit.

BTW, I think Epicurus is sometimes credited with first pointing out that "serious dilemma" -- or, actually a trilemma.

Post by "Matt" of December 27, 2021 at 4:31 PM

I agree with what you say, however, I personally feel that a person pedaling a philosophy such as the multitude of commercial forms of stoicism and all sorts of Intelligent Design theories that exist out there...especially those who profit from them are charlatans. The sheer number of books and merchandise pedaled by megalomaniac scammers are a huge issue in my opinion. Holding a belief in private and selling a belief to the public is very different.

The trilemma in the popular form that we see it was originally formulated by the apologist Lactantius, writing against Epicurus.

Post by "Matt" of December 27, 2021 at 4:36 PM

People can hold all sorts of beliefs, many of which are irrational. If beliefs are innocuous so be it...but as we all well know, many people who hold certain false beliefs about reality cause distress for the rest of society as we see very often today with all sorts of false beliefs spewing forth from the internet.

Post by "Pacatus" of December 27, 2021 at 4:36 PM

Some are surely charlatans, some are true believers. I, too, have had my share of arguments on those fronts. For myself (and I'm only speaking for myself here), I had to realize that my anger was mine -- no matter how righteous it seemed -- and that I needed to find a way to deal with it, because I allowed it to spill over with people I loved: not at them, but like a wave they didn't need. I still am dealing with it. 😊

Thanks for the correction on the trilemma.

Post by “Matt” of December 27, 2021 at 4:37 PM

Absolutely! Thank you for responding to my thread. ☐☐

I hope to chat more with you.

-Matt

Post by “Pacatus” of December 27, 2021 at 4:40 PM

Hey, thanks for the original post. It stirred things in me that I need to be aware of. 😊

Be well!