Atheism: An unwiser choice and application error

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Abstract

Declaring oneself or identifying others as Atheist or a nonreligious appears to have solid philosophical stance, at par with if not superior to, being a theist of any kind. While acknowledging the legitimacy of others' self-identification as desired, the paper would clarify that such a position, even if assumed to reflect cases in reality, are philosophically inferior to position of atheism. Moreover, atheistic identification of self or others is epistemically erroneous, as it is based on a misconception theism and religiosity. In essence, this paper draws attention to the semantic and epistemological links between two pairs of concepts that are used quite frequently yet not always with sufficient clarity: religious vs nonreligious, theist vs atheist. Moreover, recent discussions in the epistemology of faith tend to take for granted two claims: (i) that non-religiosity is attuned with atheism, and (ii) that whatever one's considered judgment might, atheism should function as the default stance in the formation of belief. In view of that, the paper takes issue with both claims, by offering a clarification of the domain of application of the relevant concepts, and by showing how an updated version of Pascal's well-known argumentation can reset the terms of the debate between theists and atheists, highlighting some neglected reasons in favor of substantiating the former's epistemological stance vis a vis the latter's critical aspiration. Accordingly, this paper's most essential claim, presented later in the paper, is that it's impossible to be an Atheist or a Nonreligious per se, as such proclamations are in fact concept application error. The initial argument would demonstrate that atheism, even if accepted as a legitimate philosophical stance, is inferior to the theistic stance, and therefore, it is an unwise wager, to use the Pascal's analogy.

Keywords: Atheism, Nonreligion, Epistemic Features, Burden of Proof, Concept Application