



Einstein And Culture

Gerhard Sonnert

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Popular images of Albert Einstein often depict him as either an almost superhuman solitary genius or as a countercultural rebel. In this unique perspective on Einstein the man, sociologist of science Gerhard Sonnert argues that both popular images are simplistic and misleading because they fail to account for the impact of culture. In this scholarly yet accessible book, Sonnert examines major features of German *Kultur*, showing how powerful cultural influences helped to shape Einstein's life and science.

The author demonstrates how strongly Einstein's physical research program was driven by a pivotal cultural goal: the quest for the synthesis of a scientific worldview (*Weltbild*). His was the rebellion of the idealistic radical in the name of *Kultur* against its perceived failings and shortcomings. Sonnert also shows that Einstein's quest was deeply motivated by a broadly defined religious impulse. Here again, the physicist reveals himself to be a true creature of *Kultur*, epitomizing the German scientist-priest.

Einstein and Culture is a fascinating, insightful, and original study of a neglected aspect of Einstein's life and work.

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