

Huston Smith

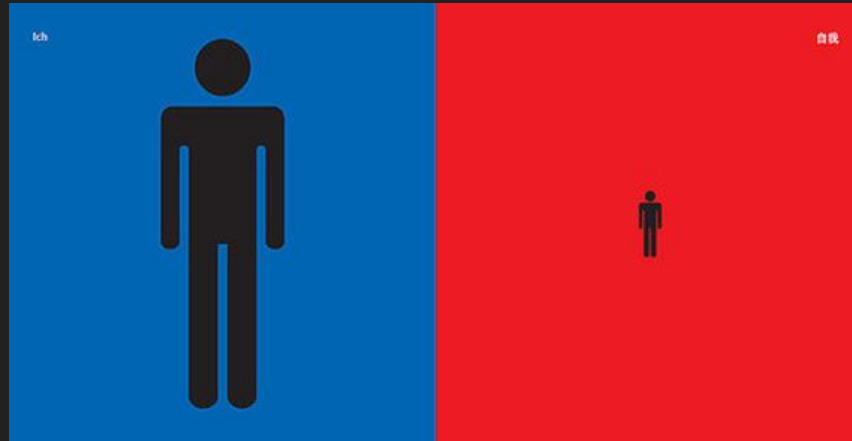
Point of Departure 2

Target Audience

- Smith: This book and its teachings are adopted for a western audience.
- Mostly an attempt for the west to understand the east and Islam

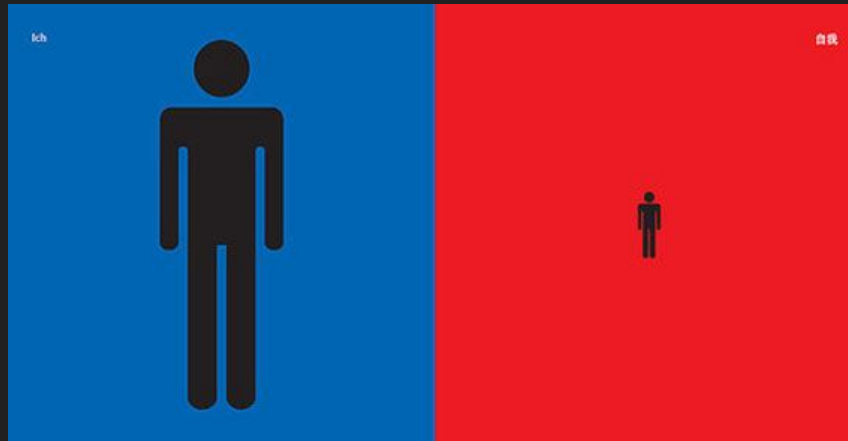
Religion in the west

- Smith: “When historians look back on our century, they may remember it most, not for space travel or the release of nuclear energy, but as the time when the peoples of the world first came to take one another seriously.”



Religion in the west

- Smith: We are beginning to become citizens of the world.
 - So understanding world religions is an action which we must take sooner or later
 - The popular religions aren't going anywhere soon

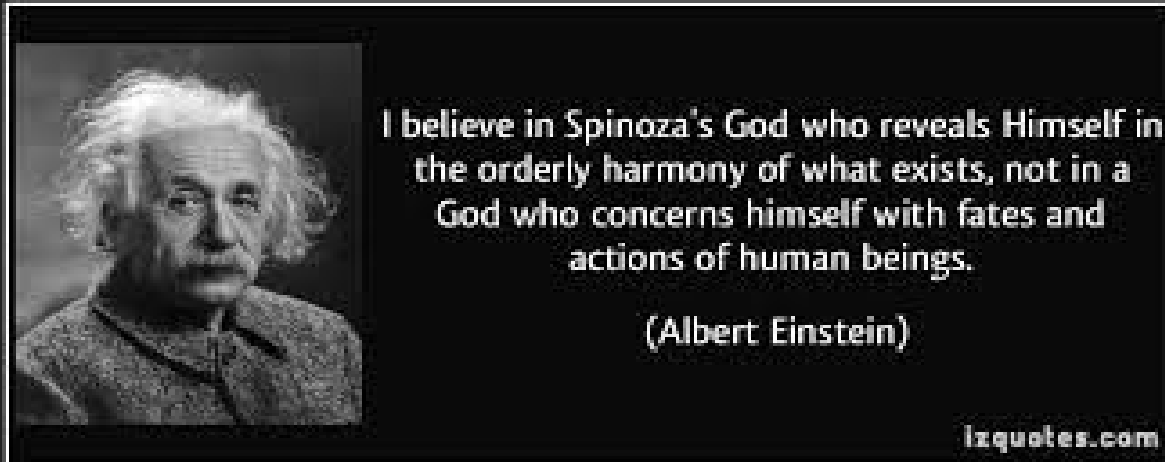


Religion in the west

- Take religions seriously
 - Not a Ripley's believe it or not
 - Not Ancient Aliens
- Smith: The people we will cover in this book are the most influential people in the history of the world
- Smith: "Science makes major contributions to minor needs".

Greek and German Philosophy + God

- Famous Western Philosophers: Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Spinoza, and Descartes
 - Each uses “God” in their Philosophies
 - The usage of “God” is not tied to a popular religion
 - The usage is not “spiritual”
 - The usage is necessary - nothing can exist without “God”



Greek and German Philosophy + God

- Western Philosophy moves the position of “God” in society
 - Re-adjusts the position the religious “God”
 - “God” isn’t something which can really communicate with humans
 - More of a foundation - allows things to subsist
 - “God” is more speculative than concrete

Greek and German Philosophy + God

- God is often a centerpiece in Ancient, Medieval, and Modern Philosophy
- Plato: The ultimate form (Justice)
- Aristotle: The prime mover (The first cause)



Greek and German Philosophy + God

- Two possible ways to view the usage of God in western philosophy:
 - Appeasing the masses
 - There is a portion of the population which would have been infuriated if God wasn't mentioned
 - Descartes saw what happened to Galileo when he talked about a God-less universe
 - Belief that something exists beyond space and time:
 - Again, not spiritual
 - “Spiritual” is rarely ever found in traditional western philosophy
 - Sometimes “Spirit” is used - but this is very specific (Hegel)
 - This usage is closer to Brahman

Greek and German Philosophy + God

- What exists beyond space and time? (Kant)
 - Some realm where numbers exist
 - Example: The number 1
 - Some realm where personal identity exists
 - Example: The self is different in different circumstances/perspectives
 - Some realm where “things-in-themselves” exist
 - Example: We never “see” objects -though they are there

Greek and German Philosophy + God

- Some Philosophers, like Nietzsche, have said that “God” is a relative term created by humans:
 - “God is dead” is one of Nietzsche’s most famous quotes
 - Understanding: The “God” which humans worshipped for the majority of the middle ages died at the end of the enlightenment period
 - The individual thought they were free - but is really just part of the herd