



u3a learn,
laugh,
live

Science
Philosophy
Spirituality

Module 3:
The Geography of Thought

CHECKING IN

- In November, we talked about the significance of “stories”, and the perils of perception.
- In December, we showed a movie about how hydrogen gas transformed itself into everything in the universe.
- Now we want to start exploring how we got into a position to be able to tell that story.
- Question to us all

How can we make our conversations more participative and/or engaging?



JARED DIAMOND GUNS GERMS & STEEL

20TH
ANNIVERSARY
EDITION
With a new
afterword by
the author

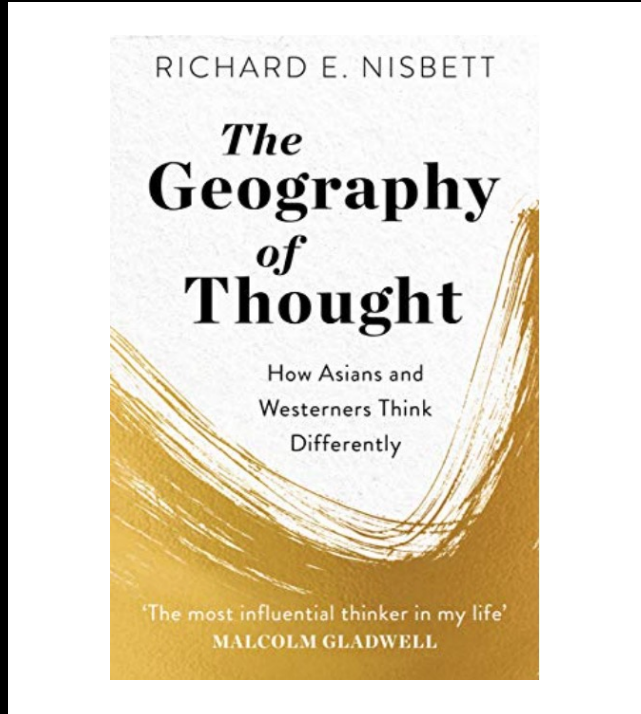
A short history
of everybody
for the last
13,000 years



Over One Million Copies Sold

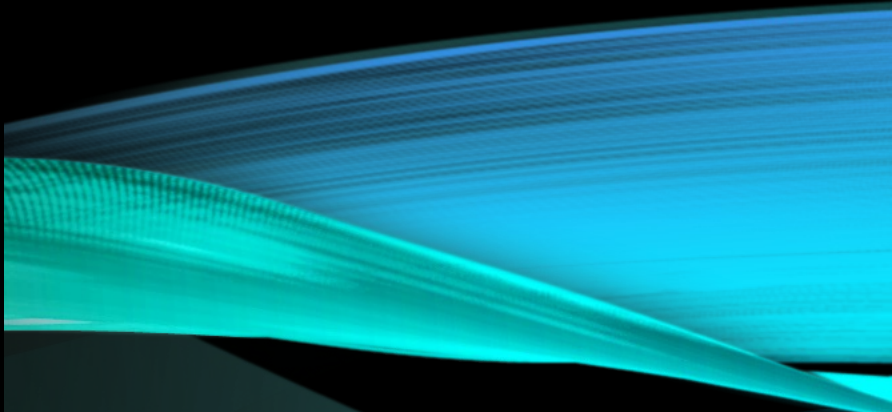
1997: YALI'S QUESTION

- *“Why is it that you white people developed so much cargo and brought it to New Guinea, but we black people had little cargo of our own?”*
- *Led Jared Diamond to an inter-disciplinary inquiry into what led to a civilisation 's success or failure*



2003:

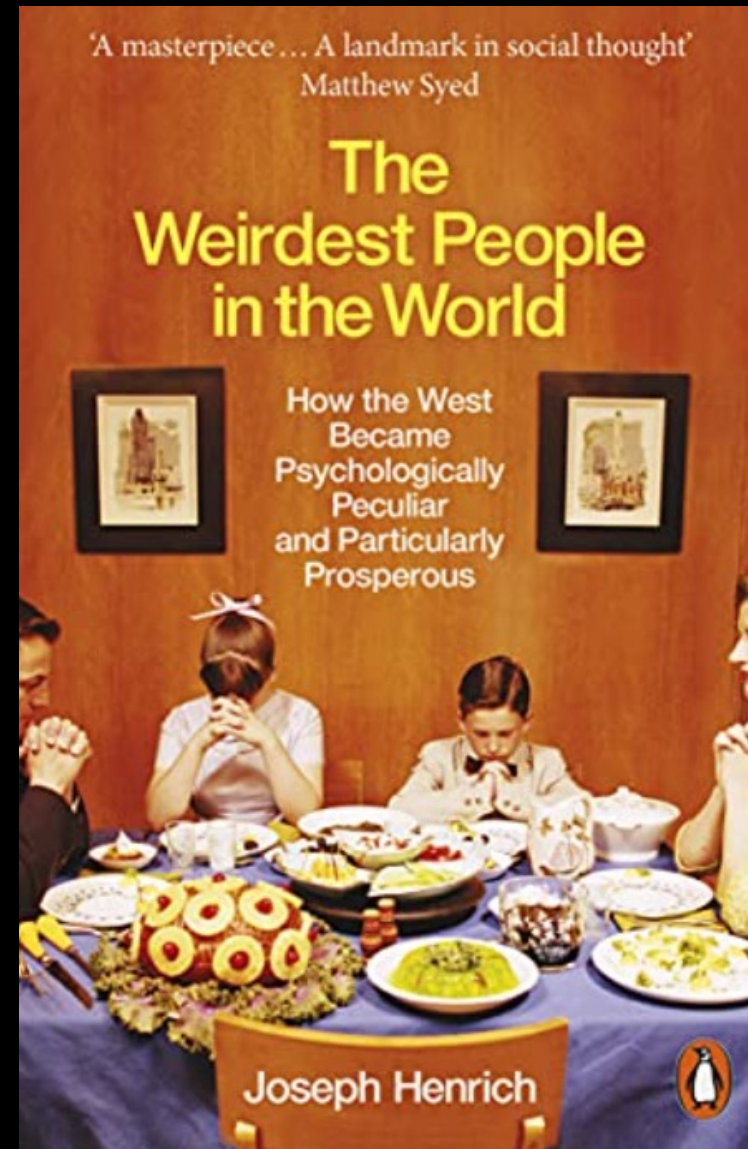
CULTURE
CHANGES
HOW WE
THINK ABOUT
THINKING



2020: WE ARE WEIRD

- Western
- Educated
- Industrialised
- Rich
- Democratic

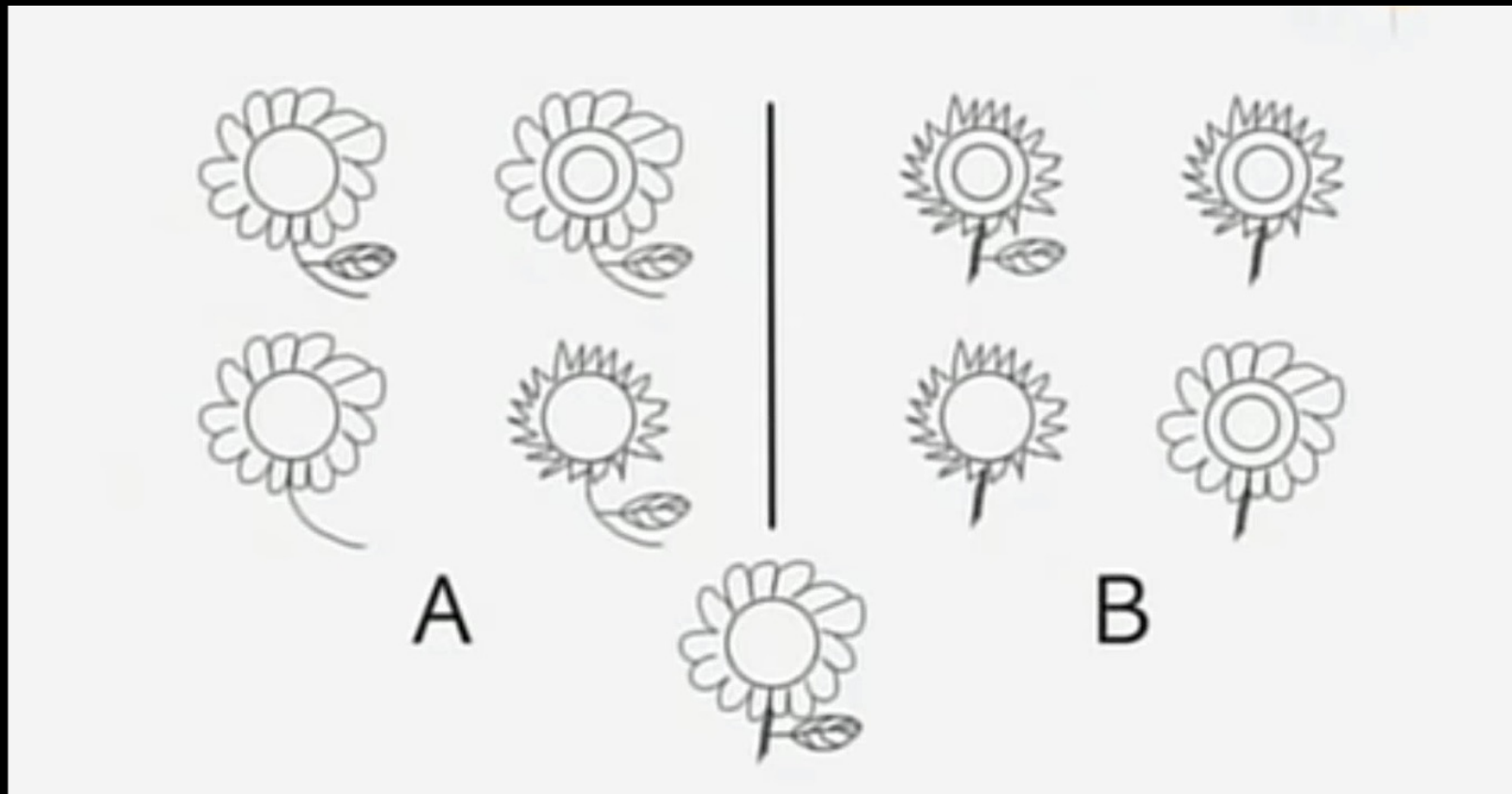
How people in the West became highly individualistic, nonconformist, analytical and control-oriented.



NOTES ABOUT THE VIDEO

- Strongly influenced by Richard Nisbett's work
 - Based on statistically significant research
 - Social science – not science
 - Generalisations hold for populations, but individuals vary.
-
- South-Korean-made video
 - More slowly paced than previous videos we have watched.
 - Sub-titles are autogenerated from speech
 - When the language is not English, the captions are total rubbish.

VIDEO OF EASTERN VS WESTERN THOUGHT



SUMMARY

Westerners

- Focus on objects
- Tend to use more nouns
- Categorise by shape
- Words for objects are independent of situation
- Look out at the world through the eyes of an individual
- Concepts formed by Greek Philosophers

Asians

- Focus on relationships
- Tend to use more verbs
- Categorise by substance
- Words for the same object vary depending on situation
- Perceive the world from outside the individual, and include the individual in the context
- Concepts formed by Asian Philosophers

DISCUSSION

- Take a few minutes to unpack what you have heard with your table colleagues.



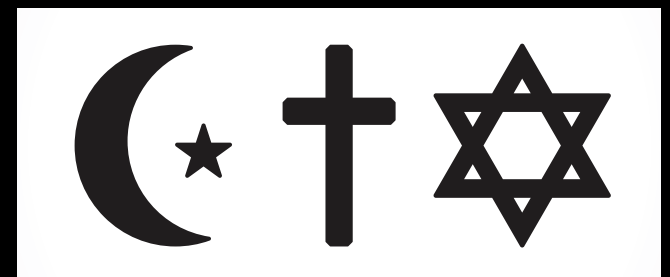
- Use the sheets provided
- Consider respective strengths and weaknesses in terms of ‘making sense of the world’
- Respect other people’s views

REFRESHMENT BREAK



HOW DOES THIS AFFECT RELIGIONS?

- Take a few minutes to share your thoughts with your table colleagues.
 - What points seemed as if they would influence religious traditions?
 - Have you personally had to confront East/West differences?



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13:06

Basic Teachings of Confucianism

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The Wisdom of Taoism

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What is a religious person? - Antony Flew, R.M. Hare,...

28:24

What is a religious person? - Antony Flew, R.M. Hare,...

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God, god & gods? PARABLE OF THE INVISIBLE GARDENER

27:23

What is the difference between God, god, and god...

153 views · 2 months ago

WHY STUDY Philosophy of Religion?

18:52

Why Study Philosophy of Religion? - Introduction to...

146 views · 2 months ago

WHAT IS Philosophy of Religion? What do you study?

33:02

What is Philosophy of Religion? What do you study?

168 views · 2 months ago

THE VALUE OF Philosophy?

210 views · 2 months ago

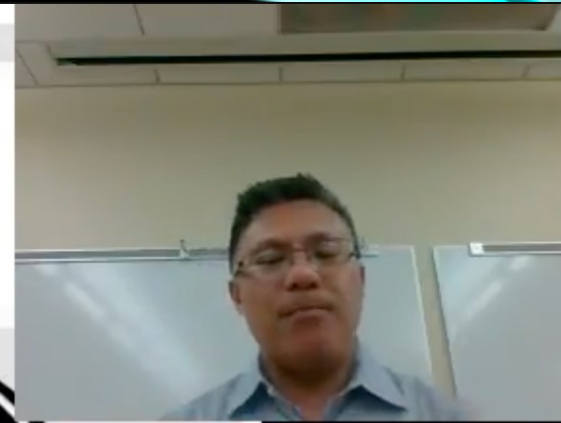
ValueofPhilosophy2

210 views · 2 months ago

EASTERN RELIGION



1. Emphasis on mystical experience.
2. Emphasis on intuitive, experiential knowledge.
3. Acknowledges the limitation of language.
4. Emphasis on the unity and interconnectedness of all things.
5. Emphasis on reality/universe being dynamic, rather than static ("motion/action" vs. "thingness")
6. Emphasizes liberation from isolated, individual self to identify with ultimate reality.



THE REVOLUTIONARY IDEA: MONOTHEISM

Common Characteristics of The Western (Abrahamic) God

The Three Perfections:

- Omniscient
- Omnipotent
- Omnibenevolent

What does this mythos tell you about the western worldview?

- Order, not chaotic. Future planned: destined.
- Anything can happen – all things possible.
- Reality is inherently good, safe.

Very different than other cultures with deities (i.e. Greek gods).



22:33 / 28:27



KEY (GENERAL) DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EAST AND WEST



East

1. Time: Cyclic, Periodic
2. Perspective, pattern, very important
3. Focus on process & development.
4. One with, member of, natural world.
5. An aspect of creation.
6. Reality is ultimate.
7. Understanding this reality is the key.

West

1. Time: Linear
2. Events, **history**, very important
3. Focus on choices and actions how.
4. Dominion over, caretakers of, nature.
5. Center of creation.
6. God (being) is ultimate.
7. Relationship with God is the key.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION



- What can we learn from understanding different World Views or Perspectives? (Remember Michael Patrick Lynch's talk in Module 1)
- How does relating a religion to the culture from which it emerged help or hinder us in making sense of the world?



See you next month

Before then – something to think about.

What periods in the development of Christianity (if any) are you interested in discussing or learning more about?

Wednesday 1st and 15th
February