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Harari and Modern Day Sociology

Have you ever believed something for your entire life, and then one person comes along and single-handedly changes your view on that certain something in less than the amount of time it takes to read a chapter in a book? Well Harari definitely had his way of doing that for most people who read the book he wrote, *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*.

Yuval Noah Harari was a proclaimed author who wrote on his way of thinking in Sociology and how the world revolves around *Homo sapiens* and the way they evolved over time.

According to Harari, “a person’s happiness from day to day has remarkably little to do with their material circumstances.” Growing up for years, I personally believed that a person’s happiness was based on their life and the things that make up their lives. However, Harari states otherwise. In previous units that we have gone over in class this semester, we learned about something called “The Beauty Myth.” The *Beauty Myth* is taught as the “social power and prominence of women have increased, the pressure they feel to adhere to unrealistic social standards of physical beauty has also grown stronger from commercial influences on the mass media.”

Referring back to Harari and his outlooks on life and humans, social standards and materialistic things do not make up a person’s happiness. Yet, the *Beauty Myth* states that

social standards and materialistic things do and should make up a person's happiness.

Growing up in a middle-to-upper class in America, I have experienced different social standards from people. I always partook in beauty pageants, was cheer captain and dated the star football player, as well as drove a nice vehicle once I turned sixteen. Most people look at my life and call me the "rich city girl" who is above everyone else. However, that is not the case. Little do they know that I look down upon myself most days and do not see the "beauty" that I was nominated for in all of those pageants I did as a child and into my teenage years. This is a prime example of where people's opinions can get ahead of themselves and provide division in this world, where there is endless possibilities of ending that if only people took the right incentive to stop it.

"Throughout this book, I often use the first person plural to speak about the future of humankind. I talk about what "we" need to do about "our" problems. But maybe there is no, "we." Maybe one of our biggest problems is that different human groups have completely different futures." The world has come to a place where there is no inbetween. Although people claim that the world is "one," there is still division, such as human groups having completely different futures according to Harari. Referring back to the previous paragraph, there is division in this world. This is a point-blank fact. Harari makes this point in his book, and this could also relate to class division in America. Many Americans are recognized in three different tiers in the U.S. such as lower class, middle class or the working class, and upper class. These classes are obtained by a person's income, wealth,

educational attainment, occupation, and social networks.

Harari simply makes history interesting. He has a way of making things sound like they're important, even if they're not. Harari has a way of agreeing with people just to disagree. In his book, he is a bit more on the biased side of things regarding history and sociology in America, or in the bigger picture, the world. Most historians or sociologists tend to have their own opinion and only their own opinion, this goes along with Harari as well. One prime example of Harari being a bit controversial, yet goes along with what most sociologists say as well, is that religion does not belong in politics. Religion tends to play its own role in people's lives, all differently for each person. "The Supreme Court has interpreted religion to mean a sincere and meaningful belief that occupies in the life of its possessor a place parallel to the place held by God in the lives of other persons." Although religion does play a huge role, that does not mean that it should be involved with politics or lawmaking, and Harari makes that known.

Feminism is a huge thing according to Harari. "Probably the greatest political and social revolution of the last century is the feminist revolution," he adds. "It altered the dynamics between men and women which hadn't changed for thousands of years... and the amazing thing about it was that very few people were killed." This is linked to the unit we learned previously this semester, *Doing Gender*. *Doing Gender* involves the everyday performance of "a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine 'natures.'

This concept is consistent, similar, and complementary with Harari's thoughts and feelings on this unit in Sociology. This is proven by the way Harari speaks on behalf of Feminism and Doing Gender, where it was basically a battle between the sexes for the longest of times.

As a young woman growing up, I always battled with the boys in different and unique ways. Along with my experiences of beauty pageants and cheerleading, I also played basketball. This in people's eyes is considered a "boys" sport, and girls are not fit to play basketball. However, I tried to bend those standards and boost the confidence of other young women around me to try something different, like playing a boys sport. Harari definitely supported something like this because he was so heavily set on feminism and how strong women support strong women.

Along with the major class division, pressure on feminism, as well as racism in today's society, there is division in its entirety in today's world. More than just class division, there is individual division such as discrimination amongst races and the way of living for people, including bashing gay people or couples. With Harari being apart of the gay community, he makes it clear that this way of living is difficult because of people's morals and religious beliefs. According to a recent interview with Yuval Harari, he states that "There is no more effective way to show your zeal for a religion and therefore hide all of the charges that you allow than to use violence and to take a group of people - usually a minority - and use extreme violence against them."

After all is said and done, no matter how far we think we have come in history over time, there is still class division, racism, religion in lawmaking, as well as division in the world including America. Harari makes valid points in his book, *21 Lessons for the 21st Century* involving all of these topics, as well as including other things that can lead to class division, like the AI is considered a “useless class.” There is always and will be constant discrimination and segregation amongst people that live in this world and provide anything towards society. Using personal experiences as well as gathering information from Harari’s personal experiences, there is no stopping the horrible things that occur in this world. However, we do have the capabilities as individuals to try and make the world a better place, one person at a time. This will come with time and may take the rest of the world’s lifetime, yet, it could only get better if people put in the effort to try and be nice for a change.