

Soc 105

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## 21 Lessons for the 21st Century

In the book, *"21 Lessons for the 21st Century"*, Harari delves into a ton of lessons and ideas for the 21st century to think about. Along with the book, our Sociology class offers multiple lessons and ideas for our class to think and reflect on. Many of the concepts seen in the book correlate to what sociologists we have learned about agree on, while many other of the concepts we have seen in the book counter the things that we have learned in class. Although some concepts that were talked about in the book counter what we have learned in the class, the concept of religion that is talked about in the book relates to the idea of the collective consciousness, while also going against the ideas of Fligstein and MacAdams.

In the beginning of the semester, we learned about Durkheim and his take on the overall idea of the collective consciousness and what the collective consciousness means. According to Durkheim, the collective consciousness is a set of shared beliefs and moral attitudes that operate as a unifying force within a society. This concept is socially constructed: it is developed by the people for the people, in order to provide guidelines for attitudes, behavior and community involvement. Furthermore, the collective consciousness determines what is considered "good" or "bad" in a society.

to meet these expectations may face social sanctions, either formally from a systemic standpoint or informally from those close to them. Every society has a collective consciousness respective to their origin or cultures which tells every citizen of that society how to act. Without the collective consciousness, the society does not know how to act and the society will cease to exist. Furthermore, according to Durkheim, individuality is a part of the morality we must exhibit in our society. The collective consciousness forms whenever humans are interacting, at any time. The collective consciousness is not tangible and is only able to be seen through collective representations. The collective representations are things such as symbols and artifacts that embody the collective beliefs and values of a group/society. Things such as technology, institutions and rituals are all factors that can influence the making of the collective consciousness. A perfect example of a collective representation would be religion. Religion holds beliefs, morals, and values that are dear to many people of a society.

In Harari's book, *"21 Lessons for the 21st Century"*, Harari delves into the idea of religion and what religion means. Harari sees religion as a set of "orders" because religion offers rules that, in return, tell people how to cooperate. These "orders" are based upon a belief that is made from something beyond the physical world. Furthermore, Harari states that religious groups sometimes, as a whole, harden their views on certain ideas and/or topics and these views become sacred and everlasting ideas for the certain religion. Harari also believes that religion unifies people together which, in return, creates an everlasting group of connected people. Harari states, in his

heal, cure and farm. For example, when there wasn't a good harvest, farmers would pray to the Gods to bring a good harvest. Now, though, in the 21st century, we use religion as a way to determine who are "us" and who are "them". We use our collective beliefs and morals to distinguish who is a part of our "group" and who is not a part of our religious "group".

Although Harari does not directly correlate religion to the collective consciousness that Durkheim talked about, there is a direct correlation to these two concepts. As talked about previously, the collective consciousness is anything in society that determines what is considered "good" or "bad", which could also be defined as morals. Religion holds morals for people as people dictate their life to the beliefs they have that correlate to their religion. Religion is considered part of the collective consciousness of a society because religion embodies collective beliefs and values that a society, or group of people, may have. Furthermore, Durkheim argues that religion creates collective consciousness by allowing for shared values and moral beliefs. Along with this, religion is imprinted on an individual; the individual feels the weight of the religion on them through the community and their beliefs. Religion offers a sense of belonging and a shared identity in a community. Through beliefs and values that are encompassed by a religion, people act in certain ways, eat certain foods, and believe in different things depending on what the entirety of the religion does or agrees with.

To connect these concepts on a deeper level, Harari also delves into the idea that religion can play a role in policy formation. Since religion is a universal language that gives everyone a baseline as to how to act morally, the government can correlate

government creates its laws related to a certain religion, the people who pertain to that religion will directly follow those laws in order to feel moral and correct in society. This is a perfect example of how the collective consciousness plays a role in our society because people will live directly off these laws to feel moral and become a unifying force.

In my own life, I can clearly see the direct correlation between the collective consciousness and the role of religion. As a Jewish woman growing up in a Jewish family, the things my family does or eat could be considered different to the average Christian family. Part of the belief of Judaism is believing that God commands kosher laws, leading to the food we eat being kosher. As a religion, Jewish people believe that eating kosher allows for them to be closer and more connected to God. This idea of eating kosher is a perfect example of collective consciousness. My entire family, and other Jewish families, eat kosher in order to feel more connected to God in the religion of Judaism. This is a shared ideal that many Jewish families do in order to feel more connected not only to God, but as an entire society in one religion.

Religion and the collective consciousness have a direct correlation due to the duties of both of these concepts. The collective consciousness impresses upon individuals the correct morality and behavior one must have in a society. On the other hand, religion is specific morals and beliefs that groups of people live by in order to act correctly and feel accepted within society. Through both the collective consciousness in a society and religion, a society is more connected and people within a certain society, or community, are able to feel as one big community instead of separate individuals in a

concepts initially, but the ways that they work alongside each other to dictate behavior and perpetuate social norms are deeply similar and cannot be overlooked.

As we learned in class, Fligstein and MacAdams believed that coordinated meaning making is based upon the idea that homo sapiens need belief systems to provide social roles. Along with this, our brains have the capacity to make and provide these social roles. As our brains became more tied together with our emotions, the meaning behind physical objects became religious.

The ideas of religion seen in the book written by Harari, Harari disagrees that humans need a belief system in order to provide social roles in society. Harari believes that religion is very subjective and open to all forms of opinions. With this being said, Harari questions religion by asking how we can base life off of something so broad and open for discussion. Furthermore, the belief of religion, according to Harari, can be viewed differently from person to person depending on their own personal views.

Although the meaning of religion directly correlates to the meaning of the collective consciousness according to Durkheim, the thoughts of Fligstein and MacAdams go against the thoughts of Harari relating to religion. Fligstein and MacAdams believe directly that belief systems are important to the social structure of homo sapiens. On the other hand, Harari believes that religion is too broad for life to be based on.

The concepts we learned in class and the lessons taught by Harari in the book "*21 Lessons for the 21st Century*", both, coincide with each other and also go against each other in multiple ways. The book that Harari wrote delves into multiple ideas, but

the collective consciousness in a society follow the outlines about religion as a whole in the eyes of Harari. Although this is true, the thoughts of Fligstein and MacAdams, learned about in class, refute the ideas of religion seen by Harari.