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Essay Brief 10: Harari's Part III

In “21 Lessons for the 21st Century” the author, Yuval Noah Harari, does an in depth analysis of the current issues being observed in the world as humans move into the future. Specifically, in part III, chapter 13 of this book he discusses humans in relation to God. Yuval Harari’s writing within chapter 13 can be related to the contents within “The Neurology of Religion” by Maryanski and Turner.

In chapter 13 of “21 Lessons for the 21st Century” Yuval Noah Harari writes about morality and how individuals are not required to believe in a religion to have ethics. Adding to this, he mentions that humans only require an awareness of what pain is in order to act morally. Continuing on in this discussion, Harari talks about how unprincipled actions are disadvantageous because they risk safety and deplete the faith among individuals. This conversation in Harari’s book can be tied to the points made by Maryanski and Turner in their writing, “Neurology of Religion.” Maryanski and Turner highlight how social evolution has brought upon beneficial and negative emotions that fuel the creation of a collective consciousness. The beneficial and negative emotions they describe can be related to Harari’s descriptions of how humans must understand suffering to act properly, because pain would be considered a negative emotion. In addition, in chapter 13 Harari mentions how religious beliefs can create compassion or generate irritation in people. This idea can be linked to when Maryanski and Turner discuss how the evolution of the brain has allowed for an expansion of human emotions, allowing humans to feel sensations such as shame and guilt. This range of emotions in “Neurology of Religion” is what allows humans to feel sympathy or anger in terms of belief in a God.

From a broad perspective the books, “Neurology of Religion” and “21 Lessons for the 21st Century” would be considered highly distinct. Yet, after taking an in depth look into the contents of these readings it is apparent that the authors make some connections to one another’s writings. Maryanski and Turner set up a foundation about the range of emotions humans experience and then Harari takes these emotions and proves how they relate to morality and how they can be generated by religion as well.