

Dating back to the eighteenth century and running into today, collective ideas have developed and dispersed in societies. The collective consciousness has brought a basis of how people work together. From collaborative villages, to bizarre folktales, to spirituality, to celebrating someone on the anniversary of the day they were born. A collective consciousness is described as a set of beliefs or ideas that a society, group, or community follows and sets the grounds for how people should live their lives. Collective consciousness exemplifies what actions are right or what is wrong and presents morals to live by as well. A collective representation is the more tangible entity of collective consciousness. For example, gifts that are given to people on their birthdays, the cross of Jesus Christ, the Quran, a wedding ring, a country's flag and other items that symbolize a collective idea in society. While Yuval Harari's stances on collective ideas building societies line up with theorists Neil Fligstein and Doug McAdam, his beliefs on the labor market are inconsistent with Karl Marx's thoughts on the expansion of capitalism.

Society has proved that humans do not need tangible proof or structured evidence to all mutually believe in something. As long as a large enough group of humans collectively believe it and spread that information, then that collective idea will stick as a component of our structured society. Yuval Harari, in his book, *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*, presents the concept of “fake news” and how fake collective consciousness of concepts that cannot be scientifically proven can be beneficial in the productivity and trajectory of a society (2019). Harari also touches on how collective ideas or fake news can be harmful to societies as well. Religion is a big system that

people still have strong belief in religion with roots that were created far before anyone on earth today was alive. The only confirmation people have to backup religion is a book, whether that be the Bible or the Quran or any other book of faith, folk tales told down generations, and other generational stories. There are many different religions and in each one, people have their own interpretations and values that stem off of the faith. Despite all these discrepancies, people believe their faith because their like-peers believe it and their family believes it and their church reinforces those beliefs. Harari argues that the collective consciousness of religion brings “effective tools in humanity’s tool kit” even though it is indeed “fake” (Harari, p.241). Religion brings people together, provides hope in people’s lives and beauty in the world. While religion brings all these positive things to life, it also allows for a certain perspective of the world and shapes how people view the world. Theorists Neil Fligstein and Doug McAdam in, *A Theory of Fields*, introduce the existential function of the social. The existential function of the self reinforces the collective consciousness and that people believe things because they are told they are true. Religious individuals believe in their faith because they are told by people, who were told by other people that their religious stories are true. The existential function of the social describes the way people perceive the world. Similar to what Harari said about the collective beliefs of religion, the existential function also brings a meaning and purpose to people’s lives.

While the collective consciousness has seen to make positive change in society and humanity, it can also be harmful. A podcast from Module One called “Lore” by Aaron Mahnke expresses an historical example of a harmful idea collectively believed

illness and medical treatments were created, people believed that fairies, or changelings, came and abducted people and replaced them with another fairy. So when a person was sick, people believed that they were an imposter that was going to harm them. There was no evidence of this being true. The superstition of the changelings was strictly a folklore that people told others to explain why their loved ones and their neighbors kept appearing unwell. They used folklore as a way to compensate for the fear of the unknown. In a more modern day sense, Harari describes the current post-truth era and how collective ideas can also lead to negative effects. Harari gives a direct example of advertising Coca-Cola and how advertisers utilize well-known healthy people of society, like athletes and physically fit actors, to spread a false appeal that it should be desired, often ignoring the facts that drinking large amounts has been proven to lead to health issues like diabetes and obesity. Other prevalent issues in society that have arisen from collective beliefs are toxic ideals coming from Hitler evoking complete hatred of another population, or communism itself, or propaganda like used in the Soviet Union and the ruling of Joseph Stalin (Harari, 2014, pp. 244-245). An example of unhealthy collective consciousness that has surfaced in modern-day political issues is the decrepit beliefs of QAnon. QAnon is a mysterious group or recently identified person, that throughout the 2020 election and beyond has been filling the media with false information, beliefs, and theories about a range of topics. Even though the information QAnon puts out is strikingly false and outlandish, people, even political leaders, seem to believe and back up their ideas. This collective representation of false

America.

Yuval Harari expresses conviction that one day society, including the labor market, will be overwhelmed with artificial intelligence. Our economy will be controlled by them. Our jobs will be taken over by artificial intelligence. We see it happening in the current day with self-driving cars and the continuous improvement of technology. Our computers, televisions, hand-held devices, and even workout machines are very smart and can code and solve problems quicker and more accurately than the brain can. Harari argues that computers and artificial intelligence are much more reliable, safer and efficient and could even be a resource for careers as crucial as medical workers. Harari gives the example of doctors and the transmission of updated information. Artificial intelligent doctors would be able to, in seconds, receive updated information on new medicine or treatments that are critical for patient care(Harari, 2018, pp. 23-26). However, real life doctors as a whole community cannot retrieve that information that quickly. This comparison makes artificial doctors overall seem more appealing and productive. Harari does stress however, that these developments will not come quick or soon and will come at different times depending on what the job requires. The more routineized jobs will have a sooner takeover of artificial intelligence but the jobs that require more emotional tendencies and personal analyzing will be replaced later on as technology advances.

Karl Marx has a completely different approach and perspective on jobs and the working community. Labor is the legs of a society and the collaborative effort to put in physical work builds a community. Marx's ideas reference the collective understanding

to assist others to overall better the whole village. As free markets started to grow and the meaning and morals of an economy was changing, the work market changed. Humans began working more as labor providers and less as collaborative community-enhancement. Marx picked up on the issues that surfaced with the surge of capitalism. The more people worked and the more they produced, the less they earned. As the value of the product they produced increased, the value of themselves decreased. This ongoing issue led to a disconnect in the worker with themself. Of course, Karl Marx wrote *Estranged Labour* before technology and especially before artificial intelligence. The concept of computerized and programmed entities taking over jobs was nowhere on his radar. The issues Marx presented with labor and the human benign are still relevant in current society. People overwork themselves and dedicate so much time and effort into company duties for a result that does not equal the work he put in. Either not enough pay or not strong enough benefits or good conditions and treatment by the facility or the people running the company. This brings my question of if artificial intelligence were to take over jobs and replace human beings in labor, would it be beneficial by solving the issues capitalism has brought? Or would it instead allow for a misstep in the collective and productive collaboration that humans have lived and thrived by since we were intelligent enough to do so?

Humans work to earn money and provide a life for themselves and their loved ones. The working society and capitalism is a collective consciousness but it is also what the world has firmly built itself on. Humanity relies on the system that has been created and altered for hundreds of years which includes labor markets, trading,

immensely and if it continues to do so with artificial intelligence swooping in as well then our collective beliefs on labor and the working system may have to change.