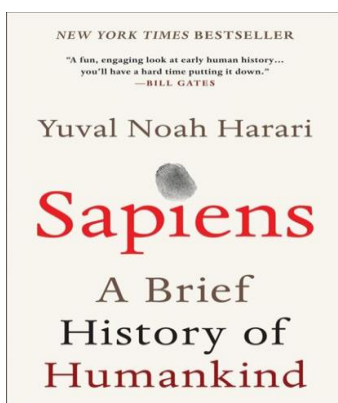


## SAPIENS A BRIEF HISTORY OF HUMANKIND: STORY ABOUT HUMAN EVOLUTION AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

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Yuval Noah Harari is a history professor of Israeli births who has written three books of *best-Seller* namely *sapiens A Brief History of Humankind* (2011), *the future Homo Deus of Mankind* (2015) and *21 Lessons for the 21st century* (2018). If first book tells of human life in the past, the second book is exploring the human being of the future, and then the last book sees human nature now. *Sapiens* first published in Hebrew in 2011 and later published in English in 2014.

In *sapiens*, Prof. Harari invites us to realize that only in the relatively short time the species “sapiens” – one among the countless other species – has undergone some kind of revolution that makes it *powerful* and most potent against its species. What makes us brilliant, empowered to kill and become sapiens? Who we are human, how can we get here? And where will we go?

Through the four chapters of its description – having previously pasted the historical period from 13.5 million years ago to present and future (IX-X) – Prof. Harari in detail dissected what he described as a cognitive revolution (around 70,000 BCE when his imagination began to evolve in the cognition of sapiens), the Agricultural Revolution (circa 12,000 BC with the start of the Agricultural Revolution), the Unification of humankind (the consolidation of human political organizations), and the Scientific Revolution (starting 1500 with the advent of science).

*Homo sapiens* (from sapiens-wise species, genus Homo – males) first evolved 2.5 million years ago from the genus *apes* called Australopithecus (*Southern Ape*) and traveled to North Africa, Europe, and Asia. The different environments led to the development in differing directions. Humans in Europe and western Asia evolved into *homo neanderthalensis* in the Java life of *homo soloensis*, *Homo floresiensis*, while evolution in eastern Africa also continued to take place.

Prof. Harari, in detail, also described various theories when describing the existence of sapiens from an evolutionary perspective. Namely, the *Inbreeding theory* when describing the possibility of unification of Sapiens with Neanderthals or sapiens with local Erectus or *Replacement Theory* where Sapiens replaced all previous beings without merging with them and mostly being “pure sapiens.”

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## 1. Cognitive Revolution

Prof. Harari also explains the secrets of Sapiens' success in survival, how they adapt to different habitats. Answers found from all debates--how Homo Sapiens conquered the world--is due to the development of their unique language. The period between 70,000 and 30,000 years ago get characterized by a revolution in the cognitive abilities of sapiens. Experts then referred to as the result of a genetic mutation in sapiens' brain structure that allows them to think and communicate using a new language type or called the Tree of Knowledge mutation (HAL 23). This unique language is a means of sharing information about the world – especially about humans – as a way of *gossip*.

The point, according to this theory of scandal, Homo sapiens is primarily a social creature, and social cooperation is the key to survival and reproduction. They need to know who in the group hate who, who is honest, who is familiar with friends and so on. More importantly, sapiens can talk about fiction (something that does not exist in real). Fiction not only allows sapiens to the imagination but also to work collectively in large quantities. Myths such as the Gospel story, myths in Aboriginal society were even a nationalistic myth in modern countries are critical explanations of why sapiens can “dominate the world.”

## 2. Agricultural Revolution

Through the Agricultural Revolution Chapter, Prof. Harari Ntara explained about the humans who initially hunt and the collector of foodstuffs, evolved into farmers who did farming practices, livestock (domestication of animals) and lived in permanent villages which then allowed to increase the population. The agricultural revolution is seen not only in terms of the success of human *survival* and reproduction but also from the perspective of victims where animals become human slaves, an increasingly artificial farming space landscape, future anxiety due to erratic agricultural cycles (depending on weather and rain). The life side of the farmer also became a full mirror of social and political systems – where the hard-working farmer remained subsistence. At the same time, the work enjoyed by an elite minority, kings, government officials, warriors, clergy, artists, and philosophers.

On the other, the agricultural revolution also opened opportunities for the construction of large cities and the development of human imagination to build a network of unprecedented mass cooperation. All of the cooperation networks of ancient Mesopotamia, the Qin dynasty, the Roman Empire were “*imagined orders*” (Hal 117).

## 3. Human Unification

In chapter 3 of human Unification, Prof. Harari goes further with the explanation of why human society grows more substantial and more complex. At the same time, the construction imaginable (*imagined constructs*) that sustain the social order becomes increasingly deeper. The creation of an artificial instinct network that allows millions of people to cooperate as “culture.” Two views on culture also shown, namely as a norm, beliefs, and values that are unchanged or in constant change (transitions). The authors also demonstrate various examples of contradictions: a contradiction in the benefits of equality and freedom in the French Revolution or Democratic and Republican views on

equality and freedom in American society. At the end of the chapter, Prof. Harari emphasized that the direction of cultural and historical dynamics did not lead to human welfare. Because there was no basis for thinking that the wealthiest culture in history is also the best for Homo Sapiens; While the human individual weakly weakened to influence the historical direction for self-benefit.

Meanwhile, only in the last 500 years, their *power* is a phenomenal growth in human potential. If the year 1500 there are only 500 million people, there are now 7 billion. Total Goods and Services (service) produced in 1500 estimated at \$250 billion, now the value of human production per year reaches \$60 trillion. The calorie consumption in 1500 is 13 trillion calories in energy per day, and now humans consume 1500 trillion calories/day. But according to Prof. Harari, the most decisive was the first atomic bomb blasting in Alamogordo, New Mexico, by US Scientists on July 16, 1945, because it turned out that humans could change not only history but also end it. This historical process includes a human journey to the moon called the *Scientific Revolution*. During this revolution, in essence, humans get several new *powers* by investing Resources in scientific research. Modern science is considered different from the cognitive revolution in terms of (i) willingness to acknowledge ignorance (*to admit ignorance*), (ii) the centrality of observation and mathematics, (iii) to acquire new power. The implications of the far-being of the scientific revolution are the absence of dogma in addition to scientific orthodoxy, knowledge as a power/*Power*, and human beings begin to believe the advancement of the new learning will solve the problem of poverty, disease, war, hunger, even death.

#### **4. Scientific Revolution and Capitalism**

The history also shows no separate scientific revolution with Modern imperialism and capitalism victory: The victory of the Ottoman Empire in the Mediterranean, the Safavid Empire in Persia, the Mughal Empire in India, and the Chinese Empire by the Ming and Qing dynasties including the European success of conquering the “outer world.” The European conquest mentality develops in line with the urge to fill “map kosong” (*emPty mAPs*). This is what in Chapter 15 described as “a marriage between science and empire. Prof. Harari also explained why Europe in the 15th century became the center of cultural, economic, political and military development and gained momentum to become the “master” of the outer *world* (two American continents and The ocean) – something he called contributed by the uninteresting factor of the high power of Asia to conquer and become the power of the oceans. The World Center switched to Europe only in the period 1750-1850, and in 1900 Europe managed to control most of the world’s economies and territories. In 1950 Western Europe and the United States jointly responsible for global production half, While the Chinese portion is only 5% (Hal 312). How can Europe rule the world? Prof. Harari affirmed the critical role of European scientists since 1850, where European domination rests with *military-industrial-scientific complex* and technology. If technology is not difficult to master, why China or Persia can not be like Europe?. Prof. Harari stated that the inaccessible of the values, myths, judicial apparatus, and sociopolitical structures took centuries to form and to become mature-something not easily imitated. In other words, what makes Europe capable of dominating the world is modern science and capitalism. Europeans are accustomed to thinking and acting in scientific and capitalistic ways even before they enjoy technological advances. Thus

also though Europe is no longer in control of the world, but science and capital continue to grow strong.

In Chapter 16, *The Capitalist Creed*, interestingly, Prof. Harari describes how money develops, how the economy plays a role in modern history by understanding what is *called growth*. If the 1500 global production of new goods and services was around \$250 billion, it now reaches \$60 trillion, while the average annual per capita production of \$550 (1500) now reaches \$8,800 per year. The modern economy develops due to the emergence of ideas on “progress.” That increasingly convinces people of the importance of “trust” in economic growth, as “trusts” create credit, and credit brings real economic growth; While the extension itself will strengthen the “trust” and in the future and unlock more credits. Adam Smith’s thought through his book *The Wealth of Nations* – became an essential economic manifesto: increased private corporate profits are the basis for the increase of collective wealth and welfare (348). In the development of capitalism is not merely a doctrine for economic growth but is now ethics – a set of teaching how human beings must behave, educating their children is even a way of thinking.

The principle is “... Economic growth is the supreme good, or at least a proxy for the supreme good because justice, freedom, and even happiness all depend on economic growth. “(H al 351). And “This New” religion has an influence that calls the development of modern science. Modern science funded by the Government or private will consider the factors of production and profit in their investments. Will investments generate economic growth? Question Prof. Harari Next is what will happen later if every growth requires raw materials and energy? Homo sapiens sooner or later will “spend” the natural and energy materials of the planet Earth.

## **5. Permanent Revolution vs. Sapien who became God**

Beginning with an industrial revolution that paves the way for the utilization of energy and production of goods, sapiens frees themselves from the dependence of the surrounding ecosystem – humans mix forests, build roads, transform rivers and build skyscrapers. To meet his needs, sapiens destroys his habitat by generating garbage, damaging ecology even destroying other species. The existence of sapiens far from declining precisely increased from 700 million (1900) to 7 billion nowadays. Meanwhile, the revolution continues to run – consciously or unknowingly – converting agrarian farming bases into a modern industrial era by changing the traditional core of the family community. Families that once marked with strong community characters is now weaker, while individuals, countries, and markets (*Market*) become very strong and prominent components (405). The concept of “*imagined communities*” – a community of people who do not know each other in this context is “nation” as imagined community countries and “consumers” as imagined community markets. Consumerism and nationalism became the driving force of the community having the past, the same interests, and the same future (406). For Prof. Harari, all such phenomena are nothing but imagination: money, corporations, human rights, nations, consumers are an inter-subjective reality – which exists/exists only in our collective imagination.

If we speak the modern revolution, then the concept of revolution changes. No longer concerning the French Revolution (1789), The Liberal Revolution (1848), or the Russian Revolution (1917), but the modern revolution is a revolution occurring every day/month/year. It was not only the revolution as an event of rebellion, warfare,

violence, but also a revolution in times of peace. Earth gets united into a single historical and ecological environment. The modern revolution in the form of the scientific and industrial revolution makes people have the power of *superhuman* and Infinite Energy.

## 6. Question about Happiness

Is humanity with accumulated results for centuries of change, in reality, to be happier? Since the cognitive revolution does the world be a better place to stay. If not, what are the benefits of developing agriculture, Cities, empires, science, and industry?

The philosophers, clergy, psychologists, biologists have already thought about what is making the man happy, whether it be a material, social or spiritual factor? What are health, food, wealth, or family factors? An understanding of the generally accepted happiness as “subjective well-being.” “... *Happiness is something I feel inside myself, a sense of either immediate pleasure or long-term contentment with the way my life is going...*” (Hal 425). In chapter 19, Prof. Harari outlines a lot of illustrated questions about how happy it can be measured and what factors are influential. Is man happier now than in the 1800s? Its invention is that happiness does not depend heavily on the objective conditions of wealth, health, or community but depends on the correlation between actual requirements and subjective expectations.

## 7. Late Homo Sapiens

In the 20th century, Homo Sapiens seemed to be no longer limited by his biological limitations. Natural selection law appears to be “resolved” human beings through intelligent design. In various laboratories, the world scientist continues to undertake engineering living beings. Humans managed to engineer rabbit embryos into green rabbits, perform cloning, and even human cloning. The Era of Darwin’s theory of evolution has ended. Humans have combined different species into a new species of creation. (page 448).

Not limited to creating new species, teams of scientists even animate ancient species that have been extinct thousands of years ago like mammoths. Through the Neanderthal Genome Project, scientists are also reconstructing and will bear a Neanderthal child.

The new technology will also change the laws of nature, with the development of *cyborg engineering*, namely humans with organic and inorganic combinations (humans with bionic hands equipped with various equipment). Not to be covered by the possibility of a hugely different non-human or biological cyborg that will appear with unpredictably philosophical, psychological, and political implications. The phenomenon of Frankenstein (1818) by Mary Shelley – where humans create superhuman beings who eventually become monsters– Gives deep learning that when men “play” into the Lord, he will get punishment. In other words, Prof. Harari delivers Homo sapiens facing the challenge of his existence: nuclear, ecological, or technological threats can turn Homo sapiens into very different creatures not only physically but also in cognitive and emotional.

## 7. Quo Vadis Homo Sapiens?

Amid the technological and biotechnological revolution, which is remarkable and accelerated by information technology, it is as if the man “drowned “ in such a powerful vortex stream. People have not had time to think about and reflect on themselves while contemplating their history and existence. In such a situation, the 498 is said by Prof. Harari as “jerking “ the Homo sapiens. Where will we be, and what is human? Will people be continuously left experimenting and making himself like the creator? Could man be aware of a danger that threatened himself as a result of his repeat? Can technological abilities be directed towards human happiness and well-being, or is it that people will obey their instincts to continue to be creative while creating damage (destruction)?

This book is worth reading carefully and mindfulness because it can be a motivator for us to do deep reflection – amid the tsunami waves of modern revolution that are unlikely to be stopped. Prof. Harari reminded the fact that human beings are mighty, but human beings do not know how to be used for what “power. “ And precisely in this condition man, the Homo sapiens become very dangerous.

If it is placed in the context of the development of Indonesian society today – which in terms of economy is continuing to pursue progress and growth, in terms of the political pursuit of the maximum power and conditions of social culture is no longer loyal to the identity of the itself-this book becomes very interesting and challenging; will be placed where the thought of Prof. Harari It is worth the review if you want to put in the specific context of Indonesia.

Once again, the first part of this trilogy is essential to read by all of us so that the *creator*’s man can maintain his balance and wisdom. Or are we no longer Homo *sapiens*, the man of knowledge?

Happy reading!