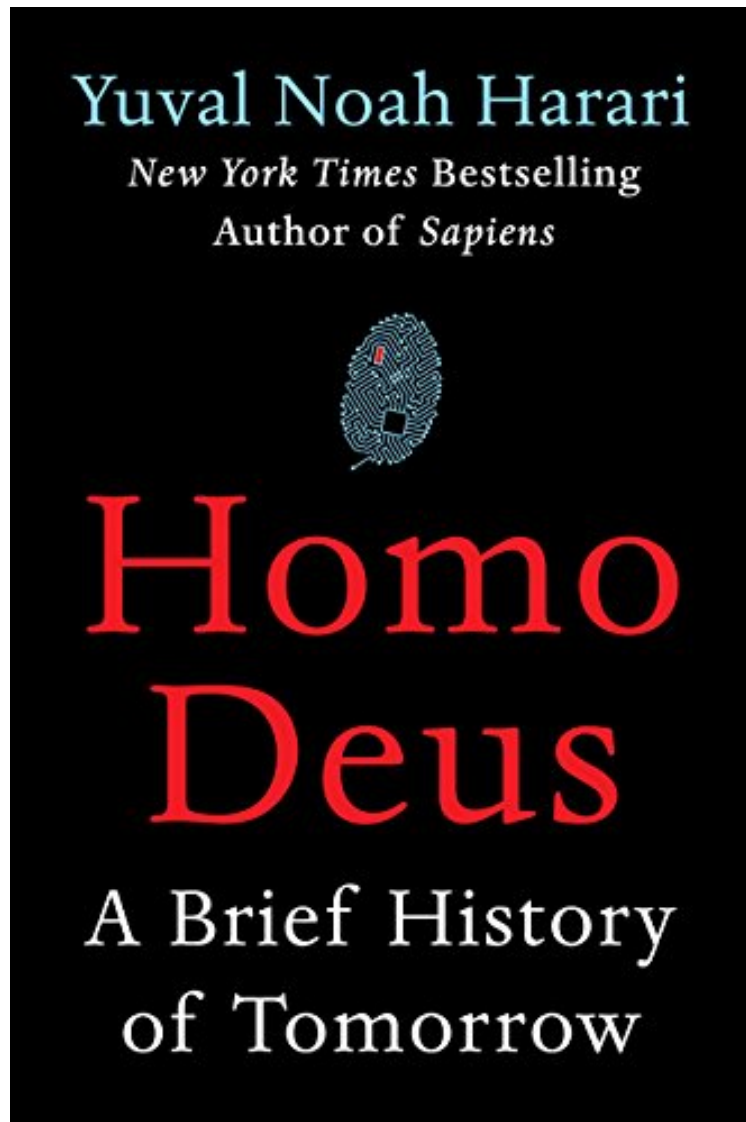


[Free] Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow

## Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow

*Yuval Noah Harari*

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#1136 in Books Yuval Noah Harari 2017-02-21 2017-02-21 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x 1.38 x 6.00l, .0 #File Name: 0062464310464 pages Homo Deus A Brief History of Tomorrow | File size: 29.Mb

**Yuval Noah Harari : Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow:

628 of 662 people found the following review helpful. A mix of deft writing, sweeping ideas and incomplete speculation: 3.5 stars By Ashutosh S. Jogalekar Yuval Noah Harari's "Homo Deus" continues the tradition introduced in his previous book "Sapiens": clever, clear and humorous writing, intelligent analogies and a remarkable sweep through human history, culture, intellect and technology. In general it is as readable as "Sapiens" but suffers from a few

limitations. On the positive side, Mr. Harari brings the same colorful and thought-provoking writing and broad grasp of humanity, both ancient and contemporary, to the table. He starts with exploring the three main causes of human misery through the ages - disease, starvation and war - and talks extensively about how improved technological development, liberal political and cultural institutions and economic freedom have led to very significant declines in each of these maladies. Continuing his theme from "Sapiens", a major part of the discussion is devoted to shared zeitgeists like religion and other forms of belief that, notwithstanding some of their pernicious effects, can unify a remarkably large number of people across the world in striving together for humanity's betterment. As in "Sapiens", Mr. Harari enlivens his discussion with popular analogies from current culture ranging from McDonald's and modern marriage to American politics and pop music. Mr. Harari's basic take is that science and technology combined with a shared sense of morality have created a solid liberal framework around the world that puts individual rights front and center. There are undoubtedly communities that don't respect individual rights as much as others, but these are usually seen as challenging the centuries-long march toward liberal individualism rather than upholding the global trend. The discussion above covers about two thirds of the book. About half of this material is recycled from "Sapiens" with a few fresh perspectives and analogies. The most important general message that Mr. Harari delivers, especially in the last one third of the book, is that this long and inevitable-sounding imperative of liberal freedom is now ironically threatened by the very forces that enabled it, most notably the forces of technology and globalization. Foremost among these are artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning. These significant new developments are gradually making human beings cede their authority to machines, in ways small and big, explicitly and quietly. Ranging from dating to medical diagnosis, from the care of the elderly to household work, entire industries now stand to both benefit and be complemented or even superseded by the march of the machines. Mr. Harari speculates about a bold vision in which most manual labor has been taken over by machines and true human input is limited only to a very limited number of people, many of whom because of their creativity and demand will likely be in the top financial echelons of society. How will the rich and the poor live in these societies? We have already seen how the technological decimation of parts of the working class was a major theme in the 2016 election in the United States and the vote for Brexit in the United Kingdom. It was also a factor that was woefully ignored in the public discussion leading up to these events, probably because it is much easier to provoke human beings against other human beings rather than against cold, impersonal machines. And yet it is the cold, impersonal machines which will increasingly interfere with human lives. How will social harmony be preserved in the face of such interference? If people whose jobs are now being done by machines get bored, what new forms of entertainment and work will we have to invent to keep them occupied? Man after all is a thinking creature, and extended boredom can cause all sorts of psychological and social problems. If the division of labor between machines and men becomes extreme, will society fragment into H. G. Wells's vision of two species, one of which literally feeds on the other even as it sustains it? These are all tantalizing as well as concerning questions, but while Mr. Harari does hold forth on them with some intensity and imagination, this part of the book is where his limitations become clear. Since the argument about ceding human authority to machines is also a central one, the omission also unfortunately appears to me to be a serious one. The problem is that Mr. Harari is an anthropologist and social scientist, not an engineer, computer scientist or biologist, and many of the questions of AI are firmly grounded in engineering and software algorithms. There are mountains of literature written about machine learning and AI and especially their technical strengths and limitations, but Mr. Harari makes few efforts to follow them or to explicate their central arguments. Unfortunately there is a lot of hype these days about AI, and Mr. Harari dwells on some of the fanciful hype without grounding us in reality. In short, his take on AI is slim on details, and he makes sweeping and often one-sided arguments while largely skirting clear of the raw facts. The same goes for his treatment for biology. He mentions gene editing several times, and there is no doubt that this technology is going to make some significant inroads into our lives, but what is missing is a realistic discussion of what biotechnology can or cannot do. It is one thing to mention brain-machine interfaces that would allow our brains to access supercomputer-like speeds in an offhand manner; it's another to actually discuss to what extent this would be feasible and what the best science of our day has to say about it. In the field of AI, particularly missing is a discussion of neural networks and deep learning which are two of the main tools used in AI research. Also missing is a view of a plurality of AI scenarios in which machines either complement, subjugate or are largely tamed by humans. When it comes to AI and the future, while general trends are going to be important, much of the devil will be in the details - details which decide how the actual applications of AI will be sliced and diced. This is an arena in which even Mr. Harari's capacious intellect falls short. The ensuing discussion thus seems tantalizing but does not give us a clear idea of the actual potential of machine technology to impact human culture and civilization. For reading more about these aspects, I would recommend books like Nick Bostrom's "Superintelligence", Pedro Domingos's "The Master Algorithm" and John Markoff's "Machines of Loving Grace". All these books delve into the actual details that sum up the promise and fear of artificial intelligence. Notwithstanding these limitations, the book is certainly readable, especially if you haven't read "Sapiens" before. Mr. Harari's writing is often crisp, the play of his words is deftly clever and the reach of his mind and imagination immerses us in a grand landscape of ideas and history. At the very least he gives us a very good idea of how far we as human beings have come and how far we still have to go. As a proficient prognosticator Mr. Harari's

crystal ball remains murky, but as a surveyor of past human accomplishments his robust and unique abilities are still impressive and worth admiring. 540 of 583 people found the following review helpful. Skip the crass caricature of humanism. Go to Part 3, a disturbing prediction of big-data dystopia. By Flatiron John This book is a mixed bag. It has three parts. The first is a review of some of the concepts explored in Harari's earlier book *Sapiens*. It elaborates on the fascinating concept of "intersubjective reality", whereby concepts that are shared in our collective imagination have great power to shape our objective reality; examples given include money, corporations, pop-culture brands, and religions. Part 1 is engaging and insightful, and deserves 4/5 stars. Part 2 is a critique of what Harari calls "humanism". He really dislikes humanism: he inaccurately states its tenets, and then repeatedly mocks it (for example, as promoting indulgent consumerism and sex). He claims that humanism is what is giving rise to an emerging cybernetic dystopia, described in Part 3. Harari is abusing the word "humanism," as a canvas on which to paint his caricature of modern liberal culture ("liberal" in the classical sense, not in the sense of left-wing politics). He is not really interested in what humanist writers and philosophers have actually said, and does not reference their works. He claims that humanism promotes the belief in a supernatural free will (when in fact, humanists value agency and freedom, but have differing opinions on free will). He claims that humanism believes in an indivisible self/soul (when in fact, psychologists since Freud have a different understanding). And he claims that humanism believes that individuals always know best about their own needs (when in fact, many have emphasized the importance of education in our development--he does not even reference John Dewey). Harari also co-opts related terms that already have other established meanings, such as "evolutionary humanism" and "liberal humanism". If you want to understand humanism or other social-political movements of the 19th and 20th centuries, Harari will lead you astray. Part 2 deserves only 2/5 stars. Part 3 is a dire prediction for humanity's future, as genetic engineering, AI, and human-machine interface technologies advance. Harari gives several scenarios, each of which are described very plausibly as future extrapolations of current trends. These scenarios are thought provoking and disturbing--we as a society should be taking them more seriously. There is an interesting discussion of an emerging religion/ideology of "dataism", wherein moral worth depends on the ability to enhance data flow, rather than on consciousness. Part 3 deserves 4/5 stars. For most of the book, Harari appears to be adopting a materialistic perspective, and one which is also extremely unsentimental and discounts the significance of human morale and character. He pretends to assume that human beings are nothing more than algorithms. However, some of his arguments (against the existence of an indivisible self, against free-will) are similar to those in Buddhism. He also discusses how animals and people have consciousness and subjective experiences, and presumes that artificial intelligence will remain unconscious (the "weak AI" hypothesis of John Searle). And on the very last page, he makes us wonder if his hardcore materialistic perspective has just been a long, extended ruse: he asks us to question a worldview that would deny the significance of consciousness. So it seems likely that in a future book he will focus on the nature of consciousness, and argue for non-theistic Buddhism (an understated agenda in Harari's writing--perhaps he thinks that this is the way for humanity to avoid the grim fate predicted here?). The reader concerned about techno-dystopia may also be interested in "Weapons of Math Destruction," by Cathy O'Neil. [Update 6/13/2017: see the comment below, by kaiser100, for further insight into Harari's perspective on consciousness and meditation.] 106 of 116 people found the following review helpful. Delightfully terrifying! By Always Trust In Books Audience: Readers looking ahead to the future and wondering what the world may look like in 100 years. People interested in all aspects of humanity and the science, psychology, technology and politics behind everything we have done, are doing and will do in the future. Summed up in a few words: Relevant. Unbiased. Necessary. First Impression: *Homo Deus* was a book I was really excited to read! The tagline 'A brief history of tomorrow' really intrigued me as I don't really put much thought into my life years down the line. This book is a must read! Not only does Harari talk about the future, he does so in such a wide spectrum of elements and details that I was impressed by how much information I took in. It also helps that he kept the language to an accessible and easy to read level, though there is technicality in some of the areas of the text. When I finished the book I was stuck between two very distinct and conflicting thoughts, the first was that I am comfortable with the steps that we as humans are taking to secure our futures and the other is that I am massively concerned about our future. Book Summary/Review *Homo Deus: A Brief History Of Tomorrow* is one of many groundbreaking books that are coming out this year that will influence certain non-fiction titles for the next decade or so. I have many of these books on my to-read list but I started with *Homo Deus* as it seem like a book that would cover all the bases and show me what we as humans are doing to secure our futures on earth and how we plan to do so. Yuval Noah Harari definitely achieves this, though it took a long time to get to sections I really wanted to read. *Homo Deus* started off strong, outlining what we have achieved up until today and where we may take life in the future. It did this from many different perspectives from agriculture, technology, economy, geography and medicine to psychology, politics, sociology, existentialism and science and it was incredibly interesting. Unfortunately for some who already have read a lot of books about human history, Harari does typical 'to see where we are going we must go back to the start' section which for me was slightly irritating but if you know very little about our past, our struggles and how we came to be then you will be very pleased with this section. I know that sounds like a complaint but it is really just a warning, because though it has been covered many times before, I felt that Harari did a great job with this section. The next section of the book covers how we brought the world to be in the last 2 or 3 centuries and again it has

been done before, but Harari has such depth, understanding and control of the subject that I was left thoroughly informed and prepared for the last section, the one I had been waiting for, where are we going! I was massively impressed with this section, it both made me excited about the future, what technologies, scientific discoveries and biological/medicinal advances we may create or discover. It also scared the hell out of me too, where societies may change, how our life may become automated and where religion may evolve. I am not sure whether I enjoyed the subject or the author the most when reading this book. I feel that it is the subject overall as it is uncharted territory for me so to speak, I know I read a lot of science fiction but I have never read a book where someone has sat down and outlined all aspects of our actual humanity and extrapolated them into a realistic vision of our future, please let me know if you have read anything like this before. In terms of content, it is overwhelming, Harari must do nothing but research as he knows more about humanity than I will ever know, but he is so down to earth and treats readers fairly, not bogging everything down in technicality and jargon but bringing the subject down to a comprehensible and comfortable level. This meant I could read this book without having to look up every other word and pretend I understood what he is saying instead of actually understanding what he is saying. If you want to know what we went through to get to this point, the famine, the war, the disease and hunger. If you want to know what life truly looks like today with social media, algorithms, happiness, religion and art. And if you want a vivid depiction of what the future may or may not become then *Homo Deus* is the book you want. I was most impressed with how Harari was so unbiased, he treated each viewpoint and opinion with respect and lets the reader make their own mind up of what to make of each scenario. Also there are great stories and case studies to back up his points as well as images to give the insights some context or texture. Fortunately this is not an 'all is lost' viewpoint on the future of human existence but it is definitely not all peachy and full of promise. Read the book, see what you think and tell me what you thought on Harari's approach to this topic. I found *Homo Deus* engaging, thought provoking, extremely concerning and delightfully promising as well.

**NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER** Yuval Noah Harari, author of the critically-acclaimed New York Times bestseller and international phenomenon *Sapiens*, returns with an equally original, compelling, and provocative book, turning his focus toward humanity's future, and our quest to upgrade humans into gods. Over the past century humankind has managed to do the impossible and rein in famine, plague, and war. This may seem hard to accept, but, as Harari explains in his trademark style—thorough, yet riveting—famine, plague and war have been transformed from incomprehensible and uncontrollable forces of nature into manageable challenges. For the first time ever, more people die from eating too much than from eating too little; more people die from old age than from infectious diseases; and more people commit suicide than are killed by soldiers, terrorists and criminals put together. The average American is a thousand times more likely to die from binging at McDonald's than from being blown up by Al Qaeda. What then will replace famine, plague, and war at the top of the human agenda? As the self-made gods of planet earth, what destinies will we set ourselves, and which quests will we undertake? *Homo Deus* explores the projects, dreams and nightmares that will shape the twenty-first century—from overcoming death to creating artificial life. It asks the fundamental questions: Where do we go from here? And how will we protect this fragile world from our own destructive powers? This is the next stage of evolution. This is *Homo Deus*. With the same insight and clarity that made *Sapiens* an international hit and a New York Times bestseller, Harari maps out our future.

.com An Best Book of February 2017: Those who read and loved Yuval Noah Harari's *Sapiens* have been eagerly anticipating his new book *Homo Deus*. While *Sapiens* looked back at our evolutionary development, this new book examines where we might be headed (*Homo Deus* is subtitled *A Brief History of Tomorrow*). Predicting the future isn't as easy as deconstructing the past, and Harari openly admits the challenge—but even if he's completely wrong in his predictions, and most of us doubt he is, *Homo Deus* is the kind of provocative, food-for-thought read that drew so many of us to his work in the first place. According to Harari, our future could be very different from our present—dark, technocratic, and automated—but reading about our possible fates, presented in Harari's clear-eyed and illuminating style, sure is fascinating. --Chris Schlupe, *The Book Provocative*...the handiwork of a gifted thinker. (Jennifer Senior, *New York Times*) *Homo Deus* will shock you. It will entertain you. Above all, it will make you think in ways you had not thought before. (Daniel Kahneman, author of *Thinking Fast, and Slow*) Thrilling to watch such a talented author trample so freely across so many disciplines... Harari's skill lies in the way he tilts the prism in all these fields and looks at the world in different ways, providing fresh angles on what we thought we knew... scintillating. (The *Financial Times*) Spellbinding This is a very intelligent book, full of sharp insights and mordant wit... It is a quirky and cool book, with a sliver of ice at its heart... It is hard to imagine anyone could read this book without getting an occasional, vertiginous thrill. (The *Guardian*) What elevates Harari above many chroniclers of our age is his exceptional clarity and focus. (London *Sunday Times*) A remarkable book, full of insights and thoughtful reinterpretations of what we thought we knew about ourselves and our history. (The *Guardian*) [A] great book not only alters the way you see the world after you've read it, it also casts the past in a different light. In *Homo Deus*, Yuval Noah Harari shows us where mankind is headed in an absolutely clear-sighted accessible manner. (Mail on

Sunday) Like all great epics, Sapiens demanded a sequel. Homo Deus, in which that likely apocalyptic future is imagined in spooling detail, is that book. It is a highly seductive scenario planner for the numerous ways in which we might overreach ourselves. (The Observer (London)) Harari is an intellectual magpie who has plucked theories and data from many disciplines - including philosophy, theology, computer science and biology - to produce a brilliantly original, thought-provoking and important study of where mankind is heading. (Evening Standard (London)) Praise for Sapiens: I would recommend this book to anyone interested in a fun, engaging look at early human history . . . you'll have a hard time putting it down. (Bill Gates) Thank God someone finally wrote [this] exact book. (Sebastian Junger, New York Times Book ) Harari is an exceptional writer, who seems to have been specially chosen by the muses as a conduit for the zeitgeist Fascinating reading. (Times Literary Supplement (London)) Sapiens takes readers on a sweeping tour of the history of our species. Harari's formidable intellect sheds light on the biggest breakthroughs in the human story important reading for serious-minded, self-reflective sapiens. (Washington Post) Sapiens tackles the biggest questions of history and of the modern world, and it is written in unforgettably vivid language. (Jared Diamond, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of Guns, Germs, and Steel, Collapse, and The World until Yesterday) In Sapiens, Harari delves deep into our history as a species to help us understand who we are and what made us this way. An engrossing read. (Dan Ariely, New York Times Bestselling author of Predictably Irrational, The Upside of Irrationality, and The Honest Truth About Dishonesty) Provocative essential reading. (New York Times Book ) I enjoyed reading about these topics not from another futurist but from a historian, contextualizing our current ways of thinking amid humanity's long marches especially with Harari's ability to capsule big ideas memorably and mingle them with a light, dry humor Harari offers not just history lessons but a meta-history lesson. (Washington Post) Homo Deus is great, accessible science writing This is a super fun read. (PBS Newshour) Thought-provoking and enlightening, Harari's books is a must-read for anyone interested in the future of our species. (BookPage) [S]hares DNA with the work of writers like Jared Diamond while drawing freely from other disciplines in both the humanities and sciences. Its emphatically a work for the general reader eager to grapple with big ideas, but who is equally hungry for context for today's headlines. (Shelf Awareness) From the Back Cover In his critically acclaimed international bestseller Sapiens, Yuval Noah Harari explained how humankind came to rule the planet. In Homo Deus, he examines humanity's future, offering a vision of tomorrow that at first seems incomprehensible but soon looks undeniable: humanity will lose not only its dominance, but its very meaning. Over the past century, humankind has managed to do the impossible: turn the uncontrollable forces of nature namely, famine, plague, and war into manageable challenges. Today more people die from eating too much than from eating too little; more people die from old age than from infectious diseases; and more people commit suicide than are killed by soldiers, terrorists, and criminals combined. We are the only species in earth's long history that has single-handedly changed the entire planet, and we no longer expect any higher being to mold our destinies for us. What then will replace famine, plague, and war at the top of the human agenda? What destinies will we set for ourselves, and which quests will we undertake? Homo Deus explores the projects, dreams, and nightmares that will shape the twenty-first century, from overcoming death to creating artificial life. But the pursuit of these very goals may ultimately render most human beings superfluous. So where do we go from here? And how can we protect this fragile world from our own destructive powers? We cannot stop the march of history, but we can influence its direction. Future-casting typically assumes that tomorrow, at its heart, will look much like today: we will possess amazing new technologies, but old humanist values like liberty and equality will still guide us. Homo Deus dismantles these assumptions and opens our eyes to a vast range of alternative possibilities, with provocative arguments on every page, among them: The main products of the twenty-first-century economy will not be textiles, vehicles, and weapons but bodies, brains, and minds. While the industrial revolution created the working class, the next big revolution will create the useless class. The way humans have treated animals is a good indicator for how upgraded humans will treat us. Democracy and the free market will both collapse once Google and Facebook know us better than we know ourselves, and authority will shift from individual humans to networked algorithms. Humans won't fight machines; they will merge with them. We are heading toward marriage rather than war. This is the shape of the new world, and the gap between those who get on board and those left behind will be larger than the gap between industrial empires and agrarian tribes, larger even than the gap between Sapiens and Neanderthals. This is the next stage of evolution. This is Homo Deus.