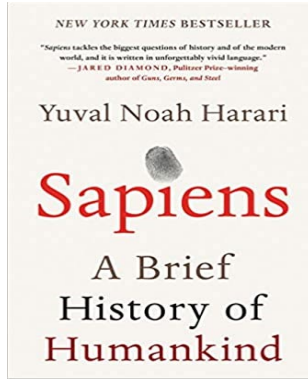




Journal of Anglo-Turkish Relations Volume 4 Number 2 June 2023

Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens, a brief history of humankind*, illustrated edition, Harper, USA, 2015, 464 pages, ISBN-10: 9780062316097.

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Sapiens, a brief history of humankind was written by Yuval Noah Harari, an Israeli historian and professor in the Department of History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In *Sapiens*, Harari reviews human history from the emergence of the species, Homo Sapiens, to the political and technological revolutions of the 21'st Century. The book is divided into four parts: The Cognitive Revolution, the Agricultural Revolution, the Unification of Humankind, and the Scientific Revolution.

In Part one, the Cognitive Revolution, Harari discusses how Homo Sapiens replaced the rival Neanderthals, approximately 70,000 years ago. He stresses how Homo Sapiens developed language skills and structured societies, which led to the species becoming an apex predator. In other words, it had no natural predators of its own.

In Part Two, Harari touches upon the agricultural revolutions that sprang up in the Middle East, China, and Central America. These regions hosted the few species that our predecessors hunted and gathered and were suitable for farming and herding. With the agricultural revolutions, Homo Sapiens was able to produce more food which led to an increase in population and the rise of cities.

In Part Three, Harari underlines that the unification of humankind is a natural progression of human history. In his opinion, Homo Sapiens has dominated the planet because of its unique ability to cooperate and imagine. This unification is essential for the survival of our species in the 21'st century. Harari emphasises three factors that have influenced the unification. The first one is the rise of Money, which made it possible for people to trade and cooperate. The second one is the rise of empires, that united large populations under one banner. The final the rise of religions that have provided a common set of beliefs and values to unite people.

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In Part Four, Harari outlines the scientific revolution, which he claims was a major turning point in human history. Humans began to question their traditional beliefs and to search for new knowledge through scientific observation and experimentation. He underlines three main factors behind the scientific revolution. The first was the rise of humanism, this is the philosophical movement that centralizes human reason and experience. The second one was the invention of printing press. This made it possible for new ideas to be spread quickly enough that it could influence large groups of people in a short time. The final one was the patronage of wealthy individuals. Monarchs and merchants gave financial support to scientists and their research. In this way, scientists could focus on their work without worrying about making a living.

To conclude, Harari argues that the future of humanity is uncertain. For our species to survive, he believes that we need to cooperate and to use our imaginations. On the whole Harari is an excellent storyteller, and he has combined his narrative skills with his knowledge of history to create a thought-provoking text. It reminds of our place as humans in the world and the challenges we have faced and will continue to face in the future. My personal takeaway from this book is that even though cultures and religions are uniting factors, they can also be dividing. As humans we have to wake up, leave our differences behind and start cooperating for a better future for our species.