Book Review

Harari, Y. N. (2014). *Sapiens: a brief history of humankind*. London: Vintage Books. ISBN: 9781846558245.

Authored by Yuval Harari, a history professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and first published in Hebrew in 2011, this non-fiction book was later translated into English in 2014. It examines the history of human life within a scientific framework, starting from our earliest ancestors 70,000 years ago and the sociocultural revolutions that followed. Harari comments on how the cognitive revolution brought about imagination and thus separated *homo sapiens* from other species. From there, he explores the agricultural revolution of 12,000 BCE, which led to farming and larger immobile communities, before moving to the scientific revolution that started in the 1500s and produced objective science. The author analyzes the larger role that each revolution played in shaping how modern humans view the world today, as compared to our ancestors. Harari attempts to answer questions that are broad and open to interpretation to explain humanity's current form.

Sapiens takes a simultaneously scientific and anthropological stance. Harari explains that social constructs such as politics and religion are products of humans' social and cognitive abilities, using the example of humans' desire to live within a community. A benefit of this view is that it helps form one possible explanation as to why religion and political structure are prevalent both temporally and geographically. Conversely, a drawback is that not everyone holds this opinion, and some readers may find the author's viewpoint offensive.

While Harari's whirlwind introduction to his history of *homo sapiens* draws the reader in with its fast pace, it can also be daunting. The book is over 450 pages long with minimal pictures; thus, it is recommended that readers take breaks between chapters. Fortunately, Harari does pause to expand on important points in history, providing an in-depth explanation of their significance and context to aid the reader in developing a more robust understanding of the subject matter.

This book is recommended for both public and academic libraries. It would be a good addition to any non-fiction collection due to its scientific and divergent view on human civilization. *Sapiens* would appeal to adults who enjoy intelligent writing, exploring complex concepts, solving puzzles, and making connections on both the micro and macro scale.

Rochelle Adamiak

Adamiak, R. (2018). [Review of the book *Sapiens: a brief history of humankind*]. *Emerging Library & Information Perspectives*, 1, 134–135. <https://doi.org.10.5206/elip.v1i1.549>