

Morten Tolboll

Yuval Noah Harari: The Historian who Wanted to be Philosopher Instead of the Philosophers

“ [...] to attempt by device or ‘magic’ to recover longevity is thus a supreme folly and wickedness for ‘mortals.’ Longevity or counterfeit ‘immortality’...is the chief bait of Sauron – it leads the small to a Gollum, and the great to a Ringwraith” (*J.R.R. Tolkien, Letters*, no. 212, p. 286).

The Israelian historian Yuval Noah Harari has achieved international fame for having written a history of Homo Sapiens (humankind), a prophetic prediction of its end, and the beginning of new species called Homo Deus: an immortal cyborg with divine powers.

This Ebook will, besides being a critique of Harari’s books, be written as a general philosophical-pedagogic treatise on the methods used by *The Matrix Conspiracy*, where science is being abused as a means of creating perverted theories of human nature, and of deliberately distorting (suppressing) philosophy. Because Harari is neither the first, nor the last, Matrix Sophist, whom we will see promoted on the international scene by an obscure Matrix elite, preaching transhumanist fundamentalism.

As in my other texts, I will use the concept of *The Matrix Conspiracy*, simply because it is the best covering depiction for what ideologically is going on globally right now. It is not a conspiracy theory, but a theory of conspiracy.

Table of contents:

Introduction.....	2
Harari as Philosopher.....	6
The Return of the Sophists.....	13
Postmodernism.....	20
The Matrix Conspiracy.....	26

a) René Descartes.....	27
b) George Berkeley.....	31
Scientism.....	38
Evolutionism.....	42
Transhumanism.....	50
The Matrix Hybrid.....	62
Conclusion.....	70

Introduction

Yuval Noah Harari has written three books which have raised to international fame. The first book was called, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*. The book surveys the history of humankind from the evolution of archaic human species in the Stone Age up to the twenty-first century, focusing on Homo sapiens. The account is situated within a framework provided by the natural sciences, particularly evolutionary biology.

The next book was called, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*. As with its predecessor, Harari recounts the course of history while describing events and the individual human experience, along with ethical issues in relation to his historical survey. However, Homo Deus deals more with the abilities acquired by humans (Homo sapiens) throughout their existence, and their evolution as the dominant species in the world. The book describes mankind's current abilities and achievements and attempts to paint an image of the future. The premise outlines that during the 21st century, humanity is likely to make a significant attempt to gain happiness, immortality, and God-like powers. This happens because humanity will melt together with, or directly transform into cyborgs and artificial intelligence, and the universe into a cyberspace. Therefore Harari can proclaim the end of Homo Sapiens and the Universe, and the beginning of Homo Deus and cyberspace.

The third book is called, *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*. Having dealt with the distant past in Sapiens and with the distant future in Homo Deus Harari turns in 21 Lessons his attention to the present. In a loose collection of essays, many based on articles previously published, he attempts to untangle the technological, political, social, and existential quandaries that humankind faces.

On his website, Harari presents himself in third person:

In 2018 Yuval Noah Harari gave a keynote speech on the future of humanity on the Congress Hall stage of the World Economic Forum annual meeting in Davos. Three months later, he presented the first ever TED talk delivered as a digital avatar. Over the last couple of years Harari has met with President Emmanuel Macron of France, Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, President Mauricio Macri of Argentina, President Frank-Walter Steinmeier of Germany, and Mayor Ying Yong of Shanghai. In 2019 Yuval sat down for public conversations with Chancellor Sebastian Kurz of Austria (on the future of Europe) and with Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg (on society and the future of artificial intelligence).

... Sapiens was recommended by Mark Zuckerberg, Barack Obama and Bill Gates.

... Prof. Harari lectures around the world on the topics explored in his books and articles, and has written for publications such as The Guardian, Financial Times, The New York Times, The Atlantic, The Economist and Nature magazine. ...

Transhumanists are known for their work as prophets. The most famous is Ray Kurzweil (a computer scientist who wants to be philosopher instead of the philosophers). He is one of the founders of the so-called Singularity University, and is a director of engineering at Google. With the support of NASA, Google and a broad range of technology forecasters and technocapitalists, the Singularity University opened in June 2009 at the NASA Research Park in Silicon Valley with the goal of preparing the next generation of leaders to address the challenges of accelerating change. Kurzweil is famous for books like, *The Age of Spiritual Machines*, which has been translated into 9 languages and was the #1 best-selling book on Amazon in science. Kurzweil's 2005 book, *The Singularity Is Near* was a New York Times bestseller, and has been the #1 book on Amazon in both science and philosophy. I mention Kurzweil from the very start, because it is primarily from him Harari is borrowing his “philosophy”. Kurzweil has often been called a prophet.

In his article, [For Transhumanists, a Dawning Realization](#), David Klinghoffer compares also Harari with a prophet. Klinghoffer gives a brilliant introduction to the key concepts of Harari’s worldview, which isn’t different from extreme forms of creationism. The difference is that transhumanism is taken seriously globally, and is induced into our minds through social medias like Google, Facebook, smartphones, etc., etc. It’s manipulating power is simply that religious terms have been replaced by scientific sounding terms. Therefore, the importance of using science as a propaganda tool. The fact is that it has nothing to do with science. Klinghoffer writes:

As traditional faiths see their self-confidence eroded by the claims of materialism and evolutionism, to which the culture assigns such monumental prestige, the rise of other, totally new faiths would seem to be a certainty. Wesley Smith has identified one in the process of arising: Transhumanism.

Transhumanist prophets anticipate a coming neo-salvific event known as the “Singularity” — a point in human history when the crescendo of scientific advances become unstoppable, enabling transhumanists to recreate themselves in their own image. Want to have the eyesight of a hawk? Edit in a few genes. Want to raise your IQ? Try a brain implant. Want to look like a walrus? Well, why not? Different strokes for different folks, don’t you know?

Most importantly, in the post-Singularity world, death itself will be defeated. Perhaps, we will repeatedly renew our bodies through cloned organ replacements or have our heads cryogenically frozen to allow eventual surgical attachment to a different body. However, transhumanists’ greatest hope is to eternally save their minds (again, as opposed to souls) via personal uploading into computer programs. Yes, transhumanists expect to ultimately live without end in cyberspace, crafting their own virtual realities, or perhaps, merging their consciousnesses with others’ to experience multi-beinghood.

*Transhumanists used to repudiate any suggestion that their movement is a form of, or substitute for, religion. But in recent years, that denial has worn increasingly thin. For example, Yuval Harari, a historian and transhumanist from Hebrew University of Jerusalem, told *The Telegraph*, “I think it is likely in the next 200 years or so *Homo sapiens* will upgrade themselves into some idea of a divine being, either through biological manipulation or genetic engineering by the creation of cyborgs, part organic, part non-organic.”*

[...]

According to Harari, the human inventions of religion and money enabled us to subdue the earth. But with traditional religion waning in the West — and who can deny it? — he believes we need new “fictions” to bind us together. That’s where transhumanism comes in:

“Religion is the most important invention of humans. As long as humans believed they relied more and more on these gods, they were controllable. With religion, it’s easy to understand. You can’t convince a chimpanzee to give you a banana with the

promise it will get 20 more bananas in chimpanzee Heaven. It won't do it. But humans will.

“But what we see in the last few centuries is humans becoming more powerful, and they no longer need the crutches of the gods. Now we are saying, ‘We do not need God, just technology.’”

Ha! The old stereotype of the bearded Christian fanatic in robe and sandals carrying a sign stating,

“The end is nigh!” has been replaced by transhumanism proselytizers like author Ray Kurzweil (of Google fame) whose bestselling transhumanist manifesto is titled, The Singularity is Near.

According to Klinghoffer, Harari, mentioned by Wesley, would make an exemplary prophet for the new faith. He even has a biblical name: Noah. Ensclosed at Hebrew University with its panoramic view over the Holy City of the three ancient monotheist religions, Dr. Harari obtained his PhD from Jesus College, Oxford. Too perfect, almost. His Wikipedia bio goes on:

Harari was born in Kiryat Ata, Israel, in 1976 and grew up in a secular Jewish family with Lebanese and Eastern European roots in Haifa, Israel. ...

Harari says Vipassana meditation, which he began whilst in Oxford in 2000, has “transformed my life“. He practises for two hours every day (one hour at the start and end of his work day), every year undertakes a meditation retreat of 30 days or longer, in silence and with no books or social media, and is an assistant meditation teacher. He dedicated Homo Deus to “my teacher, S. N. Goenka, who lovingly taught me important things,” and said “I could not have written this book without the focus, peace and insight gained from practising Vipassana for fifteen years.” He also regards meditation as a way to research.

Harari is a vegan, and says this resulted from his research, including his view that the foundation of the dairy industry is breaking the bond between mother and calf cows. As of September 2017, he does not have a smartphone.

Harari is probably very aware of himself as a prophet. At least, the chapters in his books often have biblical names. Here is a couple of examples from *Sapiens*: “The Tree of Knowledge”, “A Day in the Life of Adam and Eve”, “The Flood”. And from *Homo Deus*: “The Modern Covenant”.

First published in Hebrew in 2011 and then in English in 2014, *Sapiens* was translated into 45 languages (as of June 2017). It also made to The New York Times best-seller list and won the National Library of China's Wenjin Book Award for the best book published in 2014.

Writing four years after its English-language publication, Alex Preston wrote in The Guardian that *Sapiens* had become a "publishing phenomenon" with "wild success" symptomatic of a broader trend toward "intelligent, challenging nonfiction, often books that are several years old". Concurrently, The Guardian listed the book as among the ten "best brainy books of the decade". The Royal Society of Biologists in the UK shortlisted the book in its 2015 Book Awards.

Time magazine listed *Homo Deus* as one of its top ten non-fiction books of 2017. Wellcome longlisted *Homo Deus* for their 2017 Book Prize.

The business magazine Fast Company called him "Silicon Valley's favorite historian"; Mark Zuckerberg boosted his fame when he included "*Sapiens*" in the Facebook book club; and blurbs from President Barack Obama and Bill Gates graced the book's cover. Gates also did his bit to promote Harari's subsequent books: "*Homo Deus*" appeared on his recommended summer reading list for 2017, and this year he wrote a rave review of "*Lessons*" in The New York Times.

Just look at Harari's own [media site](#) to see how much influence this guy has.

Harari as philosopher

Harari is a naturally gifted rhetoric, invariably ready with the telling anecdote or memorable analogy. As a result, it's tempting to see him less as a historian than as some kind of all-purpose sage.

But Harari is just one of many examples of scientists who are suffering from the illusion of transferable expertise. He has an unfortunate tendency to think that being brilliant in history means every other specialty can be treated as a special case of history. One of his other favorite sciences is evolutionary biology. Here it goes wrong, as with all the other disciplines he believes he is an expert on. His work ranges across a multitude of disciplines with seemingly effortless scholarship, bringing together an illusionary understanding of history, anthropology, zoology, linguistics, philosophy, theology, economics, psychology, neuroscience and much else besides.

But, when looking at his global fame it must be quite a thinker we are dealing with here. The Times actually called him “The Great Thinker of Our Time”. The fact is that his books are a worst case scenario of the future of science and philosophy. That he is promoted in the way he is just says that this worst case scenario already has started. In this Ebook I will demonstrate how.

In her article, [Yuval Noah Harari: The age of the cyborg has begun – and the consequences cannot be known](#), Carole Cadwalladr asks Harari:

In some ways, I say, it struck me that Sapiens isn't actually a history book – it's a philosophy book that asks the big, philosophical questions and attempts to answer them through history.

“Yes, that's a very accurate description. I think that I see history as a philosophy laboratory. Philosophers come up with all these very interesting questions about the human condition, but the way that most of them – though not all – go about answering them is through thought experiments.

No, that is not what most philosophers do. It is the opposite way around. A few philosophers answer philosophical questions through thought experiments, especially transhumanist philosophers like Ray Kurzweil, David Chalmers and Nick Bostrom.

When I read Harari's three books I was really looking forward to hear what his answers to the great philosophical questions would be. The same was Gavin Jacobson. In his article, [Yuval Noah Harari's 21 Lessons for the 21st Century is a banal and risible self-help book](#), he writes:

How should democracies contend with the quantum leaps in biotechnology and artificial intelligence (AI), just as “liberalism is losing credibility”? How should we regulate the ownership of data, which “will eclipse both land and machinery as the most important asset”? How will societies respond to AI, and the conceivable uselessness of workers? What will a progressive politics look like since it's “much harder to struggle against irrelevance than against exploitation”? Should we fear another world war? What can be done about climate change? And what are the best responses to terrorism and fake news?

It would be easier to take Harari seriously if his “lessons” in any way measured up to these global conundrums. Unfortunately, for those who were expecting more from such a celebrated author, his injunctions simply die on contact with the reality of our present moment.

Jacobson hereafter gives a precise description of Harari's writing style. He writes:

The first problem is one of conception. The book is composed from various op-ed columns, as well as responses to questions asked by readers, journalists and colleagues. These may have worked well as individual pieces. But taken together, the result is a study thick with promise and thin in import. The sort of messages Harari issues – “the only real solution is to globalise politics”; “humans of all creeds would do well to take humility more seriously”; “invest time and effort in uncovering our biases”; “Leave your illusions behind. They are very heavy”; “When you wake up in the morning, just focus on reality” – are either too vague or too hollow to provide any meaningful guidance.

Harari's concluding style comes straight from the insipid “on the one hand, on the other” school of second-rate essay writing. In the meagre ten pages he devotes to “War” and the chances of a third global conflict, he ends by saying that, “On the one hand, war is definitely not inevitable... On the other hand, it would be naive to assume that war is impossible.” And, in the confused and disjointed chapter on “Humility”: “It goes without saying,” he writes, before going on to say it, “that the Jewish people are a unique people with an astonishing history (though this is true of most peoples).”

“It similarly goes without saying,” he continues, before, again, going on to say it, “that the Jewish tradition is full of deep insights and noble values (though it is also full of some questionable ideas and of racist, misogynist and homophobic attitudes).” Like an undergraduate struggling to reach the word count, Harari ends up trafficking in pointless asides and excruciating banalities. The debate about immigration “is far from being a clear-cut battle between good and evil” and “should be decided through standard democratic procedure”. (He then lazily suggests that if Europe manages to solve the issue of immigration, then “perhaps its formula can be copied on a global level”.) “The world,” we are subsequently told, “is becoming ever more complex.” “Humans have bodies.” “We just cannot prepare for every eventuality.” Nuclear states and terrorism represent “different problems that demand different solutions”. “The world is far more complicated than a chessboard.” “Putin is neither Genghis Khan nor Stalin.” And there are “several key differences between 2018 and 1914”.

Then there are the risible moral dictums littered throughout the text, cringeworthy platitudes of fortune-cookie quality. So a “small coin in a big empty jar makes a lot of noise” and “hurting others always hurts me too”. “Suffering is suffering, no matter who experiences it” and “pain is pain, fear is fear, and love is love”. Not forgetting that “change itself is the only certainty”, “emotions such as greed, envy,

anger and hatred are very unpleasant” and “everything you will ever experience in life is within your own body and your own mind”. Reading Harari reminded me of the line attributed to Abraham Lincoln: “He can compress the most words into the smallest idea of any man I have ever met.”

The point about lousy prose isn’t just one of style. As Tony Judt argued in the New York Review of Books in 2010, rhetorical fluency doesn’t always signify originality or depth of thought. But hesitant, digressive and mediocre writing does indicate an impoverished argument or analysis. As Judt put it, “When words lose their integrity so do the ideas they express.” This is clear in Harari’s chapter on post-truth, for instance, in which he circles around the issue, meandering into subjects such as the history of Nazi and Soviet propaganda, without really landing on any kind of substantive point that helps us make sense of what’s going on now. His eventual lesson is typically flat: “instead of accepting fake news as the norm, we should recognise it is a far more difficult problem than we tend to assume, and we should strive even harder to distinguish reality from fiction. Don’t expect perfection. One of the greatest fictions of all is to deny the complexity of the world.”

Fine. But once we have accepted that the world is complex, what then? Harari is silent.

The concept of, “it goes without saying” and hereafter going on to say it, is typical for Harari’s self-contradictory rhetoric. In one YouTube video he, for example, start out by saying, “we can’t say anything for sure about the future”, whereafter the whole video is about Harari saying a lot about things which for sure will happen in the future. It is central for him to begin his lectures by saying that his teaching not is predictions, but that he is only talking about possibilities he wants us to think about. But you will quickly find out that he is involving a lot of assumptions which he is taking at face value. There are thought distortions such as “begging the question” and “circular argumentation” involved overall in Harari’s rhetoric. Let’s look at it.

Though Jacobson’s account is a precise description of an unsatisfying way of writing, it is not completely true that Harari doesn’t answer the questions he claims he will answer, because Harari is in fact, between the lines, smuggling a lot of answers in through the backdoor. He is namely a clever Matrix sophist (which I will explain later). Here are the final words in *Homo Deus* (page 462):

[...] Yet if we take the really grand view of life, all other problems and developments are overshadowed by three interlinked processes:

1. *Science is converging on an all-encompassing dogma, which says that organisms are algorithms and life is data processing.*
2. *Intelligence is decoupling from consciousness.*
3. *Non-conscious but highly intelligent algorithms may soon know us better than we know ourselves.*

These three processes raise three key questions, which I hope will stick in your mind long after you have finished this book:

1. *Are organisms really just algorithms, and is life really just data processing?*
2. *What's more valuable – intelligence or consciousness?*
3. *What will happen to society, politics and daily life when non-conscious but highly intelligent algorithms know us better than we know ourselves?*

Harari is here setting up some assumptions which not have been validated. Science is for example not converging in such an all-encompassing dogma. You can say that transhumanism is, but not science. The whole thing is a so-called *Questioning Trap*. The first aspect of this is rhetorical questions. Rhetorical questions are questions which are asked purely for effect rather than as requests for answers. The questioner can for example assume that there only is one possible answer to the question in which case the rhetorical question functions in precisely the same way as *Persuader words*. In this form rhetorical questions are simply substitutes for straightforward statements.

It is comparatively easy and certainly unhelpful to raise a large number of seemingly deep questions on almost any topic (this is called *Pseudo-profundity*, something which apparently has fooled a whole world to believe that Harari is an incredible philosopher); what is difficult and important are finding answers to them. Apparently Harari thinks that it is a clever tactic just to raise questions, and hereafter leave it to the reader to answer them. But, as mentioned, he is in fact giving answers all the time, but he is not capable of giving answers which are grounded in scientific validation or philosophical argumentation. He smuggles his answers (which therefore are pure postulations) in by the use of thought distortions. A central thought distortion is *Research has shown that...* Within scientism there has gone inflation in the phrase *Research has shown that...* Scientism is seen in the New Age environment, where they demand that science has to be integrated with so-called “alternative sciences”, and in the intellectual environment in form of reductionisms, which demand that science has to be integrated with, or is the same as, certain atheistic/political/postmodernistic views. I will return to scientism later.

Research has shown that... is a phrase, which often is used to convince the listener about that the one who talks can reason what he says with concrete empirical proof.

But this is often just an example of subjective argumentation, a kind of unethical manipulation (often based on wishful thinking), because it is extremely vague to claim that "research has shown" anything, unless you can reason the assertion with specific details about the claimed research. Who has carried out this research? Which methods were there used? What exactly did they found out? Have their results been confirmed by others who work within the area?

Harari is using this thought distortion frequently; in fact: his whole work is based on it. I will give concrete examples later. Instead of writing, "it is my opinion that...", he writes: "research (or science) has shown that...".

Harari appears as unwilling to settle on a certain point of view, and yet he constantly does precisely this, by the use of thought distortions. His work is a peace of gaslightning. Gaslightning is a form of psychological manipulation in which a person seeks to sow seeds of doubt in a targeted individual or in members of a targeted group, making them question their own memory, perception, and sanity. Using persistent denial, misdirection, contradiction, and lying, gaslighting involves attempts to destabilize the victim and delegitimize the victim's belief. Gaslightning is also the tactic used by the thought police in George Orwell's dystopian novel, 1984. Here it is called Doublethink (see my article [What is Doublethink?](#)). We shall see later that the comparison with Orwell is quite suitable.

There is therefore a certain degree of brainwashing present in Harari's books. This is reinforced by his recommendation of the practice of meditation: do nothing and accept that there is no alternative to Harari's viewpoints. He is namely not presenting meditation in the traditional way, where philosophy (critical thinking) is quite important, but in the typical Western "McMindfulness" way, where meditation is viewed in a purely "scientific" way, so that all religious and philosophical aspects are cut away. In that way meditation just works as hypnotic reinforcement of the ideology which accompanies it (see my article, [Mindfulness and the Loss of Philosophy](#)). I won't go further into his meditation practice, just let you enjoy this example of "Harari sayings":

In the course catalogue of the psychology department at my own university, the first required course in the curriculum is "Introduction to Statistics and Methodology in Psychological research". Second-year psychology students must take "Statistical Methods in Psychological Research". Confucius, Buddha, Jesus and Muhammad would have been bewildered if you'd told them that in order to understand the human mind and cure its illnesses you must first study statistics (Sapiens, page 288).

This passage is just one example of what, at first, confused me about Harari. I thought that the passage was meant ironically. And I needed to read the text before and the text after, again and again, to find the ironical clue. But the fact is that Harari isn't ironical at all. He simply believes what he writes: "In order to understand the human mind and cure its illnesses you must first study statistics".

Now, let's look at his "begging the question" technique. In his article, [Sapiens – a critical review](#), Marcus Paul writes:

[...] there is a larger philosophical fault-line running through the whole book which constantly threatens to break its conclusions in pieces. His whole contention is predicated on the idea that humankind is merely the product of accidental evolutionary forces and this means he is blind to seeing any real intentionality in history. It has direction certainly, but he believes it is the direction of an iceberg, not a ship.

This would be all right if he were straightforward in stating that all his arguments are predicated on the assumption that, as Bertrand Russell said, 'Man is...but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms' and utterly without significance. But instead, he does what a philosopher would call 'begging the question'. That is, he assumes from the start what his contention requires him to prove – namely that mankind is on its own and without any sort of divine direction. Harari ought to have stated his assumed position at the start, but signally failed to do so. The result is that many of his opening remarks are just unwarranted assumptions based on that grandest of all assumptions: that humanity is cut adrift on a lonely planet, itself adrift in a drifting galaxy in a dying universe. Evidence please! – that humanity is 'nothing but' a biological entity and that human consciousness is not a pale (and fundamentally damaged) reflection of the divine mind.

Begging the question is about assuming the very point that is at issue. Sometimes this involves incorporating the conclusion of the argument into one of the premises. For example, in a law case, if someone is being tried on an accusation of murder, and has pleaded not guilty, it would be begging the question to refer to them as "the murderer" rather than "the accused" until their guilt had been established.

Some forms of begging the question occur in the way questions are asked. Complex questions are often question-begging in this way. For instance, the question "When did you start beating your husband?" might be question-begging if the fact that you did beat your husband had yet to be established.

Besides the example of begging the question, which Marcus Paul is giving, then another example of Harari's begging the question is seen in the above-mentioned question: "Are organisms really just algorithms, and is life really just data processing?"

On page 371-372, he has namely already supplied the premises for answering this question:

The idea that humans will always have a unique ability beyond the reach of non-conscious algorithms is just wishful thinking. The current scientific answer to this pipe dream can be summarized in three simple principles:

1. *Organisms are algorithms, every animal – including Homo Sapiens – is an assemblage of organic algorithms shaped by natural selection over millions of years of evolution.*
2. *Algorithmic calculation are not affected by the materials from which the calculator is built. Whether an abacus is made of wood, iron or plastic, two beads plus two beads equals four beads.*
3. *Hence there is no reason to think that organic algorithms will never be able to replicate or surpass. As long as the calculation remain valid, what does it matter whether the algorithms are manifested in carbon or silicon?*

So, when asking the question, *Are organisms really just algorithms, and is life really just data processing?* Harari is begging the question. Also remember that when he says, "the current scientific answer" then this must be translated into "the current transhumanist answer". It has nothing whatever to do with science.

One should therefore not be fooled by, that Harari is coming with warnings against a transhumanist future. The transhumanist view of human nature is namely taken as absolutely true from the very beginning, without scientific validation or philosophical argumentation. What Harari wants us to consider, is how we are to act when (not if) this transhumanist future is coming. Because there are many versions of transhumanism. But, even this question he is answering himself: namely that there is no alternative to neoliberalism. The whole thing is therefore political propaganda. The warnings are simply scare tactics. His whole (deeply annoying) technique of constantly saying: "On the one hand", and "on the other hand", and hereafter leaving it to the reader to answer the questions, is therefore just a smokescreen for inducing his neoliberalist propaganda into the reader. In this Ebook I will expose how it is happening.

The Return of the Sophists

As we can see, Harari is a conscious user of thought distortions with the purpose of manipulation. Thought distortions are “techniques”, that, unconscious or conscious, are used from an interest in finding ways of getting on in the world, rather than an interest in finding ways of discovering the truth. Thought distortions are the background for poor reasoning, diversionary ploys, seductive reasoning errors, techniques of persuasion and avoidance, psychological factors, which can be obstacles to clear thought.

Critical thinking, or philosophy, is in opposition to thought distortions. Critical thinking is about spotting thought distortions, and examining them by presenting reasons and evidence in support of conclusions. Critical thinking is the only tool you can use in order to explore, change and restructure thought distortions. It is therefore clear that Harari doesn't like philosophy and want to replace it with history. In reality he wants to replace philosophy with sophism (or politics).

The difference between the use of thought distortions and the use of critical thinking is very shortly said, that those who use thought distortions are in the control of the thought distortion *Magical thinking*, which is active when you don't discriminate between image and reality, while critical thinking is active, when you do make this discrimination.

The difference can further be clarified by comparing the so-called Sophists with the philosopher Socrates:

After centuries of successful trading, the local gods and festivals could no longer satisfy the religious needs of the ancient Athenians. Their spiritual hunger was exacerbated by the stress of city life, by the constant threat of destruction, and by the grim vision of totalitarian Sparta: the vision of Greeks living without light or grace or humour, as though the gods had withdrawn from their world.

Into the crowded space of Periclean Athens came the wandering teachers, selling their “wisdom” to the bewildered populace. Any charlatan could make a killing, if enough people believed in him. Men like Gorgias and Protagoras, who wandered from house to house demanding fees for their instruction, preyed on the gullibility of a people made anxious by war.

To the young Plato, who observed their antics with outrage, these “Sophists” were a threat to the very soul of Athens. One alone among them seemed worthy of attention, and that one, the great Socrates whom Plato immortalised in his dialogues, was not a Sophist, but a true philosopher.

The philosopher, in Plato's characterisation, awakens the spirit of inquiry. He helps his listeners to discover the truth, and it is they who bring forth, under his catalysing influence, the answer to life's riddles. The philosopher is the midwife, and his duty is to help us to what we are – free and rational beings, who lack nothing that is required to understand our condition. The Sophist, by contrast, misleads us with cunning fallacies, takes advantage of our weakness, and offers himself as the solution to problems of which he himself is the cause.

There are many signs of the Sophists, but principal among these is that they are subjectivists and relativists. Their teachings are about how to get on in the world, and not about how to find the truth. Anything goes: not facts, but the best story wins. And the result is mumbo-jumbo, condescension and the taking of fees. The philosopher uses plain language, does not talk down to his audience, and never asks for payment. Such was Socrates, and in proposing him as an ideal, Plato defined the social status of the philosopher for centuries to come.

No one should doubt that sophistry is alive and well. My concept of *The Matrix Conspiracy* is permeated with it (see my article [The Matrix Conspiracy](#)). We see it in the mix of postmodern intellectualism (social constructivism, etc.), management theory (neo-liberalism), self-help and New Age – and in the two main methods of this mix: psychotherapy and coaching.

The Sophists are back with a vengeance, and are all the more to be feared, in that they come disguised as philosophers and scientists. For, in this time of helpless relativism and subjectivity, philosophy and science alone have stood against the tide, reminding us that those crucial distinctions on which life depends – between true and false, good and evil, right and wrong – are objective and binding. Philosophy and science have until now spoken with the accents of the academy and laboratory, and not with the voice of the fortune teller.

In *Sapiens*, Harari introduces us to relativism and subjectivism (sophism) in the chapter called *The Tree of Knowledge*. He writes:

Any large-scale human cooperation – whether a modern state, a medieval church, an ancient city or an archaic tribe – is rooted in common myths that exist only in people's collective imagination (page 30)

[...] two lawyers who have never met can nevertheless combine effort to defend a complete stranger because they both believe in the existence of laws, justice, human rights – and the money paid out in fees.

Yet none of these things exists outside the stories that people invent and tell one another. There are no gods in the universe, no nations, no money, no human rights, no laws and no justice outside the common imagination of human beings [...] Modern businesspeople and lawyers are, in fact, powerful sorcerers. The principal difference between them and tribal shamans is that modern lawyers tell far stranger tales (page 31).

[...]

Telling effective stories is not easy. The difficulty lies not in telling the story, but in convincing everyone else to believe it. Much of history revolves around this question: How does one convince millions of people to believe particular stories about gods, or nations, or limited liability companies? Yet when it succeeds, it gives Sapiens immense power, because it enables millions of strangers to cooperate and work towards common goals. Just try to imagine how difficult it would have been to create states, or churches, or legal systems if we could speak only about things that really exist, such as rivers, trees and lions.

Over the years, people have woven an incredible complex network of stories. Within this network, fictions such as Peugeot not only exist, but also accumulate immense power. The kinds of things that people create through this network of stories are known in academic circles as “fictions”, “social constructs” or “imagined realities”. An imagined reality is not a lie. I lie when I say that there is a lion near the river when I know perfectly well that there is no lion there. There is nothing special about lies. Green monkeys and chimpanzees can lie. A green monkey, for example, has been observed calling “Careful! A lion!” when there was no lion around. This alarm conveniently frightened away a fellow monkey who had just found a banana, leaving the liar all alone to steal the prize for itself.

Unlike lying, an imagined reality is something that everyone believes in, and as long as this communal belief persists, the imagined reality exerts force in the world (page 35).

Well, at least we can now figure out what Harari himself is doing. He has himself told it. He is telling an effective story, which we, according to himself, should regard in the light of the above-mentioned relation between lies and, not truth, but imagined reality. Truth is power, and power is truth. The very philosophy of the One Ring in Tolkien’s masterpiece, *The Lord of the Rings*.

So, if we take his own words at face value, then his own fiction might not directly be a lie, but it is for sure economy with the truth. This Ebook will show how.

In *21 lessons* he has dedicated a whole chapter to truth, or rather: the elimination of truth. His first target is homo sapiens as a rational being. Before I go further, I would like to draw in the history of philosophy, because this is something you don't hear a word about in Harari's version of "history". Aristotle meant, that what differentiates Man from the rest of the animals, is reason. He defined Man as a rational animal. Up through the Western history of philosophy we have meant, that reason was the most crucial thing in Man. Our thinking about state and society are based on the idea about, that Man is an enlightened and rational being. The democracy is standing or falling with, that the individual is able to understand and decide on political problems. I will later return to Harari's elimination of the history of philosophy.

In Harari's book, this history is much shorter and is connected to liberalism:

In the last few centuries, liberal thought developed immense trust in the rational individual. It depicted individual humans as independent rational agents, and has made these mythical creatures the basis of modern society. Democracy is founded on the idea that the voter knows best, free-market capitalism believes that the customer is always right, and liberal education teaches students to think for themselves.

It is a mistake, however, to put so much trust in the rational individual. Post-colonial and feminist thinkers have pointed out that this "rational individual" may well be a chauvinistic Western fantasy, glorifying the autonomy and power of upper-class white men [...] Not only rationality, but individuality too is a myth, humans rarely think for themselves. Rather, we think in groups (page 253-254).

Hereafter he goes on with the concept of post-truth:

We are repeatedly told these days that we are living in a new and frightening era of "post-truth", and that lies and fictions are all around us (page 269).

[...]

In fact, humans have always lived in the age of post-truth. Homo Sapiens is a post-truth species, whose power depends on creating and believing fictions. Ever since the stone age, self-reinforcing myths have served to unite human collectives. Indeed, Homo sapiens conquered this planet thanks above all to the unique human ability to create and spread fictions.

[...]

So, if you blame Facebook, Trump or Putin for ushering in a new and frightening era of post-truth, remind yourself that centuries ago millions of Christians locked themselves inside a self-reinforcing mythological bubble never daring to question the factual veracity of the Bible (page 272).

A few lines later he writes:

I am aware that many people might be upset by my equating religion with fake news, but that's exactly the point. When a thousand people believe some make-up story for one month – that's fake news. When a billion people believe it for a thousand years – that's a religion (page 272).

[...]

Much of the bible may be fictional, but it can still bring joy to billions and can still encourage humans to be compassionate, courageous and creative – just like other great works of fiction, such as Don Quixote, War and Peace (page 273).

As you can see, Harari is not without sarcasm in his lectures about religion. In *Sapiens*, he writes about celibacy as a way of telling stories:

As a prime example, consider the repeated appearance of childless elites, such as the Catholic priesthood, Buddhist monastic orders and Chinese eunuch bureaucracies. The existence of such elites goes against the most fundamental principles of natural selection, since these dominant members of society willingly giving up procreation. Whereas chimpanzee alpha males use their power to have sex with as many females as possible – and consequently sire a large proportion of their troop's young – the Catholic alpha male abstains completely from sexual intercourse and childcare. This abstinence does not result of some quirky genetic mutation. The Catholic church has survived for centuries, not by passing on a “celibacy gene” from one pope to the next, but by passing on the stories of the New Testament and of Catholic canon law (page 38)

After this depiction Harari inserts a picture of pope Francis with the title: *The Catholic alpha male abstains from sexual intercourse and childcare, even though there is no genetic or ecological reason for him to do so (page 39).*

On the whole, Harari's books are filled with sarcasm towards, not only religious people, but towards the very species of homo sapiens, which he overall compares to animals. He even depicts them as stupid (*21 Lessons*, page 85 and 200).

Harari apparently thinks this use of sarcasm is all right when lecturing, except when it comes to himself. Harari is gay, something he is quite open about. On page 240, in *21 Lessons*, he writes:

[...] I have participated in numerous private and public debates about gay marriage, and all too often some wise guy asks, “if marriage between two men is Ok, why not allow marriage between a man and a goat?” From a secular perspective the answer is obvious. Healthy relationships require emotional, intellectual and even spiritual depth. A marriage lacking such depth will make you frustrated, lonely and psychological stunted. Whereas two men can certainly satisfy the emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs of one another, a relationship with a goat cannot. Hence if you see marriage as an institution aimed at promoting human well-being – as secular people do – you would not dream of even raising such a bizarre question. Only people who see marriage as some kind of miraculous ritual might do so.

He has himself compared pope Francis with a chimpanzee. In fact, he is constantly comparing humans with animals. Why is it suddenly a problem putting a goat into the discussion? He has himself lined out the level of discussion. But this is just one of many examples of Harari’s self-blindness. And by the way: isn’t transhumanism in itself quite a bizarre worldview? It is on the level of creationism (if not even more bizarre), and after all: the Catholic church doesn’t preach a Christianity on the level of creationism.

When Plato founded the first academy, and placed philosophy at the heart of it, he did so in order to protect the precious store of wisdom from the assaults of charlatans, to create a kind of temple to truth in the midst of falsehood, and to marginalise the Sophists who preyed on human confusion.

The Sophists were teachers of rhetoric, who against a fee, taught people how to persuade other people about their “truths”. Rhetoric, or sophistry, is the art of persuasion. Rather than giving reasons and presenting arguments to support conclusions, as Socrates did, then those who use sophistry are employing a battery of techniques, such as emphatic assertion, persuader words and emotive language, to convince the listener, or reader, that what they say or imply is true.

The Sophists taught their pupils how to win arguments by any means available; they were supposedly more interested in teaching ways of getting on in the world than ways of finding the truth, as Socrates did. Therefore any charlatan is welcome. And the use of thought distortions is seen as the best tool, when practising the mantra of the neo-liberal management theorists: “It is not facts, but the best story, that wins!”

In my article, [The Return of the Sophists](#), you can read more about the sophists in relation to social medias, especially Facebook.

Postmodernism

The academical defenders of relativism and subjectivism, which Harari until now has presented us for as truth authorities, are social constructivism and radical feminism. Read more about the absurdity of these in my articles, [Constructivism: The Postmodern Intellectualism Behind New Age and the Self-help Industry](#) and, [Feminism as Fascism](#).

You could also simply term what we have seen until now: postmodernism. We live in a postmodern society, where the distinction between reality and appearance/superficies is about to disappear. Reality is often the images, we receive through the stream of information. And it becomes more and more difficult to see, which objective reality that lies behind. It seems more and more to be the images, which are real, and not some behind lying reality. In that sense all images are equal true - (because there is no objective instance to decide what is more true than something else) - but they are not equal good, for some images are more fascinating than others, some images affect us more than others. Therefore the expression of the image has come in focus. The expression of the image – it's aesthetics – decides, whether it fascinates us or bores us. What apply for today, is the intensity and seduction of the expressions. The new truth criterion is, whether something is interesting or boring. Eternal values such as goodness, truth and beauty fall more and more away.

This postmodern society is the society of the new wandering Sophists, whom I have categorized as The Matrix Sophists. The Matrix Sophists are a common term for the tens of thousands of consultants, coaches, practitioners, identity-experts, therapists, sexologists, educators, teachers, social workers, spin doctors, psychotherapists and psychologists, who all share the ideas of The Matrix Conspiracy; that is: some kind of mix between postmodern intellectualism (social constructivism), management theory (neo-liberalism), self-help and New Age. To this have to be added the growing number of scientists who want to be philosophers instead of the philosophers.

The death of the eternal values namely doesn't only apply for reality, but also the personality. The individual human being lives in a space without truth, in a time without direction, and with an information flow so huge, that the manageability beforehand has to be given up. How are we to live then? Well, these wandering Sophists say, you do this by creating yourself in a never-ending new production.

The personality then becomes a persona (mask), an eternal change of role, because when the role begins to stiffen, it becomes uninteresting and boring. New is good, as these Sophists say. What before characterized the personality's relationship to the world, was a call. Now the relationship has become a project (or as the neo-liberal management-theorists say: a good story, a good branding, a good spin), which is formed, quickly is being carried out and dropped for the benefit of a new project, that can maintain the constant demand for intensity and seduction.

Storytelling was traditionally a way of getting in contact with the universal images. We cannot think of abstract universals like "man" without imagining some concrete, particular example of a man. Storytellers like Karen Blixen, Tolkien and Saint-Exupéry, see the universals in man and life. Whenever we think of an abstract universal, we have to use a particular concrete image. But the converse is also true: whenever we recognize a concrete particular as intelligible and meaningful, we use an abstract universal to classify it, to categorize it, to define it: we see or imagine the Bedouin as a man, not an ape.

When you look through binoculars, you look through both lenses at once. Because human thought is binocular, philosophy and storytelling naturally reinforce each other's vision. Philosophy makes storytelling clear, storytelling makes philosophy real. Philosophy shows essences, storytelling shows existence. Philosophy shows meaning, storytelling shows life.

As the Nigerian poet and novelist, [Ben Okri](#), writes in his little book, *Birds of Heaven*:

Philosophy is most powerful when it resolves into story. But story is amplified in power by the presence of philosophy.

Storytelling is a way in which we can talk about the universal, as for example philosophical questions such as: Who am I? Where do the thoughts come from? What is consciousness and where does it come from? Is there a meaning of life? How does man preserve peace of mind and balance in all the relationships of life? How do we learn to appreciate the true goods and flout all transient and vain goals? Is the destiny of Man part of a larger plan?

Storytelling can concretize the universal. The need of being able to talk concretely about the abstract and universal is as old as mankind itself. And myths are precisely tales that gives abstract topics a visible form. They make an invisible universe visible, at least to the "inner eye". In many cultures myths have probably been the only language in which they have been able to talk about the great questions of life.

Storytelling is the oldest form of teaching, and the basic vehicle for the transmission of culture from one generation to another. Jesus taught through parables. The Hindu lives in a culture knit by the great stories of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. The Sufi trained through the stories of Nasrudin. All of these great teaching stories are available on multiple levels, simple enough for the child, yet complex enough to engage the deepest levels of reflections.

Ben Okri writes:

“The African mind is essentially abstract, and their story-telling is essentially philosophical.

"A people are as healthy and confident as the stories they tell themselves. Sick storytellers can make nations sick. Without stories we would go mad. Life would lose it's moorings or orientation. Even in silence we are living our stories."

A central explanation why storytelling today has lost its enchantment, its magic, is because philosophy has been removed and been replaced by postmodernism. Enchantment is only enchantment, if you can feel a direction towards something otherworldly you haven't created yourself. Postmodernism is removing enchantment by saying that the whole thing is your own creation. There is no magic in the questions: *Am I dreaming or am I awake? Was it real, or was it just a dream?* Postmodernism says: it was only a dream. Philosophy says: no, it was real. Philosophy is therefore also the instance which makes it possible to discriminate between dream and reality. If you claim that everything is a product of your own mind, you don't have any ability of discrimination.

Critical thinking (kritikos) has to do with three virtues: A) refutation of sophisms (elenchos), B) discrimination (the ability to discriminate between reality and illusion, good and evil, true and false - emphilotekhnein), and C) flexible thinking (learning to see, or rather, think about, things "from above", from alternative viewpoints, and, when doing this, focusing your thoughts on Beauty, Goodness and Truth).

I have called sophisms thought distortions. I introduced the concept of thought distortions in my supporting exercise the philosophical diary, where I described a Socratic inquire technique. Here they especially deal with psychological and personal matters. I have developed them further in my book [A Dictionary of Thought Distortions](#).

The interplay between the three virtues ensures the balance between logic and imagination, rational and irrational, philosophy and storytelling.

Today we see a war against critical thinking. A war that reflects the war which the Sophists led against Socrates in ancient Greece, and which eventually led to the death of Socrates. Hereafter philosophy has been in decline.

Today storytelling has been reduced to confabulation.

What is confabulation? The drive to find personal meaning or significance in impersonal or insignificant coincidences (Subjective validation) may be related to the powerful “natural” drive to create stories, narratives that string together bits and pieces of information into a tale. Of course truth matters most of the time, but many of our narratives satisfy us regardless of their accuracy. This tendency to connect things and create plausible narratives out of partially fictitious items is called Confabulation.

A confabulation is a fantasy that has unconsciously replaced events in memory. A confabulation may be based partly on fact or be a complete construction of the imagination. The term is often used to describe the “memories” of mentally ill persons, memories of alien abduction, and false memories induced by careless therapists or interviewers.

Have you ever told a story that you embellished by putting yourself at the center when you knew that you weren’t even there? Or have you ever been absolutely sure you remembered something correctly, only to be shown incontrovertible evidence that your memory was wrong? No, of course not. But you probably know or have heard of somebody else who juiced up a story with made-up details or whose confidence in his memory was shown to be undeserved by evidence that his memory was false.

In my book *A Portrait of a Lifeartist* Confabulation is a central issue. I here show how memories are constructed by all of us and that the construction is a mixture of fact and fiction.

Confabulation is an unconscious process of creating a narrative that is believed to be true by the narrator but is demonstrably false.

Young Earth creationists (YECs) provide an excellent example of Confabulation mixed with Motivated reasoning. YEC is a form of creationism which holds as a central tenet that the Earth and its lifeforms were created in their present forms by

supernatural acts of a deity between approximately 6,000 and 10,000 years ago. In its most widespread version, YEC is based on the religious belief in the inerrancy of certain literal interpretations of the Book of Genesis. Its primary adherents are Christians who believe that God created the Earth in six days

To maintain their position, YECs must reject nearly all science and confabulate new laws of nature and rules of logic and evidence, and subject themselves to ridicule for their willful ignorance and irrational adherence to the myths of an ancient, pre-scientific people. The same we see within the postmodern intellectualism on Universities, which therefore justifies the tendency within neo-liberal Management theory and New Age to confabulate stories which are not true. And we see it in transhumanism. The myths of an ancient, pre-scientific people are just replaced with science fiction.

For example, some transhumanists, like Nick Bostrom, believe that we live in a simulated reality (a Matrix) created by extraterrestrials. This simulated reality, and the whole of the human history, could easily have been created a week ago. Ray Kurzweil, and therefore Harari, believes that the Matrix will be created in the near future by humans, and that it therefore is important to have the political correct opinions. To repeat the neoliberal management theorists: "It is not facts, but the best story that wins!"

So, in our time with the spreading of subjectivism and relativism - and therefore Magical thinking - we are seeing how Confabulation somehow gets a justification. There is in fact - as I claim in my article [The Matrix Conspiracy](#) - a New World Order emerging: the world of Alternative History, Alternative Physics, Alternative Medicine and, ultimately, Alternative Reality.

Communal reinforcement is a social phenomenon in which a concept or idea is repeatedly asserted in a community, regardless of whether sufficient evidence has been presented to support it. Over time, the concept or idea is reinforced to become a strong belief in many people's minds, and may be regarded by the members of the community as fact.

Often, the concept or idea may be further reinforced by publications in the mass media, books, or other means of communication. There is no doubt about that The Matrix Conspiracy (which is a strong advocate for the use of hypnosis and hypnotherapy) will be made propaganda for through mass media phenomena such as Transmedia Storytelling, Alternate Reality Games (for example The Blair Witch Project), Viral Marketing/Internet Hoaxes and Collaborative Fiction.

The phrase “millions of people can’t all be wrong” is indicative of the common tendency to accept a communally reinforced idea without question, which often aid in the widespread acceptance of urban legends, myths, and rumors.

The new New Age product called the WingMakers Project is an attempt to create an alternative history. It is not directly an example of Confabulation, since the creators of the website hardly believe their story to be true, but it will certainly create confabulation in others (see my article, [The WingMakers Project](#)).

Alternative history or alternate history is a genre of fiction consisting of stories that are set in worlds in which history has diverged from the actual history of the world. Since the 1950s this type of fiction has to a large extent merged with science fictional tropes involving cross-time travel between alternate histories or psychic awareness of the existence of “our” universe by the people in another; or ordinary voyaging uptime (into the past) or downtime (into the future) that results in history splitting into two or more time-lines.

A secret history (or shadow history) is a revisionist interpretation of either fictional or real (or known) history, which is claimed to have been deliberately suppressed, forgotten, or ignored by established scholars. Originally, secret histories were designed as non-fictional, revealing or claiming to reveal the truth behind the “spin”. Today we see how secret history sometimes is used in a long-running science fiction or fantasy universe to preserve continuity with the present by reconciling paranormal, anachronistic, or otherwise notable but unrecorded events with what actually happened in known history; for instance in the fictional time travel theories. The WingMakers story, for example, combines this with the urban legend and alternate history from the Ong’s Hat myth. Though the WingMakers website tries to avoid critique by saying it is a modern mythology (where urban legends are considered as a modern folklore) it also keeps on, precisely as in urban legends, to insinuate that the story is true. It is therefore a piece of pseudohistory.

Pseudohistory is purported history such as Afrocentrism, creationism, holocaust revisionism and the catastrophism of Immanuel Velikovsky. Pseudohistory should be distinguished from the ancient texts it is based on. The sagas, legends, myths and histories, which have been passed on orally or in written documents by ancient peoples are sometimes called pseudohistory. Some of it is pseudohistory, some of it is flawed history and some of isn’t history at all.

Pseudohistory should also be distinguished from historical fiction and fantasy. Anyone who cites a work of historical fiction as if it were a historical text is a practising pseudohistorian. There are also writers of historical fiction who

intentionally falsify and invent ancient history. A technique to do this is to claim to find an ancient document and publishing it in order to express one's own ideas. An example is *The Celestine Prophecy*. A variation on this theme is to claim that one is channeling a book from some ancient being, e.g, *The Urantia Book*, *Bringers of the Dawn*, and... [A Course in Miracles](#).

New Age is permeated with references to vibrations and energy, advices to avoid the negative (you can tell good people by their eyes), stop doubting, follow your intuitions and premonitions, flow with coincidences, believe in the purposiveness of everything, join thousands of others on the quest, turn into your feelings and evolve to a higher plane. Follow your intuitions and dreams as you go through your spiritual evolution. Fact or fiction, it doesn't matter. Truth is what you make it. Life's too short and too complicated to deal with reality. Make your own reality.

This New Age subjectivism and relativism encourage people to believe that reality is whatever you want it to be. The line between fact and fiction gets blurry and obscured. Subjectivism shuts down people's critical faculties, making them suggestible for any Ideology. It involves making people quit thinking critically in order to open them up to thinking Magical about that Subjective validation and Communal reinforcement lead to bliss. Hypnosis is in New Age directly used as a means for inducing in people certain worldviews.

The subjectivism in the WingMakers Project can be seen in the question about whether the WingMakers material is fact or fiction. The introduction to the project says as follows: "It is fact wrapped in fiction otherwise known as myth." So here we see how subjectivism is used as an attempt to get the line between fact and fiction blurry and obscured. It is also an attempt to avoid critique. Without success, because the story, as mentioned, ends in pseudohistory.

The Matrix Conspiracy

With my concept of The Matrix Conspiracy I put myself in the risk of being accused of being a paranoid conspiracy theorist. This is not the case. I'm just making aware of that there exists a conspiracy theory which is called The Matrix Conspiracy, and that this conspiracy in fact are a global spreading ideology. An ideology I'm highly critical towards. My critique is in that way ideological critique, or cultural critique.

The concept of the Matrix comes from mathematics, but is more popular known from the movie the Matrix, which asks the question whether we might live in a computer simulation. In The Matrix though, there is also an evil demon, or evil demons, namely the machines which keep the humans' in tanks linked to black cable wires

that stimulates the virtual reality of the Matrix. Doing this the machines can use the human bodies as batteries that supply the machines with energy. This leads of course to questions of evil scientists, Sophists, etc. It is the fascination of the virtual reality that deceives the humans.

In *21 Lessons*, in the chapter on truth, it is therefore no surprise that Harari is bringing the movie *The Matrix* up. He is ending the chapter on post-truth with some advices about how to “get out of the brainwashing machine” (page 282). He writes that we should strive harder to distinguish between reality and fiction. I couldn’t agree more. The absurdity is that Harari hereafter is doing a good job of hindering this. But, as mentioned, this is a part of his gaslightning. Harari now offers “two simple rules of thumb”: The first rule is to pay good money for information. Good newspapers for example. I agree. The next rule is: read relevant scientific literature. And by scientific literature, Harari means: “I mean peer reviewed articles, published by well-known academic publishers, and the writings of professors from reputable institutions”. I couldn’t agree more.

But then comes some of his usual odd remarks. He writes:

[...] *“it is equally important to communicate the latest scientific theories to the general public through popular-science books, and even through the skilful use of art and fiction.*

Does this mean scientists should start writing science fiction? This is actually not such a bad idea. Art plays a key role in shaping people’s view of the world, and in the twenty-first century science fiction is arguably the most important genre of all, for it shapes how people understand things like AI, bioengineering and climate change. We certainly need good science, but from a political perspective, a good science-fiction movie is worth far more than and article in Science or Nature” (page 284).

This is postmodernist nonsense. It is therefore no surprise that he ends the Truth-chapter with a section called Science-fiction. And no surprise that he advices us to see the movie *The Matrix* as a good educational movie.

Let’s look at this movie. The philosophy behind the movie comes from especially two philosophers: Rene Descartes and George Berkeley.

1) Rene Descartes

Descartes is the first to formulate the problem of the external world, and the modern dualism, which created the so-called mind-body problem. Descartes was very

dubious concerning how much we can trust our senses. Therefore he took up the question *Is life a dream?* However, his intention with this was in his *Meditations* to develop a confident cognition-argument. In his *Meditations* Descartes presents the problem approximately like this: I frequently dream during the night, and while I dream, I am convinced, that what I dream is real. But then it always happens, that I wake up and realize, that everything I dreamt was not real, but only an illusion. And then is it I think: is it possible, that what I now, while I am awake, believe is real, also is something, which only is being dreamt by me right now? If it is not the case, how shall I then determinate it? Precisely because Descartes not even in dreams can doubt, that 2 plus 3 is 5, he leaves the dream-argument in his *Meditations* and goes in tackle with the question, whether he could be cheated by an evil demon concerning all cognition, also the mathematics. This radical skepticism leads him forward to the cogito-argument: Cogito ergo Sum (I think, therefore I exist). But he didn't deny the existence of the external world. The external world he described in a way that resembles what would later be known as modern natural sciences. In the view of nature in natural science, nature is reduced to atomic particles, empty space, fields, electromagnetic waves and particles etc., etc. I have called this the instrumental view of nature. It is also called materialism. It is the classical example of reductionism.

Materialism, or naturalism, stands for any view, which considers nature, or the natural, as the most common basis for explanations and evaluations. A materialistic view of human nature is this conception: Man is a piece of nature.

Materialistic views can be traced back to the oldest Greek philosophy, but all newer forms of materialism are characterized by modern natural sciences. Materialism therefore very often advocates the conception, that all phenomena in the world can be studied through natural science. However, it is important to be aware, that materialism in itself isn't a scientific point of view, but a philosophical point of view. No single branch of science gives anything else than a limited perspective on Man or reality. If you are claiming anything else, you end in reductionism; that is: where you reduce Man and reality to only being a result of a single influence. You accentuate one influence at the same time as you understate all others, and therewith you get a problem with creating unity and coherence in your theory. Both Man and reality are all too complex to be written down to one influence.

But it is a misunderstanding, that reductionism only applies to natural science. We are seeing examples of reductionism in just about any scientific discipline, and Harari is using all the reductionisms he can get hold on. Let's look at what reductionism is.

Surely – many are the people, who become seduced by the reductionisms. Maybe not so strange after all: all reductionisms imply a simplification, a manageable solution to

all problems, a key, which saves the supporters for having to think fundamentally over the philosophical questions – which after all only a few are capable to.

What is reductionism? Science can't give answers to the problems of lifeviews and view of values. Single branches of sciences can't out of hand answer questions about values or moral standards.

However this they nevertheless often do, but then it ends in reductionism. And there has not been a lack of trying to understand Man from one or the other single branch of science. They have for example claimed, that Man fully could be described and explained with the methods of natural science. This happens in various forms of Naturalism, Biologism, Positivism and Behaviourism. Or they have thought, that psychology, sociology or history can give the total and superior understanding of, what a human being is. These viewpoints are described respectively as Psychologism, Sociologism and Historism. Harari is using all of these reductionisms.

A reductionism reduces or devaluates Man to a phenomenon of a single type. The problem is then to lead all other sides of Man back to this single type, for example to explain ethics, politics and mathematics as pure historical or psychological phenomena. Here the reductionisms always end in various forms of explaining away, which often is directly absurd.

The reductionisms observe Man from fragmented viewpoints, for example as organism, as physical-chemical system, as society being, as psyche, as producer and user of language and meaning. But what becomes of the Wholeness? What unites all this knowledge to a total image of Man?

The reductionisms view themselves as scientific approaches, but they are not. It is here the fundamental invalidity in the reductionist viewpoints arises, since their basis not is building on argumentation, but on the claim, that they are founded in science. But science is not able to answer problems of life-views and values. Reductionisms are philosophical viewpoints, which under cover of being science seek to answer questions of values or moral standards. No single branch of science gives anything else than a limited perspective on Man or reality. If the reductionisms should be taken seriously, then they shall contain a unifying perspective on all knowledge about Man.

Now, let's return to materialism. In the view of nature in natural science, nature is reduced to atomic particles, empty space, fields, electromagnetic waves and particles etc., etc. Characteristic is, that nature is explained, and is described, in a way, which is a world away from our immediate sense experiences. The Wholeness is removed,

or rather: macrocosmos is written down to microcosmos. And we should not be fooled by quantum mystical New Age lectures about energy fields as “holistic”.

What’s astonishing about Harari is his explicit reductionism. It seems like he is using reductionism deliberately, or provocatively. Normally, people end in reductionism unintended. But it could also be that Harari just is incredible scientific and philosophical naïve. In that case we have to do with something that could have been written as a Facebook comment, or, in the best case: an undergraduate student. In both cases it would be dumped as any serious paper. Let’s look at some examples. In *Sapiens* he writes:

As far as we can tell, from a purely scientific viewpoint, human life has absolutely no meaning. Humans are the outcome of blind evolutionary processes that operate without goal or purpose. Our actions are not part of some divine cosmic plan, and if planet Earth were to blow up tomorrow morning, the universe would probably keep going about to business as usual. As far as we can tell at this point, human subjectivity would not be missed. Hence any meaning that people ascribe to their lives is just a delusion. The other-worldly meanings medieval people found in their lives were no more deluded than the humanist, nationalist and capitalist meanings modern people find (page 438).

Where has science shown this? Nowhere. It is just postulations taken out of the blue air. There is no scientific validation or philosophical argumentation. It is in other words dogmatism. But ordinary people have no chance of looking through this nonsense. They will believe him due to the use of the thought distortion, *Research has shown that...*

In *21 Lessons* he writes:

In itself, the universe is only a meaningless hotchpotch of atoms. Nothing is beautiful, sacred or sexy – but human feelings make it so. It is only human feelings that make a red apple seductive and a turd disgusting. Take away human feelings, and you are left with a bunch of molecules.

We hope to find meaning by fitting ourselves into some ready-made story about the universe, but according to the liberal interpretation of the world, the truth is exactly the opposite. The universe does not give meaning. I give meaning to the universe. The universe does not give me meaning. This is my cosmic vocation. I have no fixed destiny or dharma. If I find myself in Simba’s or Arjuna’s shoes, I can choose to fight for the crown of a kingdom, but I don’t have to. I can just as well join a wandering

circus, go to Broadway to sing in a musical, or move to Silicon Valley and launch a start-up. I am free to create my own dharma.

[...]

Unfortunately, human freedom and human creativity are not what the liberal story imagines them to be. To the best of our scientific understanding, there is no magic behind our choices and creations. They are the product of billions of neurons exchanging biochemical signals, and even if you liberate humans from the yoke of the Catholic Church and the Soviet Union, their choices will still be dictated by biochemical algorithms as ruthless as the Inquisition and the KGB (page 347-348).

So, Harari is using reductionism to deconstruct the world as we know it, in order to get his own prediction, Homo Deus, made probable (note how he cleverly gets the concept *algorithm*, mixed in, as a part of the “scientific knowledge”). As we shall see later, he believes neo-liberalism is the best new story in his begging the question scenario.

2) *George Berkeley*

George Berkeley developed the metaphysical theory called *subjective idealism*. Subjective idealism is the monistic metaphysical doctrine that only minds and mental contents exist. It entails and is generally identified or associated with immaterialism, the doctrine that material things do not exist. Subjective idealism rejects dualism, neutral monism, and materialism; indeed, it is the contrary of eliminative materialism, the doctrine that all or some classes of mental phenomena (such as emotions, beliefs, or desires) do not exist, but are sheer illusions. It is important to mention this part of the Matrix, since the Matrix (dataism) just is an updated version of subjective idealism. We therefore have to do with a paradox, when materialists support transhumanism, since idealism is the direct opposite of materialism (I will return to this paradox in the section on transhumanism).

Berkeley is famous for the sentence *Esse est percipi*, which means that being, or reality, consists in being perceived (to be is to be experienced). The absurdity in Berkeley’s assertion is swiftly seen: If a thing, or a human being for that matter, is not being perceived by the senses, then it does not exist. In accordance with Berkeley there therefore does not exist any sense-independent world. He ends in solipsism, the consequence that only I, and my perceptions, can be said to exist. Everything else is an illusion created by myself. Berkeley is the philosopher behind many New Agers’ adoption of the movie Matrix.

However, it is Descartes who is the main philosopher behind the movie. In modern discussions about the reliability of our cognition you often meet a variation of Descartes' argument of the evil demon. The argument is: some day surgery will have reached so far, that you will be able to operate the brain out of a human being and keep it alive by putting it in a jar with some nutrient substratum. At that time computer research perhaps will have reached so far, that you will be able to connect a computer with such a brain and feed it with all possible data – that is: supply us with an experiential "virtual reality", so that we think that we have a body, that we have a life and walk around in the world believing, that we can perceive our surroundings, whilst we in reality only is a brain laying in a jar. It is this thesis the movie *The Matrix* is based on. The brain-in-jar hypothesis has been developed further into the so-called simulation theory, and ideas such as uploading minds to computers.

Descartes and Berkeley are the reason for why both New Agers and atheist materialists can believe in the Matrix Conspiracy: that we in fact are being deceived and are living in a virtual reality, or, will do so in a near future. In fact, we have two ruling metaphysical theories in the society today: materialism (leading to atheist fundamentalism) and idealism (leading to New Age). They seem to be each other complements.

The most extreme form of materialists believing in the Matrix, is defended by the so-called transhumanists. There are both pros and cons. The pros (Ray Kurzweil, David Chalmers, etc.) find it *desirable* to live in a virtual reality. They believe that we must melt together with machines (computers) in order to solve our problems. This is scary enough supported by Silicon Valley, and the Californian Ideology. This means that Google, Facebook, Amazon, etc., as well as smartphones, etc, etc., all are designed with the primary goal to design us into a transhumanist future.

An example of cons is Nick Bostrom. The reason why you can be a cons and still be a transhumanist, is that you in fact believe that the Matrix is possible, and that it will be created (if it not already exists). Harari could sound like a cons, but he also believes that there is no alternative to *The Matrix*. But, as I will show later, it is questionable whether Bostrom and Harari in fact *are* cons, but just want their own versions of the Matrix realized.

The other version, idealism and New Age, doesn't find it desirable, and is often advising us to unplug from the Matrix. They often compare the Matrix with the Indian concept of Maya, and claims that we must plug out from the external reality, which they believe is a Matrix created by evil forces. We must therefore instead rely completely on our subject, which in reality is God. If we find this divine core, we will

be able to create our own reality. But this is not what Indian philosophy says (nor the movie). On the contrary, the Indian concept of Maya claims that it is the subject which is Maya (the Matrix), and that we must plug out from the subject in order to reach absolute objectivity. In reality New Age is building on George Berkeley and his subjective idealism. In that way New Age becomes a more sinister advocate for the evil machines in the movie. This is completely unwillingly (they have good intentions), and is rooted in the hopeless uneducated people within New Age, who especially via the internet can present themselves as experts in just about anything from spirituality to science, without the need to validate it. If you asked them who George Berkeley is they wouldn't know, and yet it is him they are representing (I have investigated the misunderstandings in my Ebook [The Tragic New Age Confusion of Eastern Enlightenment and Western Idealism](#)).

Both subjectivism and relativism claim, that there doesn't exist any objective truth. Truth is something we create ourselves, either as individuals or as cultures, and since there doesn't exist any objective truth, there doesn't exist any objective scale of truth. Therewith they also say, that we live in a Matrix, a dream, a kind of virtual reality, we have created ourselves, and that there is no chance of getting out of this. The Matrix simply *is* reality, and you can either be a slave of it or a master of it. It is what you think it is.

Here I already hear objections from New Agers. And yes, New Agers often speak about breaking with the Matrix of deception. But what they mean is, as already shown, that you through your mind can create your own version of it. Instead of being a slave of it, you can be a master of it. If you for example take the Law of Attraction coach [Magnetic Mama](#)'s version of the Matrix then she in connection with "Narcissistic Abuse Recovery Coaching" says: "I can give you suggestions for coping with complex-PTSD symptoms and reprogramming negative beliefs ('malware') installed in childhood by your narcissistic household." This is certainly not the speak of Morpheus, Neo, or the rebels, it is the speak of the machines and Agent Smith. According to Morpheus, in the movie, Smith is an Agent of the system. Like other Agents, Smith's role is to police and maintain the Matrix by eliminating potential threats to the stability of the system, such as Redpills and defective programs. Smith is personified as stern, serious, and nearly invincible. Agent Smith is in that way the archetypal Matrix Sophist.

Harari is therefore right. Watching the Matrix movie has created some "good" education tools. On a website, a New Age therapist for example writes the following:

I work holistically, with a grounding in psychological theory, integrating a variety of therapeutic tools. These include: Counselling, EFT, [Matrix Re-imprinting](#), Psych-

K®, Theta Healing, Rewind Technique (Fast Phobia Cure), Reference Point and Geneline Therapy, and Spiritual Healing or Reiki.

Matrix Re-imprinting? Let's visit this website. The subtitle on the website goes: "Rewrite Your Past, Transform Your Future". Matrix Re-imprinting is created by Karl Dawson, an "EFT Founding Master". The website says:

Matrix Reimprinting is a completely new personal development technique that dramatically improves health and wellbeing by allowing you to access and transform painful memories that may be holding you trapped in the past. It was developed from the popular self-help technique, EFT, a meridian tapping therapy that has shown outstanding results with both physical and emotional issues. Matrix Reimprinting advances EFT by incorporating all the latest developments in the New Sciences and quantum physics.

So, it is all science? The introduction to the book on Matrix Re-imprinting claims that:

We are all connected to a "unified energy field, generally referred to as the "Field or "The Matrix". This understanding was first brought to light in the 1940s by the father of quantum mechanics, Max Planck. In the twenty-first century it was popularized by films such as The Secret, What the Bleep Do We Know?! and more recently, The Living Matrix, and books such as The Divine Matrix, by Gregg Braden, and The Field, by Lynne Mctaggart.

According to the book, you can practice Matrix Re-imprinting by following four principles:

- 1) We are all made up of energy that vibrates so fast we appear as solid matter.
- 2) We are linked by a web that connects us all known as the Matrix,
- 3) We send out thoughts out into the Matrix and those thoughts are attracted back to us as life experiences.
- 4) We can change how we experience life by changing the pictures in the Matrix.

As we can see, the real science of Max Planck is brought together with a range of popular science books in the New Age field.

It's puzzling that they don't seem to have grasped the meaning of the film, only Morpheus's introducing claim that the Matrix is everywhere, in the bones, around us, etc. They speak Agent Smith's speak, and not the rebels. They speak about finding ways of getting on in this Matrix, rather than being interested in finding ways of

discovering the truth; or rather: what they see as the truth is that they can control the Matrix entirely through the mind.

To teach people this, is the main job of the Matrix Sophists. But this is in opposition to the message of the movie the Matrix, which is, that we should create a rebellion, and try to get out of the illusion. In that way you can say that the new Sophists are the “machines”, or the rulers of the Matrix, which keep people as slaves.

Let’s look at two of Harari’s subtitles (still in the chapter on Truth in *21 Lessons*):

- 1) “Getting Out of the Brainwashing Machine” [in the post-truth section].
- 2) “The Future is not what you see in the movies” [in the science-fiction section].

So, does Harari want us to get out of the brainwashing machine? No, he does precisely as in the above-mentioned examples. In the section called *Living in a Box*, he continues his gaslighting technique. He writes:

One theme that science fiction has explored with far greater insight concerns the dangers of technology being used to manipulate and control human beings. The Matrix depicts a world in which almost all humans are imprisoned in cyberspace, and everything they experience is shaped by a master algorithm. The Truman Show focuses on a single individual who is the unwitting star of a reality TV show. Unbeknownst to him, all his friends and acquaintances – including his mother, his wife and his best friend – are actors; everything that happens to him follows a well-crafted script; and everything he says and does is recorded by hidden cameras and avidly followed by millions of fans (page 287).

Now, this sound good, right? Harari is now making us aware of the dangers of the Matrix. He is now beginning the advice on how to get out of the brainwashing machine. Or is he? He continues:

However, both movies – despite their brilliance – in the end recoil from the full implications of the scenarios. They assume that the humans trapped within the Matrix have an authentic self, which remains untouched by all the technological manipulations, and that beyond the matrix awaits an authentic reality, which the heroes can access if they only try hard enough (page 287)

[...]

...when Neo breaks out of the matrix by swallowing the famous red pill, he discovers that the world outside is no different from the world inside. Both outside and inside there are violent conflicts and people driven by fear, lust, love and envy. The movie should have ended with Neo being told that the reality he has accessed is just a bigger matrix, and that if he wants to escape into “the true real world”, he must again choose between the blue pill and the red pill.

The current technological and scientific revolution implies not that authentic individuals and authentic realities can be manipulated by algorithms and TV cameras, but rather that authenticity is a myth. People are afraid of being trapped inside a box, but they don't realise that they are already trapped inside a box – their brain – which is locked within a bigger box – human society with its myriad fictions. When you escape the matrix the only thing you discover is a bigger matrix (page 288).

Again: *Research has shown that...* Anyway, Harari is here ending in an endless regress, which is an unacceptable standpoint if you want to be taken serious in a philosophical discussion. As usual there are no validations and arguments following his postulations. They are made out of the blue air as straightforward answers. Most absurd is that it is based on a Hollywood movie, which he even needs to correct, since it contrary to himself, offers good solutions. I have explained the problem of endless regress in my article, [The Dream Hypothesis and the Brain-in-jar Hypothesis](#).

But not enough with that: Harari's claims about our lives in *The Matrix* is a complete contradiction of all his speak about a physical world existing independent of our fictions. It contradicts all of the above-mentioned examples of his materialist reductionisms (that we only are a bunch of molecules, atoms, etc.). It makes his own claims invalid. What he now is speaking about is techno idealism. He is apparently only using materialism as a way of deconstructing all truth and meaning, so that we can enter into techno idealism, and his goal: dataism.

What's more troubling is that he is ending his section on science fiction (the whole truth chapter) with the novel *Brave New World*, by Aldous Huxley. This novel foresees the end of democracy in a pseudoscientific, technological fixated meritocracy. The novel is about a totalitarian state, which keeps psychological and genetic control with everybody, so that they surrender to the claimed “blessings” of the progress of the instrumental or technical reason; that is: through the reductionisms of psychologism and biologism.

Everything, also humans, and human problems, are treated instrumental or technical. Psychology and genetics are controlling people down to the smallest details, children

are being born and “grown” on bottles, brains are being trimmed, characters are being converted after the needs of the dominant state. Notice the similarities with the New Age product called NLP which are about programming your brain so that you can become a success in society; that is: so that you work in favour of Surveillance Capitalism.

The people in this meritocracy are considered as being happy. If they experience some kind of negativity, they are in large quantities supplied with the drug Soma, which makes them “happy” again. All religion, philosophy, literature and art have been removed, because the society doesn’t want people to have “deeper feelings”. Science is strictly political controlled; that is: it is ruled by scientism. The entertainment is so-called sensitivity-entertainment. You can go to sensitivity-parties, or you can watch sensitivity-movies, etc. Everywhere the people are meeting sensitivity-influences.

Somewhere in the novel there is a discussion between the main character John the Savage and the President about the lack of truth and beauty in this society. The President argues that it might very well be that there isn’t any truth and beauty, but the people are happy. John the Savage objects, and says that the whole society is completely meaningless. The President continues: “Yes, but the people are happy!”

John the Savage is now offered the opportunity to escape. Harari ends the chapter:

John the Savage retires to an uninhabited wilderness, and there lives as a hermit. Years of living on an Indian reservation and of being brainwashed by Shakespeare and religion have conditioned him to reject all the blessings of modernity. But word of such an unusual and exciting fellow quickly spreads, people flock to watch him and record all his doings, and soon enough he becomes a celebrity. Sick to the heart of all the unwanted attention, the Savage escapes the civilized matrix not by swallowing a red pill, but by hanging himself.

Unlike the creators of The Matrix and The Truman Show, Huxley doubted the possibility of escape, because he questioned whether there was anybody to make the escape. Since your brain and your “self” are part of the matrix, to escape the matrix you must escape your self. That, however, is a possibility worth exploring. Escaping the narrow definition of self might well become a necessary survival skill in the twenty-first century (pages 296-297).

Again, he is begging the question, since he at the same time supplies us with the answer: *the self is part of the matrix*. He is chasing the reader around in his own setup of choices. Pure gaslightning.

Scientism

I have supplied my concept of the Matrix Conspiracy with three other conspiracies: The Bilderberg Group, Illuminati and the 666 Conspiracy. Before we go further, I will again emphasize that I use the conspiracy terms simply because they are the most precise terms for the bizarre ideology we see spreading these days.

Illuminati is a secret society, that goes way back in history. The background is real. This organization has in fact existed. The goal was a challenge to for instance the church, working towards a new world order, and with connections to occultism. The goal was a world without religions, often referred to as the New World Order.

Illuminati is said to be an advocate for a scientific world-view, but this has nothing to do with true science. True science can't be connected with certain political views, and/or occultism. But there is an ongoing strong demand that science has to be integrated with New Age (occultism and spirituality) and/or reductionism (postmodernism and politics). You see these demands all the time, especially in New Age magazines and books.

So the "scientific" in Illuminati is rather pseudoscience. Note that I don't discriminate between the pseudoscience of New Age - (demands for that science has to be integrated with certain alternative "spiritual" sciences) - and the pseudoscience of reductionism - (demands for that science has to be integrated with, or is the same as, certain atheist/political/postmodernist point of views) - though these views can disagree highly in between. They all advocate subjectivism and relativism, and certain occult and/or political views.

So, my concept of Illuminati has to do with the rise of scientism, which is shared by New Age and Atheist fundamentalism. Scientism is the ideology of science. The term scientism generally points to the cosmetic application of science in unwarranted situations not amenable to application of the scientific method or similar scientific standards. Scientism claims:

- 1) that philosophy and religion need to be founded in science.
- 2) that certain single branches of science can give an explanation of everything.
- 3) that certain single branches of science are self-sufficient and that philosophy and religion are superfluous.

In New Age it happens in the demand of "alternative sciences." In reductionism it happens in the form of pseudoskepticism.

Pseudoskepticism is usually used in opposition to an assortment of questionable claims (from UFOs and paranormal phenomena to alternative medical practices to religious ideas). Pseudoskepticism refers to arguments which use scientific sounding language to disparage or refute given beliefs, theories, or claims, but which in fact fail to follow the precepts of conventional scientific skepticism.

The term “pseudoskepticism” has gradually been expanded to include any unsubstantiated invalidation of a theory.

The term was coined by professor in sociology, Marcello Truzzi. Truzzi attributed the following characteristics to pseudosceptics:

- 1) The tendency to deny, rather than doubt.
- 2) Double standards in the application of criticism
- 3) Tendency to discredit, rather than investigate
- 4) Presenting insufficient evidence or proof
- 5) Assuming criticism requires no burden of proof
- 6) Making unsubstantiated counter-claims
- 7) Counter-claims based on plausibility rather than empirical evidence
- 8) Suggesting that unconvincing evidence is grounds for completely dismissing a claim

Truzzi characterized true skepticism as:

- 1) Doubt rather than denial; nonbelief rather than belief
- 2) An agnostic position, one that says the claim is not proved rather than disproved
- 3) Maintains that science need not incorporate every extraordinary claim as a new “fact.”
- 4) As a result, has no burden to prove anything

5) Discovering an opportunity for error should make such experiments less evidential and usually unconvincing. It usually disproves the claim that the experiment was “air tight” against error, but it does not disprove the anomaly claim.

Harari’s scientism and pseudoskepticism, combined with his tendency to sarcasm, might be inspired by postmodernism, but it is also inspired by atheist fundamentalism. Atheist fundamentalism is advanced by a group of thinkers and writers who advocate the view that superstition, religion and irrationalism should not simply be tolerated but should be countered, criticized, and exposed by rational argument wherever their influence arises in government, education, and politics.

On September 30, 2007, four prominent atheists (Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens and Daniel Dennett) met at Hitchens' residence in Washington, D.C., for a private two-hour unmoderated discussion. The event was videotaped and titled "The Four Horsemen."

In *Homo Deus* Harari writes (in a defence of liberalism):

Indeed, even Richard Dawkins, Steven Pinker and the other champions of the new scientific world view refuse to abandon liberalism (page355).

In *21 Lessons* he calls Dawkins, “the eminent biologist”, and combines this with something Dawkins said in combination with Brexit (page 59). As if Dawkins’s status as “eminent biologist” makes his political views true. But this is something that is taken for granted in Harari’s scientism. If a scientist says something about politics, philosophy, religion, culture, etc., then this is absolutely true due to his status as scientist, according to Harari.

Besides this, the only thing Dawkins is eminent in is making himself visible as public atheist sophist in the same style as Harari himself. Dawkins has made no valuable scientific work at all, except the creation of a purely pseudoscientific concept called the Meme (the pseudoscience of Memetics is by the way something Harari makes into a fundament for his “historical” research – see *Sapiens* 269-271).

Take for example Dawkins’ book *The God Delusion* where he states that religion simply is evil! When it is banished from the face of the earth, we can live in peace! It is a theme that goes from beginning to end. The God that Dawkins does not believe in is (and I *quote* from page 31): “a petty, unjust, unforgiving control freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.”

And religious people are all under one characterized as deranged, deluded, deceived and deceiving; their intellectual capacity having been warped through being hijacked by an infectious, malignant God-virus. In short: religious people are idiots.

Furthermore: the “rational arguments” in the book is simply a bunch of pseudoscientific speculation, poor reasoning, diversionary ploys, seductive reasoning errors, techniques of persuasion and avoidance. Dawkins is obviously trying to do philosophy, but manages only to demonstrate his lack of competence herein. The reviewer of *Prospect* magazine was shocked at this “incurious, dogmatic, rambling, and self-contradictory” book. The title of the review? “Dawkins the dogmatist.”

There you are. That sets the level of the “rational argument” Dawkins claims he is a representative of (read more about Dawkins in my booklet, [Atheist Fundamentalism](#). A collected description of the rise of scientism can be read in my article, [Final Secret of the Illuminati](#)).

The “heretical” atheist, and philosopher, Michael Ruse has made the claim that Richard Dawkins would fail "introductory" courses on the study of "philosophy or religion" (such as courses on the philosophy of religion), courses which are offered, for example, at many educational institutions such as colleges and universities around the world. You could say precisely the same about Harari.

But people celebrate Dawkins for his status as scientist alone. We see the same in the admiration of Stephen Hawking. It is considered smart to quote something Stephen Hawking has said. In the same way as it is smart to quote Einstein. But the difference between Einstein and Hawking, is that Einstein actually did breakthrough science, and was clever on a lot of fields unrelated to his scientific discipline. This is not the case with Hawking. Hawking belongs to the same brand of scientism as Harari. He believed in the simulation theory, and he wanted to do philosophy instead of the philosophers. *The Grand Design* is a popular-science book written by Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow. In the book Hawking seems to want to surpass Nietzsche’s declaration: God is Dead! In the introduction he presents a variety of philosophical questions, whereafter he says:

Traditionally these are questions for philosophy; but philosophy is dead. Philosophy has not kept up with modern development in science, particular physics...

Note the title of one of his books: *A Brief History of Time*.

I have examined a lot of scientists, who want to be philosophers instead of the philosophers, and who therefore end up in the field of scientism. Besides [Stephen Hawking](#) (a physicist), and [Richard Dawkins](#) (a biologist), they are: [Nassim Haramein](#) (amateur physicist), [Robert Lanza](#) (biologist), [Timothy Leary](#) (psychologist), [Bruce Lipton](#) (biologist), [Robert Anton Wilson](#) (psychologist), [Ken Wilber](#) (biologist), [Gregg Braden](#) (computer scientist), [Joe Dispenza](#) (amateur neuroscientist), [Christopher Hyatt](#) (psychologist), [David Jay Brown](#) (psychobiologist), [Rupert Sheldrake](#) (biochemist).

They are all abusing science as a way of getting their personal “philosophies” brought to fame. And it works. Most of them are celebrated on the international scene.

Evolutionism

Evolutionism was created in the 19th century, but the background is to be found in the Renaissance, not least in the scientific breakthrough from approximately 1550 onwards.

It is an ideology which we still celebrate in the Western world. We find it natural to talk about progress, development, growth, renewal, innovation, visions, whether it's economic, political, social conditions, spiritual - and also when it comes to art. It is a linear view of history where it is about being constantly progressive, revolutionary, dynamic, unconventional, without rest, without end. Evolutionism is so close-knit in our minds that we find it very difficult to imagine that it could be different.

But evolutionism is a newer Western phenomenon. In the rest of the world, it did not exist before the Europeans. All pre-modern societies had a cyclic view of history. In the society of today it is stated in all areas that we must move on, develop ourselves, renew ourselves and the institutions, companies, develop trade, exports, imports. In the cyclic societies concepts such as gods, providence and destiny were central. But such concepts have long been replaced with ideas of growth and progress. In business, innovation and expansion have become key words. Evolutionism has gone so much into the blood that it also characterizes our view of spirituality.

In my Ebook [Evolutionism - The Red Thread in the Matrix Conspiracy](#), I described the different variations of evolutionism, as for example historicism, as well as its current popularity in America, with transhumanism and its dreams about the future merging of humans and machines.

My intention was to show how evolutionism makes us blind for a number of relationships, as for example down-cycles, the shadow side of life, negative

consequences, and most important: the wisdom of the past. I consider evolutionism to be the beginning of a long period of human decline.

Historicism is the belief that historical, and by extension present and future, events unfold according to predetermined sequences. You could mention Hegel's dialectics. But it is found in many belief systems, for example in the 19th and some early 20th century anthropology and archaeology (generally referred to as "cultural evolutionism") - societies evolve through time on a single path from small bands of hunter-gatherers to nation-states resembling those of 19th century Europe — and no further.

You can also see it in certain formulations of biological determinism applied to historical processes, e.g. racialist theories that posited the achievements of European civilization were due to biological superiority. These ideas were often tied into the anthropological theories above.

Then there is the above-mentioned Hegelian dialectics - every development in history (thesis) would lead to a reaction (antithesis). The contrast between both will lead to a reconciliation or otherwise be settled (synthesis), which would eventually become a new thesis, etc. This view had a great influence on Marxism - civilization goes through several stages, from primitive communism, through the rise of the state and private property, to feudalism, capitalism, socialism and finally to communism.

You can find it in dispensationalism - a fundamentalist Protestant Christian belief in seven periods of time or "dispensations" the earth will go through; according to this belief we are currently in the "dispensation of grace" and will be until the rapture happens.

Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West*, arguably an intellectual influence on Nazism, claimed a civilization model in which each civilization necessarily passes through several epochs and eventually declines.

Auguste Comte's positivism - in his famous *Law of the Three Stages* Comte postulated that all human societies would pass through three stages: the religious stage, the metaphysical stage and the positive stage. He believed his own philosophy kicked off the third stage.

A common trait of historicists are egos that seem to follow their grand fantasies.

It should be easy to see how all this has influenced the New Age movement, where the concept of historical stages has been applied to consciousness, and the coming

New World Order – the New Age. You can for example see this in the New Age guru Ken Wilber's works (See my articles [A Critique of Ken Wilber and His Integral Method](#) and the update [Ken Wilber](#)).

Finally there is Futurism - Many works of technological determinism may be found under this heading. Its current incarnations are known as "transhumanism" and "Singularitarianism." Many New Age systems merge with futurism, as for example the WingMakers Project and The Human Design system (see my blog post [The WingMakers Project](#) and my article [A Critique of the Human Design System](#)).

It should be mentioned that it is comparatively easy to invent such historical systems. You just have to more or less copy and paste from others, who have done a harder thought work, as for example Hegel and Marx, and then insert your own terminology. Evolutionary art (postmodern art) is just the repetition of an idea, and therefore not something new, despite that the new is what the ideology are fascinated by.

Historicism was especially popular during the 19th century but has got it renaissance in futurism and New Age, which is spreading worldwide via internet and social media. Basically, historicism is a historian's scientism. Historicists attempted to get the study of human history to become a natural, 'hard' science. They typically identified a 'motor' behind all human history (class struggle, national mission, racial destiny, reason, violence, or repressed sexuality). By careful study of the workings of the motor during human history, most historicists believed it could be used to predict the future, which if successful would in effect turn history into a natural science.

Eventually, these attempts failed, as it turned out human behavior is not as predictable as most historicists believed it is. It has sometimes been argued that much of the nasty cataclysm of war and violence of the 20th century was caused by failed attempts to forcefully have reality fit the perpetrator's pet historicist theory.

Notably, most historicists were not historians (Comte, Marx, and Hegel were philosophers) and historians have generally been aware that their field of study is distant from the natural sciences. This is in stark contrast with practitioners of many other social sciences. What sets history apart from both the natural and social sciences is that it looks for the unique rather than the general. Many historians (though there are exceptions) have been plainly not interested in formulating general laws about human history.

Historical determinism and historicism were decisively rebutted by Karl Popper, who argued that it is impossible to predict the future course of history. His argument goes like this:

- 1) The biggest historical changes in recent history have for the most part been caused by technological changes. If you could get somebody who lived a hundred years ago to time travel to the present the most striking differences would probably be technological ones, and even if that is not the case many of the social, cultural and political changes can at least in part be ascribed to changes in technology.
- 2) Technological progress depends heavily on scientific progress.
- 3) Therefore, in order to predict the future, one should be able to predict future scientific knowledge.
- 4) It is, however, not possible to predict future scientific knowledge. You can't predict a scientific fact that has not been discovered yet. If you could, it would not be a future discovery but a current one. In other words, if you know a fact that is not yet known, you know it now, so it's not a prediction any more. Knowing things you don't know yet is an impossible logical contradiction.
- 5) Therefore, it is not possible to predict the future course of history.

Many theories espousing historicism could be considered as scientific hypotheses that were initially valid but eventually failed. Continued adherence to such theories, however, should be classified as pseudoscience. Many historicists will tell you that the revolution or the rapture is still going to happen, but at some undetermined point in the future. Although they do make a prediction, it is not a testable one, making it impossible to falsify, making it essentially worthless for scientific purposes.

In the historicism of New Age (inspired by postmodernism), there has gone inflation in the concept of paradigm shifts. The bridge between science and spirituality is an expression you hear all the time within New Age. And they try to create “alternative sciences” all the time. Each new number of a New Age magazine or New Age promoting website with respect for itself, must contain at least one new “revolutionary” new “scientific” theory, which is the beginning to a “paradigm shift” in science. The number of new forms of “alternative sciences” within New Age is therefore today almost comically large.

Since the late 20th century there has been a renewed interest in bringing history and natural science closer to each other. Although some have tried to formulate laws about human history, these attempts have stayed short of complete determinism.

One example is Richard Dawkins' *The Selfish Gene*, presenting a gene-centered view of evolution, leading some historians to adopt a gene-centered view of history. As mentioned, Harari makes this into a fundament for his “historical” research” – (see *Sapiens* 269-271).

More relevant is Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, which explores the different ways human societies developed, and especially why some became powerful and ended up ruling the world while others didn't, based on differences in natural geography.

On CBC radio, Harari cites Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel* as one of the greatest inspirations for *Sapiens* by showing that it was possible to "ask very big questions and answer them scientifically". But Diamond's book immediately came in for heavy criticism from specialists working in the disparate fields on which he drew. But, in the same way as Harari, no one will care. Because the trick is to get the propaganda out in the public (via social medias), where no one ever will read the critics.

Again, notably, neither Dawkins (a biologist, who wants to explain everything from biology) nor Diamond (a geographer who want to explain everything from geography) is a historian (note the subtitle of Diamond's book: *A Short History of Everybody for the Last 13,000 Years*).

Let's look at Harari's evolutionary model. In his article, [A Reductionist History of Humankind](#), John Sexton lines up Harari's model. He writes about *Sapiens*:

*Books like this meet an appetite for sweeping history written in an accessible style and stressing the role of science and technology in shaping human destiny. Probably the best-known work in this genre is Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (1997). Diamond endorses *Sapiens* on the cover and receives special thanks in the acknowledgments: Diamond “taught me to see the big picture,” Harari writes. But whereas Diamond stressed the role of climate and disease as well as technology in shaping human history, Harari makes the curious claim that it is only when humans have started making things up — imagining entities that do not objectively exist, like gods, ethical principles, and limited liability corporations — that we have made progress toward becoming a super species. Harari's vision of history is therefore actually quite different from Diamond's: while Diamond was really concerned with the influence of the external environment on human culture, or the power of matter over mind, for Harari, history is the story of the gradual triumph of mind over matter [Morten Tolboll: from materialism to techno idealism].*

The basic outline of this story will be familiar to most readers. The genus Homo evolved from primates several million years ago, and modern humans emerged, certainly in Africa but also, perhaps, in other parts of the world, several hundred thousand years ago. Around 70,000 years ago, we underwent the first in a series of revolutions, which Harari terms the Cognitive Revolution. The causes of this event, which in his telling is decisive for all of human history, are largely unknown — he makes no bones about the fact that all that remains from this period is, well, bones. But whatever happened, humans began doing things no species had ever done before and spread rapidly across the planet. Around 11,000 years ago, the Agricultural Revolution turned some of us from hunter-gatherers into farmers, which led to a deterioration in diet, longer hours of work, increased susceptibility to disease, and, ultimately, immense power over nature. Around 500 years ago, the Scientific Revolution began. The world we live in today is in large part a product of this latest, and possibly last, revolution.

Along the way, Harari breezes through some other great and mysterious matters, including the development of language, the rise of religion and the gradual triumph of monotheism, the invention of money, and the growth of empires. Sexton notes that Harari makes a number of striking claims (Harari's straightforward statements which he doesn't support with scientific validation or philosophical argumentation):

- Prior to the start of the Cognitive Revolution around 70,000 years ago, when humans started making things up, they were an unremarkable species in the middle of the food chain; it was only after the Revolution that large-scale social cooperation became possible through fictions.
- Modern science distinguishes itself from all preceding traditions in its “willingness to admit ignorance.” In fact, the “discovery that humans do not know the answers to their most important questions” is what “launched the Scientific Revolution.”
- Humans' mastery over nature, especially in the form of industry and the market, has freed us from many forms of drudgery but has also helped to alienate us from each other and to bind us to industry and technology. The state and market now act as — often inadequate — replacements for lost communal bonds.
- All behavior and “whatever is possible” is by definition natural, because nothing can go against the laws of nature. Any behavior we might call “unnatural” is so only by virtue of cultural norms, not biology. The distinction between natural and unnatural is an invention of Christian theology.
- Liberal humanism is a religion founded on “monotheist beliefs.”

- The nation-state is declining in power and we are on our way to a “global empire” with one culture.
- Current developments in biotechnology may lead to the end for us sapiens: we will replace ourselves with bioengineered post-humans, immortal cyborgs who will be as different from us as we are from other species.

Like Diamond, Harari is occupied by letting science answer the “big questions” and in this quest he must, for example, wipe out the complete history of philosophy, so that only science is left to answer the big questions. In *Sapiens* he writes about the scientific revolution:

... We call it the Scientific Revolution. It began in western Europe, a large peninsula on the western tip of Afro-Asia, which up till then played no important role in history. Why did the Scientific Revolution begin there of all places, and not in China or India? Why did it begin at the midpoint of the second millennium AD rather than two centuries before or three centuries later? We don't know. Scholars have proposed dozens of theories, but none of them is particularly convincing (page 272).

This borders to falsification of history, since the development of science has a quite well recorded history. It namely began with Greco-Roman philosophy, and was developed under the influence of Christianity. But Harari's project of letting science answer philosophical questions leads him to selective thinking. In his brilliant article, [A Response to Yuval Harari's 'Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind'](#), C. R. Hallpike writes:

Harari's next major turning point in world history he refers to, reasonably enough, as 'The Scientific Revolution'. Around AD 1500 'It began in western Europe, a large peninsula on the western tip of Afro-Asia, which up till then played no important role in history.' (272) *This is a unconvincing assessment of a region that had been the seat of the Roman Empire, the Christian Church, and Greek science which was one of the essential foundations of the Scientific Revolution. Harari's opinions about how this got started are even less persuasive:*

“The Scientific Revolution has not been a revolution of knowledge. It has above all been a revolution of ignorance. The great discovery that launched the Scientific Revolution was the discovery that humans do not know the answers to their most important question.” (p 279).

This is a statement whose truth is not immediately obvious, and he justifies it as follows:

”Premodern traditions of knowledge such as Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and Confucianism asserted that everything that is important to know about the world was already known. The great gods, or the one almighty God, or the wise people of the past possessed all-encompassing wisdom, which they revealed to us in scriptures and oral traditions” (pp 279-80).

These traditions may have claimed to know all that was essential to salvation and peace of mind, but that kind of knowledge had nothing whatsoever to do with pre-modern traditions of science. In Europe this meant Aristotle and Greek natural philosophy but about which, astonishingly, Harari has nothing at all to say anywhere in his book. Apart from a willingness to admit ignorance and embrace new knowledge, science

”. . . has a common core of research methods, which are all based on collecting empirical observations - those we can observe with at least one of our senses - and putting them together with the help of mathematical tools” (p 283).

This is a nineteenth-century view of what science does, whereas the really distinctive feature of modern science is that it tests theory by experiment, and does not simply collect empirical observations [...]

So, you can't trust Harari. In fact, you are in for a huge manipulation project. That he in fact is willing to tell fake stories, can be seen in the controversy with the Russian edition of *21 Lessons*. Harari was allowing several omissions and amendments in the book, using a softer tone when speaking about Russian authorities. Leonid Bershidsky in Moscow Times called it "caution — or, to call it by its proper name, cowardice", and Nettanel Slyomovics in Haaretz claimed that "he is sacrificing those same liberal ideas that he presumes to represent".

In his article, [Putin Gets Stronger When Creators Censor Themselves](#), Bershidsky writes:

To reach China's enormous audiences, writers and filmmakers must submit to official censorship. But in Russia, where censorship is constitutionally banned, Western creators and companies will sometimes allow their content to be excised in order to avoid displeasing the authorities.

The latest incident involves Israeli historian Yuval Noah Harari, whose book “Sapiens. A Brief History of Humankind” sold 1.8 million copies in 45 languages. His third bestseller, “21 Lessons for the 21st Century,” came out in Russian in June. Eagle-eyed readers soon spotted a difference between the Russian translation and the text published in other languages.

The non-Russian versions of a chapter about humans being a “post-truth species” addresses the difference between the Russian and Ukrainian narrative of the Crimea invasion. Russian President Vladimir Putin claimed Russian troops weren’t involved. He, Harari wrote, described the fighters as “spontaneous ‘self-defense groups’ that may have acquired Russian-looking equipment from local shops. As they voiced this rather preposterous claim, Putin and his aides knew perfectly well that they were lying.”

In the Russian version, however, the lengthy passage on Russia and Ukraine was replaced with what appears to be a partial translation of a Harari column on the Israeli website Ynet (skirting the bits where the writer calls Russia “tyrannical” and undemocratic). Mentions of Putin are gone, and instead there’s a passage on Donald Trump making thousands of false statements.

It was soon revealed that Harari authorized the change, which was suggested by the Russian publishing house, Sindbad. “My goal is for the main ideas of the book, concerning the dangers of dictatorship, extremism and fanaticism, to reach the broadest possible audience, including in countries with non-democratic regimes,” he said in a statement. “Some examples in this book can repel this audience or lead to censorship on the part of a certain regime. For that reason I sometimes allow adaptation and authorize changing certain examples, but never the main ideas of the work.”

It’s rather post-truth to teach the residents of dictatorships about post-truth only using examples from other countries.

But, as we have seen, in Harari’s world, truth is precisely post-truth, and a question of power. He is fully in line with the modern neo-liberal management theorists and their mantra: “It is not facts, but the best story, that wins.” Yes, I repeat this neoliberal mantra. Remember it, and recognize it, so you don’t get fooled by it!

Transhumanism

What’s peculiar about transhumanists like Ray Kurzweil, David Chalmers, and Nick Bostrom, is that they seem to move from a purely materialist (physicalist) standpoint

into some kind of weird digital version of idealism. We have already mentioned that also Harari does this. They simply replace concepts of mind with concepts from computer science and cognitive science. They therefore come to remind about New Agers, and New Age is in fact using a lot of the same arguments (Ken Wilber, for example, has started a support of transhumanism – see my article, [A Critique of Ken Wilber – Updated](#)). It is the create-your-own-reality postulations repeated as if it was science.

But it is still idealism, and it is precisely the same absurd postulations as Bishop Berkeley came with. And the absurd consequences are the same: infinite regress, solipsism, as well as the polarization-problem (see my booklet: [A Critique of the Simulation Theory and the Rise of Digital Totalitarianism](#)).

Transhumanism builds on a theory of human nature, and therefore a certain theory of mind. It's rise and fall depends on that this theory of mind is valid and true. In order to explain this theory of mind I will refer to an article by Susan Schneider in the book *Philosophy and Science Fiction – From Time Travel To Superintelligence*. The article is called *Mindscan: Transcending and Enhancing the Human Brain*. Here is her introduction to transhumanism:

...Transhumanism is a philosophical, cultural, and political movement that holds that the human species is now in a comparatively early phase and that its very evolution will be altered by developing technologies. Future humans will be very unlike their present-day incarnation in both physical and mental respects, and will in fact resemble certain persons depicted in science fiction stories. Transhumanists share the belief that an outcome in which humans have radically advanced intelligence, near immortality, deep friendships with AI creatures, and elective body characteristics is a very desirable end. Both for one's own personal development and for the development of our species as a whole.

Despite its science fiction-like flavor, the future that transhumanism depicts is very possible: indeed, the beginning stages of this radical alteration may well lie in certain technological developments that either are already here (if not generally available), or are accepted by many in the relevant scientific fields as being on their way (Roco and Bainbridge 2002; Gerreau 2005). In the face of these technological developments, transhumanists offer a progressive bioethics agenda of increasing public import. They also present a thought-provoking and controversial position in philosophy of cognitive science, applying insights about the computational nature of the mind to the topic of the nature of persons, developing a novel version of one popular theory of personal identity: the psychological continuity theory.

In this chapter I shall amply science fiction thought experiments to discuss what I take to be the most important philosophical element of the transhumanist picture – its unique perspective on the nature and development of persons ... (page 261).

Harari is very fond of the immortality promises. In the introduction to *Homo Deus*, he puts up a bizarre straw man in order to be sarcastic to people who believe in a life after death. A straw man is a caricature of your opponent's view set up simply so that you can knock it down. Sometimes it is a deliberate ploy; in which case it is a disreputable form of *Rhetoric*. More often it involves, as we shall see in Harari's case, a degree of *Wishful thinking* stemming from widespread reluctance to attribute great intelligence or subtlety to someone with whom you strongly disagree (there exist profound philosophies of death and life after death, as for example *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*). Over-confidence in your own position may lead you to treat dissenting views as easy targets when in fact they may be more complex and resistant to simple attacks.

In the chapter, *The Last Days of Death*, Harari writes:

Throughout history, religions and ideologies did not sanctify life itself. They always sanctified something above or beyond earthly existence, and were consequently quite tolerant of death. Indeed, some of them have been downright fond of the Grim Reaper.

Because Christianity, Islam and Hinduism insisted that the meaning of our existence depended on our fate in the afterlife, they viewed death as a vital and positive part of the world. Humans died because God decreed it, and their moment of death was a sacred metaphysical experience exploding with meaning. When a human was about to breathe his last, this was the time to call priests, rabbis and shamans, to draw out the balance of life, and to embrace one's true role in the universe. Just try to imagine Christianity, Islam or Hinduism in a world without death – which is also a world without heaven, hell or reincarnation.

[...]

How exactly do humans die? Medieval fairy tales depicted Death as a figure in a hooded black cloak, his hand gripping a large scythe.

[...]

In reality, however, humans don't die because a figure in a black cloak taps them on the shoulder, or because God decreed it.

[...]

Modern science and modern culture have an entire different take on life and death. They don't think of death as a metaphysical mystery, and they certainly don't view death as the source of life's meaning. Rather, for modern people death is a technical problem that we can and should solve (page 24-25).

And:

[...] nothing metaphysical about it. They [deathprocesses] are all technical problems.

And every technical problem has a technical solution. We don't need to wait for the Second Coming in order to overcome death. A couple of geeks in a lab can do it (page 26)

[...]

An increasing minority of scientists and thinkers consequently speak more openly these days, and state that the flagship enterprise of modern science is to defeat death and grant humans eternal youth (page 27).

It is striking to hear Harari talk in such a condescending way about metaphysical beliefs in life after death, and at the same time talk about creating immortality as if this was a complete objective and scientific fact, which absolutely nothing has to do with superstition. The fact is that there isn't anything scientific about it, since it would require that all physical laws, and all natural life cycles (as for example the seasonal changes), should be changed. Yet, this is precisely what transhumanists believe could happen if they could turn the whole universe into a cyberspace. But we are then talking about a religious fate which are as bizarre as any form of superstition. Let's re-quote the above passage about creationism:

Young Earth creationists (YECs) provide an excellent example of Confabulation mixed with Motivated reasoning. YEC is a form of creationism which holds as a central tenet that the Earth and its lifeforms were created in their present forms by supernatural acts of a deity between approximately 6,000 and 10,000 years ago. In its most widespread version, YEC is based on the religious belief in the inerrancy of certain literal interpretations of the Book of Genesis. Its primary adherents are Christians who believe that God created the Earth in six days.

To maintain their position, YECs must reject nearly all science and confabulate new laws of nature and rules of logic and evidence, and subject themselves to ridicule for their willful ignorance and irrational adherence to the myths of an ancient, pre-scientific people. The same we see within the postmodern intellectualism on Universities, which therefore justifies the tendency within neo-liberal Management theory and New Age to confabulate stories which are not true. And we see it in transhumanism. The myths of an ancient, pre-scientific people are just replaced with science fiction.

Harari puts a thick line under his quest for immortality with the following memorable statement:

The Universal Declaration of human Rights adopted by the UN after the Second World War – which is perhaps the closest thing we have to a global constitution – categorically states that “the right to life” is humanity’s most fundamental value. Since death clearly violates this right, death is a crime against humanity, and we ought to wage total war against it (page 24).

Besides the absurdity in the statement, then Harari himself, in *Sapiens*, has removed any possibility for talking about human rights from a rational foundation. Remember the above-mentioned quote:

Any large-scale human cooperation – whether a modern state, a medieval church, an ancient city or an archaic tribe – is rooted in common myths that exist only in people’s collective imagination (page 30)

[...] two lawyers who have never met can nevertheless combine effort to defend a complete stranger because they both believe in the existence of laws, justice, human rights – and the money paid out in fees.

Yet none of these things exists outside the stories that people invent and tell one another. There are no gods in the universe, no nations, no money, no human rights, no laws and no justice outside the common imagination of human beings [...] (page 31).

Let’s return to Susan Schneider’s introduction to the “leading theories” of the nature of persons:

1) The soul theory: your essence is your soul or mind, understood as a nonphysical entity distinct from your body.

2) *The psychological continuity theory: you are essentially your memories and ability to reflect on yourself (Locke) and, in its most general form, you are your overall psychological configuration, what Kurzweil referred to as your “pattern.”*

3) *Brain-based materialism: you are essentially the material that you are made out of, i.e., your body and brain – what Kurzweil referred to as “the ordered and chaotic collection of molecules” that make up my body and brain (Kurzweil 2005: 383)."*

4) *The no self view: the self is an illusion. The “I” is a grammatical fiction (Nietzsche). There are bundles of impressions but no underlying self (Hume). There is no survival because there is no person (Buddha).” (Page 265).*

Note the last distorted view of Buddhism, which I won't go further into here, except that Harari is repeating this distortion with his Mindfulness version of meditation. Also note that the whole thing is based on Kurzweil's "philosophy". In his book, *The Singularity is Near*, Kurzweil sketches a future world in which we (or perhaps our children or grandchildren) become cyborgs, and eventually entirely artificial beings. The creation of "superintelligent" AI brings forth beings with such advanced intelligence that solutions to the world's problems are generated, rapidly ending disease and resource scarcity. "Superintelligence and Singularity" is not a work of science fiction, however; it is Kurzweil's prediction of the shape of the near future, based on our current science.

But not enough with that: this superintelligence will, through nanotechnology, expand into the universe and make it "wake up" and become intelligent (according to Kurzweil the universe is not intelligent right now, and there is no life other than us). In other words: the whole universe will become a virtual reality, and we humans will be a kind of avatars in this virtual reality. A kind of gods, who can create and manipulate with the universe as we want to (I will return to Kurzweil in the end of this Ebook).

If we return to the above-mentioned theories of minds, then Schneider is correctly claiming that it is 2, that currently is the most influential. She hereafter suggests that the Transhumanist adopts a novel version of the psychological continuity view; that is, they adopt a computational account of continuity. She writes:

First, consider that transhumanists generally adopt a computational theory of mind.

The Computational Theory of Mind (“CTM”): The mind is essentially the program running on the hardware of the brain, that is, the algorithm that the brain

implements, something in principle discoverable by cognitive science (Churchland) (page 265).

And hereafter:

...Note that proponents of CTMs generally reject the soul theory. One might suspect that the transhumanist views a brain-based materialism favorably, the view that holds that minds are basically physical or material in nature and that mental features, such as the thought that espresso has a wonderful aroma, are ultimately just physical features of brains. Transhumanists rejects brain-based materialism, for they believe the same person can continue to exist if her pattern persists, even if she is an upload [to a computer], no longer having a brain (Kurzweil 2005) (265-66).

Harari is following Kurzweil, and is rejecting the soul theory, as usual without scientific validation or philosophical argumentation. In *Sapiens* he writes:

Scientists studying the inner workings of the human organism have found no soul there. They increasingly argue that human behavior is determined by hormones, genes and synapses, rather than by free will – the same forces that determine the behavior of chimpanzees, wolves and ants. Our judicial and political systems largely try to sweep such inconvenient discoveries under the carpet. But in all frankness, how long can we maintain the wall separating the department of biology from the departments of law and political science? (page 263)

Think over that! Science needs to be politized! That's precisely the scenario in *Brave New World*. This is simply scary. If Kurzweil's, and therefor Harari's, transhumanist theory of human nature, mixed with a relativism that removes the foundation of ethics and morals, is made into a political goal, we have a fascistic totalitarian scenario, were humans could be forced to undergo bioengineering experiments. In fact, as I will demonstrate in the end of this Ebook, this is already in progress. And this is the fundamental reason why Harari is carried to fame as he is, by an obscure Matrix elite.

Harari's view of consciousness is the same as Kurzweil's. He avoids a purely materialistic view of the mind. In *Homo Deus* he writes:

Another story employed to justify human superiority says that of all the animals on earth, only Homo Sapiens has a conscious mind. Mind is something very different from soul. The mind isn't some mystical eternal entity. Nor is it an organ such as the eye or the brain. Rather, the mind is a flow of subjective experiences, such as pain, pleasure, anger and love. These mental experiences are made of interlinked

sensations, emotions and thoughts, which flash for a brief moment, and immediately disappear. Then other experiences flicker and vanish, arising for an instant and passing away. (When reflecting on it, we often try to sort the experiences into distinct categories such as sensations, emotions and thoughts, but in actuality they are all mingled together). This frenzied collection of experiences constitutes the stream of consciousness. Unlike the everlasting soul, the mind has many parts, it constantly changes, and there is no reason to think it is eternal (123).

This might explain the content of consciousness, but not the form of consciousness. It doesn't explain what an "I" or a "Self" is. I wake up in the morning, and I know, that I am the same as yesterday or ten years ago, in spite of the fact that my body since then has changed look and that the content of my thoughts in many ways has become something else. What is this "Me"?

It is not my body, because then I should each morning go out in the bathroom and look in the mirror, in order to find out who I am. Nor is it the content of my consciousness, my thoughts and my memories, because then I first had to evoke a line of memories each morning, before I knew who I am. The whole of the total science has no explanation of, what a "Self" is, or what personal identity is.

In this there also lies another factor, namely the question about the free will, the possibility of Man consciously to decide on his own present condition and within some limits to make a free choice.

Harari is, like other reductionists, viewing consciousness from a third person perspective (outside-and-in perspective), and not a first personal perspective (inside-and-out perspective), but I won't go further into it here. Harari himself wouldn't care anyway. He is a sophist and not a philosopher. You can read more about a non-reductionist view of consciousness in my booklet [Philosophy of Mind](#). Also read my article, [The Pseudoscience of Reductionism and the Problem of Mind](#). Read more about free will in my Ebook, [Philosophical Counseling with Tolkien](#). See chapter 2, *Philosophical Theology*, part 2: *Divine Providence and Free Will*, and chapter 10, *Ethics*, part 3: *The Ring and the Devil*.

Simulated reality is the hypothesis that reality could be simulated — for example by computer simulation — to a degree indistinguishable from "true" reality. It could contain conscious minds which may or may not be fully aware that they are living inside a simulation. This is quite different from the current, technologically achievable concept of virtual reality. Virtual reality is easily distinguished from the experience of actuality; participants are never in doubt about the nature of what they experience. Simulated reality, by contrast, would be hard or impossible to separate

from "true" reality. There has been much debate over this topic, ranging from philosophical discourse to practical applications in computing.

In the beginning of this Ebook we examined Harari's begging the question style. In this is involved a circular way of argumentation. This is of course something he has borrowed from the famous transhumanists, as for example Ray Kurzweil, Nick Bostrom and David Chalmers.

Let's illustrate it by looking at Bostrom's famous simulation argument. The simulation hypothesis was first published by Hans Moravec. Later, the philosopher Bostrom developed an expanded argument examining the probability of our reality being a simulation. His argument is featured in *Philosophy and Science Fiction* in an article called, *Are You in a Computer simulation?* In reality it is a thought experiment. One should note that Schneider already in the beginning of the book is making aware of the concept of thought experiments. Both Bostrom, Chalmers and Kurzweil are building their "philosophy" on thought experiments (which Harari wrongly stated that most philosophers are). In this way they believe they can avoid critique. But there is a difference. While Harari, Kurzweil and Chalmers believe that the Matrix will be created in the future by humans, Bostrom believes that it already exists. Try to think over that. Who have created it then? There are many speculations: extraterrestrials, or future version of ourselves? What's for sure is that we are as far out in imagination as creationism. Some New Age directions even claim to be examples of "atheist spirituality". An example is the [Canadian Raelian movement](#). But contrary to creationism and such New Age fantasies, transhumanism is taken seriously by leading politicians and business people all over the world.

Bostrom claims, that his hypothesis shows that we should accept as true at least one of the following three propositions:

1. The chances that a species at our current level of development can avoid going extinct before becoming technologically mature is negligibly small.
2. Almost no technologically mature civilizations are interested in running computer simulations of minds like ours.
3. You are almost certainly in a simulation.

Bostrom claims that these three propositions may be prima facie implausible; yet, he says, if the simulation argument is correct, at least one is true (it does not tell us which). He writes:

While the full simulation argument employs some probability theory and formalism, the gist of it can be understood in intuitive terms. Suppose the proposition (1) is false. Then a significant fraction of all species at our level of development eventually becomes technologically mature. Suppose, further, that (2) is false, too. Then some significant fraction of these species that have become technologically mature will use some portion of their computational resources to run computer simulations of minds like ours. But, as we saw earlier, the number of simulated minds that any such technologically mature civilization could run is astronomically huge.

Therefore, if both (1) and (2) is false, there will be an astronomical huge number simulated minds like ours. If we work out the numbers, we find that there would be vastly many more such simulated minds than there would be non-simulated minds running on organic brains. In other words, almost all minds like yours, having the kinds of experiences that you have, would be simulated rather than biological. Therefore, by a very weak principle of indifference, you would have to think that you are probably one of these simulated minds rather than one of the exceptional ones that are running on biological neurons.

So if you think that (1) and (2) are both false, you should accept (3). It is not coherent to reject all three propositions. In reality, we do not have much specific information to tell us which of the three propositions might be true. In this situation, it might be reasonable to distribute our credence roughly evenly between the three possibilities, giving each of them a substantial probability (page 24).

In the book, *More Matrix and Philosophy – Revolutions and Reloaded Decoded*, Bostrom is featured in an article called *Why Make a Matrix? And Why You Might Be in One*. Here he claims that his simulation argument haven't been refuted (page 91). It is also a fact that his argument actually is being taken as an argument for that we live in a computer simulation. But Bostrom has himself cleverly avoided being accused of that (this is also something Harari copies).

Personally, I don't understand that his argument haven't been refuted, because the whole argumentation is an example of the thought distortion called *Circular Arguments*. Any philosopher left, who not yet has turned into a sophist, can see that. Bostrom is namely assuming that *The Computational Theory of Mind* is true; that is: that it is possible to create a simulation, and on the whole: that transhumanism is absolutely true. The whole argumentation stands and falls with that.

His circular argument takes the form:

A (simulated reality) because of B (the computational theory of mind)

B (the computational theory of mind) because of A (simulated reality)

Scientifically seen there is no proof for the computational theory of mind. On the contrary. In nuclear physics and the quantum mechanics we have learned, that there exist processes, which is not cause determined, and which do not follow the old rule about, that everything has to be continuous. Brain-functions are, as Roger Penrose has shown, in a wide extent quantum mechanical, and since the quantum mechanics breaks with the principle of causation and determinism, then the human brain is not fully a cause determined system. And then you can't up from the ground explain brain processes from materialistic factors. Precisely the same is the case with computational factors.

The fundamental principles of classical physics, namely the perception of space and time as absolute and the principles of causality, determinism and continuity, must therefore be completely given up with the breakthrough of modern physics at the beginning of this century. The only exception is the principle that energy and matter are constant, which also in modern natural science is considered to be fundamental.

So, quantum mechanics disproves materialism, but it doesn't prove idealism neither, as idealists seem to think. Because you can't – as Niels Bohr points out – replace classical physics with quantum mechanics, because *the validity of classical physics is a necessary precondition for, that you can describe the quantum mechanical phenomena* and make account for the macroscopic ("classical") experimental arrangement. Bohr is writing in a famous discussion contribution against Einstein, who didn't want to accept, that the causality principle has no validity in nuclear physics:

"...the account for all experiences – regardless how far the phenomena are lying outside the reach of classical physics – must be expressed in classical concepts. The reason is simply, that we by the word "experiment" refer to a situation, where we can tell others what we have done and what we have learned, and that the experimental device and measuring results therefore must be described in the usual language with appropriate use of the terminology of classical physics." (Niels Bohr: *"Atomfysik og menneskelig erkendelse"*, Schultz' Forlag, København 1957, s. 53.)

Note, that Bohr here speaks about the usual language (everyday language) supplemented with the terms of classical physics. This is due to, that he regards the concepts of classical physics as a more explicit formulation of everyday language. In that sense everyday language is a necessary precondition for all natural scientific realization, and nor can everyday language be replaced by an unambiguous and

formalized, logical scientific language (read more in my article: [Quantum Mechanics and the Philosophy of Niels Bohr](#)).

So, when there is no independent reason for believing A (the computational theory of mind) or B (simulated reality), then Bostrom's argument can be described as viciously circular and should be rejected as a particular unenlightened form of begging the question. If there is no further support for A or B then it is equivalent to the impossible pastime of lifting yourself off the ground by pulling on both your shoelaces.

For instance, if someone tells you that there must be a God because the Bible or some other holy book says that God exists, and then, when asked how we know that what is written in the holy book is true replies that it must be true because it is the word of God, then this would be a viciously circular way of arguing. If there is independent proof that whatever is written in the holy book is true, or perhaps some other independent proof of God's existence, then we would have reasons which support the conclusion but which are not obviously presupposed in the conclusion. As the argument stands, however, it would be totally unconvincing to an agnostic or atheist since it assumes that God exists, or that what is written in the holy book is true, both of which are major points at issue in such a discussion. It is precisely the same problem with Bostrom's simulation argument. If you aren't a believer in the computational theory of mind, the argument is worthless. And it is the same problem which other transhumanists, such as Ray Kurzweil and David Chalmers, run into. They have build extremely complex philosophies and argumentations up on circular arguments, which are begging the question.

In other words, if the presumption not is proved, either scientifically, or philosophically, via evidence or via good arguments, or, as in the case of quantum mechanics, directly has been proved invalid, the whole thought experiment is superfluous and falls together like a house of cards. This is therefore also the case with the whole of Harari's version of history. What Harari is proposing, is nothing else than a new religion. This religion is called Dataism. In his article, [Algorithmic Man: Yuval Noah Harari's Timid Transhumanism](#), Charles T. Rubin writes:

Revising Religion: The Rise of "Dataism"

To make a long story short, this understanding, which Harari stresses repeatedly is nothing more than the orthodoxy of contemporary life sciences, is to his mind completely incompatible with philosophical and political liberalism and, indeed, all forms of humanism—as Harari presents it, the idea that it is free, choosing humans who endow the world with meaning. Humanism is important because in pursuing the

project of modern natural science, which Harari stresses is unable on its own terms to make any value statements, we have made a bargain. In order to gain power over the world through science and technology, we gave up the idea that there is any meaning already embodied in the world, leaving meaning-making up to us. Hence the “religion” of humanism. Notwithstanding his odd use of the term “religion” to apply to all normative discourse, Harari argues, reasonably enough, that this bargain has been pretty spectacularly successful at creating the conditions for longer, happier, healthier, and more prosperous human lives such that we now can contemplate even grander projects like immortality.

But there will need to be a “different kind of deal” now that science has exposed the assumption behind humanism as false. Actually, it looks as if Harari might better have simply said, a different kind of “religion,” for the deal remains much the same: we need something to give meaning to a world that science has stripped of meaning. While he considers alternatives, Harari appears to settle on “dataism” as the appropriate new religion that will give us the values that we need.

Dataism turns out to be nothing more than the algorithmic view of life that Harari himself had previously articulated, but with the added normative propositions that more complex information structures are better than less complex ones, and that information wants to be free. What this means in practice is that the meaning of life is the accumulation and manipulation of data. The data that represent my life-world need to be free so that artificially intelligent algorithms can learn from them how to direct me to lead my life better than I could unaided. They need to be free so that data about my health can be used to find the most effective cures for me and others. The data that I embody as a collection of algorithms need to be shared so that that “bundle” that I think of as “me” can be given virtual instantiation, with all the consequent possibilities of manipulation, alteration, transmission, enhancement, etc.

By this path we reach a kind of immortality, at least so long as my virtual being is sufficiently backed up. And in this virtual world, algorithms could make us happy all the time, and grant us godlike powers. So dataism brings us back to where Harari began.

This brings us to Harari’s political views on how the path into this new religion should be handled, namely neo-liberalism (to repeat: for a deeper rebuttal of transhumanism, see my booklet, [A Critique of the Simulation Theory and the Rise of Digital Totalitarianism](#)).

The Matrix Hybrid

When I'm talking about a coming Matrix Hybrid between Western Consumer Capitalism and Chinese Communism this isn't a prophesy. We already see the beginning. The Slovenian continental philosopher, Slavoj Žižek, sees the same: "capitalism doesn't need democracy", he says in an interview. He says that the economical globalization increasingly will be combined with stronger and more authoritarian national states. That is our future, and we already see it with Trump, Erdogan and Putin, as well as what is happening in China and India; an authoritarian capitalism. And he claims that the one who is the father of such a way of thinking is [Lee Kuan Yew](#) from Singapore. When Deng Xiaoping took the power in China in 1978, he went to the authoritarian Singapore and here he saw, how that system functioned. He then decided that it also should be like that in the the future of China, "and it works!" says Žižek. "But do you know what makes me pessimistic about that development? Slowly it happens – and this is very clear – that capitalism in lesser and lesser degree needs democracy."

The so-called "Californian Ideology" have emerged promoting a form of techno-utopia as a reachable goal. "The Californian Ideology" is a 1995 essay by English media theorists Richard Barbrook and Andy Cameron of the University of Westminster ([download](#)). Barbrook describes it as a "critique of dotcom neoliberalism". In the essay, Barbrook and Cameron argue that the rise of networking technologies in Silicon Valley in the 1990s was linked to American neoliberalism and a paradoxical hybridization of beliefs from the political left and right in the form of hopeful technological determinism. This ideology mixed New Left and New Right beliefs together based on their shared interest in anti-statism, the counterculture of the 1960s, and techno-utopianism.

With this we see the most scary part of what I want to explain in this Ebook. In the previous chapter I have already mentioned it. Personally, I would guess, that most people (still) believe that the above-mentioned theories are far out. And I have shown them to be invalid. But this is precisely the problem. People don't take it seriously. Because the theorists will try to get them forced through anyway. And then we have a totalitarian, fascistic scenario, a dystopia where people are forced to live after perverted theories of the human nature (Frankenstein's project, for example, goes wrong due to a mix of power ideals and lack of understanding human nature). And it is happening right now.

In my theory about the Matrix Conspiracy I talk about five programming-technologies. One of them is neoliberal management theory (about management theory, see my articles: [Management Theory and the Self-help Industry](#), [Self-help and the Mythology of Authenticity](#) and, [A Critique of Coaching](#)).

I will now document how the above-mentioned totalitarian scenario is enforced by neoliberal management theorists controlled by the Singularity University (remember that the founder is Ray Kurzweil). As an example, I will show how they are influencing politicians in Denmark (the same is happening in all other countries). I will in that connection mention two Danish authors: Markus Bernsen (journalist), and Mads Vestergaard (philosopher).

Markus Bernsen has written a book called *Danmark Disruptet* (Denmark Disrupted). The book is about how Denmark without bigger consideration has let itself be caught by technology enthusiasm and a disruption and algorithm logic, where it is about being digital frontrunners and participate in the, primarily American, tech giants' agenda. The logic is that this is what a small country like Denmark needs to live by.

In Denmark it was seen in connection with a new employment act. With the exception of two parties, all political parties backed up behind the law, which opens for surveillance of unemployed. In an attempt to face long time unemployment, the law opens up for that you feed the algorithms of the office with all kind of personal information, whereafter they can tell whether the unemployed is in danger of ending as long time unemployed. The law was voted without much debate, without much consideration, and – as it would turn out - without that the politicians behind the political majority quite had comprehended the range of the law.

Again it is important to mention China. In the time of writing this, we see heavy protests in Hong Kong against a new law which makes it possible for citizens to be prosecuted in China. Why? Because the citizens know China. And that China is fully in progress of reintroducing hard-core Communism, as for example the new introduction of re-education-camps. China does this at the same time as it is embracing capitalism, or rather: techno-capitalism. Just think about it for a moment instead of celebrating how China finally is “opening up.” We ought to listen to why there are so heavy protests in Hong Kong.

It might well be that Harari and postmodernism has declared the grand narratives dead. But this has never happened in China. Yet, read what Harari has to say about China:

China seems to offer a much more serious challenge than Western social protestors. Despite liberalizing its politics and economics, China is neither a democracy nor a truly free-market economy, which does not prevent it from becoming the economic giant of the twenty-first century. Yet this economic giant casts a very small ideological shadow. Nobody seems to know what the Chinese believe these days – including the Chinese themselves. In theory China is still communist, but in practice

it is nothing of the kind. Some Chinese thinkers and leaders toy with a return to Confucianism, but that's hardly more than a convenient façade. This ideological vacuum makes China the most promising breeding ground for the new techno-religions emerging from Silicon Valley (which we will discuss in the following chapters). But these techno-religions, with their belief in immortality and virtual paradises, will take at least a decade or two to establish themselves. Hence at present China doesn't pose a real alternative to liberalism (Homo Deus, page 313).

In his article, [How Yuval Noah Harari Became the Pet Ideologist of the Liberal Elites](#), Danny Gutwein writes:

Why did Obama, Zuckerberg, Gates and Silicon Valley as a whole adopt Harari as their pet historian? One possible explanation for their efforts to spread his gospel could be the political benefit they hoped to extract from the close connection between Harari's view that there is currently no serious alternative to the neoliberal package and the metanarrative he's been weaving since "Sapiens" – which will be referred to here as the "Sapiens mythology."

[...]

Alongside support for liberal elites, Harari's new liberal story blatantly ignores the protest movements and the left-wing parties that have challenged neoliberal hegemony in the past decade. The liberal elites are part of a political bloc that the philosopher Nancy Fraser labels "progressive neoliberalism." Pursued by Presidents Clinton and Obama, this policy harmed the material well-being of members of the seven lowest socioeconomic levels in the U.S. In reaction, some of them switched to support of Donald Trump. Fraser, who in contrast to Harari sees the liberal elites as the problem and not the solution, maintains that the true alternative to Trump is a "rejuvenated left" in the form of Bernie Sanders' "democratic socialism." To win the trust of the "working people," Fraser emphasizes, the rejuvenated left will need to breach the false dichotomy between "emancipation" and "social protection" – in other words, to disconnect from progressive neoliberalism and uncover the conceptual and political divide between the two schools.

The same political logic that impels Fraser to call for a renewed left and to hone the differences between it and progressive neoliberalism, leads Harari to blur those differences. In fact, the obfuscation of social-economic inequality and the erasure of socialism is creating the illusory notion that the political struggle is being waged only between populism and liberalism, and therefore it appears that opponents of

populism should hook up with liberalism, even if they are victims of its social-economic policy.

In fact, it's progressive neoliberalism that is the other side of Trump's populism. Thus, deleting the rejuvenated left from the new liberal story that Harari weaves in "Lessons" serves liberalism and populism alike.

In her brilliant book, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism – The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*, Shoshana Zuboff explains how neoliberalism is a shelter for the rise of surveillance capitalism. She describes surveillance capitalism as a global system of behavior modification that threatens human nature in the twenty-first century just as industrial capitalism disfigured the natural world in the twentieth. Zuboff gave the paradigm its name. Now, as surveillance capitalism advances from Silicon Valley into every sector of the global economy, she brings its consequences to life. Vast wealth and power are accumulated in ominous new “behavioural futures markets”, where predictions about our behavior are bought and sold. But what starts with prediction ends with control. We find ourselves in the crucible of an unprecedented form of power, one that is distinguished by extreme concentrations of knowledge and no democratic oversight. It is in other words anti-democratic and totalitarian.

Zuboff's comprehensive and moving analysis lays bare the threats to twenty-first-century society: a seductive “hive” of total connection that promises maximum certainty for maximum profit, but whose price is human freedom. With little resistance from law or society, surveillance capitalism menaces our present, and will dominate our future – if we let it. Harari advises us to do nothing, and just meditate.

Zuboff's dark vision is, among others, based on a researcher like Alex Pentland from MIT – who gets research support from Google and other top firms – who seriously is talking about that we already live in a world, where private life, individuality and freedom rights, must be given up, because the behavioral changes now need to be so radical that we can streamline traffic, health, working procedures, etc. Humans are not individuals, but just pack animals among others, and they will – with a little push in the right direction – copy the actions of others. Therefore we can, via the omnipresent censors “tune” the whole society – for the common good. Not much different than Harari's view on human nature.

That we have to do with a totalitarian ideology can be seen in how Zuboff was confirmed in, that the goal justifies the means for the tech giants, even by the use of very rough methods. In an article called, [Microsoft quietly deletes largest public face recognition data set](#), Financial Times writes:

Microsoft has quietly pulled from the internet its database of 10m faces, which has been used to train facial recognition systems around the world, including by military researchers and Chinese firms such as SenseTime and Megvii.

The database, known as MS Celeb, was published in 2016 and described by the company as the largest publicly available facial recognition data set in the world, containing more than 10m images of nearly 100,000 individuals.

Among the usual celebs there were also a line of critics of the digital companies' ways of gaining finance. Zuboff herself was among them. She had become a persona non grata in surveillance capitalism.

While all this happens in the Western world, and that's my opinion, China is just sitting and waiting until its economical power is large enough. Then we will see Communism in action once more, now globally. And China happily uses digitization.

In USA, though, there has begun to happen a counter-reaction against digitization. Shareholders in Amazon are now beginning to question the ethics of, that the tax shy tech giant is using enormous amounts of money in developing its surveillance technology. A technology which has been accused of being both racist and stigmatizing.

In San Francisco – the unofficial tech capital of the world – there are plans about a direct prohibition against using face recognition. Because, while the police believe that it is necessary and required, more and more are warning against moving transitions towards a surveillance society.

In that connection it is interesting that Nick Bostrom, who (apparently!) is a pessimist transhumanist, is out with a new thought experiment, and therefore a new kind of circular argument. He calls it, *The Vulnerable World Hypothesis*. I will not go deeper into it, since I already have shown the sophism of this kind of "argumentation". But I will shortly describe it. Bostrom believes that it is sheer luck that we haven't invented a technology that would destroy our world. Therefore, he suggests, we must establish a high tech surveillance society of Orwellian dimensions. Yes, you heard me right. First, he comes with a contrafactual hypothesis, and thereafter he suggests that we begin to take political action on the background on this hypothesis (which is building on a science fiction fantasy). He says that we must exit the "semi-anarchic default condition", which we are in right now. He is quite open about that what he describes, is a high tech panopticon of the most extreme degree; that is: a global prison where we all are prisoners. But the alternative, he claims, is that our society will be

destroyed. Here he puts up another sophistic thought distortion, namely a false dichotomy. False dichotomy is a misleading conception of possible alternatives. A dichotomy is a division in two alternatives. Often seen in the expressions Either/or – If/then, as for example: "Either you are with us, or you are against us" – "if I'm not always a success, then I'm a fiasco". Similarly, someone who says that you must either believe that God exists or else that God doesn't exist is setting up a false dichotomy since there is the well-known third option of the agnostic (download his article [here](#)).

It is unbelievable that this is what philosophy has turned into today, and it is scary that Bostrom himself in this way becomes a part of the danger he warns against.

Now, if we return to Bernsen's article. In Denmark there is hardly any discussion about the warnings. Ok, the government has created a data ethical council and are willing to talk about responsible digitization, but it is at the same time working by full engines towards it.

In one of Bernsen's great chapters, he tells about how the American tech giants Apple, Google and Facebook, under huge secrecy, have made their invasion in cities like Foulum by Viborg, Odense and Aabenraa. About Apple's first soundings in Foulum, Bernsen writes: "The Americans began to visit the city regularly, and are lodging under false names." Everything was secret and discreet and was surrounded by strange decisions until Apple's billion-dollar investment was revealed. Only four people in the city council knew what was going on, says Flemming Gundersen, who was in the city council for the political party Enhedslisten: "I thought: is this really the way decisions are being made in Denmark when the big ones come and want to play?"

Apparently. Bernsen can't go deeper into the case since it is blacked out. But he is convincing in his story about that something is hidden. Add to this that many people in Copenhagen would be surprised to know how staff is provided for free for Google's Success Online-shop on Nørrebrogade Street 34: the tech giant coaches leaders to use the tech giant's own tools, against that the local authorities deliver staff for free. Pure win-win, right?: the municipality of Copenhagen is accepting, and Google is entering deeper and deeper into the work of the municipality.

Bernsen describes our tech enthusiasm and absence of critical thinking (The Matrix Conspiracy is deliberately trying to eliminate critical thinking). He puts the date of the so-called disruption of Denmark to October 23, 2017, when the Singularity University was inviting to house warning for its Danish branch. Hordes of municipality leaders and private bosses paid up to \$ 2500 for the entrance.

Bernsen sees this as an essential revival meeting.

Mads Vestergaard's book *Digital Totalitarisme* (Digital Totalitarianism) begins by pointing out some unpleasant stories which is rampant in Western medias about China, where the central government in Beijing has started to introduce face recognition and handing out points to citizens for good and bad behavior. The goal is to ensure, that only the good citizens can have access to certain privileges, especially bank loans.

Vestergaard shows how we in the West fear this reality, which we see on the other side of the globe and in science fiction movies. Nonetheless, great parts of what many are offended over when hearing about Chinese digitization, are already a reality in our own part of the world, and many of the same thoughts, which the Communist party uses to legitimize this digital control over the Chinese, are also existing in the Western World.

According to Vestergaard, the tendency to collect records about the citizens in order to control them isn't something which comes from a certain Chinese culture, or only exists under totalitarian regimes. The tendency is rather the consequence of a state's eternal need for controlling the citizens, combined with capitalism's build in drive towards gathering and accumulating information, which can be turned into profit.

Our counterpart to the Communist party in Beijing, is the large tech giants in Silicon Valley. Vestergaard shows, how the most bizarre part of this business, especially the Singularity University, is spreading an anti-democratic future ideology, where tech entrepreneurs represent a Communist-like enlightened elite, who shall lead our society into perfection. The others of us just need to remain passive (this is precisely what Harari teaches with his *Mcmindfulness* meditation), while we reverently and thankfully give them our data. Naive decision makers, not least in Denmark, have uncritically led themselves be abused as useful idiots by these ideological extremists and have, for years, sung the song of all kinds of digitization as an unavoidable movement towards a lighter, but also still accelerating future. A surveillance industrial complex, as Vestergaard calls it, where state and market flows together in suspect digital partnerships.

As Vestergaard shows, then the digitization and collection of data, are namely not without consequences. It can be used as strong tools of social control, it invades the peace of private life, and it can help to cement already existent inequalities in society, which now need to be justified by numbers and algorithms. In the most extreme consequence it can reduce decision makers and citizens to marionets in a totalitarian

and undemocratic system, where everything is transparent and registered – except the large tech companies and their algorithms.

The power monopoly of the Communist party in Beijing is justified by that it is the few in the top of the party, which have the knowledge which is necessary for that the nation can be led towards growth, wealth and harmony. The party is the vanguard of progress. In Silicon Valley the entrepreneurs on the market have taken over the Communist party's role as the farsighted planners. The new entrepreneur-technocrats are in that sense the best suited to steer the society in the correct direction, because only they have seen the future and can plan after it. The role of the elected politician will hereafter be to avoid stopping the “progress.”

This model is what the Google commissioned rapport, *Digitizing Denmark*, is lecturing about. It says:

Regulation can't be allowed to hinder or slow down economic and societal development (page 16).

Got that! This is directly an advice about restricting the citizen's democratic influence and political self-determination.

The rapport is made by neoliberal management theorists from The Boston Consulting Group (download it [here](#)).

Conclusion

Let us, for pedagogical reasons, and as a conclusion, repeat this Harari quote from *Sapiens*:

Scientists studying the inner workings of the human organism have found no soul there. They increasingly argue that human behavior is determined by hormones, genes and synapses, rather than by free will – the same forces that determine the behavior of chimpanzees, wolves and ants. Our judicial and political systems largely try to sweep such inconvenient discoveries under the carpet. But in all frankness, how long can we maintain the wall separating the department of biology from the departments of law and political science? (page 263)

And my own answer:

Think over that! Science needs to be politized! That's precisely the scenario in Brave New World. This is simply scary. If Kurzweil's, and therefor Harari's, transhumanist

theory of human nature, mixed with a relativism that removes the foundation of ethics and morals, is made into a political goal, we have a fascistic totalitarian scenario, were humans could be forced to undergo bioengineering experiments. In fact, as I will demonstrate in the end of this Ebook, this is already in progress. And this is the fundamental reason why Harari is carried to fame as he is, by an obscure Matrix elite.

So, there is in fact, a New World Order emerging: the world of Alternative History, Alternative Physics, Alternative Medicine and, ultimately, Alternative Reality. How, given the recent and sorry story of ideologically motivated conceptions of knowledge – Lysenkoism in Stalin’s Soviet Union, for example, or Nazi critiques of “Jewish science” – could it again have become acceptable to behave in this way?

Many transhumanists are atheists. Both Nazism and Communism were atheist ideologies (yes, also Nazism, despite its fascination with occultism - see my booklet, [A Critique of Atheist Fundamentalism](#)). To be an atheist should not be used in connection with these ideologies, but when we see how science now again is being abused as a means for reaching atheist ideological goals, the comparison should be made.

It is unbelievable that an Israelian historian like Harari, who even is a professor, has learned so little from history. His version of history is showing the end of Homo Sapiens (wise man), and the beginning of Homo Deus (divine man). I will agree that we are facing the end of Homo Sapiens. But the idea of Homo Deus is, as I have shown, based on both scientific and philosophical invalid premises. So, we are not entering the era of Homo Deus, but the era of Homo Stultus (stupid man).

In his new collection, *Homo Stultus*, Taxiarchis Mermiris used ink to create a hoard of brilliantly stupid people who, within the context of many different environments, are ready to show off their power and domination. You are welcome to use this Ebook on Harari as a presentation to the gallery. Visit the gallery on this link: [Homo Stultus, by Taxiarchis Mermiris](#).

Other related links:

[The Californian Ideology](#), by Richard Barbrook and Andy Cameron

[The Vulnerable World Hypothesis](#), by Nick Bostrom

[Digitizing Denmark – How Denmark Can Drive And Benefit An Accelerated Economy In Europe](#), by The Boston Consulting Group (commissioned by Google)

Links to related texts by me:

[The Matrix Conspiracy](#) (article)

[Evolutionism – The Red Thread in the Matrix Conspiracy](#) (free Ebook)

[A Critique of the Simulation Theory and the Rise of Digital Totalitarianism](#) (free booklet)

[Philosophical Counseling with Tolkien](#) (free Ebook. This book is in every respect a serious alternative to Harari's pseudo-philosophical work).

Critical articles by others:

[How Yuval Noah Harari Became the Pet Ideologist of the Liberal Elites](#), By Danny Gutwein

[A Reductionist History of Humankind](#), by John Sexton

[Sapiens – a critical review](#), by Marcus Paul

[Yuval Harari: Please Recognize Your Own Unacknowledged Fictions](#), By Jeremy Lent

[A Response to Yuval Harari's 'Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind'](#), By C. R. Hallpike

[Yuval Noah Harari: 'Homo sapiens as we know them will disappear in a century or so'](#), by Andrew Anthony

[The incarnation and the challenge of transhumanism If we become godlike, what god will we be like?](#), by Ian Curran

[For Transhumanists, a Dawning Realization](#), by David Klinghoffer

[Algorithmic Man: Yuval Noah Harari's Timid Transhumanism](#), By Charles T. Rubin

[Yuval Noah Harari's 21 Lessons for the 21st Century is a banal and risible self-help book](#), by Gavin Jacobson

[Can mindfulness save us from the menace of artificial intelligence?](#), by David Sexton

[Putin Gets Stronger When Creators Censor Themselves](#), By Leonid Bershidsky

[Yuval Noah Harari: The age of the cyborg has begun – and the consequences cannot be known](#), by Carole Cadwalladr

[Yuval Noah Harari's Problem Is Much More Serious Than Self-censorship](#), by Nettanel Slyomovics

All articles and books referred to are available in free PDF Versions. Links can be found on my blog: www.MortenTolboll.blogspot.com

Copyright © 2019 by Morten Tolboll.

Terms of use:

http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/deed.en_US