Yuval Harari has written a book that is categorized as a brief history of humankind. But as I read through the 443 pages, to me those pages became more a magnifying glass enlarging my view of Mr. Harari’s philosophy. Certainly as a historian he focusses on some very interesting concepts, grouping history into revolutions: the cognitive, the agricultural, the scientific and even the last 500 years, a breathtaking series: ecological, historical, economic, scientific, technological and sociological revolutions. But as a historian he is most cavalier in measuring the cause and effects of many well-studied historical eras and events. As an example, Mr. Harari says, “The Agricultural Revolution was history’s biggest fraud”, or “the leading project of the Scientific Revolution is to give humankind eternal life.” Such statements cry for greater documentation which never rises in his arguments.

However, some of Harari’s concepts draw great interest. His belief that the capacity of Sapiens to imagine and develop language allowed them to invent “common myths” or “fictions” which became a uniting factor for people around the world. Mr. Harari identified these myths as, money, religion and empire, classing them as the most common – an argument quite thought provoking.

I believe that the world wide appeal for the book Sapiens, a Best Seller for months on the New York Times, printed in 20 languages and the text book for teaching history across multiple colleges, lies in its verve, startling prose, cynical and iconoclastic humor which changes what can be textbook-boring into an enjoyable read. However, it too often caused me to recall, wonderful evenings with friends, a glass of merlot, and far reaching topics, rather than the well documented and disciplined story of mankind of the “Big History” genre.

I guess by now you may ask, “Why read this book?” My answer, “It makes you think, even reconsider much you were taught in history and more it is a most interesting non-fiction book, it is filled with wonderful “stories,” heretical thoughts and often surprising facts.” Read it – it will make you reflect?

E. Perley Eaton