

## From Prediction to Prophecy: A Critical Examination of Harari's Claims about the Future of Human Evolution

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** Yoval Noah Harari is one of the most influential figures of the last century, whose horrific predictions of the future of mankind have received much attention. Given the capabilities of technology and artificial intelligence, he warns against the hacking of humans, widespread unemployment and the emergence of super-humans, and so on. The purpose of this article is to evaluate Harari's claims, considering the importance of futures research topics and its impact on how human beings move towards the future, in order to determine the place of futures studies in recognizing and constructing the human future.

**Method:** The method taken in this article is mainly analytical-critical. In this way, based on the rational principles and rules of Futures Studies, Haray's claims have been examined in terms of structure and basis.

**Findings:** The findings of this article show that Harari, unlike other futurists, has made prophecies and, knowing the role of prophecy in human subsequent actions, has made his statements improvable and invalid. His arguments also suffer from an internal incompatibility; Because the human self is called a myth and at the same time warns against being hacked and ignored! Exaggerating the future of technology and the possibility of reducing human truth to data is another problem.

**Conclusion:** The result of these discussions will be that Harari's futures research has no prior scientific value and, given the many drawbacks it faces, can not be a basis for those interested in futures research.


**Keywords:** Harari, Future Research, Artificial Intelligence, Human Evolution

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## **Introduction**

Future is the part of time that has not yet arrived and is important because of this uncertainty. So you can plan to build it. In this regard, the science of futures studies focuses on Prospective thinking in order to create better world for the human life. For this purpose, the discussion of Alternative futures – including Possible futures, Probable futures and Preferable futures – is important so that people can strive to reach the desired future (Bell, 2003, p73-74).

When we are talking about the desired future, the world view, value system, culture and myths will also be mentioned. This is why the foundations and presuppositions of the future researcher are directly involved in his future studies (Inayatullah, 2012).

Yuval Noah Harari is one of futurists that has entered this field according to his own principles and presuppositions. According to him, his Predictions are in an active position, unlike weather forecasts. Therefore, these predictions themselves are effective in building the future. (Harari A, 1397, pp. 335-337).

Focusing on the latest scientific and technological advances in artificial intelligence, dataism and biology, he has announced the future of mankind. Some of these cases are:

1. Management of beliefs and the crisis of freedom: because humans are investigated by artificial intelligence algorithms and then hacked (Harari C, 2017, p. 72; Harari B, 2017, pp. 516-519). This is the end of freedom and the rise of digital dictatorship (Harari C, 2017, pp. 92-93).
2. The crisis of human employment and non-consumption, because robots are narrowing the field for humans due to their higher physical and mental abilities (Harari B, 2017, pp. 471-505; Harai C, 2017, pp. 51-52).
3. The emergence of the super human, which will never last more than fifty years. Because evolution will have moved from natural selection to the non-biological realm, racial superiority will become a reality. (Harari B, 2017, pp. 120) and this will be the beginning of the decline of social justice (Harari B, 2017, pp. 528-529; Harari C, 2017, pp. 101-102).

## **Methodology**

The events related to the future have not yet been objectively realize. Therefore, the predictions are neither provable nor falsifiable at the present time. Considering the uncertainty of the future and the existence of various possibilities in it, on what basis and criteria can we evaluate the predictions? (Øhrstrøm and Per, 2020)

Even if the future arrives, it is still not possible to simply judge the correctness of past predictions; If the prediction is fulfilled, a person can consider its realization as a proof of the correctness of his prediction, and if the prediction is not fulfilled, a person can introduce his prediction as a reason for its non-fulfillment. Because the predictions related to humans stimulate human actions and this problem can cause acceleration or slowness or non-fulfillment of the prediction (Popper, 1957, p12-13) This issue is so important that some have denied the possibility of prediction about human sciences and have reduced the prediction to prophecy (Merton, 1968, p183-184).

Therefore, due to the nature of the discussion, we should not directly discuss here the truth or falsity of Harari's claims - such as whether or not super-humans will appear in the future. Rather, we should see what deficiencies are his foundations, approaches and methods on which Harari's future studies are based on. For this purpose, we evaluate them from the point of view of the intellectual foundations of Islamic wisdom, the rules of future research, and the evidences and clues ahead.

## **Conclusions Results**

Harari's future research topics can be criticized and evaluated from different aspects. Especially his materialistic principles have caused him to look at today's world in a different way and consequently explain the future in the same horizon. Here are some of them.

### **1. Passive prediction instead of prediction :**

Harari's view of future research is completely descriptive and passive; By moving from prediction to predicting the future, he scares the audience of a terrible future that seems like there is no way to control or change the future .

Whereas if this is really the case, what is the use of knowing the future that there is no way out of it? Rather, the sadness of its arrival makes the present time bitter. In his future studies, Harari proposes only one path for the future of mankind. While we cannot be sure that the relations established in the past and present will continue in the future. Especially when we see that the efforts of various western traditions to find certainty, control and social engineering have failed( Gibbins and Reimer, 1381, pp. 131-137 and 200-201)

### **2. Impact technology :**

Harari is highly technological in examining the future. He explains the future based on an exaggerated view of the capabilities of new technologies - especially artificial intelligence. But human history has shown that technological capacities are not the only determining factor in the fate of humans. These are the people who decide whether to accept the changes or not (Watson, 2018, pp. 101-99 and 236). In addition, things like God's will, divine promise, and the unseen world are among the factors that play a decisive role in the equation and the future of mankind (Pedram and Ayouzi, 2015, pp. 167-171), the superficiality of Harari's statements considering the theory of " The Causal Layered Analysis " can be easily understood (Enayatullah, 2015, Vol. 1, pp. 27-41) .

### **3. The incompatibility of identity denial with the following topics**

After denying "Self", relying on the effects of artificial intelligence in human life, Harari expresses great concern that in the not too distant future, unfortunate events will happen to humans, one of them is that Humans will "hacked . "

If man really does not have a "self", then how is it possible to warn him about the future challenges of mankind and say that the human self will be hacked in the future !

### **4. The impossibility of reducing "I" to an algorithm**

We know that whenever we pass from one level of reality to another, some aspects always left aside and on the other hand other capacities and aspects are

emphasized. For example, a sociologist uses models in the study of society; while the biologist examines the same reality with other.

Therefore, when it is said that man can be delivered to data, if it is meant that data shows the whole truth of man, then it is a fallacy argument because a huge part of human reality remains out of the circle of knowledge. And if it is meant that the data only refers to a part of the human truth and not all of it, then the whole human truth cannot be reduced to the data (Paya, 2017, p. 37).

#### 5. Exaggeration in the technologies of today and tomorrow

The main pillar of predicting the future is knowing the current situation (Pedram and Ayouzi, 2015, p. 120). What mankind has achieved so far has been the only superior analysis power, but cognitive and innovative abilities in computers are very few and disappointing (Behfroz, 2014, pp. 48-49 and 97-106). And the activities related to artificial intelligence - contrary to Harari's statements - indicate a very significant difference between humans and intelligent robots (Yazdi, 2015, p. 290-291).

### **Conclusion**

Considering the existing approaches in future research and considering the direct effects of future researcher's presuppositions in future research discussions, it seems that Harari's statements are neither compatible with the knowledge of future studies nor you can find a solid foundation for his statements. Contrary to the probabilistic nature of future studies, he has included a kind of certainty in his statements and rather than trying to predict the future, he has made prophecy about the future. Also, by ignoring alternative possibilities, it is void of providing a desirable future; While the new futurism tries more than anything to build such a future. Harari organized his statements in such a way that they are neither provable nor falsifiable; Certainly, such an approach in experimental sciences will not have much cognitive value. Also, the foundations and presuppositions on which Harari's future research findings are based are very shaky and weak.

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