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9/18/2019

Today, society depends on hierarchies; the law governs the population, parents discipline their children, and older children rule over the younger. In previous centuries, the same usually held true. While some hierarchies elevated husbands above wives, and ruling families could wield more power over the law, there was still an order that everyone followed. Since the existence of an order appears so universal, could it be innate? Could these social structures be part of our biology? Harari, author of "Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind," says no: instead, he argues that mankind has always "created imagined orders"--essentially, any sort of hierarchy we form is artificial (58).

Harari states that an "imagined order" is simply that: imaginary. While some argue that their societal rules descended from a divine being, and others say that observing nature led them to the hierarchy, they all agree that their created order is not a fiction. They hold steadfast to the idea that their order is, as Harari puts it, "natural and inevitable" (59). This makes sense; those who create the hierarchy often, in their own self-interest, put themselves in the upper level of society. In an effort to be seen as righteous or even pious, instead of self-serving, they proclaim the hierarchy as "inevitable." While hierarchies are created from the imagination, human beings nevertheless continue to insist that these complex hierarchies are pre-existing.

In contrast, the early civilizations consisted of "simple agricultural societies," ones in which people were primarily split into hunters and gatherers (50). These two categories were few and equally valued in society, so this imagined order didn't present many situations where the upper levels could oppress or discriminate against the lower. There wasn't as much opportunity for the hierarchy to influence people. Conversely, the current, complicated hierarchy in the

United States affects even my own thinking and behavior; for example, the debate between STEM and the humanities seems to re-appear with each college admissions cycle. In the larger Asian-American community, it's the salary that differentiates the two; currency is a part of the imagined order that raises STEM careers on a pedestal. No longer backed to a gold standard, fiat money's value comes solely from the government's declaration and the citizens' trust.

Additionally, the community compares each field's success, but how do you measure your impact on the world? Our current hierarchy elevates tangible, material successes, such as technology, over more internal successes, such as cultivating minds and raising children to be open-minded and open-hearted citizens; however, in other civilizations, this hierarchy may easily be switched. In other words, the salary-driven and outward success-driven hierarchies that elevates STEM and lowers the humanities is held only by our imagination and beliefs, just as Harari argues.

My ardor for analyzing literature has naturally diminished somewhat as I've grown older, but how do I know that this condescension of the humanities and its "paltry" effects on the world didn't influence me, even subconsciously? Additionally, I know that my recent curiosity in computer science was certainly buoyed by the multitude of people who commented that tech companies are constantly searching for more female employees; the allure of a high income, which is prized in my community, is tempting. Still, how much did this hierarchy influence me, and the rest of my life? Though these orders may very well be imaginary, the effects are decidedly not.