

Humankind

A Hopeful History

OVERVIEW

The main idea of the book is that it is realistic and revolutionary to assume that people are naturally good and friendly.

The attempts of people are good and people are essentially social creatures: People are willing to do much for the ones that are similar to them and for the ones they are in contact with.



The real lord of the flies, The boys of Ata

STRENGTHS

It is accessible to read for a wide audience and the author uses captivating ways of explaining concepts.

Provides many tangible examples which show the main concepts into practice. Which work nicely to show how humankind collaborates.

WEAKNESSES

Doesn't provide much of a detailed analysis of the in-depth academic discussions or counter-arguments.

Author challenges only popular scientists. Would the outcome of the debate be different if counterparties were hardcore scientists of niche segments?

CONTEXT

This book was written in 2020 for a mainstream and young audience, for the author to be able to influence minds.

The author aims to shift the way we perceive humanity, to a more hopeful and realistic view of human nature that believes in the innate goodness of man.

It is an attempt to contribute to a shift in ways society is built and the author hopes for different ways in which schools, workplaces and democracies are built.

MAIN CONCEPTS

Veneer Theory: beneath the civilized surface, people's natural state is a war against all & people are self-serving beasts (as argued by e.g. Hobbes, Machiavelli) → need for hierarchical power.

“Homo Puppy”: People are naturally good and social (as argued by e.g. Rousseau) → hierarchical power corrupts and causes violence.

Placebo & Nocebo: our positive/negative assumptions materialize in positive/negative outcomes → The narratives & assumptions matter!

CRITICAL THOUGHTS

The biggest critique on the text has to do with the fact that some of the arguments throughout the book did not go into much depth. Although the argumentation was intriguing and there were times when Bregman made notions about possible critique towards his own arguments, often heavy simplification was used concerning the conclusions and causal connections to **strengthen** his message and to keep the writing simple enough and story-like.