

The Next Age - Homo Deus

When people are asked to describe a belief system, they tend to think of religions, but arguably the most powerful belief system in the UK today is not Christianity or Islam, but liberalism. Liberalism and its values define our age and guide the beliefs by which many people organise their lives in this country. Freedoms of conscience, speech, religion and choice are founded upon it. Most of our institutions are shaped by it, such as the systems of law, democracy, education, even capitalism. It is founded upon three important assumptions

- The first is that we are each of us assumed to have a single essence which cannot be divided into any parts or subsystems. True, this inner core is wrapped in many outer layers. But if I make the effort to peel these external crusts, I will find deep within myself a clear and single inner voice, which is my authentic self.
- The second assumption is that my authentic self is completely free
- The third is that, because of the first two assumptions, each of us knows things about ourselves that nobody else can discover. Since only I have access to my inner space of freedom, only I can hear the whispers of my authentic self. This is why liberalism grants the individual so much authority. I cannot trust anyone else to make choices for me, because no one else can know who I really am, how I feel and what I want. This is why (under liberalism) the voter knows best, the customer is always right and beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

However, all three of these liberal assumptions have been all but demolished by recent developments in thinking.

Here I want to introduce an interesting word to help us with the next stage in the argument -

The future is unwritten, but the general direction of travel can be discerned. I hope to explore what this new age might bring in a future assembly. After all, if we are moving into a new age and a new way of thinking, this is the age in which you will be the leaders and the decisions you make will shape that is, unless you let an algorithm do the thinking for you.