



# One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society

*Herbert Marcuse*

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# One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society

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**One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society** Herbert Marcuse  
Originally published in 1964, One-Dimensional Man quickly became one of the most important texts in the ensuing decade of radical political change. This second edition, newly introduced by Marcuse scholar Douglas Kellner, presents Marcuse's best-selling work to another generation of readers in the context of contemporary events.

## One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society Details

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# From Reader Review One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society for online ebook

**peiman-mir5 rezakhani says**

## Ahmad Sharabiani says

The One-dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society, Herbert Marcuse  
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**Emad (TheBookCritic) says**

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**“All liberation depends on the consciousness of servitude and the emergence of this consciousness is always hampered by the predominance of needs and satisfactions which, to a great extent, have become the individual's own.”.**

I've read this book more than once, though it is a short one but it needs time in order to be fully grasped. It is, definitely, not an easy read.

In this book, Marcuse clarifies the meaning of the one-dimensional society (which is a repressive society) and how it affects the people turning them into one-dimensional men.

When you read this book, you will think that Marcuse is talking about the people you meet every day! Our world is currently infected with one-dimensional men – men who can't think rationally and can't allow other people to have different opinions. In a one-dimensional society the only genuine individual is the rebel (the one who refuses the pressure of the society and rejects to become a one-dimensional man).

Marcuse thinks that in order to preserve your genuine character in such a repressive society, you will have to practice a strategy he calls 'The Great Refusal'. You must refuse everything the society produces. **DON'T BE A BLIND CONSUMER. SAY NO!**

I recommend it to all of my friends. I'm sure you're going to enjoy reading it.

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### **Sebastien says**

This was a very interesting read, I'm particularly interested in this line of critique on modern society and technology, how our technology ends up imprisoning us within closed loop thinking making it difficult to avoid subjugation to the system, both in the mental and physical realms. We are reduced to instruments, all life and nature is reduced to mere tool and in the process our thinking is flattened (one-dimensional man). We become prisoners within this paradigm, and there is no real way to dissent, heck it is impossible to imagine beyond this paradigm because we labor under the illusion of freedom and choice, subsumed within the invisible threads of a modern industrial apparatus that precludes true freedom by dominating the mental landscape, crowding out any competing visions by force of historical, cultural, economic, social momentum and indoctrination (sheesh this is all sounding so Matrix-y). Working jobs we hate to buy things we don't want to impress people we don't care about. That kind of thing. And so long as the system delivers "the goods," if the material wealth delivery system functions to some degree (for some subset of people) then the status quo will grind on, buttressed by some measure of popular support. Marcuse hits upon the fact that much of the production of the system is based upon destruction, so you know that kind of view forces you to ask the question: is such a system sustainable? or will it implode based upon its contradictions? it seems more and more people are asking this question nowadays, because the potential catastrophic looming crises are sharpening into focus and becoming harder to ignore (imo).

I had trouble following some of the parts where the critique got more technical, I found the language overly

complicated and for me it became a thicket of obfuscating language that was hard to chop through. Still I enjoyed the read in spite of those sections, I'm guessing those sections were more difficult for me because I don't have a lot of background in the technical language and fundamentals of philosophy. Less of a strike against the author, more indicative of my own shortcomings as a reader.

Anyways, the critique is interesting. It is quite pessimistic, damning, I wish I could disagree with more of it but I find a lot of it rather on point although I'm torn on certain aspects, or at least still trying to figure out what I think on certain things. The critique is relevant to our times I think, one doesn't have to agree with it, but it is great material to think about and forces one to reflect upon modern systems, and maybe the collective delusions we accept (whether consciously or subconsciously) that allow the system to keep functioning.

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## Paradoxe says

Δυσκολε?τηκα πολ? να το αξιολογ?σω σωστ?. Κ?ποια κεφ?λαια τα δι?βαζα και τα ξαναδι?βαζα. Συνειδητοποι? κοιτ?ντας τις ημερομην?ες ?τι ?ντως μου π?ρε σχεδ?ν 1,5 μ?να να το διαβ?σω. Οι λ?γοι γ' αυτ? την αργοπορ?α ε?ναι δ?ο. Δε θα αν?λυα τους λ?γους αν δεν ε?χαν να κ?νουν με την κριτικ? μου.

Κατ' αρχ?ν, η λ?για και πολ? συχν? ξ?λινη γλ?σσα που με απωθο?σε και θα ?θελα να κ?νω μια παρ?νθεση για να εξηγ?σω κ?τι: η λογοτεχν?α μπορε? να χρησιμοποιε? ακ?μη και υπερβατικ? ?ποια γλ?σσα επιθυμε? ο συγγραφ?ας, οι επιστ?μες του ανθρ?που συν?θως ασπ?ζονται ?να δικ? τους λεκτικ?, με συγκεκριμ?νες εκφρ?σεις και λ?ξεις ?που επεκτε?νεται ακ?μη και στα παραδε?γματα πολλ?ς φορ?ς ( παρ?νθεση μ?σα στην παρ?νθεση :ρ: ειδικ? αυτ? με τα παραδε?γματα ε?ναι και ο λ?γος που παραμ?νει ?να απ' τα καλ?τερα βιβλ?α Φυσικ?ς του Σ?ργουνεη ικαν? να προκαλ?σει ακ?μη κι ?ναν ?σχετο να το διαβ?σει ).

Ε?ναι αυτ? που δυσχερα?νει την αν?γνωση απ? πολλο?ς. Ε?ναι ο λ?γος που μπορε?ς να διαβ?σεις την Τετραπλ? Ρ?ζα του Σοπεν?ουερ απνευστ? λ?γω της απλ?ς γλ?σσας και των καθημεριν?ν εκφρ?σεων και παραδειγμ?των με την ?πια χρ?ση των αντ?στοιχων επιστημονικ?ν εκφρ?σεων και η Κριτικ? του Πρακτικο? λ?γου απαιτε? εν?σεις αδρεναλ?νης.

Παραδειγματ?ζομαι με τη Φιλοσοφ?α που με ?χει κερδ?σει τ?σο ?στε να θ?λω κ?θε φορ? να επιβληθ? στον εαυτ? μου ακ?μα κι ?ταν το κε?μενο δε με καλε? σ' αυτ?. Ο Μονοδι?στατος ?νθρωπος δεν αν?κει ακριβ?ς στη Φιλοσοφ?α, αν πατ?ει η ρ?χη του στη Φιλοσοφ?α, το ?κρο των σελ?δων πατ?ει στην Κοινωνιολογ?α και της οπο?ας το λεκτικ? για 'μενα ε?ναι απ?λευτο.

Ο δε?τερος λ?γος που ?ργησα τ?σο πολ? κανονικ? φαντ?ζει περ?εργο ως λ?γος για να καθυστερ?σει την αν?γνωση εν?ς βιβλ?ου δι?τι ε?ναι μ?λλον κ?νητρο για να το ρουφ?ξεις: Πρ?κειται για ασυν?θιστα διαχρονικ? κε?μενο. Θα γρ?ψω ?να μ?νο παρ?δειγμα που δεν ε?ναι το πιο σπουδα?ο του βιβλ?ου αλλ? ε?ναι χαρακτηριστικ?: Ο ?νθρωπος σχεδ?ν 50 χρ?νια πριν εισ?γει τον ?ρο "γκ?τζετ" και του δ?νει τον τωριν? ορισμ? του. Π?ρασα ?πειρες ?ρες στα δι?φορα καταστ?ματα με γκ?τζετς κοιτ?ντας ?λα αυτ? τα σκουπ?δια και προσπαθ?ντας να καταλ?βω την ?ννοια του γκ?τζετ και παντο? ?ταν σα να τον ?χω στα αυτ? μου. Και ξεκ?νησα να το κ?νω για να αποδε?ξω το αντ?θετο.

Δεν ?χω διαβ?σει ?λλα βιβλ?α του, δεν ξ?ρω πως θα καταφ?ρω να διαβ?σω κ?τι ?λλο δικ? του αλλ?

σκοπε?ω να το κ?νω, ?πως και με αυτ? το βιβλ?ο δεν ?χω τελει?σει. Ο Μαρκο?ζε ε?ναι ο μεγαλ?τερος προφ?της που ?χω συναντ?σει. Τα λ?για δεν επαρκο?ν.

**muaad alqaydy says**

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## **Mariafrancesca di natura viperesca says**

**Una confortevole, levigata, ragionevole, democratica non libertà prevale nella civiltà industriale avanzata, segno di progresso tecnico..**

E' l'ennesimo libro che si intreccia fittamente alla mia seconda vita e non può essere altrimenti: la prima cominciò ad agonizzare tra il '63 e la primavera del '68.

La seconda germogliò a ruota del maggio francese ed ebbe per padrini Sartre e Marcuse (naturalmente Marx, Mao, H? Chí Minh e il Che erano l'humus imprescindibile). Forse uno di questi giorni rileggerò quello che ho in casa di Jean Paul ma Herbert - non so per quale pulsione - l'ho dovuto leggere subito.

Lo comprai nell'autunno di quell'anno, quando anche i terroncelli decisero che fosse giunto il momento di unirsi all'internazionalismo studentesco. Lo lessi. Mi imposi di leggerlo. Volevo sposarne le tesi ma non riuscivo a farne il vangelo con cui interpretare il mio "reale presente" preindustrializzato.

M. si riferiva al mondo dei ricchi, dove anche le tute blu non si distinguevano più dai colletti bianchi negli atteggiamenti, nei bisogni, nei desideri e nel pensiero (a)critico.

Nel mio mondo non solo non c'erano tute blu (per alcuni una fortuna: la mancata industrializzazione ci aveva preservati dalla distruzione del territorio, come se la mancanza di reti fognarie non avesse trasformato le magnifiche coste in infinite praterie per i colibacilli) ma i colletti bianchi ci tenevano a esibire i loro simboli di casta.

In casa avevamo una 850 e loro la Lancia.

Io portavo i vestiti cuciti da mia madre – aveva con gli scolli giromanica una incompatibilità irrimediabile: praticamente affondava le forbici fin quasi al giro vita. La povera manica, quando alzavi il braccio per appenderti al poggia mano degli autobus, non poteva che tirare su il vestitino già cortino. E se proprio non volevi mostrare la giarrettiera, dovevi rassegnarti a cascare alla prima frenata – e loro, i rampolli dei colletti bianchi, quelli dell'unico negozio esclusivo. Io andavo a scuola in autobus e loro con l'autista di papi.

Però, senza voler emulare i più luridi fascisti di oggi, erano proprio loro a recitare Marcuse a menadito. Io non avevo mai varcato il Rubicone, l'Italia visitata era tutta al di sotto della linea gotica. Forse là il libro aveva un senso, pensavo. Dalle mie parti, nel paese del sole, della fame e della mafia, valevano ancora le vecchie teorie marxiste della lotta di classe.

Riletto a distanza di cinquant'anni, L'uomo a una dimensione, mi sembra il più riuscito dei libri distopici mai scritti. Altro che 1984.

*“ Una confortevole, levigata, ragionevole, democratica non libertà prevale nella civiltà industriale avanzata, segno di progresso tecnico”.*

Siamo diventati tutti turisti, tutti griffati, tutti con uno smartphone in mano. Non esiste più né destra né sinistra, tutti apolitici (al massimo ci permettiamo i grillini), tutti amici di Maria, tutti a tuffarci nella casa del Grande Fratello (abbiamo però il telecomando, liberi di muoverci dentro il recinto approntato per noi). Siamo diventati il gregge del sì, non più in grado di ragionare con la nostra testa per dire No manco alle minchiate.

Vogliamo essere come tutti. Siamo come tutti.

E nel frattempo, senza accorgercene, da paese di emigranti ci siamo trasformati in terra di migranti: il nemico n° 1, specie se arrivano a frotte e non più regolati dall'orribile legge Bossi-Fini. Come gli zombi fuoriescono dal mare dove li facciamo annegare e invadono (?) le nostre strade e i nostri catoi. Loro sono fuori da tutto. L'essere senza identità li rende senza diritti. Saranno loro a dire di NO.

Forse per questo ne abbiamo tanta paura. Non perché ci rubino il lavoro, o spaccino e turbino il decoro delle nostre città. Veniamo indotti, perché hanno anestetizzato il nostro cervello, a ignorarli come se fossero trasparenti, nel migliore dei casi. Nel peggiore facciamo sì che si insidi un governo che i benpensanti dicono di temere ma in cui, in realtà, fidano per fare il lavoro sporco che tutti ormai ci auspiciamo. Che lo confessiamo a noi stessi o meno.

Marcuse in un passo chiave del suo libro descrive come: *"il sostrato dei reietti e degli stranieri, degli sfruttati e dei perseguitati di altre razze e di altri colori, dei disoccupati e degli inabili. Essi permangono al di fuori del processo democratico, la loro presenza prova quanto sia immediato e reale il bisogno di porre fine a condizioni e istituzioni intollerabili. Perciò la loro opposizione è rivoluzionaria anche se non lo è la loro coscienza. Perciò la loro opposizione colpisce il sistema dal di fuori e quindi non è sviata dal sistema; è una forza elementare che viola la regola del gioco e così facendo mostra che è un gioco truccato"*.

Il sociologo Luciano Gallino afferma che *"M. anticipa i termini delle questioni odierne e ciò lo fa apparire moderno... è un libro che obbliga a riflettere su ciò che dobbiamo decidere e fare, qui e ora al fine di trasformare noi stessi e la società in cui viviamo, in direzione di un'esistenza che non sia come l'attuale, il regno di un'abile e previgente applicazione di mezzi efficienti per scopi presi alla cieca, ma un'esistenza in cui la ragione oggettiva, con la sua capacità di individuare l'essenza della realtà suggerisca i nostri scopi e le correlative azioni, stabilendo e interiorizzando nuovi rapporti con società fino ad ora sottoprivilegiate che non sono più disposte ad accettare l'attuale disuguaglianza dei privilegi, prima che sia la storia, se non domani, ma forse domani l'altro, a trasformare brutalmente noi in strumenti dei suoi scopi più ciechi"*.

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## Javier says

A nice addition to Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization*, *One-Dimensional Man* presents Marcuse's devastating characterization of advanced capitalist society as totalitarian. As in his previous work, Marcuse here follows in the footsteps of Marx (tied together with Freud, actually) in criticizing the furtherance of repression in societies with highly advanced technologies--he calls for a re-appraisal of this mode of existence (which he calls domination) and a restructuring of 'work' into 'play' (following his sketches of the concept in *Eros and Civilization*), claiming that the level of technology enjoyed by advanced industrial countries makes possible an existence (more or less never before experienced, at least in a non-discriminatory, universal way) in which all can labor much less than the interests of domination (corporations, the State) have compelled them--through both coercion and indoctrination--to do. He criticizes the disappearance of

'multidimensionality' in such societies, claiming that the economic 'goods' afforded by advanced capitalism (as in, eg, the economic boom of the 1950s and 60s, or the present day) has led the ordinary person to valorize the current mode of society, thus leading to the collapse of oppositional social elements and the resulting 'one-dimensional' man and society.

Marcuse takes issue with a great deal of linguistical reality in advanced industrial society--he warns that prevailing conceptions of x and y in this society are shaped largely by dominant interests, and the result, he finds, is a betrayal of aspirations for human liberation. He uses the examples of 'freedom' and 'democracy' centrally here (positing that the presence or absence of democracy is not to be determined by competitive elections, etc., alone, and that the market, instead of promoting 'freedom,' really enslaves).

Marcuse's account here, as an uncompromising defense of individuality and human liberation, is a crucially needed one. Its implications tend toward anarchism, though I wonder if his endorsement of liberation as possible only in the most highly advanced capitalist societies (as with Marx) reflects a lack of concern with ecological matters. I think he answers this to a certain degree in *Eros and Civilization*, where he claims that the artistic mode of existence made possible through revolutionary processes of human liberation would result in a rather new relationship between humanity and nature--one characterized not by domination or exploitation but beauty and respect. In any case, though, more people should read Marcuse.

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### **Benjamin Hersh says**

few books have left me more curious to read other people's reviews.

sadly, it's my impression that relatively few reviewers here, lovers or haters, have actually read the book in its entirety. browsing the reviews, one can easily get the impression that this book is an awesome (or awful) critique of modern technological society. which it is, but also much more.

the things that many people respond to arrive within the first few sections of the book. lots of fluffy, vague rhetoric about industrial society, the sort of social criticism that, read with the right inner voice, becomes self-parody. it's not all that predictable though. Marcuse is surprisingly conservative on a number of fronts--in particular, his biting remarks towards women's sexual liberation come to mind. it's almost a red herring to talk about any of this though, because it's just the beginning (literally) of a much greater project.

Marcuse devotes the bulk of this book to a deep, often insightful analysis of early analytic philosophy and operationalism in the mathematical sciences. forget Marx and Adorno. Marcuse is primarily responding to the likes of Popper, Austin, and Wittgenstein. this is a book about the ideological roots of positivism and ordinary language philosophy, and how these (then new and trendy) academic attitudes contrast with more 'traditional' dialectic modes of reason. specifically, what is lost when we only consider the world as it is, rather than as it should be? reading this in 2013, the whole thing is tremendously dated, but absolutely fascinating as a piece of intellectual history.

this is a beautiful (and sometimes naive) piece of meta-philosophy from before the boundaries of continental and analytic traditions (or for that matter, philosophy and science) were as rigid as they are today. it is absolutely worth reading if you are into that sort of thing. if you have not subjected yourself to the classics of the analytic school, particularly 20th century philosophy of science and language, much of this book will be lost on you and you'll be left clutching to the easy rhetoric that bookends it.

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## Graham says

This is pretty damned radical for its time (1964). People mock the Frankfurt school these days for reasons I do not understand. One Dimensional Man is Marcuse's best known work, though probably not his best. The question he tries to answer is rather straight forward: What has late industrial society done to us and how has it shaped our state of mind? The problem with Marcuse (as with other Marxists, I suppose) is that while criticizing industrialization, he still holds out much hope in technology as a potential tool of liberation (as opposed to a means of oppression and alienation underneath the capitalist regime). Though I should say that One Dimensional Man is much more pessimistic than some of his other works.

It is hard to argue with Marcuse when he tells us that if freed from the chains of capitalism we could stop producing so much needless crap and only work a few hours a week, but when he actually thinks this is gonna actually happen, I have to take issue with that. I think we've come very far since Marcuse and are much more likely to view industrialization as a system in and of itself that should be looked upon with suspicion--even when not tied to the Capitalist regime. Still, this book is hugely important and sets the groundwork for much future radical thought.

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## Tyler says

Here's an interesting thought: Every technologically advanced society operates on a *de facto* ideology stemming from the technology itself, regardless of its particular political system. When television or the Internet replace newspapers, for instance, as the means by which an individual interacts with society, the concomitant replacement of words by images takes on an unforeseen brainwashing quality. This is the odd progression looked at in *One-Dimensional Man*, and Herbert Marcuse's investigation leaves the reader with an altered perspective, enlightened and disturbed at the same time.

The book tackles in two parts the Orwellian quality of advanced technology, one part looking at the kind of society technology brings forth, and the other explaining the kind of thinking this society engenders. As a philosophy work, it requires a rudimentary knowledge of that subject. From there, I came across enough original thinking to keep my highlighter busy throughout the read.

The nature of one-dimensional society I vaguely suspected, and Marcuse filled in the details. Modern society has gutted Enlightenment ideas, such as the right to dissent, and hollowed out concepts such as "democracy," leaving the terms intact while eviscerating the meanings. The book shows how it is then possible to manufacture an everyday reality for ordinary people.

One example is that the pre-industrial "battle for existence" humans once faced has long been obviated by technology, so the misery and distress found in modern societies is in fact artificially contrived. Why? Because modern economics needs the threat of destitution and insecurity to function. But paradoxically, one-dimensional society is far more passive in its contrived reality than previous societies. With the institutions of modern society now geared toward dissipating serious dissent, no real social change will ever be possible using the means available *within* that society. Wow.

The section on "one-dimensional thinking" contained even greater surprises. With the media entrapping society in a permanent present, people cannot achieve the historical perspective necessary to make judgments

critical of the *status quo*. The author goes into some depth about “universal” concepts, concepts of quality which, in one-dimensional society, are stripped of their actual importance. How is this stripping done? Using linguistic analysis and even logical positivism, that’s how. What a cogent, provocative argument Marcuse presses on this point, and what a persuasive one. Never had I thought of linguistic analysis as actually impeding the ability to think, especially since its goal has been to improve the use of language.

The author takes up many philosophical questions connected to one-dimensional thinking: dialectical versus formal logic; quality versus quantity; Plato versus Aristotle; the immediate versus the ends. Because the author takes care with his conclusions, the book is filled with more ideas than just these. But the examples, I expect, will give potential readers an idea of the original work to be found here.

First published in the sixties, this book's theme has proven more durable with each passing year, and its relevance is far more obvious now than when it first came out. I recommend it to anyone who likes reading philosophy or is interested in the social sciences, people who like to consider novel and challenging ideas.

**Thom Dunn says**

yadayadayadayadayadayada--- As well read the endless debates of the Scholastic Philosophers for all the good Marxist and neo-Marxist theorizing does anyone. Once buy into the notion of Historical Inevitability, whether it be the Inevitable Class Struggle or the Second Coming of Jesus, and human experience is open to endless criticism concerning its conformity--or the lack of it--or the antithesis of it-- to the way things are spozed to go. Instead, gimme Rachel Ray, the Tuscan Sun and bottle of Vin Ordinaire, ne Marx, ne Jesus. Amen.

## Bahman Nojavan says

## Roger Cottrell says

This book remains as important and flawed as ever and is probably MORE significant now than when it was published in 1964. A couple of weeks back, Nick Cohen wrote a salient article in The Observer in which he compared the present political situation with that in the 1930s - the last time that capitalism experienced a crisis of this magnitude (though not compounded to the same extent by the circulation of fictitious capital in the economy). The 1930s gave us a revolutionary crisis, Jarrow marches and the New Deal in the US. The current crisis finds the working class meek as kittens and still integrated into their own enslavement through the consumerist spectacle. Seems Marcuse had a point about his society without opposition.

Of course, in absolute terms, Marcuse was wrong because as Mattick said (Critique of Marcuse, Merlin Press, 1977) capitalism can't be planned, the working class can't be written off completely, today's students certainly aint revolutionaries and there are limits to total integration, But there's enough truth in Marcuse's words to make his dismissal by Trotskyist groups who once commanded tens of thousands in their ranks and

are now insignificant a trifle premature.

## Erik Graff says

Marcuse was a very prominent figure when I was in high school and on into the seventies. While familiar to pretty much everyone with a penchant for politics, few actually went beyond the various articles by and about him or the occasional interview in the progressive press. My intellectual mentor in high school, Ed Erickson, however, had read *One-Dimensional Man* and passed on a copy of it with a very strong recommendation.

Not having read much Marx in high school and having read no Heidegger, I found the book hard-going at the time. Still, the fact that he criticized both the Soviet and the American systems impressed me and his analysis and rejection of American consumerism struck me powerfully. His arguments about the revolutionary potentials of fringe groups, such as we students, but also what Marx called the lumpen proletariat, while attractive, seemed also to be wishful thinking--wishful thinking I shared, mind you.

During high school and college, Marcuse was often discussed, often along with others from the Frankfurt school, but, as I said, few really knew his thinking well in my circles. The mainline media certainly distorted it, making him out to be some sort of depraved monster and nihilist which was hardly the case. Interestingly, he was offered a high platform to address America on one occasion. Playboy Magazine offered him a pretty penny to do one of their interviews. He agreed, with one condition: he, in his seventies at the time, would have to appear as that issue's centerfold. The interview never occurred, but it was stuff like this, his humor and perceived solidarity with us young people, that endeared him to us.

**SSamaneHH says**

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**Amin says**

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**Asim Alzou'bi says**

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### **Amal 88 says**

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### **Sunny says**

A brilliant thought provoking and challenging book. Covers lots of different topics but the key one which i found relevant was the one on technology and how this has been imbibed into our minds and modus operandi. Ask yourself, if you were to start a new business for example, what would be your first thought when it came to operationalising it? Which website to launch it off i guess right? Which app to use? Technology has become such a leading driver and medium for our thoughts that its hard for us to think independently of it. Mark Hughes wrote the book in the 50s (i think) and some of the points are massively relevant to the twitter and Facebook generation of today. Very interesting read though in places i found it quite complicated.

