

One-dimensional man

[Media](#), [Social Media](#)



The introduction of Herbert Marcuse's book, "One-dimensional Man," shows us the problem that a democratic society creates. Though this book was written back in 1964, many can agree that what he says is true in today's society. Different scenarios are also brought up to show us how things will be affected due to the advancements of technology. Marcuse wants us to see what will happen and what has happened to society through a series of changes. Marcuse talked a lot about the necessities and luxuries of life. He called these the "true needs" and the "repressive needs." He makes it a point to show us that the changes in society cause us to think differently. Most people are beginning to mistake the "true needs" with the "repressive needs." Instead of actually spending their money on things they need for themselves or their families, they splurge. Marcuse believes this to be due to the advancement of technology. Marcuse also believes that the media, in all its forms, influence what the individual believes to be "true needs." Through social media, we are convinced that we must have something, therefore we go out and get what we want.

All of the advertisements that you see are purposely developed so that you would want the product. With this the individual is blinded by what is truly needed and what is wanted. Marcuse compares this kind of behavior to a disease. He states that the individual indulges on these products so that they may satisfy their happiness within. But Marcuse says that this happiness is not a condition which has to be maintained (5). Instead, it is temporary and will go away once this person has satisfied their need. Then what is left is euphoria in unhappiness (5).

Marcuse believes that an individual indulges in these “repressive needs” because they want equality. Buying these products give them a sense of equality to others in society. Marcuse believes that they are blinded by these products so much that they don’t even care about “true needs” anymore. They would rather have a big screen TV like their boss has rather than having health insurance. Marcuse says “Mass production and mass distribution claim the entire individual, and industrial psychology has long since ceased to be confined to the factory” (10).

Anything that can be found within a household is mass produced. Most of which are machines that are used to help make everyday life easier. Society has become so accustomed to having certain gadgets around that some people don’t even know how to perform simple tasks. Being able to mass produce an item is good in itself, but being able to distribute that product to an entire nation or even several nations is something else. This creates the potential of having the entire world depending on one company for a particular product. Technology has become just another part of everyone’s life.

Technology is constantly advancing and new products are always invented to help the daily routine of life, easier. Some examples of how certain inventions make life easier are the car, computer and internet. Being able to travel twice the distance in half the time makes the task of going to work and tending to your family much easier. Being able to send someone a document with a click of the mouse or even keeping in touch with family or friends that live far away. Since the workforce mainly consists of machines creating everything, people have begun to find things to do with their free time.

Having actual free time to do things with the family or friends or even oneself is starting to become common according to Marcuse. Marcuse clearly states that technology has taken over the entire work force. Marcuse states “ The very structure of human existence would be altered; the individual would be liberated from the work world’s.... ” (2). By this he wants us to realize that humans will soon be replaced by technology. There would be no need for people to be around factories anymore because everything can be done much faster and much more efficient with machines.

This is the type of society that we are heading into. This is all due to the people that own these factories. The uses of machines have proven to be much more efficient and much more productive. Humans just can’t perform certain tasks that are needed to mass produce products. They just may be able to but the quality of the work wouldn’t compare to that of a machine’s work. “ Today political power asserts itself through its power over machine process and over the technical organization.... ” (3). We can all agree that this statement still holds true today.

The executive decisions, which are made in today’s society, are all made by those who own major companies or corporations. They have the most power because they have the most money. Their factories are mainly machines that create their product. Though they still require some manpower to run their system, they mainly rely on their machines, These select few people utilize the full potential use of technical, scientific and mechanical productivity (3). Marcuse makes a good point in saying “... economic freedom would mean freedom from the economy...’ (4).

Those who have utilized the full potential of machines have already found their freedom from the economy. Everyone else is struggling to earn freedom from the economy, making just enough money to support their families. We know these people as the middle class or the working class. Their jobs give them a decent amount of money to live comfortable lives. In this passage, Marcuse talks about how liberty can become something that is used for controlling the masses. The ability to be able to elect ones leader doesn't necessarily mean that the government isn't in control.

The government is always going to have some type of influence on everything that is put on the media. For example, if the government isn't influencing the media, why is there censorship? The truth is that the government controls most aspects of our life. Marcuse argues that the right of freedom of speech is good yet it also creates the right for censorship. Marcuse believes that the purpose of technology is to help us live easier lives. Assisting us with jobs that humans just don't have the strength for should be the true intention of a machine. A machine is supposed to take the job of several humans.

It is there to perform tasks that a normal human does not have the strength or ability to do. Instead, the capitalist government is using machines to increase their power and wealth. Instead of using technology advances as something to help the people, they instead use it to oppress the people with weapons and propaganda. Being able to determine one's leader may sound like an ideal but Marcuse may disagree. He states that this system is not perfect. The idea of having a free trade system allows the government to punish people with trade sanctions.

Going between countries would require one to meet all of these rules in order to proceed with the transaction. Sanctions for one country may be completely different from a neighboring country. These sanctions would not have existed before but must still be enforced. Even though this was written back in the mid 1960s, we can see that some of what Marcuse says is true in today's society. Though the change process was gradual, there were still significant changes that we can see. The advancement in technology is one key factor in the gradual changes that we see.

Everything has technology integrated into it in one way or another. Because of this people began to lose sight of what was truly needed in life to survive and live. Instead, people have been blinded by things that they want and work until they have actually gotten what they wanted. They have fed their hunger for materialistic things for the time being but will soon realize that this hunger will eventually fade away. The government also influences the society through media. Censorship is a method in which the government influences the media.