



The Human Machine

Arnold Bennett

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This is a typical example of the sort of self-improvement essays or book that Arnold Bennett produced so readily during his heyday. In Britain in the first decades of the 20th century, there was a demand for anything that would help ordinary people better themselves, and Bennett obliged with volumes on Mental Efficiency, how to live 24 hours a day, how to improve one's literary taste, as well as books on the life of a novelist, etc. Overall, of course, he is deservedly best remembered for such novels as *The Old Wives' Tale*, the *Clayhanger* Trilogy, and *The Card*.

Enoch Arnold Bennett (1867-1931) was a British novelist. He was born in a modest house in Hanley in the Potteries district of Staffordshire. At age 21 he went to London as a solicitor's clerk. He won a literary competition in *Tit Bits* magazine in 1889 and was encouraged to take up journalism full time. From 1900 he devoted himself full time to writing, giving up the editorship and writing much serious criticism, and also theatre journalism, one of his special interests. In 1902 *Anna of the Five Towns*, the first of a succession of stories which detailed life in the Potteries, appeared. In 1908 *The Old Wives' Tale* was published, and was an immediate success throughout the English-speaking world. His most famous works are the *Clayhanger* (1910) trilogy and *The Old Wives' Tale*. These books draw on his experience of life in the Potteries, as did most of his best work. Among his other books are: *The Grand Babylon Hotel* (1902), *The Grim Smile of the Five Towns* (1907), *Hilda Lessways* (1911), *The Author's Craft* (1914), *The Lion's Share* (1916), and *The Roll-Call* (1919).

The Human Machine Details

Date : Published (first published November 1908)

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From Reader Review The Human Machine for online ebook

Tricia Porter says

According to this book, babies are not human beings.

Morad says

First of all I have to elaborate on the rating I gave this book. It's 3.5 but there are no half stars here so it's 3. I would say 7/10 which is good.

Almost 50-60% of the book is about what since now call "Cognitive Control" But of course back then you don't expect the author to know that topic.

It's a nice read as it motivates and encourages you to take control on yourself and be more decisive and build a strong character but there is not much in terms of depth, philosophy or science.

It's much lighter than the titles suggest.

Alex says

A dull, half ass philosophical, scientifically vague loveletter to the functionality and potential of the human brain.

Sudha says

A good read .. With a simple explanation and providing insights and ways on how to master the human machine

Recommended for anyone who is interested in the subject and is looking for simple book without any huge technical or medical terms .

Dianne Owens says

Ruth Golding does justice to this rather curious self-help book. Bennett's humour and descriptive come through with relative ease, allowing for a discussion of human frailties in an accessible manner. Some folks may have issues with the book length and content reflective of the era, such as the occasional statement that might seem racist by a modern audience, but I found it rather entertaining because of Bennett's eloquence and willingness to discuss subjects that would have seemed confronting at the time of publication.

Piotr Kalinowski says

This is a great, short book about why is self-awareness important. Or actually mindfulness. There's nothing new here really, if you're already familiar with ideas related to mindfulness and buddhism. I have personally read it just because of the author's style. It's quite humorous, and showing you, yes you, that you should take some care with regard to your mind lest you end up ridiculed ;)

Keith Zuniga says

Arnold presents some interesting ideas and wisdom regarding people and the machine (their minds)! Easy to understand and one should heed the wisdom of someone such as this. It would seem they speak from experience. I will try to put some of this into practice. I look forward to coming back and reading it again in retrospect on day in the not too distant future.

Ratnesh Neema says

The Human Machine is about an idea. An idea that can transform a man, both within and without. The author's got an amazing way of saying things.

A must read for anyone not in complete control of their self (that's everyone..)

Speranza says

As always, I love Bennett's writing – it has an effect on my soul that red wine has on my brain – it makes me dizzy, content and emotional.

However, the idea of disciplining one's mind in order to achieve one's best sounds ridiculous to me. He talks of control of the brain all the time. One should make a habit of controlling one's brain. Who is one? Which part of the human being can control the brain if not the brain itself? And why should it be controlled at all?

It is odd how violence in any way, shape or form is universally condemned (and rightly so), yet we still write 'self-help' books that teach us how to discipline the brain, control the brain, force the brain, become the master of our brain in order to be perfect and happy human beings. Apparently BDSM is good for the brain - it should be kept nicely submissive so we can fit in society and be model homo sapiens.

Thankfully, human nature is flawed enough and, as much as it has been brainwashed throughout the centuries, the human brain will always have a mind of its own.

Cristina says

To know more about Bennett, I strongly recommend this short video (little over 3 minutes):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJdHkJ...>

Eunice says

It has some interesting insights but nothing I haven't heard of before. I'm still wondering why the chapter about money is entitled, "L.S.D."

Armagan Kilci says

I am not satisfied with its emphasis on progress. Especially the opposition between "clean" progressive individual who uses the mind and the resisting, "dirty" person archetype who is the slave of "his" heart, seemed problematic to me. This review is anachronistic though. However, the reader may see the links between today's self-help discourses and Bennett's theorization of "self" as a control mechanism on mind (which is suggested to be a machine). If you are interested in the genre, I would suggest you to check it out. Especially, strong emphasis on Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius throughout the book is encouraging for any reader.

Karen Chung says

Entertaining, some useful ideas, and beautifully read by Librivox volunteer Ruth Golding, who fully brings out all the sardonic twists and wry humor. The work was four-star-worthy till the last couple chapters, which I found quite uninformed and half-baked. But overall worth a listen.

Cassandra says

A wonderful, slim text. I am endlessly amused while reading of this white westerner realizing the ancient wisdom of the east completely oblivious that he has not in fact discovered anything new. He writes as though he has discovered something no one else has ever known! This enthusiasm is delightful.

Johnny says

Very insightful explanation of using meditation to improve your circumstances.
