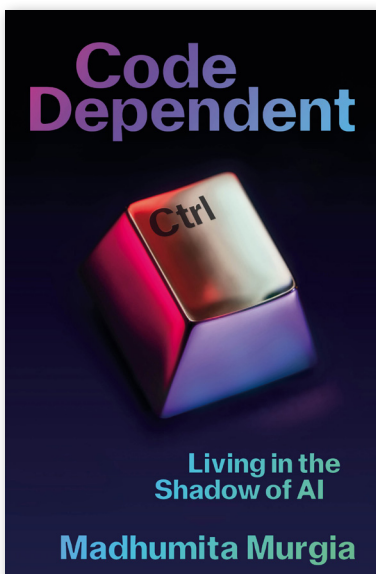


Code Dependent

Living in the shadow of AI

by Madhumita Murgia



PLOT SUMMARY

A British poet, an Uber Eats courier in Pittsburgh, an Indian doctor and a Chinese activist in exile apparently have nothing in common. Yet their lives are linked by their unexpected encounters with artificial intelligence.

In the human stories she tells in *Code Dependent*, Madhumita Murgia, AI Editor for *The Financial Times*, shows how automated systems are reshaping our lives all over the world, from technology that marks children as future criminals to an app that is helping to give diagnosis to a remote tribal community.

AI has already infiltrated all our day-to-day lives, through language-generating chatbots like ChatGPT and social media algorithms. But it's also affecting us in more insidious ways, touching everything from our personal relationships to our kids' education, our work, finances, public services, and even our human rights.

The ways in which algorithms and their effects are governed over the coming years will profoundly impact us all. Yet, we can't agree on a common path forward.

Murgia not only sheds light on this chilling phenomenon, but also charts a path of resistance. AI is already changing what it means to be human, in ways large and small, and Murgia reveals what could happen if we fail to reclaim our humanity.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

As a journalist, Murgia excels at making the complex and constantly developing topic of AI accessible to non-specialists, which is no easy task. By concentrating on the stories of individual people from around the world, Murgia clues the reader in to how the issues surrounding AI ownership, implementation and use of data affect real people. This

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“This is a chilling and essential read about AI and the way it imports and exacerbates existing social inequalities.”

PROF. NICOLA ROLLOCK,
2024 JUDGE

gives readers a handle on how AI could be affecting them, and see in real terms what it's doing in the world at the time of writing. Murgia titles her chapters Your Rights, Your Body, Your Future, Your Identity, etc, reminding readers how personal all this truly is.

The breadth of topics covered in *Code Dependent* is impressive, given the breadth of impact that AI is currently having on the world. But it's this bringing it back to the personal – what it means to be human – that grounds Murgia's book and makes it an impactful, memorable read. Last, *Code Dependent* is also a guide to how humanity is a source of resistance against the more chilling developments of AI, with Murgia always considering how individuals, corporations, the media and governments might move forward in a positive way.

DISCUSSION POINTS

One of the key points Murgia returns to in *Code Dependent* is how AI – perhaps unsurprisingly, since it draws on the existing world to 'learn' – disproportionately discriminates against the most vulnerable and marginalised in society. This includes workers in some of the poorest nations in the world, which tech companies are employing as content moderators, not caring that the content they are tagging for hours every day is giving them PTSD; delivery drivers, who are working for the algorithm and often not making enough money to live, or women across the world, who are the victims of 95 percent of non-consensual deep fake porn videos.

As Murgia points out, AI face recognition is also being utilised by various law enforcement organisations across the world, and, in some places, 'being used to discredit or even cause the murder of female activists, or those fighting those in power, e.g. in Africa, South East Asia and Latin America' (p73). Further, AI facial recognition has a much higher error rate in identifying darker skinned women than those of white ethnicities, meaning that there are far more cases of police mis-identifying suspects of colour and arresting them.

Having read *Code Dependent*, do you think AI could be a force for good in the world – looking at its use in medicine, for instance? Or is it already too immersed in corrupt practices to be redeemed? What would need to happen for AI to be used to genuinely help humanity? Do you think this is likely or possible?



Shortlist
2024



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QUESTIONS

Were you aware of 'deep-nude' technology, and how does it make you feel to know that this is out there?

Does AI remove our agency as humans? Do you think we will come to rely on it too much? How much is too much?

Has reading *Code Dependent* made you want to change any of the ways you use AI, or use apps and sites that use it?

Should AI be used to 'predict' things like criminality and teen pregnancy? Can it ever predict those things accurately? Why or why not?

NEXT STEPS

Try using a text AI like ChatGPT if you haven't already to write a poem or short story or script in a particular style. How accurate or convincing is it? Is it useful to have AI start something off which you can then edit and amend? If you do this, how much do you feel that you are the author? Where do you feel that authorship begins and ends?

Or why not write the opening to a novel set in a dystopian universe where AI is the norm and has been for hundreds of years. How do the residents interact with it? How does it impact their daily lives? What obstacles could it cause? ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Madhumita Murgia is an award-winning journalist, editor and speaker with expertise in the fields of technology, science and health. She is the first Artificial Intelligence Editor of *The Financial Times* and has been writing about AI, for *Wired* and *The FT*, for over a decade.

Born and raised in India, she was educated as an immunologist in the UK. She lives in London. *Code Dependent* is her first book.



If you enjoyed this book...

RECOMMENDED READS

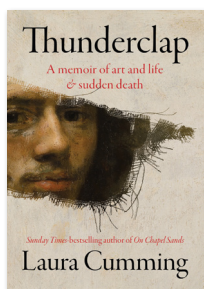
In *Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police and Punish the Poor*, Virginia Eubanks systematically investigates the impacts of data mining, policy algorithms, and predictive risk models on poor and working-class people in America.

In *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*, Safiya Umoja Noble argues that the combination of private interests in promoting certain sites, along with the monopoly status of a relatively small number of Internet search engines, leads to a biased set of search algorithms that privilege whiteness and discriminate against people of colour, and, specifically, women of colour.

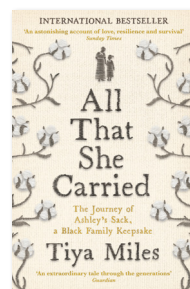
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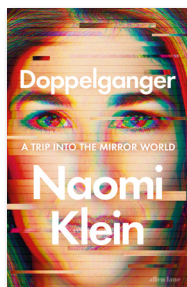
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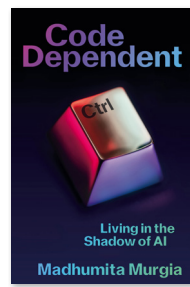
Thunderclap: A Memoir of Art and Life and Sudden Death
by Laura Cumming



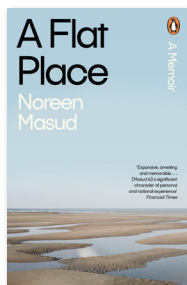
All That She Carried: The Journey of Ashley's Sack, a Black Family Keepsake
by Tiya Miles



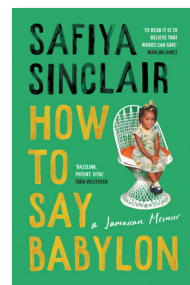
Doppelgänger: A Trip Into the Mirror World
by Naomi Klein



Code Dependent: Living in the Shadow of AI
by Madhumita Murgia



A Flat Place
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How to Say Babylon: A Jamaican Memoir
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