


Book Reviews

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Disclaimer: These are the author's subjective opinions, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of any organization or other individual. A human prepared this article, with assistance from Microsoft Editor and Grammarly.

As you have read in my previous articles if you can only read one of these books, read the first one. You also know I read each one twice. I have never had such a tough time choosing between two great authors in a review. Likewise, I have never been so glad of a double-read. To prepare this review I also read Dr. Cathy O'Neil's *Weapons of Math Destruction: How Big Data Increases Inequality and Threatens Democracy* (Broadway Books (2017)), because both authors positively reference her work. I got so down with the facts coming from Dr. Buolamwini's book I snuck ahead and read Mustafa Suleyman's *The Coming Wave* (reviewing next month, details at the end of this article). Dr. Buolamwini's startling specifics on facial recognition depressed me, as I thought artificial intelligence was a large part of the solution to achieving equality and equity. *The Coming Wave* helped me stay more optimistic about the ability to fix these harms in currently deployed and future systems.

Privacy itself is probably psychologically harder to implement for most IT professionals because the ones I have met like action, and plenty of it. I hold a privacy certification and have been studying the field for years. Carson's mantra in privacy states the opposite norm: *In privacy, it is always better to ask permission than forgiveness!* I believe both books support my mantra. If you are a proponent of a national privacy law, including elements from Illinois' Biometric Information Privacy Act, you are going to love and reference these books.

Book #1 of this review, here we go:

Buolamwini, Joy. *Unmasking AI: My Mission to Protect What is Human in a World of Machines*. Random House (2023).

Sound Bite: Even if unconsciously, we dragged human discrimination with us as we developed sensors, datasets, and algorithms used in AI. A triple insult to women of color who happen to have darker skin tones.

Opinion on Primary Audience: Everyone!

Dr. Buolamwini carefully details how deployed AI, especially regarding facial recognition, is spreading divisiveness, distrust of government, and especially distrust of law enforcement. You have some assurance when you get a medication at your local pharmacy it has been subjected to rigorous double-blind testing. Unlike pharmaceuticals, AI, datasets, and even sensors were released too early from the labs without looking for all the potential harms, especially in underserved communities.

The Author

Dr. Buolamwini has numerous impressive credentials such as being a Rhodes Scholar and an MIT PhD. She has testified before Congress and has created and leads the Algorithmic Justice League. Her professional journey, detailed in the book, is inspiring. She also stars in a Netflix documentary on this subject, 'Coded Bias.'

The Metadata

A **2023** publishing date! The online ordering cost, including shipping, is under \$30, half with an e-reader. The hardcover book is over 300 pages, including notes pages. My local public library system has or soon will have at least one copy. Public library availability is noted for those like me who try to keep costs down.

I took a one-page sample of the text to analyze for readability. Using a Wikipedia article about the Flesch-Kincaid Readability Test, the readability is at the high school level. There was around 22% passive voice in my sample, but it reads OK. This article is about 3% passive voice, for comparison.

My one criticism of this book is there is no index, and that makes it harder to find quotes, terms and definitions related to algorithmic bias.

Book Reviews (continued)

Table of Contents (abbreviated/modified and annotated in bold font () by me)

Introduction (Coded Gaze: "... describes the ways in which the priorities, preferences, and prejudices of those who have the power to shape technology can propagate harm, such as discrimination and erasure.")

Part I: Idealistic Immigrant (How she reached MIT, and the literal IT 'white mask effect' from the book cover)

- Chapter 1 Daughter of Art and Science
- Chapter 2 The Future Factory
- Chapter 3 Break the Alabaster
- Chapter 4 Shield Ready

Part II: Curious Critic

- Chapter 5 Defaults Are Not Neutral (**Cameras and Colorism**)
- Chapter 6 Facial Recognition Technologies (**Good explanations**)
- Chapter 7 Guardians Assemble
- Chapter 8 Power Shadows

Part III: Rising Researcher (The Dangers Hidden in Datasets)

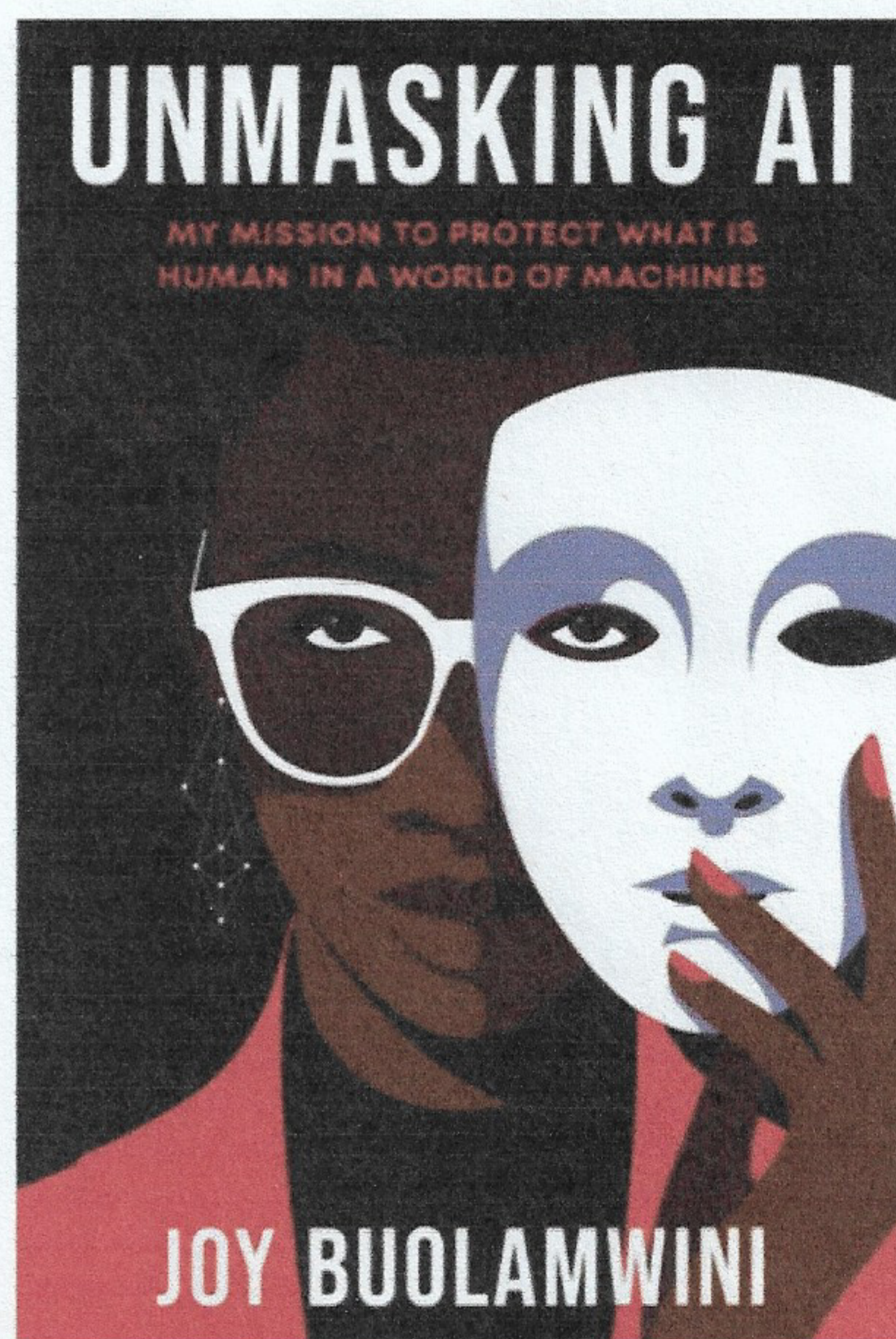
- Chapter 9 Crawling Through Darta
- Chapter 10 Arbiter of Truth
- Chapter 11 Gender Shades
- Chapter 12 Deserted Desserts

Part IV: Intrepid Poet

- Chapter 13 AI, Ain't I A Woman? (**The Poet Code**)
- Chapter 14 Gates in Belgium
- Chapter 15 Poet vs. Goliath in the Wild
- Chapter 16 Brooklyn Tenants (**Excellent Example**)
- Chapter 17 Testify
- Chapter 18 Betting on Coded Bias

Part V: Just Human

- Chapter 19 Drop Out (**How she almost did not complete her doctorate**)
- Chapter 20 Golden Redemption (**Not 60 Minutes finest hour**)
- Chapter 21 Costs of Inclusion
- Chapter 22 Sword of Knowledge
- Chapter 23 Cups of Hope
- Epilogue Seat at the Table



Book #2, also great, more on privacy in general and design fixes.

Hoepman, Jaap-Henk. *Privacy is Hard and Seven Other Myths: Achieving Privacy Through Careful Design*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2021).

Sound Bite: We can (and must) incorporate privacy in IT, efficiently and effectively.

Opinion on Primary Audience: It, including cybersecurity and Privacy Professionals

This is a terrific book for Chief Information Security Officers (CISOs) who want privacy solutions. I am going to add a different audience. Let us say you are a CISO, and your CEO, COO, or CIO ask, "What book can I read to understand privacy and what to do about it?" If they do not yet 'get it' on how widespread and devastating the harms are, you might suggest Dr. Buolamwini's and Dr. O'Neil's books detailed above. If they already 'get it,' then, by all means, recommend Dr. Hoepman's book. His examples, explanations of IT terms, and solutions at the leadership level will delight them. He gets quickly to the point, a plus with any busy leader. For example, his explanations of the types of encryptions, digital signatures, and the entire world of Identity and Access Management are as clear as any I have ever seen.

Book Reviews (continued)

The Author

Dr. Jaap-Henk Hoepman is Dutch, with a visiting professorship at Karlstad University in Sweden plus two associate professorships at universities in the Netherlands, one in computer science and the other on the law faculty. Although he credits someone helping him write in English, he is far too modest on his superb skills.

The Metadata

A **2021** publishing date! The online ordering cost, including shipping, is under \$25. You can cut that cost by a third if you use an e-reader. The hardcover version is about 250 pages including notes. My public library has no copies. You (or your CEO) will benefit from the glossary of cyber terminology and will keep the book as a desk reference.

I took a one-page sample of the text to analyze for readability. Using a Wikipedia article about the Flesch-Kincaid Readability test, the writing level and style measurement is college level. There was 26% passive voice in my sample. This article is under 3% passive voice, for comparison.

Table of Contents (abbreviated/modified and annotated in bold font () by me)

(Note the below chapter titles **are the myths!!!!**)

- 1 We Are Not Collecting Personal Data (**Oh yes, they are!**)
- 2 You Have Zero Privacy Anyway - Get Over It (**1999 quote**)
- 3 I've Got nothing to Hide (**Want to bet?**)
- 4 It's Merely Metadata (**Quote from Gen Hayden: We kill people on metadata"**)
- 5 We Always Need To Know Who You Are (**John Wayne would say "Not hardly"**)
- 6 Your Data Is Safe With Us (**Give me a break!**)
- 7 Privacy And Security Are A Zero-Sum Game (**How a team can implement privacy by design**)
- 8 Privacy Is Hard (**Only if you don't try**)
- 9 Busted: Privacy Isn't Hard If You Try

Happy Reading!

PS - If you have a book you want me to read & review, please use the email address in my bio to let me know!

Up next month:

Bradford, Anu. *Digital Empires: The Global Battle to Regulate Technology*. Oxford University Press (2023).

Suleyman, Mustafa. *The Coming Wave: Technology, Power, and the 21st Century's Greatest Dilemma*. Crown (2023).

William J. (Jay) Carson

AKA 'Dad'

The Cyber Librarian

Additional sources used in the article:

1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biometric_Information_Privacy_Act
2. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flesch%E2%80%93Kincaid_readability_tests
3. LinkedIn profiles for authors listed, where available.

PRIVACY IS HARD

AND SEVEN OTHER MYTHS

ACHIEVING PRIVACY
THROUGH CAREFUL DESIGN



Jaap-Henk Hoepman