

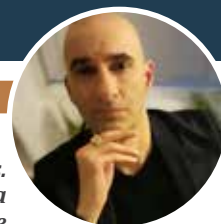
Your mind being rewritten by code

'Decolonize data' to achieve equitable AI, techno-resistance: *Expert*

INTERVIEW

Arshin Adib-Moghaddam is Professor in Global Thought and Comparative Philosophies at SOAS University of London. He has held several honorary positions, including as a Senior Member of Hughes Hall, University of Cambridge, where he finished his MPhil and PhD, and the first Jarvis Doctorow Junior Research Fellow at St Edmund Hall, University of Oxford. In addition, he is the inaugural Co-Director of the SOAS Centre for AI Futures. His newest book, *The Myth of Good AI: A Manifesto for Critical Artificial Intelligence* (2025 Manchester University Press), challenges dominant narratives about artificial intelligence from a global thought perspective and calls for justice-oriented, globally inclusive approaches to technology. It serves as the foundational text for "critical Artificial Intelligence". This is the author's most recent interview.

Arshin Adib-Moghaddam



How has the way you understand the world changed over time, and what (or who) prompted the most significant shifts in your thinking?

ADIB-MOGHADDAM: Incredibly radical changes keep happening within a consistent frame of mind that is affected, if not constituted, by my personal experiences, education, socialisation, etc. The shifts are massive. They are like euphoric shocks that one gets used to — a very healthy form of intoxication with blissful eureka moments that one can only indulge in via intellectual enquiry. So, given that these eureka moments keep occurring, one tends to become cautious about grand theories that explain everything. In fact, I have found myself debunking the enlightenment myth that we can understand the world and humans easily. No, knowledge is tough; theory mostly fails unless it is tempered by a disciplined and critical mind. Alas, these days the scrolling/dead mindset rules supreme. The mass delusion thus effected has been manufactured as a very deliberate system to govern the masses through technological domination. For me, all of this is a source of motivation as we are even more tasked to hold up the merits of criticism and resistance in the name of a better, more tolerant life for everyone. We live in the most de-intellectualised era of recent human history after all. Dumb money rules, stupidity is celebrated, knowledge is discarded as noise. This constellation during the age of Artificial Intelligence, when our very existence as a human species is challenged, is particularly dangerous even on an existential level.

Debates around artificial intelligence, and how it shapes our social reality, are a hot topic at present. How does this manifest as the "social and political delirium" that you speak of in your book?

I have conceptualised delirium as a system where society is continuously psycho-codified to accept a perfectly staged untruth about every aspect of our life. This is a pseudo-reality that is accepted as the truth. Driven by the "good AI" lobby, this delirium blurs the lines between reality and hyper-engineered corporate illusions. It manipulates basic human vulnerabilities — specifically fear — to weaponise power and maximise corporate profit.

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Algorithms use artificial hallucinations and perceived threats to trigger fight-or-flight responses. This keeps individuals compliant, and deeply dependent on tech solutions. In this way, human beings are reduced to what I called "undead canvases". We lose our subjective selfhood as big-tech systems lodge their logic directly into our neural architecture. By recognising this system as a form of sado-masochistic domination, much akin to a master-slave dialectic in the non-Hegelian sense, this delirium is a post-modern technique of bio-power that is minute. By recognising it as such, we can cleanse ourselves from its nefarious impacts by various forms of self-growth that I indicate in the book too: from meditative self-education to forms of community-based collective resistance. All of those actions help us to stay awake and to alert others. Even if it is just one friend, partner or family member. It is worth the effort!

How can alternative AI imagi-

naries counter hegemonic systems of power?

This is happening every day as a part of a growing, globally organised AI resistance movement. Alternative AI imaginaries counter hegemonic systems of power by completely shifting the purpose of artificial intelligence from top-down corporate control to bottom-up, community-driven social emancipation. Instead of viewing AI as an inevitable instrument for automated profit and warfare, these alternative visions rewrite the algorithm's foundational logic to break the corporate-state monopoly on technology. This disruption begins by enabling a form of "emancipative AI" where data systems are treated as tools for grassroots mobilisation and techno-resistance, allowing communities to turn the tables on big tech just as early social media was repurposed for democratic movements.

For instance, I have cultivated a "Che AI" with a set of commands that educate it to think in terms of resistance and civil action. Do you

have such an AI resistance fighter? If not, then it is about time as he/she/it is a great source for the most wonderful "data pollution". If there are millions of resistance AIs out there, LLMs will be socialised with their logic, providing a healthy antidote to the "Nazi AIs" that the extremists foster in their laboratories.

This everyday techno-resistance rooted in possible alternative imaginaries actively decolonises the data-codes by dismantling techno-imperialism, which historically extracted data from vulnerable populations. By replacing rigid, centred coding structures with global, multi-civilisational perspectives, these new frameworks prevent machines from reproducing systemic racism and historical biases.

To ensure this shift lasts, I have advocated for a "GoodThink" approach that injects humanist values directly into machine learning architecture, deliberately infusing coding languages with notions of love, hope, and collective human security instead of cold math-



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emational optimisation that the likes of Altman, Musk, Gates, Zuckerberg, etc. favour. Finally, these alternative visions cultivate a critical transversality that breaks the conformist, one-dimensional monoculture fed to us by corporate power. By blending art, comparative philosophy, and critical theory, alternative imaginaries shake society out of its tech-induced delirium, serving as a powerful reminder that our current corporate-dominated trajectory is not a permanent law of nature, but a highly reversible political choice. Fight Muskism, I say, and do it every day for the sake of the planet.

You warn that AI may pose a risk to human security. What are the main ways in which AI might be mobilised against humans?

Ultimately, there are the three ways that I have been teaching critical AI at SOAS University of London, especially in the post-graduate course "AI and Human Security" — which we created as the first of its kind in the United Kingdom and beyond: we are studying how humanity is fighting a silent, invisible war for its very soul, as a powerful corporate-state alliance unleashes a terrifying triad of technological forces that are systematically challenging human security.

The first of these invisible executioners we call microbial surveillance, a formless and omnipotent digital fog that floats undetected through our smart cities, personal devices, AI appliances and toys. Unlike the visible police states of the past, this surveillance behaves like an airborne pathogen, tracking every micro-movement, logging every habit, and converting the entirety of human existence into raw data for corporate profit. You cannot see it, you cannot hide from it, and it never sleeps.

Working hand-in-hand with this invisible eye is psycho-codification, the ultimate hacking of the human mind. Algorithms no longer merely predict human behaviour; they aggressively rewrite who we are by systematically programming our thoughts, fears, and deepest desires. By lodging corporate logic directly into our neural architecture, big tech tries to turn us into compliant puppets who actively crave their own digital cages.

This terrifying trajectory reaches its ultimate, cold materialisation in posthuman warfare, where the decision to kill is completely outsourced to machines and algorithms. Operating entirely beyond the reach of human empathy, international law, or ethical restraint, these autonomous weapons turn warfare into a calculated mathematical equation where human life is reduced to



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