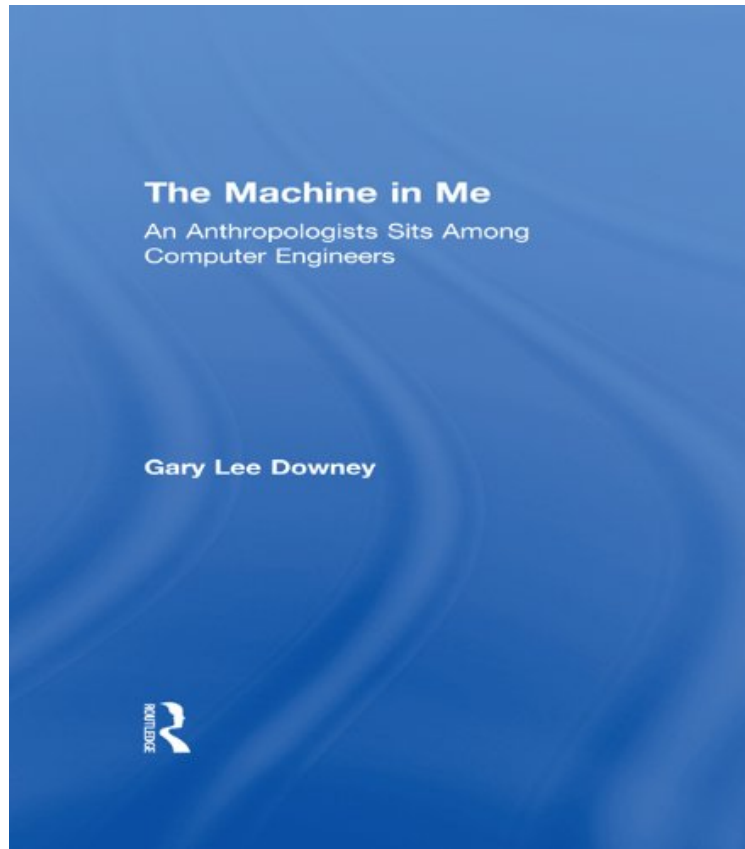


The Machine in Me: An Anthropologist Sits Among Computer Engineers

Gary Lee Downey

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Gary Lee Downey : The Machine in Me: An Anthropologist Sits Among Computer Engineers before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Machine in Me: An Anthropologist Sits Among Computer Engineers:

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. In search of an audienceBy Christine Hoff KraemerOn reading Downey's book, I was hard-pressed to tell exactly what kind of audience _The Machine In Me_ was aiming for. Too technical for most anthropologists and too loaded with anthropological jargon for most technology types, _The Machine In Me_ seems to fit only the narrow field of anthropological technology studies, thus depriving related audiences (general cultural anthropologists and techies) of its many interesting insights. Downey's examination of how a class of engineering students struggled, interacted, and in some ways became part of the CAD/CAM software with which they worked was fascinating. His success in communicating his sometimes complex observations about the social dynamics of technological fields and the nature of the students' relationships with the software, however, are obscured by unnecessarily complex and roundabout prose. Downey is left talking about "transcribing human agency into technology" without ever employing the clearly appropriate term "cyborg." In fact, Downey's book is unmistakably a work in the burgeoning field of cyborg anthropology, yet the book avoids all mention of the term. The

end result, I think, is a book without a clearly defined audience, one that refuses to position itself inside a discipline and therefore is likely to be passed over by those who would benefit most from it.

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"[T]his book makes an important contribution to the larger project of theorizing the relationship between technology and society. Downey prods readers to rethink the cultural boundary between technology and humanity and focuses much-needed attention on the dynamics of technology-in-use."-"Technology and Culture "[A]musing and insightful observations about industry trade shows, sharp criticism of the national rhetoric of productivity in the United States in the 1980s."-"Technology and Culture About the Author Gary Lee Downey is Director of the Center for Science and Technology Studies at Virginia Tech.