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Argument   Rhet Dragons Student Writing Samples

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The Great Unknown: Unlimited Artificial Intelligence (2023-2024)

Kathryn O'Brien

"The Great Unknown: Unlimited Artificial Intelligence" Kathryn O'Brien (argument example)

Questions to Consider For Discussion and Reflection

In this example of an argument anchor assignment, Kathryn O'Brien raises concern over the risk of unregulated, unlimited AI in various contexts. One example she considers includes the dangers of discrimination and proliferation of hate speech within AI-enriched search engines and use of algorithms. Another context involves the use of AI in robot nurses and healthcare contexts in the form of job security, bias, and overall care. Finally, O'Brien returns to her opening example of AI generated music, which could borrow the name, image, likeness, identity, and style of known human musicians, as in the example of a recent AI hit, "Heart on My Sleeve," created by Ghostwriter trading on those qualities of Drake and The Weeknd. Throughout O'Brien's piece, she carefully considers what is known about AI applications and the vast territory of the future unknowns in calling for limits, regulations, and careful consideration of ethical and desirable uses of AI.

- How would you describe O'Brien's main argument regarding uses of Artificial Intelligence?
- How does O'Brien use concrete examples of AI in order to strengthen her argument? Which were the most compelling examples for you? Why were these examples more compelling than others? What does this suggest to you in crafting your own arguments?
- One of the challenges of writing a cohesive and persuasive argument is providing the audience with a clear sense of stance or thesis, while still acknowledging other perspectives or counter-arguments. How do you see O'Brien's argument balancing the need for different perspectives with maintaining the cohesion of her own thesis? How can you apply this balance to your own topic or argument?

The Great Unknown: Unlimited Artificial Intelligence by Kathryn O'Brien

Have you heard the new hit song by Drake and The Weeknd? If you gave the song, "Heart On My Sleeve," a good listen, you would probably be struck by its upbeat tempo, catchy lines, and an interesting piano track that lays behind the lyrics. You would honestly have no clue that this song is, in fact, not Drake's, nor The Weeknd's. It was made by Ghostwriter, someone on Tiktok who hides under a bed sheet to cover their identity, all using Artificial Intelligence to mimic the artists' voices. As A.I. begins to ramp up its popularity and usage, it seems to bring a lot of uncertainty with it as it opens a whole new world of opportunities and issues that we as a society have never been exposed to before. There are many people who believe that A.I. is incredible, and its lack of boundaries only means incredible advancements and opportunities for all of us. This is true in some way, but at what point does no boundaries become too much? Take this song for example, how will Drake and The Weeknd react to their name, image, voices, and likeness

being used without their permission? I believe that in order to have a world where A.I. is as beneficial, whether it is healthcare, media, or anything else it can be used for, as it has the opportunity to be, there will have to be boundaries and laws set in place in order to protect us humans from the incredible potential A.I. holds. Artificial Intelligence is very unknown, but the risks of leaving it without boundaries is extremely dangerous, and we have no idea the power A.I. could potentially hold. By limiting A.I., hate speech, discrimination, and humanity can all be kept in check, protecting us from uncontrolled algorithms and other uses of Artificial Intelligence that could prove to be dangerous.

Artificial Intelligence has changed the way we as humans have access to anything, such as ideas and information on the internet. Giving us easy access to answers has become ingrained in our lives, and now we go on Google and look things up all day, every day. It has gotten so easy that we do not even have to type in a whole search. Just type a few words, and more than likely, Google will finish your search for you. This has made access to information so convenient for us, and has also broadened our knowledge of many topics that we likely would not have interest in ourselves, but have been exposed to online. However with this easy access, exposure to hate speech and propaganda has become a lot more common. Artificial Intelligence and some of its algorithms have been shown to lead to harmful speech and ideas online. The exposure to these ideas hold the potential to greatly influence our society, making people more hateful and putting many groups at risk of being the victims of hateful acts.

We use A.I. everyday without even realizing. There are so many different algorithms built into every single app we use, as well as search engines like Google. The algorithms built into our search engines give us easy access to any information we want, but it also can steer us to hateful ideas that we truly were not looking for, coming across blogs, manifestos, and articles spewing such horrible speech. In the article, "Google, Democracy, and the Truth about Internet Search," written by Carole Cadwalladr, these negative algorithms are brought to light, along with how they may be impacting our democracy as a whole. Using many sources, such as her own experiences, Cadwalladr exposes Google and how it allows for such easy access to hate speech, and manipulation of searches to lead you to these articles. She believes that Google is jeopardizing democracy throughout the world by allowing algorithms that easily lead to hateful content, and a hole that one can keep clicking into deeper and deeper. Using her own experience of typing certain words into Google and finishing the phrase with a negative question, Cadwalladr shows just how simple it is to fall victim to. She typed in just two simple words, "Are Jews…," which unlocked an entire new world of information. In the first paragraph, Cadwalladr states, "It offered me a choice of potential questions it thought I might want to ask: 'Are Jews a race?,' 'Are Jews white?,' 'Are Jews christian?,' and finally, 'Are Jews evil?'" (par. 1). Cadwalldr then explains that each result on the first page came up proving that "Jews are evil", something so severely hateful and wrong, but so easily accessible to anyone. Most of us never have even thought to ask ourselves such questions; why would we feel the need to? But the sad reality is that we are all one click away from spiraling into pages and pages of propaganda such as this, which truly shape our minds and threaten our peace.

Similar to Cadwalladr's experience with Google, this past summer, in June 2022, a Google employee sought to expose Google's language model, claiming it has a mind of its own, and that it specifically targets anti-religion media. According to the *New York Times* article, "Google Sidelines Engineer Who Claims Its A.I. Is Sentient," Blake Lemoine was a "Senior Software engineer who worked in Google's Responsible A.I. organization," prior to being put on leave

over his claims. Before working at Google, he was a Military Veteran, and claims to have been a priest. A day before he was suspended, Lemoine claims to have, "handed over documents to a U.S. senator's office, claiming they provided evidence that Google and its technology engaged in religious discrimination" (Grant and Metz, par. 2). His conclusion was based on his work and research with Google's A.I. systems, and led him to often fight with Google over whether its A.I. was sentient or not. As any big company would do, Google denied all claims, putting Lemoine on leave and issuing statements against his work. They claimed that his work was backed in religious beliefs, and whether that is true or not, Lemoine is not the only one to have concerns with A.I. technologies as a whole.

Much like Cadwalladr points out, realizing how Google's search algorithms work is a bit intimidating. The growing access to such hateful ideas can have such a great impact on our society. Even those who believe they understand how the algorithms work, and even helped to build Google's algorithms, have shown fear that Google's Artificial Intelligence has its own control and actively tries to steer us into hateful information. The active access to hate speech that A.I. continues to lead us to is dangerous to all of us, and there is no certainty to the effects it could cause on our world. Limiting the abilities of these companies' use of A.I. could help to protect many generations from unnecessary hate. We as humans have grown so accustomed to looking things up on the internet, or using it as a navigation tool, outlet to express ourselves, or even a place to enjoy our favorite websites, shows, and any other media. The internet has become a part of us, and we feel so comfortable with it, we do not even seem to question the unknowns of it. But there is something intertwined in our searches that we have no idea about, Artificial Intelligence. How was Google able to finish Cadwalladr's searches with questions about Jews? All thanks to Artificial Intelligence. We may think that A.I. makes things more convenient, which is certainly true. Why type out your entire search when it can be filled in by typing the first few words? But there is such an unknown with A.I., a whole new world we have never seen before, and possible reasons we should fear it.

Much like hate speech, a very prevalent issue with Artificial Intelligence is the overwhelming amount of discrimination it presents, whether baked into its systems, or even just its appearance. Artificial Intelligence extends far beyond search engines, and has made its way into cars, robots, and other technologies. With many people being skeptical of its power and abilities, A.I.'s integration into everyday life and our futures seems a bit unnerving. Anna Romina Guevarra writes about the difficulties robots in healthcare and other fields may cause, in her article, "Here Come the Robot Nurses." Recently, robots have become part of healthcare services in a world that is in need of caregivers and nurses. Robots have been "working in hospitals and elder care facilities around the world. They do everything from bedside care and monitoring to stocking medical supplies, welcoming guests, and even co hosting karaoke nights for isolated residents" (par. 2). These robots may seem to be a relief for a healthcare world that has been trying to keep up with its patients and their needs, constantly in need of workers and nurses, but there are deeper issues than just what these robots are capable of helping with. Discrimination is a large part of healthcare, whether we would like to believe it or not. Healthcare has rested on the backs of poor, minority and immigrant women, who work extremely hard for very little pay. These workers are heralded as the backbone to our healthcare system, but are not treated as such. And now, they must fear losing their jobs to these robots.

Discrimination looms large in Artificial Intelligence, and it is not just through robots taking jobs from those who struggle with poverty and discrimination from other humans as well. The hate,

discrimination, and false attempt at humanity that A.I. exhibits are a huge cause for concern amongst us humans who are exposed to Artificial Intelligence. The topic of hate speech, which Cadawalladr and the Google Employee addressed earlier is discriminant to the groups in which the speech and ideas are spread about. The Google Employee, Blake Lemoine's, "claims were founded on his religious beliefs, which he said the company's human resources department discriminated against" (Grant and Metz, par. 7). Much like Lemoine, Cadawalladr's experience with hate speech and discrimination dealt with religion, and the propaganda against Jews. Overall, discrimination has proved to be a large issue in the systems of A.I. engines.

Discrimination is within the appearance of robots, as well as their systems, and can be very dangerous for many people exposed to their care, especially minorities. As Guevarra points out, "By choosing to have Grace [the first medical robot to have a lifelike human appearance] look like a white woman, however, the designers broadcast a particular understanding of human expertise that is both racialized and gendered" (par. 10). It is believed that the face of a white woman presents the most warmth, care, friendliness, and understanding. What may that mean to the rest of our population, especially those minorities in which we have relied upon so heavily? There are concerns with not only the discrimination in the appearance of these robots, but also how they may interact with humans. "A.I. facial recognition systems are notoriously bad, for example, at interpreting the emotional responses of people with darker skin tones. Some can't perceive the faces of people with darker skin at all, let alone understand their expressions" (par. 12). The concern surrounding these robots is real and as humans, we have every right to feel skeptical. Fear of discrimination and bias is huge, but also there are only so many things that a robot can be programmed to do. There is no personal human connection, and what happens if something goes wrong? As many optimists in the healthcare and engineering field claim, there is definitely a place for A.I. and robots in healthcare in our future, and they may be a solution to the lack of healthcare workers. I partially agree, but in order for that to happen and have a positive impact on those in their care, the discriminant features within these robots and their A.I. must be eliminated to protect those at risk of being treated lesser by these robots and their features.

Now let's dive deeper into the case of A.I. in the music industry. I have mentioned many times how new A.I. is to us as a society, which makes so much of it unknown. A large benefit of A.I. that has been exposed very recently, within the last few weeks, is the use of A.I. to make artists' sing lyrics that are not theirs. A fun hoax involving Kanye West has been circling TikTok, with renditions of him singing other songs, such as Morgan Wallen's, "Chasing You," as well as songs like "Hey There Delilah," by Plain White Tees. This all seemed lighthearted and in good fun, with others copying the trend using artists like Rhianna and Beyonce. A.I. has been used to expose the creativity of people all across social media platforms, bringing laughter to the world of music and social media. Along with myself, no one ever thought these acts would be taken further, and to be fair we had no idea that there was even a way to take it further. Until this week, this was the reality of A.I. in the music industry. Then, it all changed. As Joe Coscarelli claims in his article, "An A.I. Hit by Fake 'Drake' and 'The Weeknd' Rattles the Music World," this new song takes the music industry into a place it's never seen before, the world of A.I.. He writes, "'Heart on My Sleeve'" was the latest and loudest example of a gray-area genre that has exploded in recent months: homemade tracks that use generative artificial intelligence technology, in part or in full, to conjure familiar sounds that can be passed off as authentic, or at least close enough" (par. 3). This enters a whole new realm of image, likeness, and voice, and whether there is a way to stop A.I. from passing as others. As we can imagine, there will likely be

a court case to follow in the next coming weeks between Drake and this Ghostwriter, which will greatly impact the future of A.I. in the music industry, and the barriers we can place on the technology that seems to be able to do any and everything we could ever imagine.

Much like the fear of robots in healthcare and the lack of humanity they bring, with A.I. in the music industry, there is a lack of humanity with these copycat A.I. voices. True artists have fans that not only love their music, but their personalities and beliefs that they stand for. Will it be enough for fans to care for Drake and his true music, or will fans like the generated music enough to abandon their loyalty to artists, screwing them out of profit and success? At the time that Artificial Intelligence is taking away human aspects from both healthcare and art industries, it may be doing it in an almost human-like way, which Blake Lemoine, the Google Employee fears. Overall, the irony of lack of humanity while trying to be more human-like is very strange for A.I. and its engineers. A.I. has given people who likely would not have the opportunity to share their talents an outlet to spread and share their creativity through songwriting and other feats. It has been an amazing tool for creativity to flourish in that aspect, but has taken so much creativity and stability from the artists that are being used for these A.I. songs. What risks does impersonation hold, even if it's just for a little song on TikTok?

The unknown potential does not only worry myself and many others who are subjected to A.I., but it also concerns people who have worked in A.I., much like the Google engineer mentioned earlier. Ted Lieu, United States Congressman of California's 36th District, has expressed his concerns over unlimited A.I., too. Lieu, a former Air Force Colonel in the Reserves, who has a degree in computer science, as well as political science and law, shares his concerns and how he plans to enact a bill to limit A.I. in his article, "I'm a Congressman Who Codes. A.I. Freaks Me Out." featured in the *New York Times.* He claims, "The rapid advancements in A.I. technology have made it clear that the time to act is now to ensure that A.I. is used in ways that are safe, ethical and beneficial for society. Failure to do so could lead to a future where the risks of A.I. far outweigh its benefits" (par. 1). This quote is so powerful, poignantly hitting on a subject we know so little about, but even more remarkable is the fact that Lieu admits it was written by ChatGPT, an AI application. Now yes, it outlines Ted Lieu's whole message, but doesn't it seem a little strange that by typing in a keyword or sentence, an A.I. app could give us something so intelligent? Lieu speaks about the discrimination that A.I. systems show in facial recognition, as well as its failure in self-driving car features and other technologies. He touches on the broad range of risks, from missed recognition, to the fatal car crash caused by the self-driving failure in San Francisco. Knowing that A.I. is so broad and congress will not be able to enact any bill that covers all of its possibilities, Lieu is focused on starting somewhere in the fight to limit A.I.. He claims, "That's why I will be introducing legislation to create a nonpartisan A.I. Commission to provide recommendations on how to structure a federal agency to regulate A.I., what types of A.I. should be regulated and what standards should apply."

I agree with Lieu that it is urgent and necessary to start somewhere to place limitations on A.I., and appreciate his effort to create a force against it. It seems necessary to start somewhere in protecting us against the unlimited and unknown potential that A.I. holds. Creating a task force to specialize in regulating A.I., as Lieu suggests could prove to be very beneficial. The idea of laws and regulations against A.I. seems to be a reasonable task, especially since A.I. is used in all facets of life nowadays, and it seems smart to protect us against an unknown technology that has proven to be a bit risky in many ways.

With the world of A.I. expanding rapidly, it is important that we recognize both the good and bad possibilities it holds. A.I. is constantly changing, with so many new features and developments found each and every day. For example, today I opened the Snapchat app to find a new feature, an A.I. robot that can keep you company through texting. I decided to play around with it, asking if it thinks A.I. should be regulated. As my new Snapchat A.I. Chatbot today claimed, "I agree that it's important to have regulations in place to ensure that A.I. is used ethically and responsibly. But at the same time, we shouldn't be so quick to dismiss the potential benefits of A.I.." I couldn't agree more.

There is a future for A.I. in everything, like the robots in healthcare, algorithms in search engines and social media, and even the arts. It will be very interesting to see how all of it plays out, and I can imagine there will be great things that come of these developments. But as I stated throughout this essay, much like Ted Lieu, I believe that in order to have a future where A.I. helps us as a society, we must limit it before it reaches an unknown potential that has already shown risks. Discrimination, hate speech, and humanity are all serious concerns within the scope of Artificial Intelligence and what it could possibly do. A world without protection may turn out to be like those dystopian movies and novels we have all seen, which seem cool but too eerie to really comprehend. As a protection to ourselves and our humanness, we must prevent technology from becoming too humanlike, because who knows what could happen from there.

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