

Assignment 4 – Critical Reflection Essay: What OpenAI Doesn't Want You to Know

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The video *What OpenAI Doesn't Want You to Know* (More Perfect Union, 2024) offers a compelling critique of how artificial intelligence (AI) corporations—especially OpenAI—shape technological development, public perception, and government regulation. The film challenges the dominant narrative that AI progress is inevitable or inherently beneficial. Instead, it demonstrates how industry leaders use persuasive rhetoric, lobbying, and selective transparency to strengthen their control over a rapidly expanding global infrastructure. These strategies raise fundamental questions about leadership, ethics, and accountability in an era when private companies exert unprecedented influence over public life.

A central theme in the video is the myth of inevitability. OpenAI executives and their allies frequently claim that rapid AI development cannot be stopped and must be accepted as the inevitable path forward (More Perfect Union, 2024). This framing disarms criticism by portraying resistance as irrational or anti-innovation. According to Alvesson and Spicer (2014), such narratives reflect a form of "functional stupidity" in leadership—when individuals and organizations avoid critical reflection to preserve efficiency, stability, or authority. In this context, the inevitability narrative functions as a managerial ideology: it simplifies complex issues, discourages public engagement, and legitimizes corporate dominance in AI governance.

The video also illustrates how AI companies shape policies and regulations to serve their interests. Through aggressive lobbying, revolving-door hiring, and the creation of "ethics boards" staffed by insiders, companies like OpenAI blur the line between public oversight and corporate influence (More Perfect Union, 2024). This dynamic shows how leadership motivated by profit rather than accountability can become self-reinforcing and opaque. The executives promoting

"responsible innovation" often define what "responsible" means, allowing them to protect their legitimacy while excluding democratic participation.

Ultimately, the film portrays a crisis of leadership more than technology. The critical question is not whether AI can be developed safely, but who decides what safety means—and for whom. Ethical leadership in this context demands transparency, humility, and a willingness to accept scrutiny rather than monopolizing moral authority. By confronting these dynamics, this video challenges viewers to reconsider whether innovation truly serves society or whether society is increasingly being structured to serve innovation itself.

Critical Discussion Questions

1. How does the concentration of decision-making within a few AI companies highlight larger issues of power and control in organizational leadership? Can ethical leadership exist when the same individuals profit from and regulate the technology?
2. If the idea of AI's inevitability stifles public debate, how can leaders and educators reintroduce critical reflection and collective decision-making into discussions surrounding emerging technologies?

References

Alvesson, M., & Spicer, A. (2014). Critical perspectives on leadership. In D. Day (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Leadership and Organizations* Oxford University

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More Perfect Union. (2024, July 3). *What OpenAI doesn't want you to know* [Video]. YouTube.

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