Automated Surveillance

Paper review → Lying Eyes

Essay: The Victorian roots of Facial recognition

Author - Richard Woodall
Published in Real life magazine.
Medium - Popular Essay.

Essay Gist:

* Historical beliefs like "a cat crossing the road implies bad luck" showcase how modern concepts of proof and evidence are relatively new.

* What is Science?

Falsifiability - The potential for something to be proven false.

* If a hypothesis can be disproven it's scientific; once confirmed it's called a theory.

Example:

Astrology - Cannot be proven wrong, lacks falsifiability, hence can not be considered science.

Alchemy - Similar to astrology, it's classified as a theory, but lacks scientific validity.

Concepts & Historical Perspectives:

Pathognomy → Medieval theory claiming qualities can be deduced from skull shapes.

It's not scientific as it lacks falsifiability.

Evolution- Natural selection

* Charles Darwin's book "The Expression of Emotion in Man and animals" proposed studying facial expressions for character insights.

Physiognomy →

* Study of human behaviour based on character traits. Equivalent to modern emotion detection in AI.

* Popularized in the 19th century due to colonialism & industrial revolution.

- Aim was to identify "trustworthy" or "able" individuals.

Essentialism

The belief in a fundamental essence of a human life.

Eg: Racism, Ethnicity, Biological determinism.

Social Impact & Modern Relevance :

* Physiognomy appealed in societies with power differences, benefitting those in power by "validating" their authority.

* Darwin opposed Pathognomy yet overlooked similar flaws in physiognomy.

Affect & Affective Computing :

* Human reactions to emotions vary internally, leading to affective computing for detecting emotions through AI.

Industrial Revolution:

* Created a desire to measure people's traits, including an obsession with identifying "problematic" individuals.

* The British Criminal Tribes act labeled certain tribes as suspicious; descendants are now called denotified criminals.

* Francis Galton - Introduced Eugenics attempting to classify people based on perceived "biological qualities".

* Modern AI: Scientists today replicate these 19th century pseudoscientific methods, investing in emotion detection despite the known pseudoscientific roots