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<div align="center">Facial Recognition, Past and Future</div>

In my field of study, computer science, facial recognition has grown increasingly popular as a tool for law enforcement and other surveillance purposes. But this increased popularity has invited controversy over facial recognition, with several organizations such as Facebook and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) scrutinized for reports of its misuse. In a July 2019 opinion piece in the New York Times called "The Racist History Behind Facial Recognition," graphics editor Sahil Chinoy reveals facial recognition's extensive past to the general public, arguing that this technology and similar methods of judging appearance are inherently flawed. Implicit in his argument is the assertion that everyone— including computer scientists such as myself—should consider the objectivity, ethical consequences, and history of the technological advancements we pursue.

From the first page, Chinoy employs an intriguing rhetorical strategy—he shames his audience toward his point of view. This tactic is markedly present in his diction. His subtitle, in particular, reads, "When will we finally learn we cannot predict people's character from their appearance?"[1] The emphasis on the word "finally" establishes the article's tone, reframing the sentence like a repeated reprimand to an insolent child (i.e. a parent asking,"When will you learn not to play with matches?"). In doing this, Chinoy conveys a great deal of information before his article begins. First, he expresses the fallacy in placing too much stock in people's appearance. Next, he observes that this faulty methodology is something we, as a society, still attempt to pursue regardless. And lastly, he highlights the repeated nature of these mistakes and our failure to learn from them. The people reading this article may not yet know the history of facial recognition, but Chinoy's tone in this one sentence has disclosed everything worth noting: the history isn't something we should be proud of, and we should know better than to keep trying. By raising our awareness of this implicit information and expressing his disappointment in our ignorance, Chinoy pressures the reader to become more cognizant of the issues related to facial recognition.

Besides shaming his audience, Chinoy attempts to outrage the reader's sense of justice. His primary method of provoking outrage is juxtaposition. Particularly, Chinoy juxtaposes facial recognition with concepts that violate society's most widely accepted perceptions of justice. For example, Chinoy compares facial recognition to a "perpetual lineup" used for law enforcement[1]. The reader will likely understand that crimes are not perpetual events, and that suspect lineups should only exist after a crime is committed, and only so long as that crime is being actively investigated. Therefore, if facial recognition creates lineups more "perpetual" than the crimes that caused them, the suspect list is implied to exceed—perhaps even *precede*—the list of crimes, collecting faces perceived as "suspicious" for the sake of unwarranted monitoring and accusation. Facial recognition should thus strike the reader as unjust—no one should be accused of crimes before they happen, and no one should be added to a lineup without good reason. Facial recognition is further equated with injustice as Chinoy relates the ideology behind facial recognition to racism, supremism, and other supremely unjust ideologies. Chinoy's main argument contends that facial recognition mistakenly relies on "the discredited pseudoscience of physiognomy and phrenology" to determine quality of character[1]. These ideas, Chinoy reveals, were "used to legitimize slavery and perpetuate Nazi race 'science'"[1]. To see facial recognition in the same paragraph as Nazism and slavery should shock the reader. Nazism and human enslavement are some of the most unjust ideologies in human memory, both responsible for the oppression and killing of millions. Their mention thus achieves two goals: first, it draws a frightening connection between facial recognition and injustice of the highest order, and second, it establishes the potentially dire social stakes of this connection.

The moral implications (and transgressions) of facial recognition are another significant focus of the article. Specifically, Chinoy asserts that facial recognition algorithms "are trained on people who did not or could not consent to their faces being used" and "mug shots and images of people who have died"[1]. As consent and respect for the dead remain principal moral obligations in society, facial recognition's inherent violation of these concepts should automatically strike the reader as wrong. Also striking is an integrated quotation from German physicist Georg Christoph, who claims facial recognition "simply licensed our natural impulses to form impressions from appearance"[1]. While Christoph's expertise in

facial recognition isn't explicitly qualified, most people are warned as children against "judging a book by its cover." It's that moral platitude—not Christoph's occupation—which lends credibility to the quotation. We, as a society, recognize our impulse to judge others based on appearance, but have been taught to reject that impulse as superficial and wrong. With this quotation, Chinoy crafts a syllogism the reader cannot deny: it's morally wrong to judge someone exclusively on appearance, and since facial recognition exclusively judges the appearance of faces, facial recognition must also be morally wrong.

  As a member of the computer science field, I often notice coworkers and peers fixating on the future of certain technologies with little regard for the history of those technologies. In an article such as this, however, Chinoy reminds everyone that technology cannot properly exist in the future without proper regard for the past. A simple examination of history, Chinoy argues, would have easily dissuaded us from pursuing facial recognition technology from the start. Indeed, as a graphics editor, he is not a member of the computer science industry. But his arguments nonetheless commentate on how to use and create technology responsibly—philosophies that can and should directly influence people in my field.

Reference

1. Chinoy S. The Racist History Behind Facial Recognition [Internet]. The New York Times; 2019 Jul 10 [cited 2019 Sep 12]. Available from: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/10/opinion/facial-recognition-race.html