MACHINE GUESSING, PIGEON SUPERSTITION AND TRUST IN AI

Ramón Alvarado, Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Data Ethics, University of Oregon

In this paper I argue that the predictive prowess of artificial intelligence methods, such as machine learning, is not sufficient as an epistemic warrant for us to allocate trust in them. This is because of two reasons: 1) they are opaque in ways that other methodology is not and 2) they fail in ways that other methodology does not. In order to motivate my analysis, I compare the prowess of some machine learning methodology in image recognition to the ability for pattern identification by some animals, such as pigeons, and suggest that while useful in certain practical

circumstances, their success does not constitute the kinds of epistemic warrants that we should aim for in more epistemically demanding contexts such as science, medicine, and/or policy-making.

Key-words: *artificial intelligence methods, machine learning, epistemic warrant, pattern identification*