

# Inferential Machine Learning: Towards Human-collaborative Foundation Models



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Feb. 28, 2025 – Tucson, AZ, USA



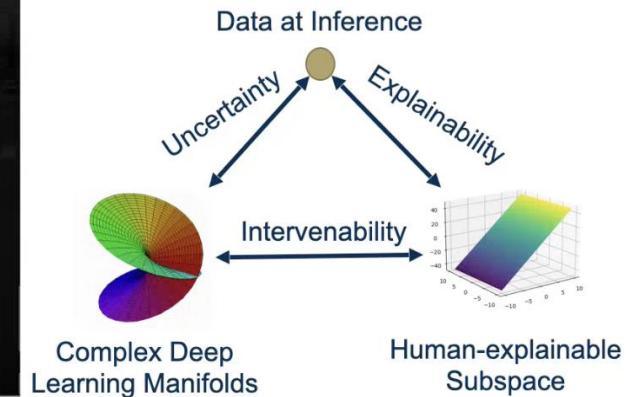
# Tutorial Materials

Accessible Online



<https://alregib.ece.gatech.edu/courses-and-tutorials/wacv-2025-tutorial/{alregib, mohit.p}@gatech.edu>

## Tutorial on Inferential Machine Learning: Towards Human-collaborative Foundation Models



### Applications

- Explainability
- Uncertainty Quantification
- Manual and Automated Prompting on Segment Anything Model
- Out-of-Distribution Detection
- Intervenable



## Inferential Machine Learning: Towards Human-collaborative Foundation Models



# Foundation Models

## Expectation vs Reality

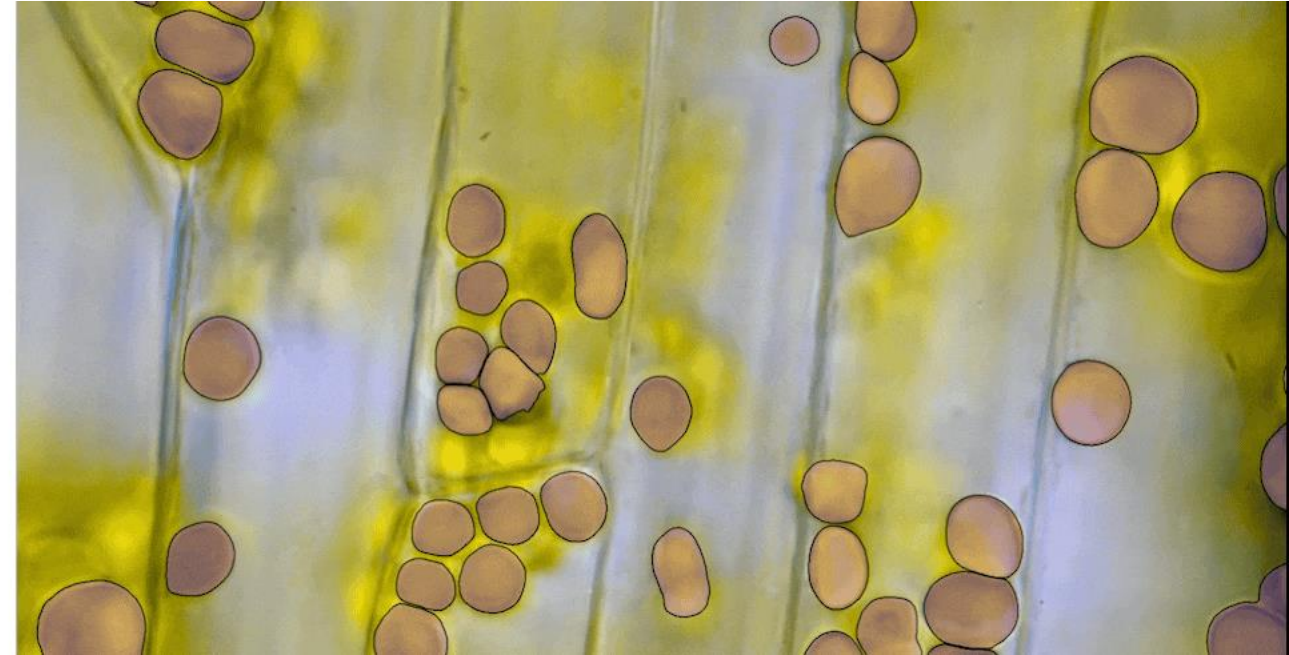
### Expectation vs Reality of Foundation Models





# Foundation Models

## Segment Anything Model



Segment Anything Model (SAM) released by Meta on April 5, 2023 was trained on Segment Anything 1 Billion dataset with 1.1 billion high-quality segmentation masks from 11 million images



# Foundation Models

## Segment Anything Model



Cityscapes dataset  
semantic segmentation  
annotation took ~90  
mins per image



# Foundation Models

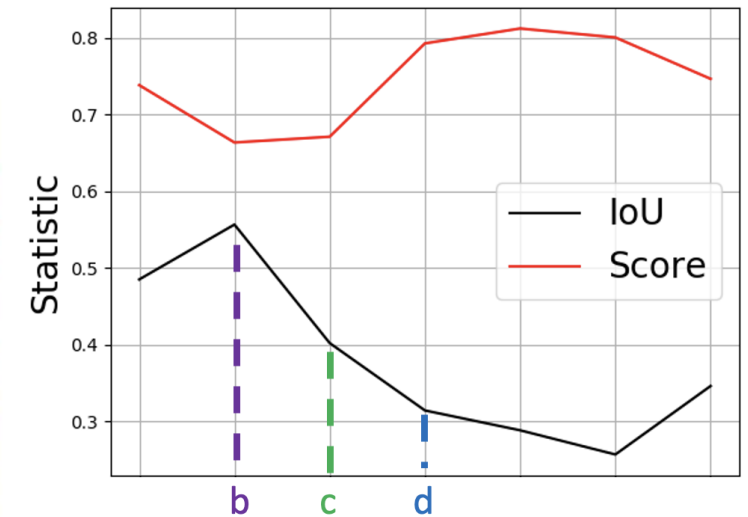
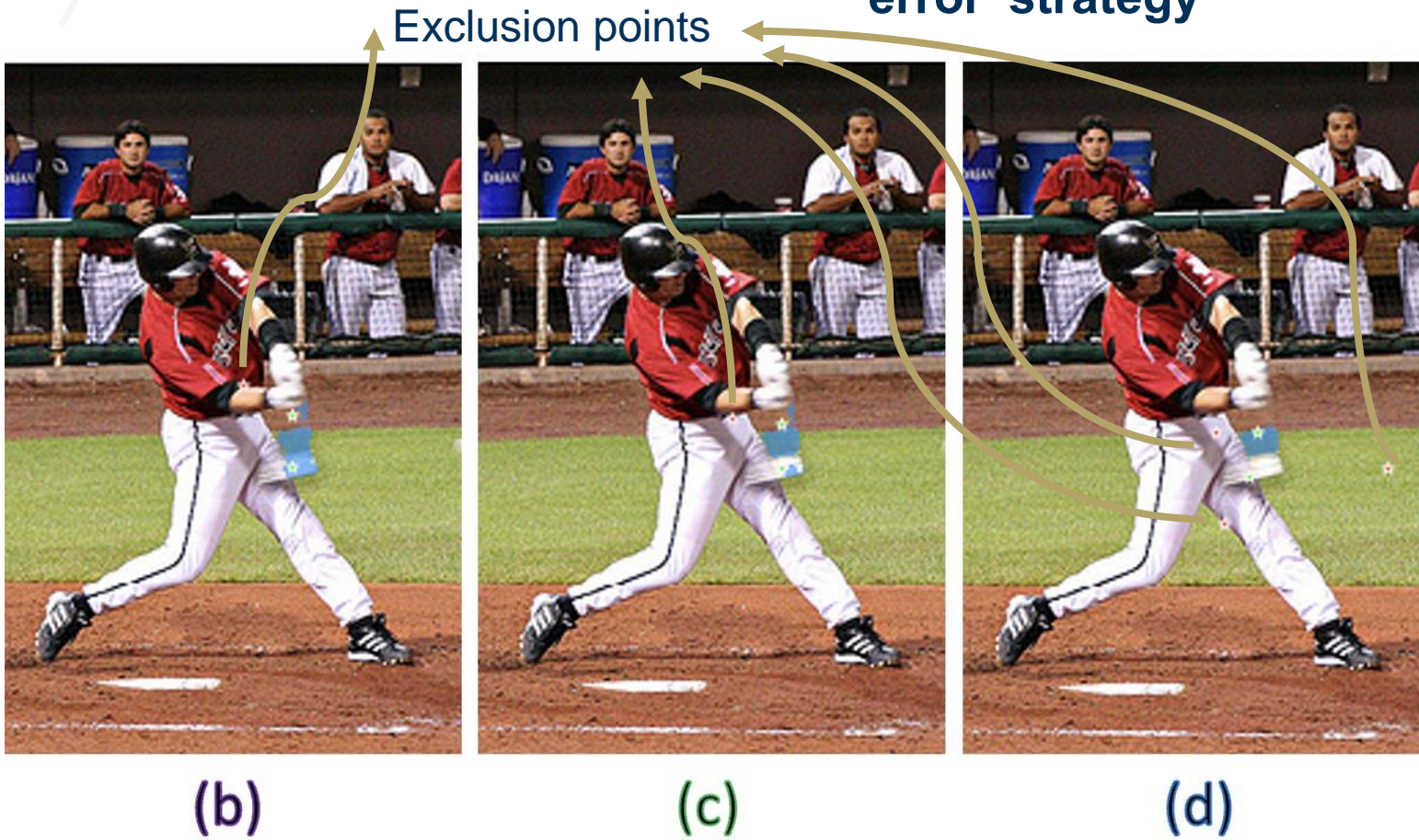
## 'Trial and Error' Interventions in Segment Anything Model



PointPrompt

Dataset

**Goal:** Given a promptable model with no operational knowledge, users employ a 'trial and error' strategy



The general conclusion from [1] is that annotators overprompt and utilize strategies that lead to worse performance

~200,000 prompts on 6000 images



# Foundation Models

Vision-Language Models are 'Doomed to Choose'



**Goal:** Given a long video sequence, vision language models (VLMs) can process, interpret, and answer questions



**USER:**

*What is the person doing?*

**ASSISTANT:**

VLMs (and all other deep learning-based systems) are **'doomed to choose'** – no mechanism to understand if sufficient information is available at inference

**Demo created at Inference on “LLaVA-v1.5-13B” model on Daily Activity Recognition (DARai) dataset [1]**



# Foundation Models

Vision-Language Models are Sensitive to Granularity of Tasks

**VLMs (encoder finetuned on dataset) fail when recognizing fine-grained hierarchical activities**



DARai Dataset

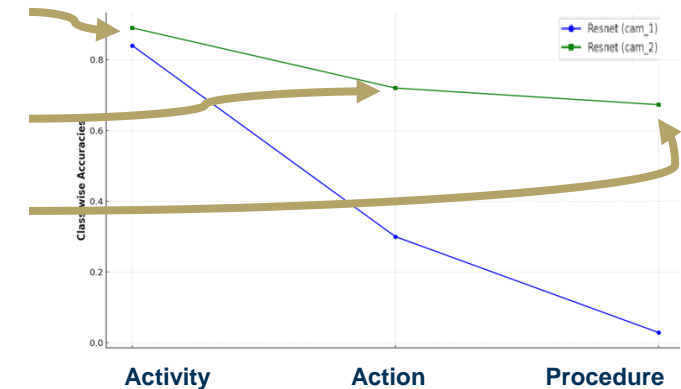


## Hierarchical Activity Recognition

Ground Truth

Prediction

Other findings:





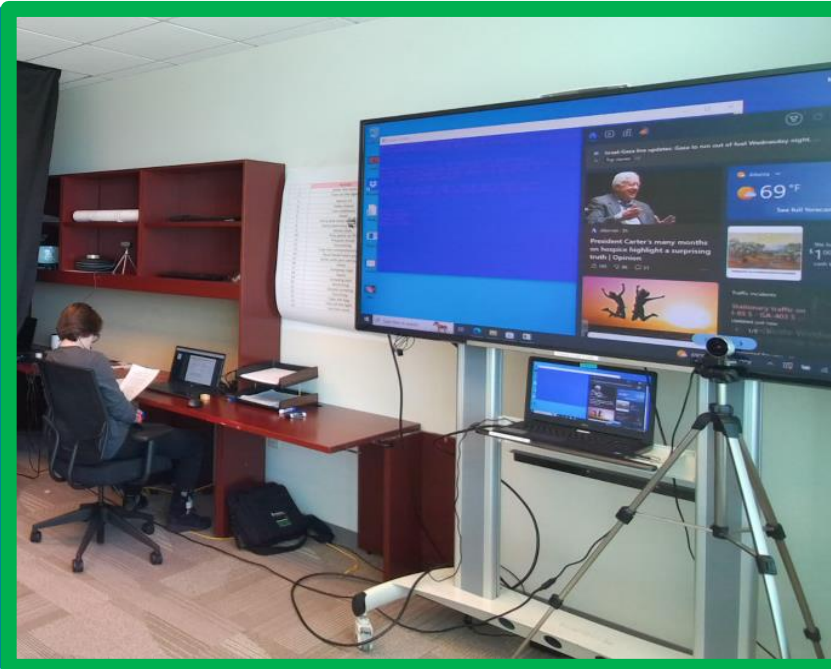
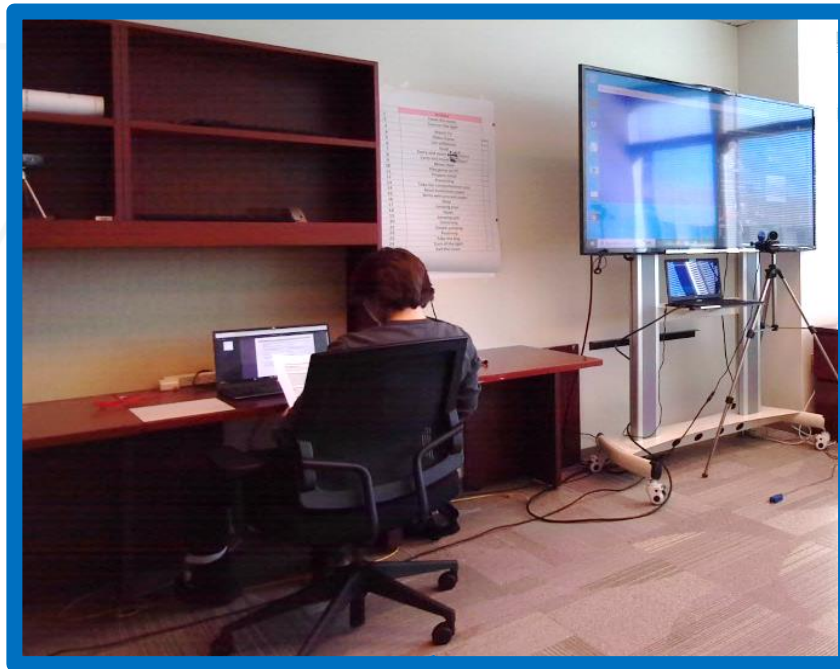
# Foundation Models

Vision-Language Models are sensitive to experimental setup



DARai Dataset

**VLMs (encoder finetuned on dataset) fail when recognizing domain-shifted inputs**



Other findings:





# Foundation Models

## Vision-Language Models are Biased towards Societal Stereotypes



Debiasing VLMs



**CLIP-CAP**

A **woman** in a wetsuit surfing on a wave.



**CLIP-CAP**

A **man** riding skis down a snow covered slope.

Uncurated training data invariably reflects biases present in society. Utilizing such models in downstream tasks perpetuates biases



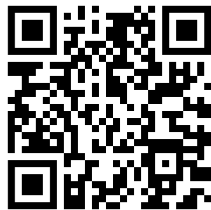
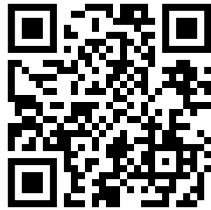
# Foundation Models

## Requirements and Challenges for Deep Learning

**Requirements: Foundation model-enabled systems must predict correctly and fairly on novel data and explain their outputs**

**Novel** data sources:

- Test distributions
- Anomalous data
- Out-Of-Distribution data
- Adversarial data
- Corrupted data
- Noisy data
- New classes
- ...

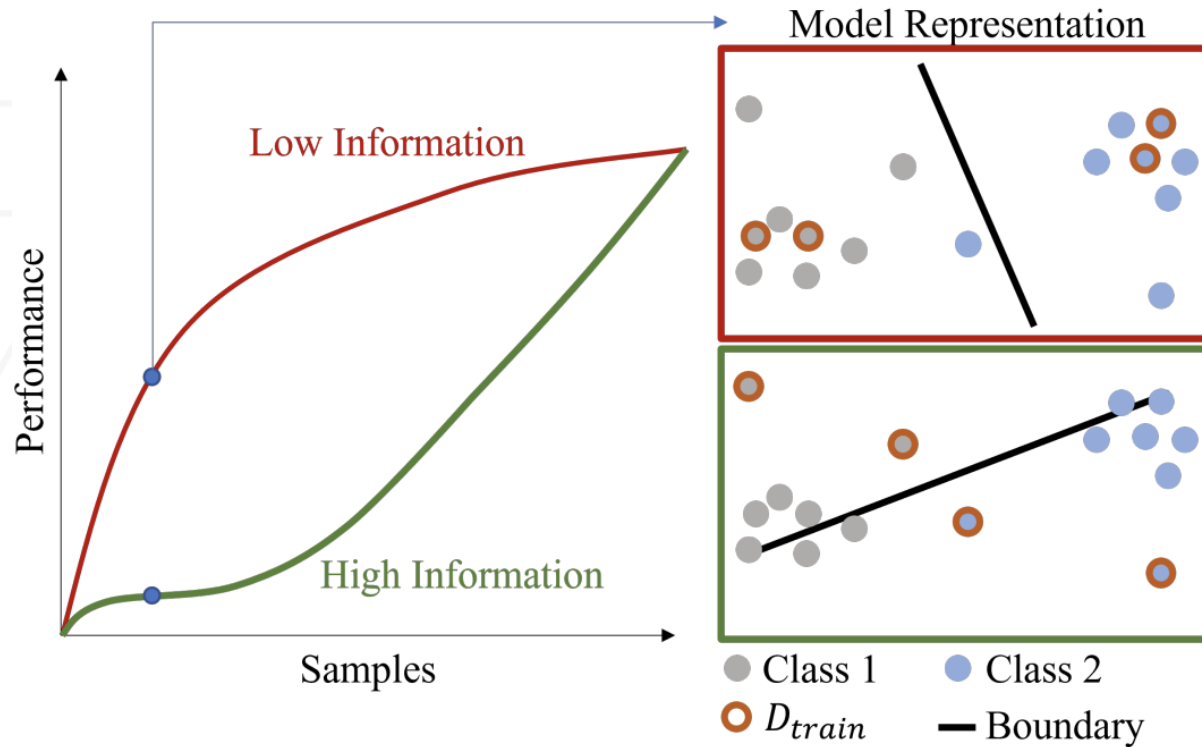




# Deep Learning at Training

## Overcoming Challenges at Training: Part 1

The most novel/aberrant samples should not be used in early training



- The first instance of training must occur with less informative samples
- Ex: For autonomous vehicles, less informative means
  - Highway scenarios
  - Parking
  - No accidents
  - No aberrant events

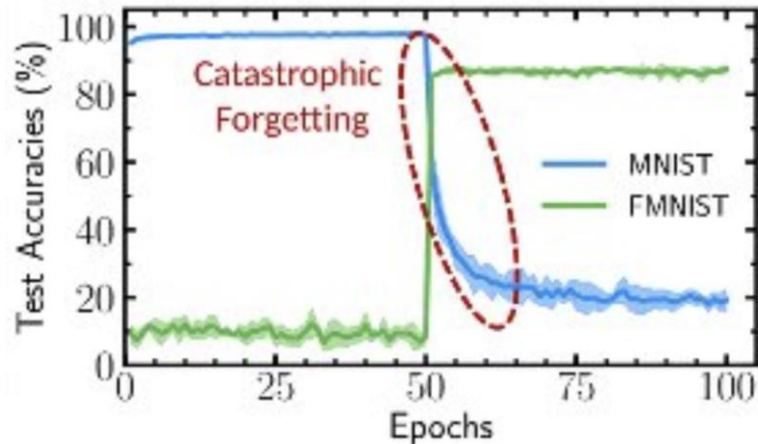
Novel samples = Most Informative



# Deep Learning at Training

## Overcoming Challenges at Training: Part 2

Subsequent training must not focus only on novel data



- The model performs well on the new scenarios, **while forgetting the old scenarios**
- Several techniques exist to overcome this trend
- However, they affect the overall performance in large-scale settings
- It is not always clear **if and when** to incorporate novel scenarios in training

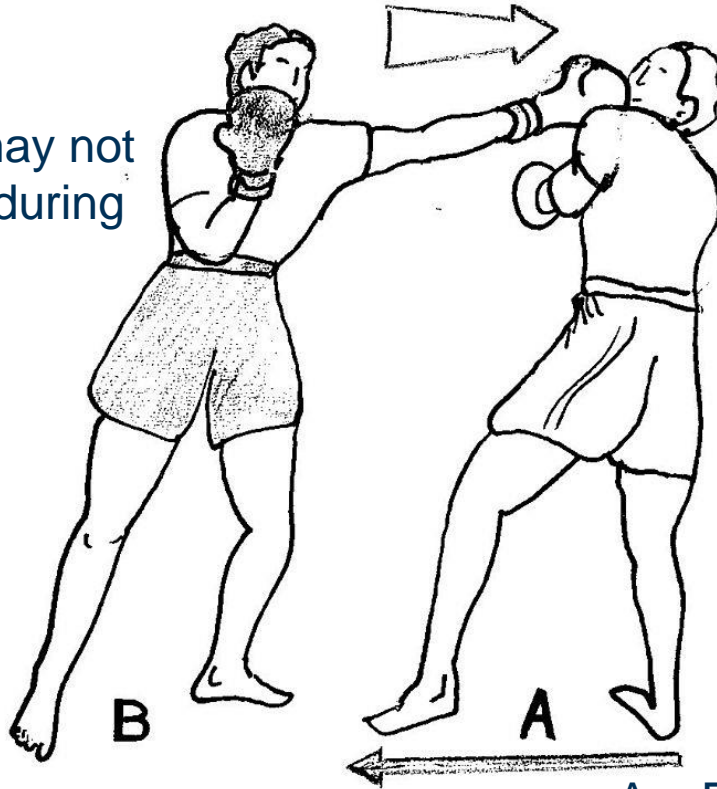


# Deep Learning at Training

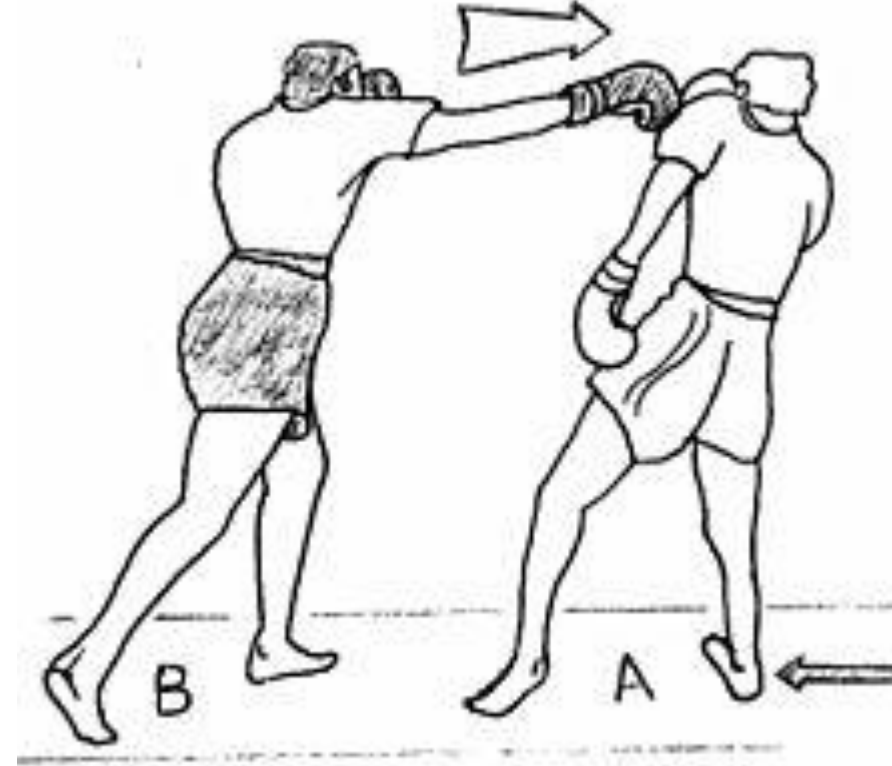
## Overcoming Challenges at Training

**Novel data packs a 1-2 punch!**

Novel data may not be available during training



A = Deep Neural Networks  
B = Novel data



Even if available, novel data does not easily fit into either the earlier or later stages of training



# Foundation Models at Inference

## Overcoming Challenges at Inference

**We must handle novel data at Inference!!**

**Novel** data sources:

- Test distributions
- Anomalous data
- Out-Of-Distribution data
- Adversarial data
- Corrupted data
- Noisy data
- New classes
- ...

Model Train



At Inference





# Objective

## Objective of the Tutorial

**To discuss methodologies that promote robust and fair inference in neural networks**

- Part 1: Inference in Neural Networks
- Part 2: Explainability at Inference
- Part 3: Uncertainty at Inference
- Part 4: Intervenability at Inference
- Part 5: Conclusions and Future Directions



# Inferential Machine Learning

## Part I: Inference in Neural Networks



# Objective

## Objective of the Tutorial

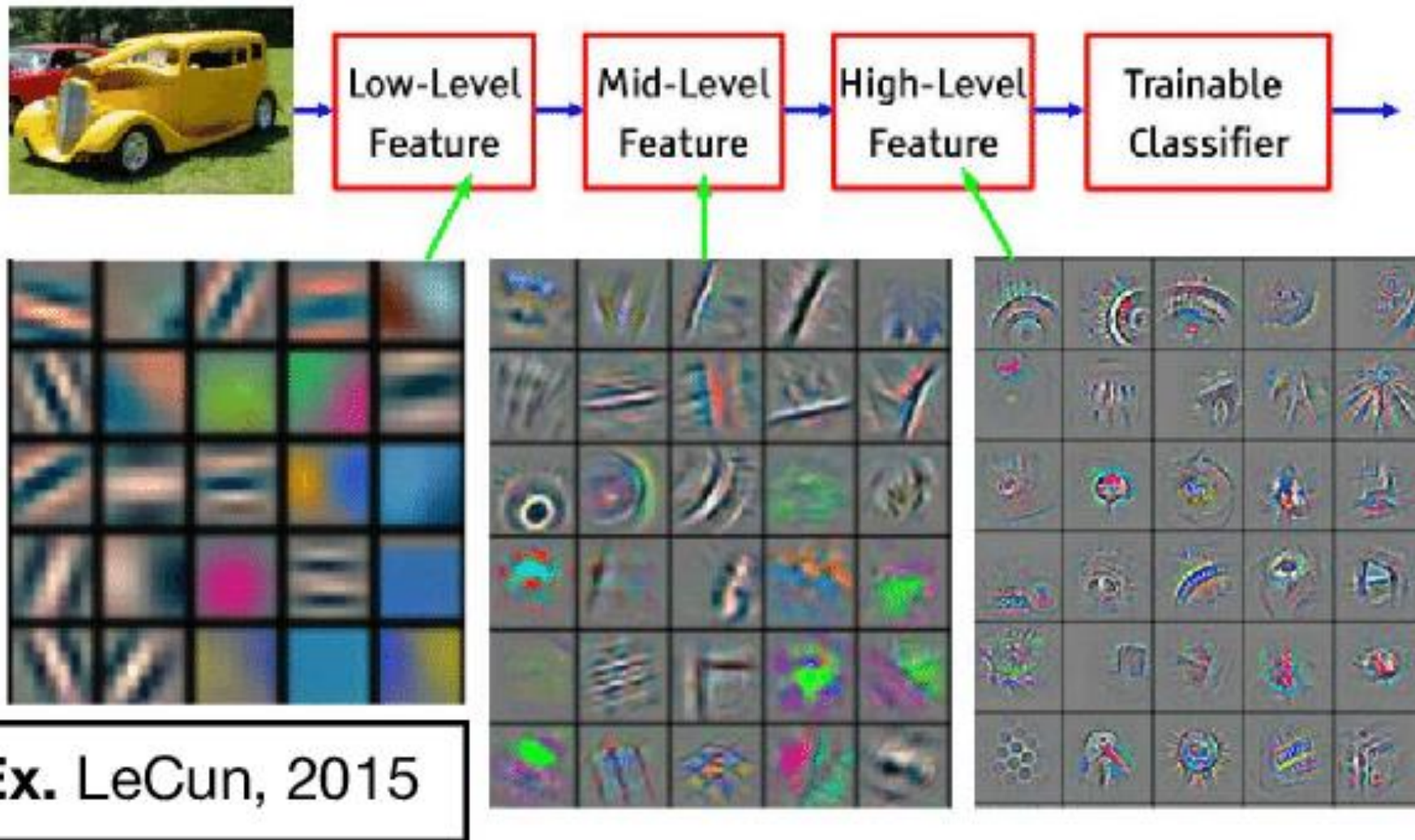
**To discuss methodologies that promote robust and fair inference in neural networks**

- **Part 1: Inference in Neural Networks**
  - Neural Network Basics
  - Robustness in Deep Learning
  - Information at Inference
  - Challenges at Inference
  - Gradients at Inference
- Part 2: Explainability at Inference
- Part 3: Uncertainty at Inference
- Part 4: Intervenability at Inference
- Part 5: Conclusions and Future Directions



# Deep Learning

## Overview

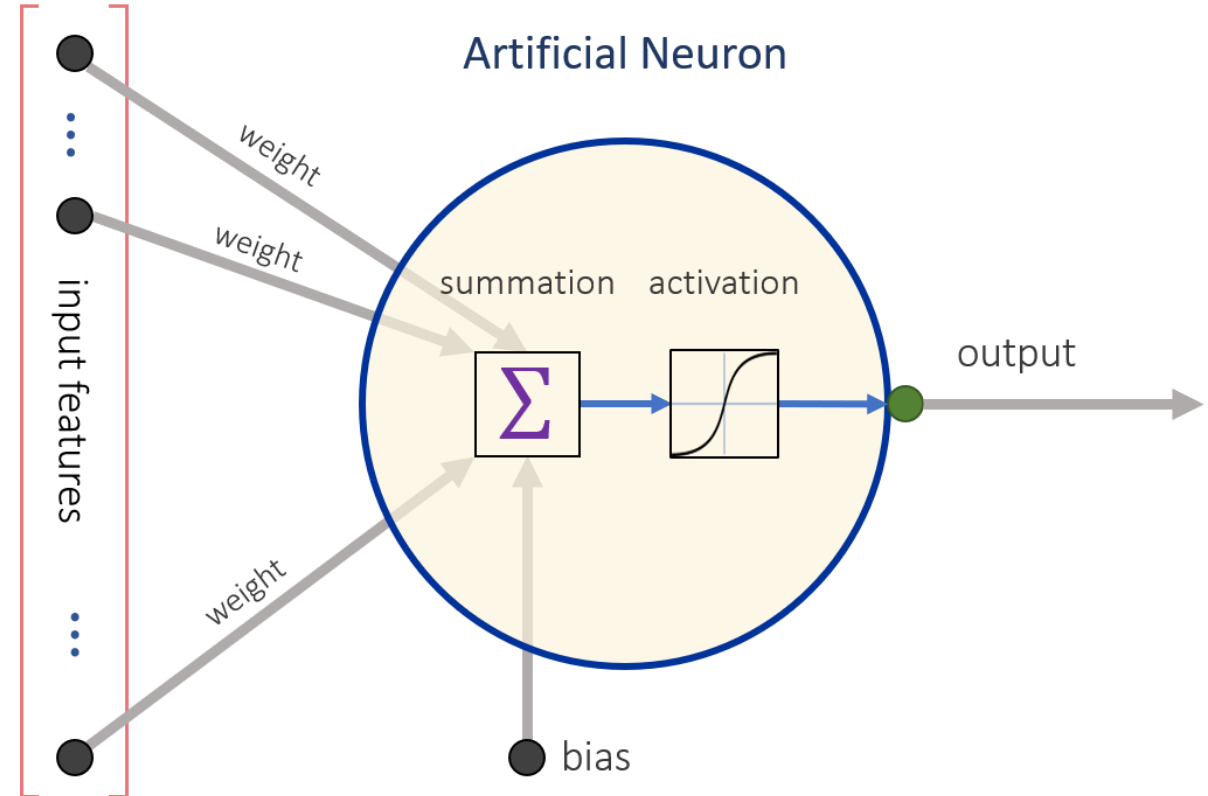




### The underlying computation unit is the Neuron

Artificial neurons consist of:

- A single output
- Multiple inputs
- Input weights
- A bias input
- An activation function

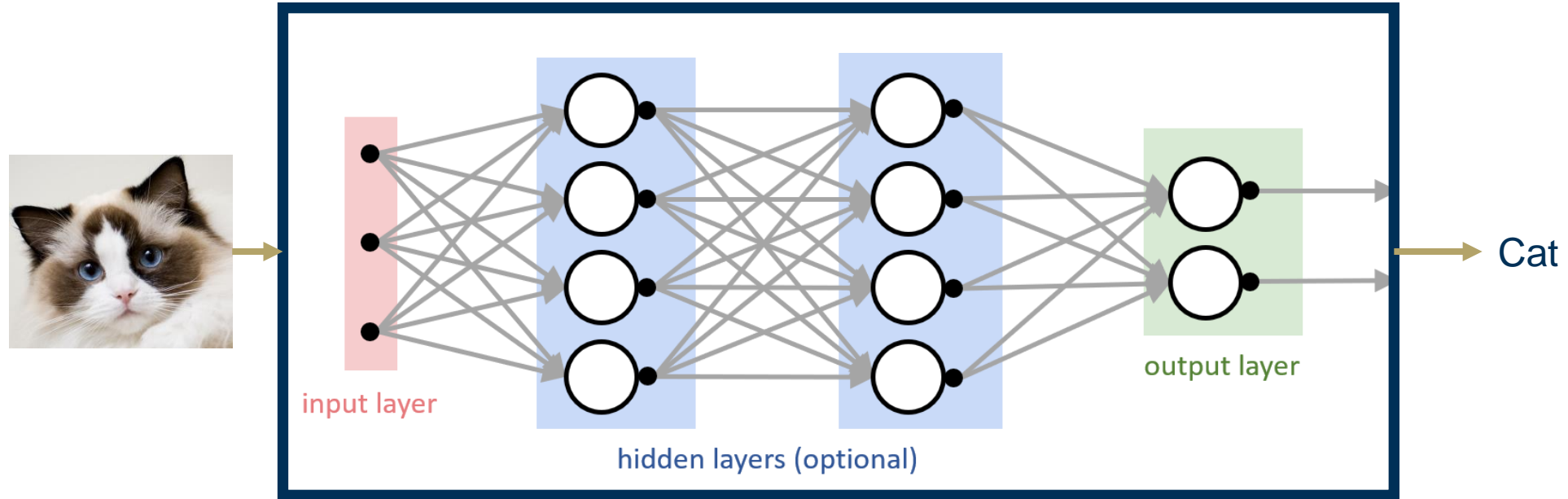




# Deep Learning

## Artificial Neural Networks

Neurons are stacked and densely connected to construct ANNs



Typically, a neuron is part of a network organized in layers:

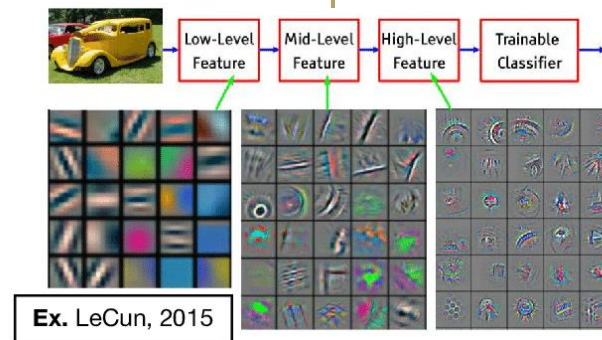
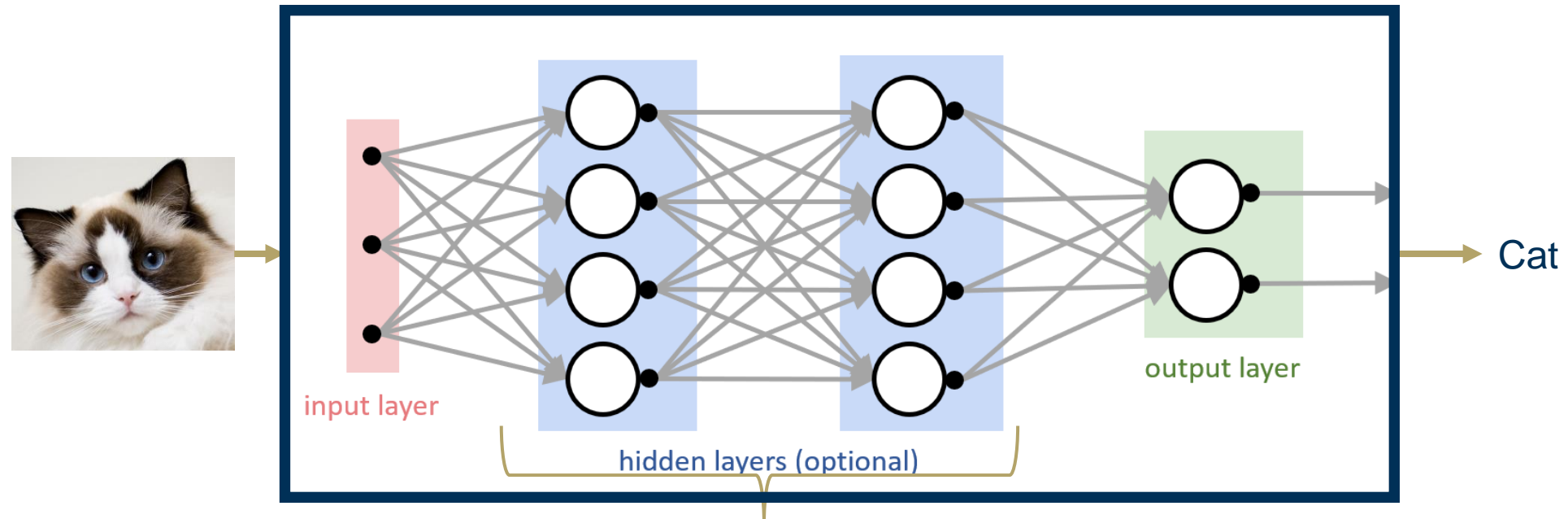
- An input layer (Layer 0)
- An output layer (Layer  $K$ )
- Zero or more hidden (middle) layers (Layers  $1 \dots K - 1$ )



# Deep Learning

## Convolutional Neural Networks

Stationary property of images allow for a small number of convolution kernels

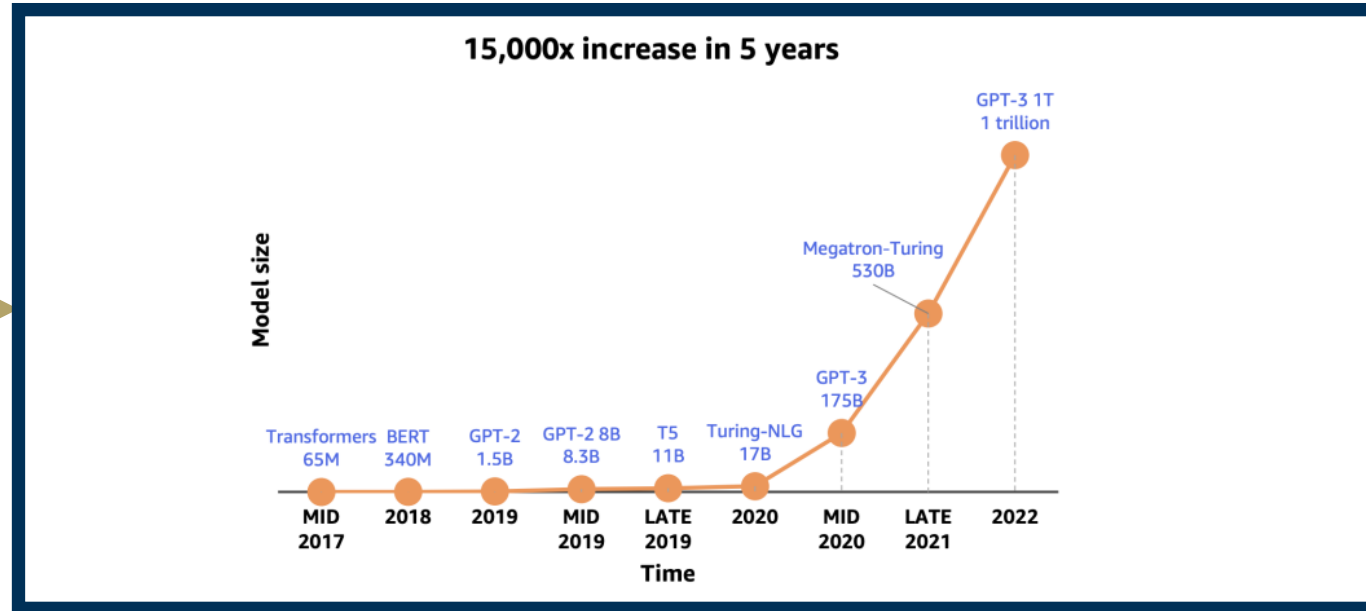




# Deep Deep Deep Deep Deep ... Learning

## Recent Advancements

### Transformers, Large Language Models and Foundation Models



Cat

Primary reasons for advancements:

1. Expanded interests from the research community
2. Computational resources availability
3. **Big data availability**



# Foundation Models

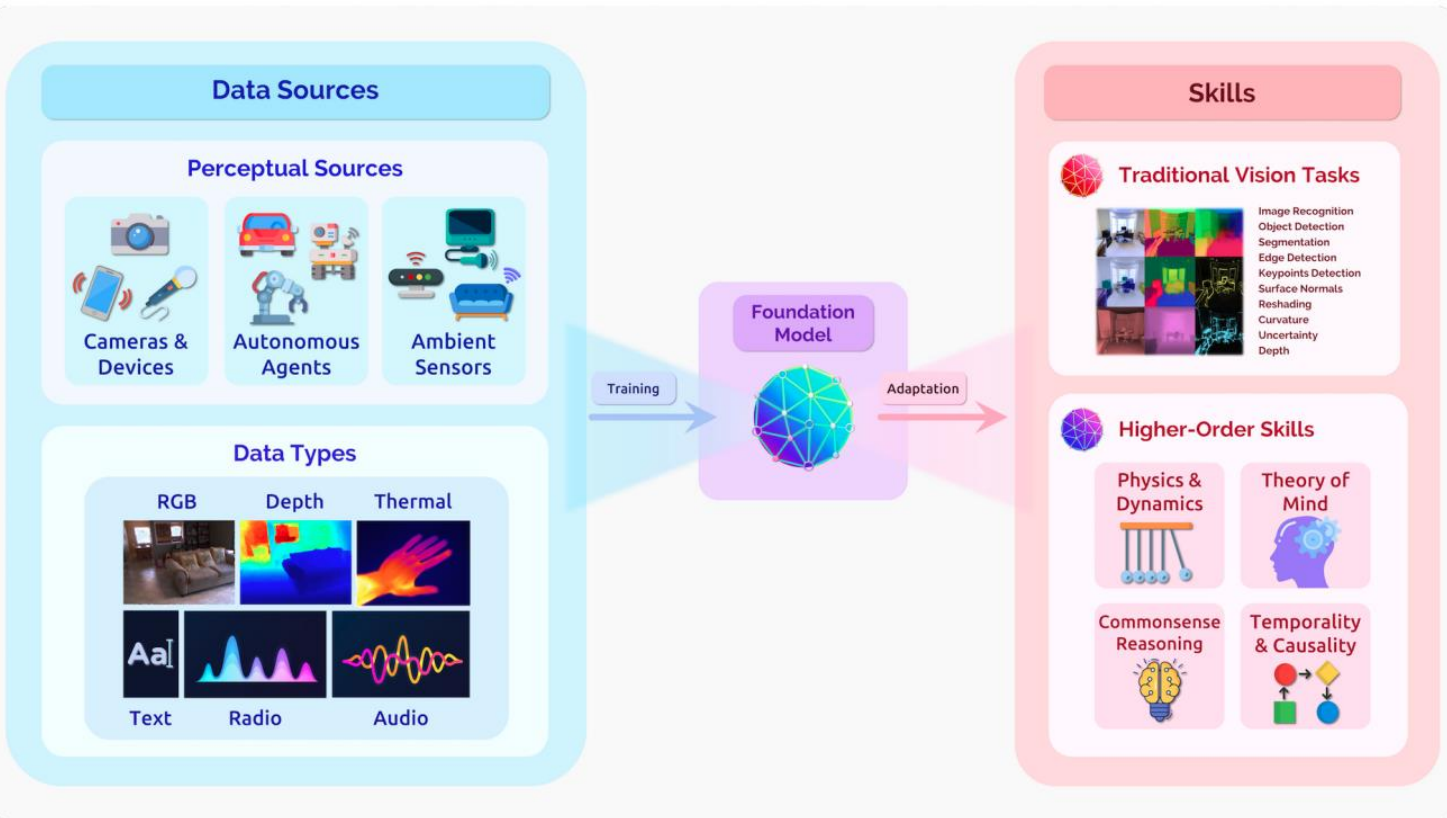
## Origin of the term Foundation Models

- **Foundation models** are like any other deep network that have employed **transfer learning**, except **at scale**
- **Scale** brings about **emergent properties** that are common between tasks
- **Before 2019**: Base architectures that powered multiple neural networks were **ResNets, VGG** etc.
- **Since 2019**: **BERT, DALL-E, GPT, Flamingo**
- Changes since 2019: **Transformer architectures and Self-Supervision**



# Foundation Models

## Origin of the term Foundation Models



*‘By harnessing self-supervision at scale, foundation models for vision have the potential to distill raw, multimodal sensory information into visual knowledge, which may effectively support traditional perception tasks and possibly enable new progress on challenging higher-order skills like temporal and commonsense reasoning. These inputs can come from a diverse range of data sources and application domains, suggesting promise for applications in healthcare and embodied, interactive perception settings.’*



# Deep Learning at Inference

What, Where, and When is Inference?

**Ability of a system to predict correctly on novel data**

**Novel** data sources:

- Unexpected prompts
- Test distributions
- Anomalous data
- Out-Of-Distribution data
- Adversarial data
- Corrupted data
- Noisy data
- New classes
- ...



Trained Model

Cat



# Deep Learning at Inference

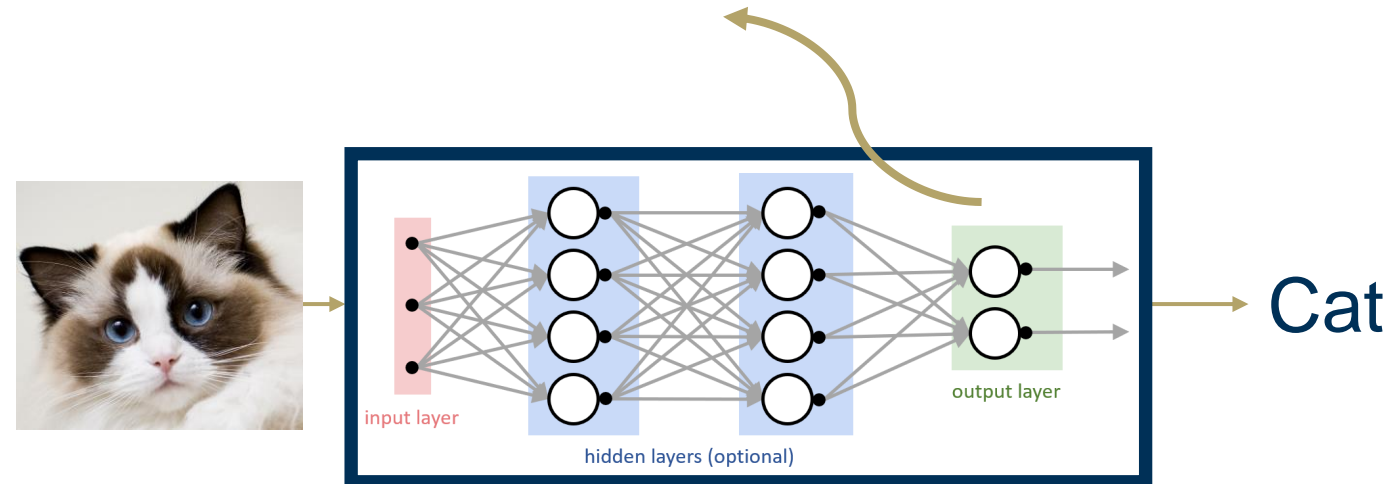
What, Where, and When is Inference?

**Neural networks are feed-forward systems; output layer logits are used for inference**

**Novel** data sources:

- Unexpected prompts
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- ...

All **required** information is passed to last layer  
Outputs from last layer are termed **Logits**



**Required** information is learned at training; leads to **inductive bias** when encountering novel data at inference



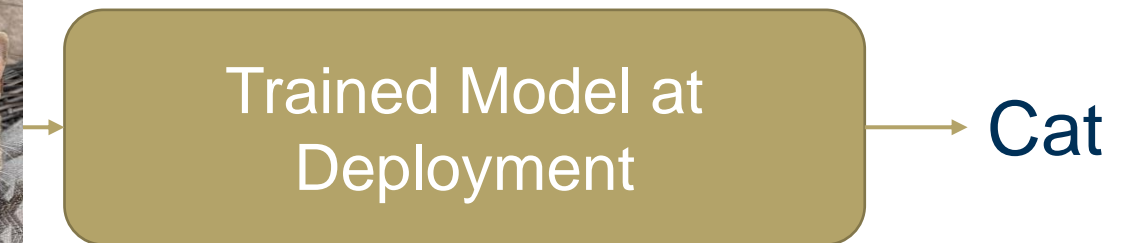
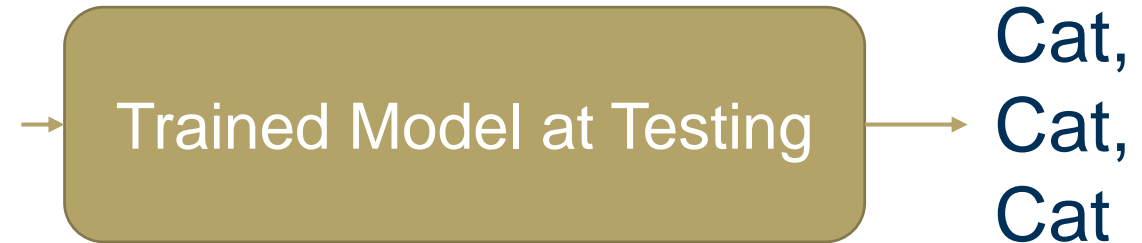
# Deep Learning at Inference

What, Where, and When is Inference?

**Inference occurs at: (i) Testing, and (ii) Deployment**

**Novel** data sources:

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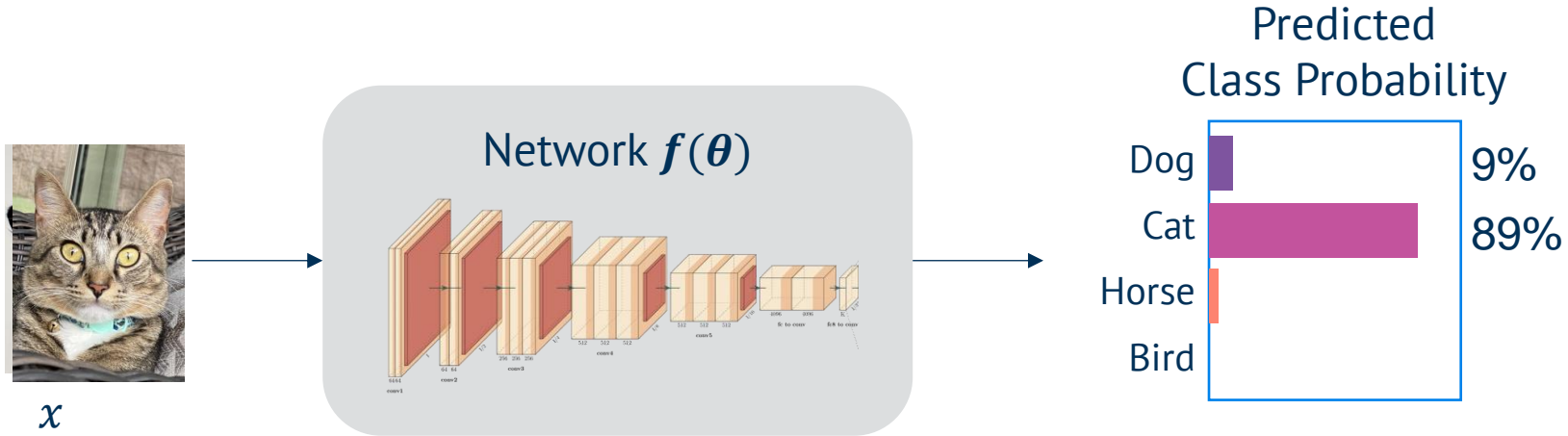




# Deep Learning at Inference

## Application: Classification

**Given : One network, One image. Required: Class Prediction**



$$\hat{y} = f(x)$$
$$y = \operatorname{argmax}_i \hat{y}$$
$$p(\hat{y}) = T(f(x))$$

$\hat{y}$  = Logits  
 $y$  = Predicted Class  
 $p(\hat{y})$  = Probabilities  
 $f(\cdot)$  = Trained Network  
 $\chi$  = Training data

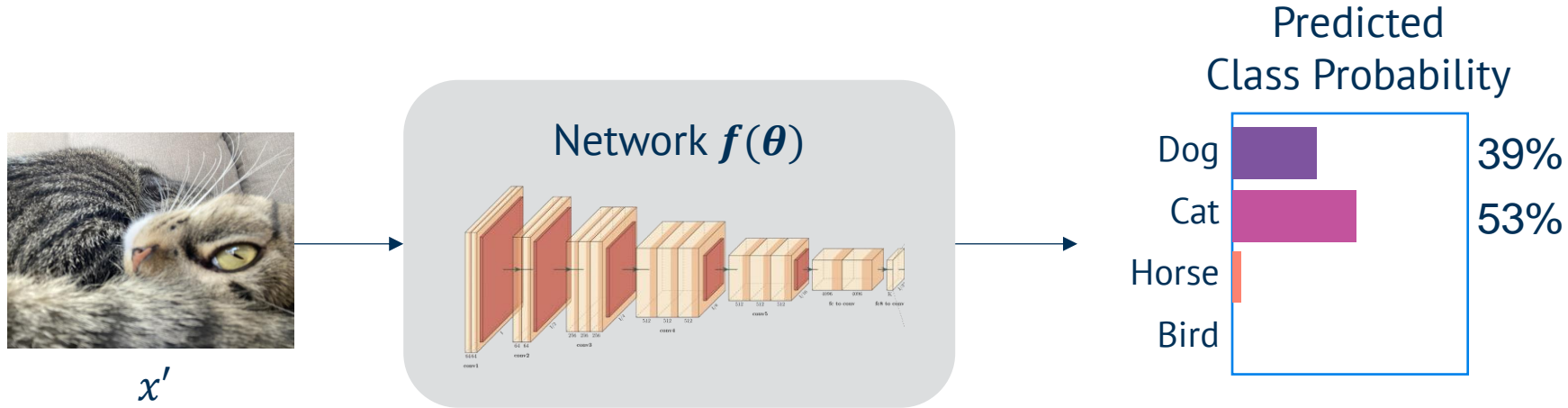
If  $x \in \chi$ , the data is **not novel**



# Deep Learning at Inference

## Application: Robust Classification

Deep learning robustness: Correctly predict class even when data is novel



If  $x \notin \chi$ , the data is **novel**

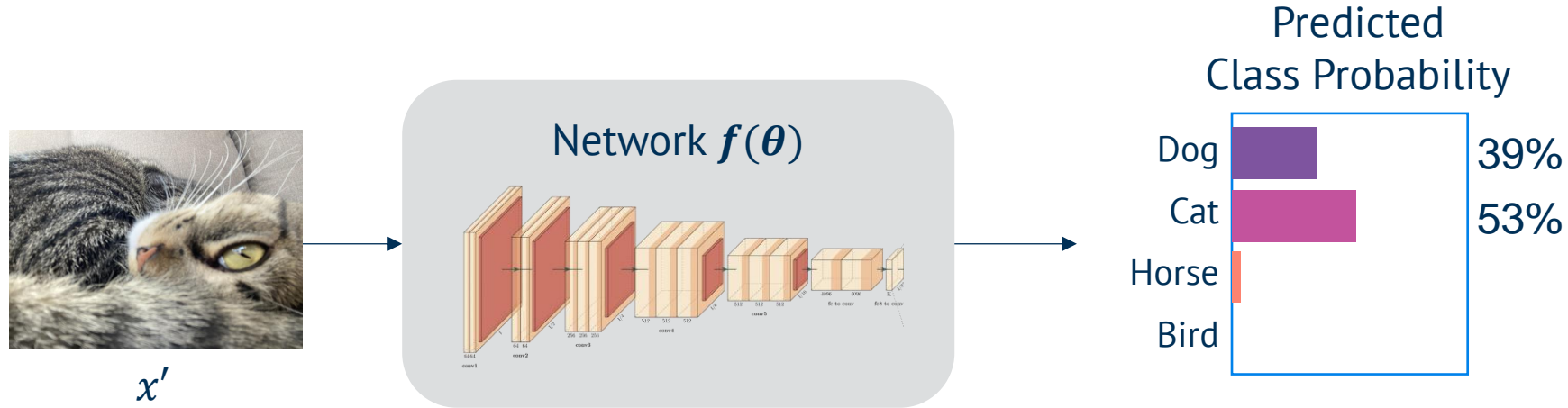
$$\begin{aligned}\hat{y} &= f(x' + \epsilon) & \hat{y} &= \text{Logits} \\ y &= \operatorname{argmax}_i \hat{y} & y &= \text{Predicted Class} \\ p(\hat{y}) &= T(f(x' + \epsilon)) & p(\hat{y}) &= \text{Probabilities} \\ & & f(\cdot) &= \text{Trained Network} \\ & & \chi &= \text{Training data} \\ & & \epsilon &= \text{Noise}\end{aligned}$$



# Deep Learning at Inference

## Application: Robust Classification

**Deep learning robustness: Correctly predict class even when data is novel**



To achieve robustness at Inference, we need the following:

- **Information** provided by the novel data as **a function of training distribution**
- Methodology to **extract information** from novel data
- **Techniques** that utilize the information from novel data

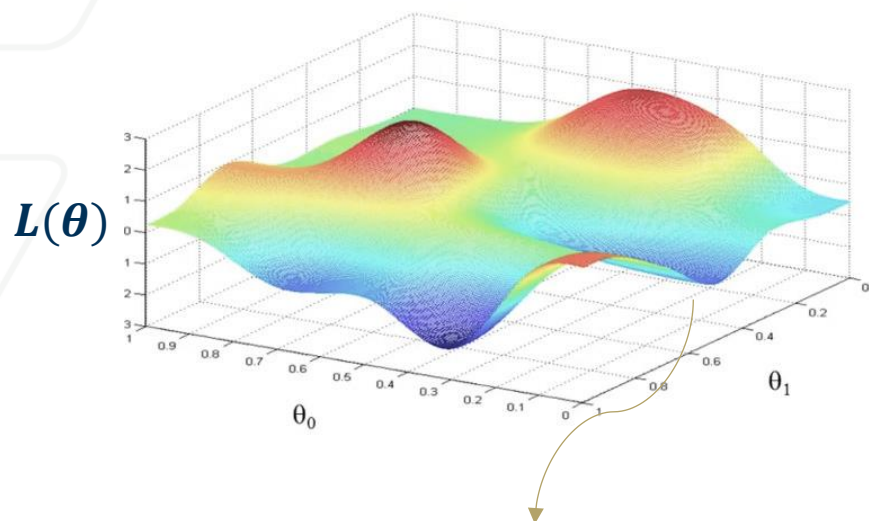
**Why is this Challenging?**



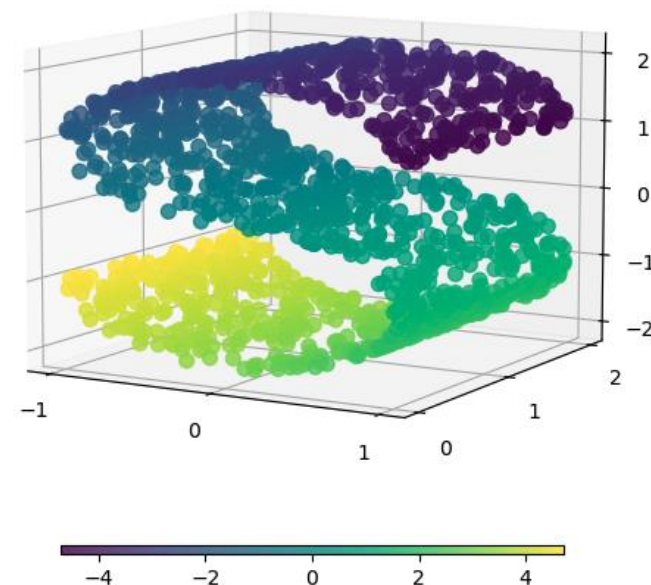
# Challenges at Inference

A Quick note on Manifolds..

**Manifolds are compact topological spaces that allow exact mathematical functions**



Toy visualizations generated using functions  
(and thousands of generated data points)



Real data visualizations generated using  
dimensionality reduction algorithms (Isomap)



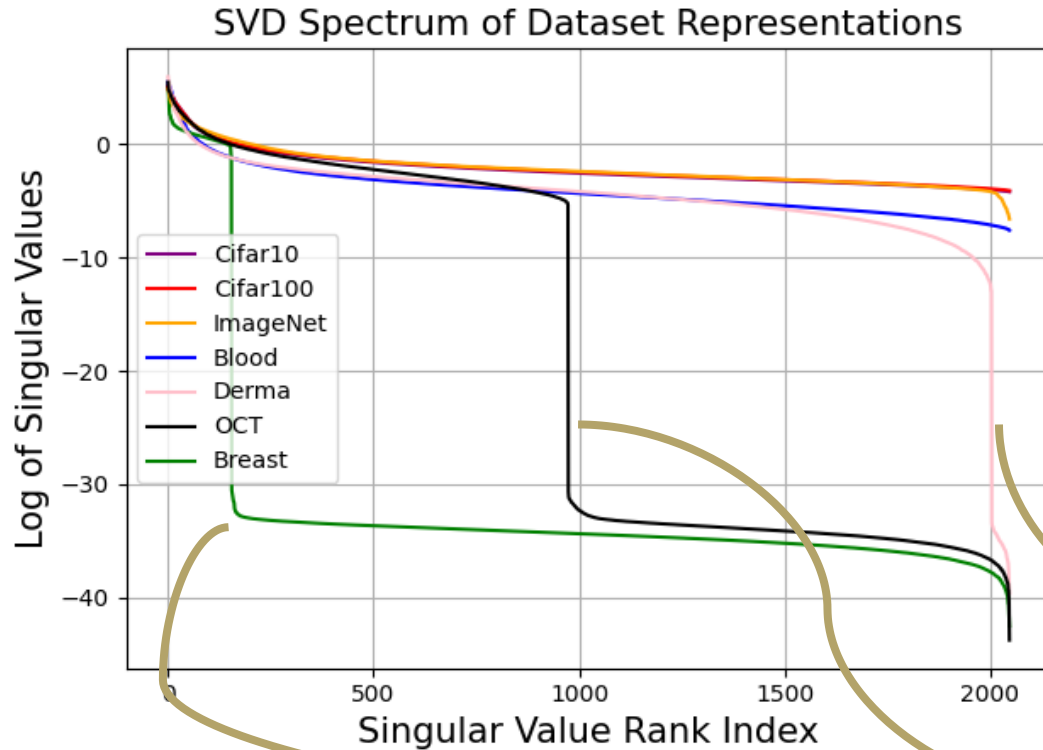
# Challenges at Inference

Manifold evaluation at Test-Time Inference without Labels



Hierarchical  
Constrained  
Contrastive Learning

The change in singular values indicate 'goodness' of a self-supervised model for a given dataset



- Construct covariance matrix of the dataset of representations
- Take SVD and order all singular values.
  - The singular values in decreasing order are plotted on the left for different datasets
- 'Better suited-data' for a trained model has no dimensional collapse
- **Conclusion: The natural image trained self-supervised learning model is ill-suited to be utilized for Breast, OCT, and derma datasets**

**Dimensional collapse**



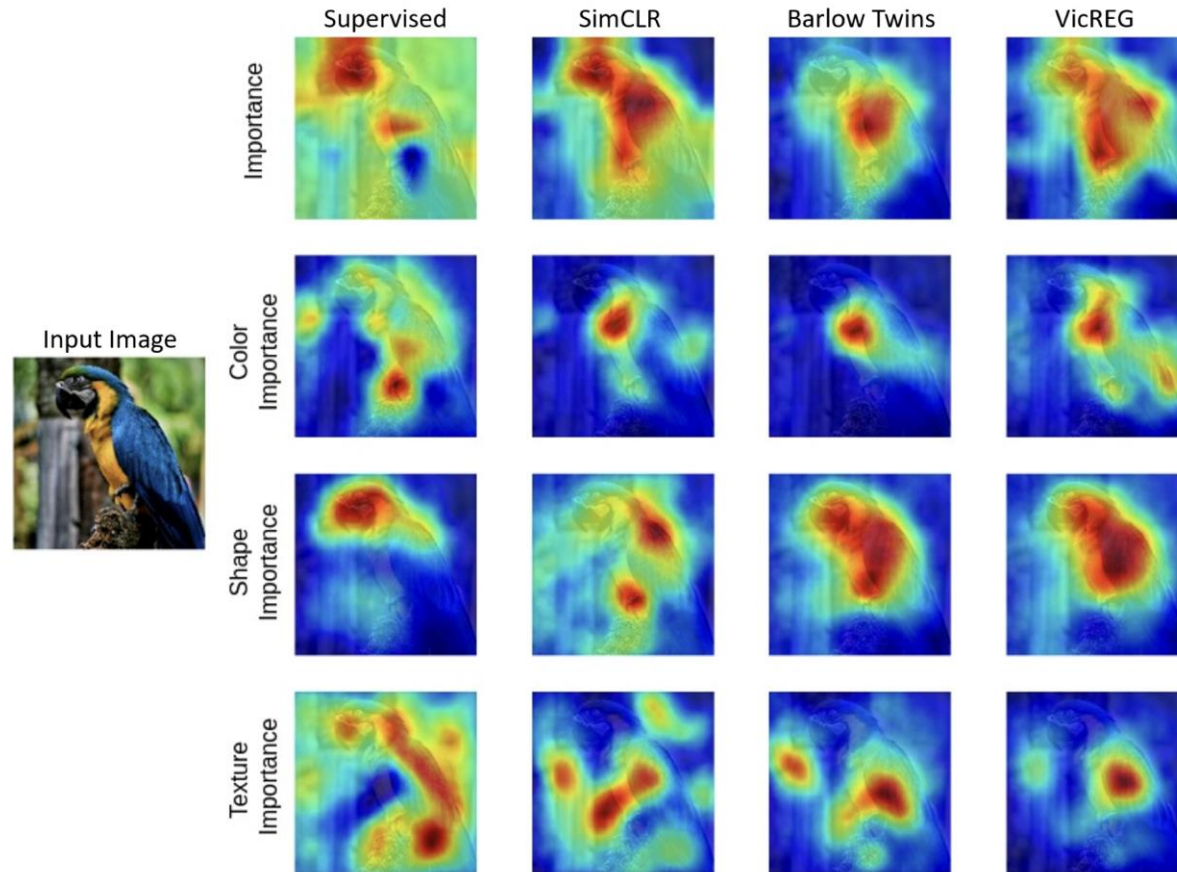
# Challenges at Inference

Manifold evaluation at Test-Time Inference without Labels



Perceptual  
Components in Self-  
Supervised Learning

The similarity of concepts like shape, color, and textures between different self-supervised training regimens and the supervised version indicate ‘goodness’ of that regimen



- **Column 1:** Given the task of bird classification and the bird class, explanations can be constructed for specific perceptual components like color, shape, and texture
- **Columns 2, 3, and 4:** Given only a pre-text task and no true ground truth, we can construct visual explanations for the same concepts
- Construct correlation score between column 1 and each of the other columns.

**More correlation = better suited for downstream task**



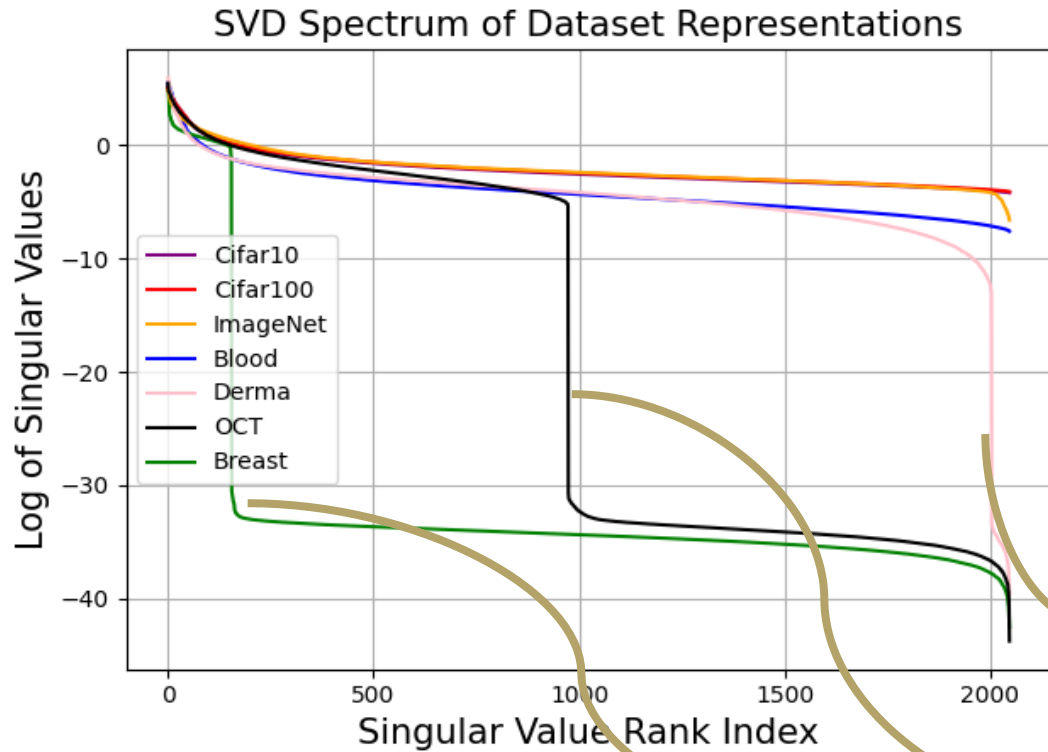
# Challenges at Inference

## Deployment Inferential Evaluation

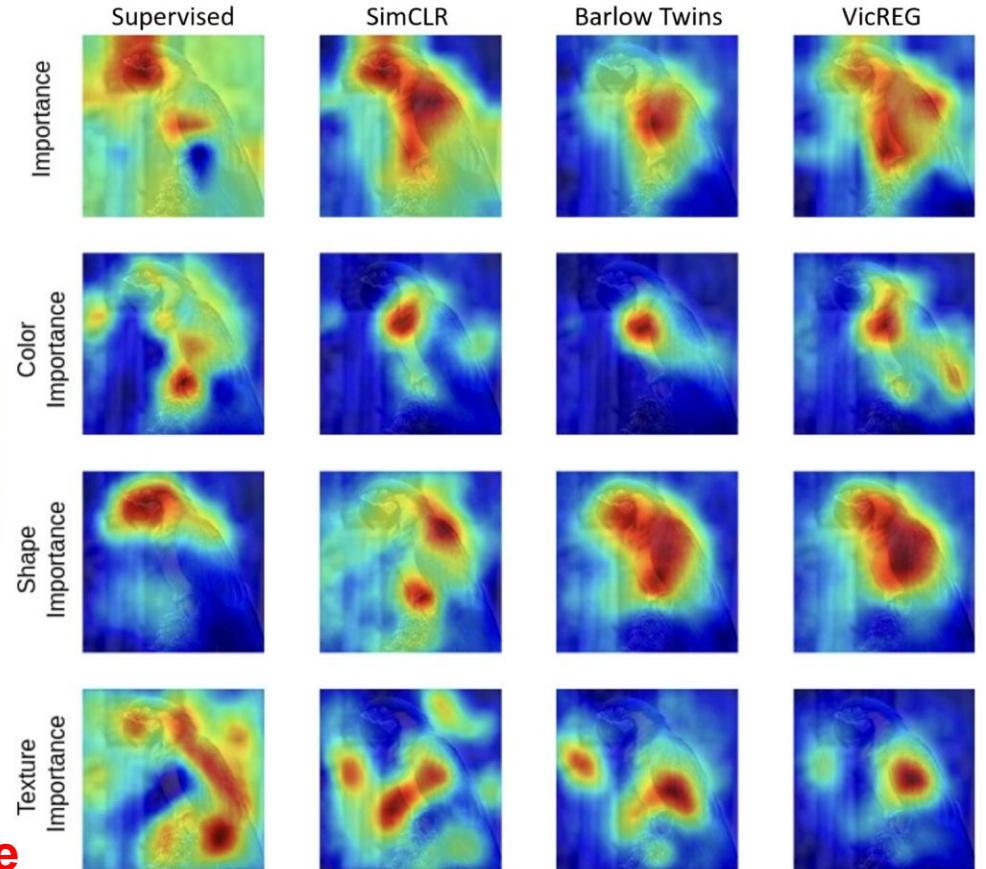


Perceptual  
Components in Self-  
Supervised Learning

Both these methods work on 'test-time' inference; we need access to a large dataset to (i) construct SVD of dataset, (ii) correlation across image explanations



**Dimensional collapse**





# Challenges at Inference

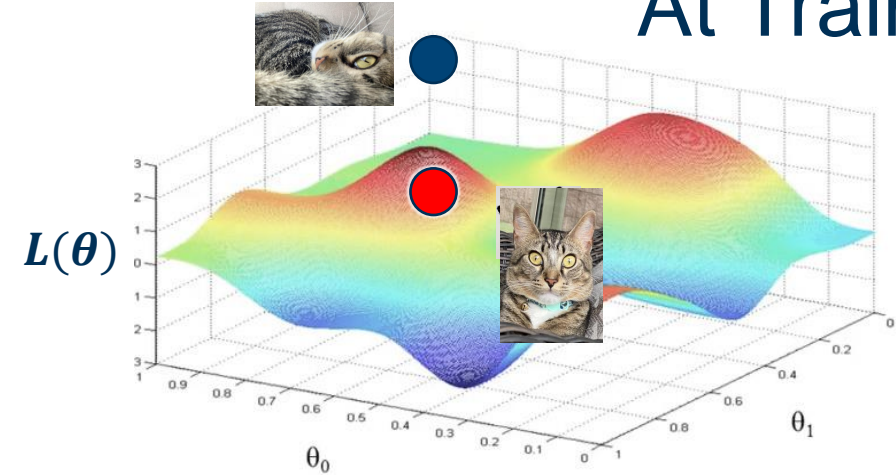
## Deployment Inferential Evaluation

However, at deployment only the test data point is available, and the underlying structure of the manifold is unknown

At Inference



At Training



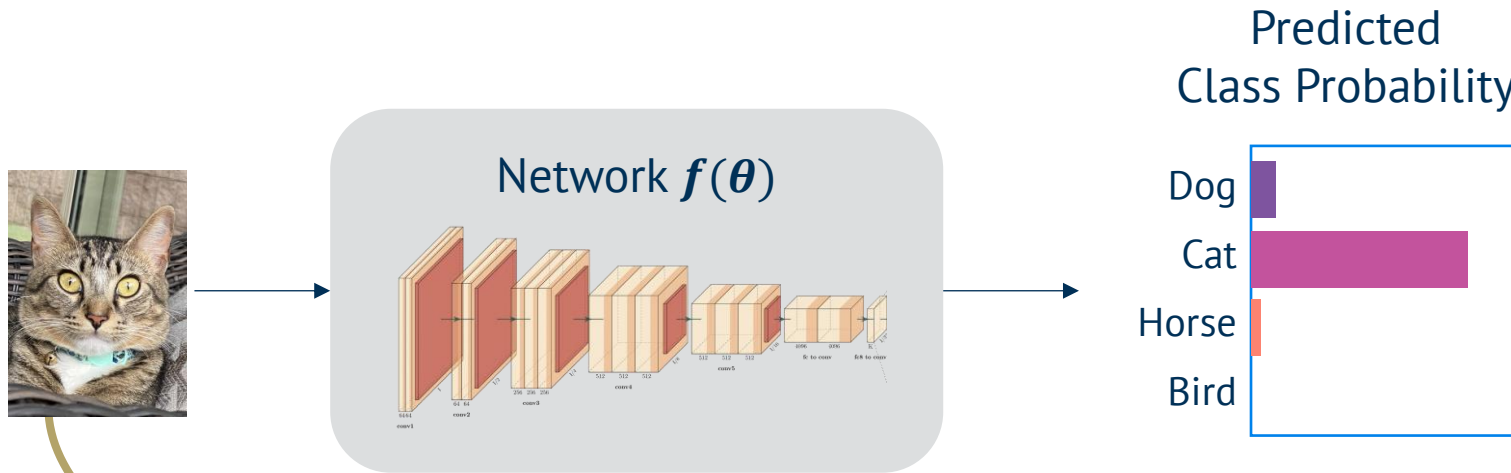
At training, we have access to all training data.



# Information at Inference

## Fisher Information

Colloquially, Fisher Information is the “surprise” in a system that observes an event

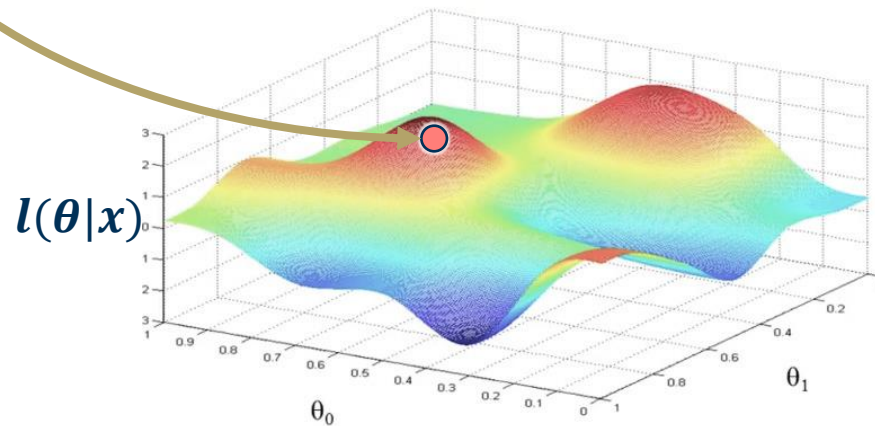


Fisher Information

$$I(\theta) = \text{Var}\left(\frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} l(\theta|x)\right)$$

$\theta$  = Statistic of distribution  
 $l(\theta | x)$  = Likelihood function

Likelihood function



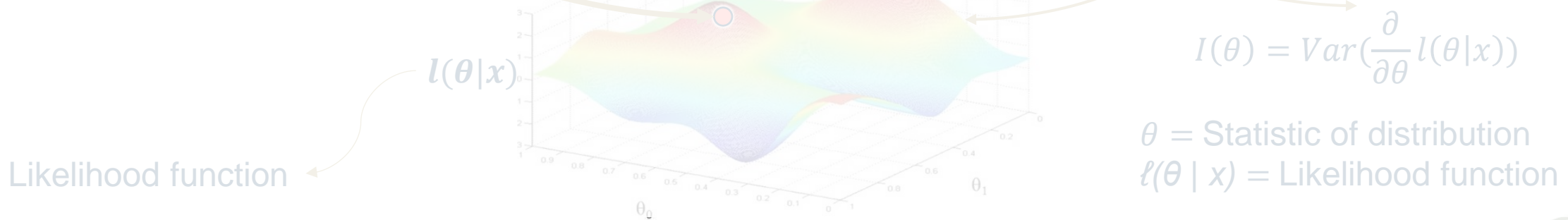


# Information at Inference

## Information at Inference



**At inference, given a single image from a single class, we can extract information about other classes**

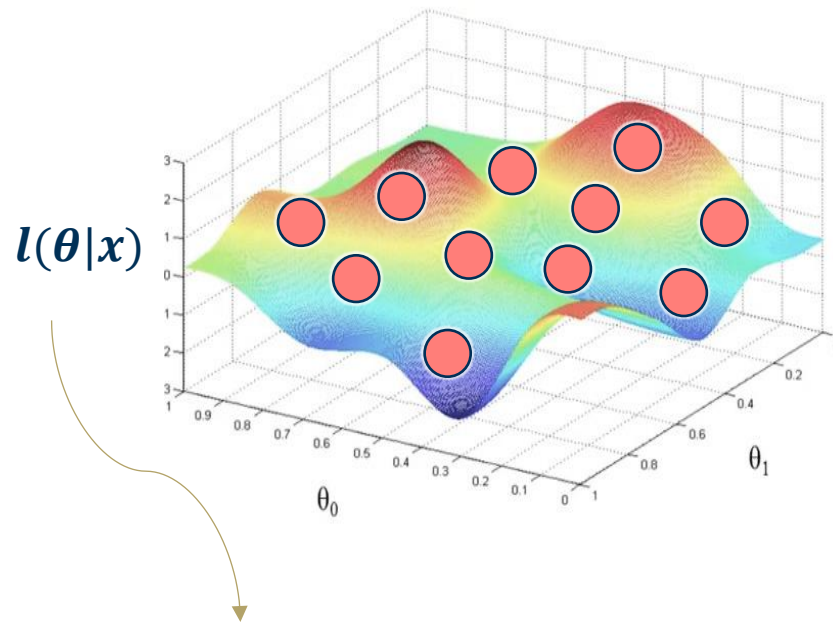




# Information at Inference

## Gradients as Fisher Information

**Gradients infer information about the statistics of underlying manifolds**



Likelihood function instead of loss manifold

From before,  $I(\theta) = \text{Var}(\frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} l(\theta|x))$

Using variance decomposition,  $I(\theta)$  reduces to:

$$I(\theta) = E[U_{\theta} U_{\theta}^T] \text{ where}$$

$E[\cdot]$  = Expectation

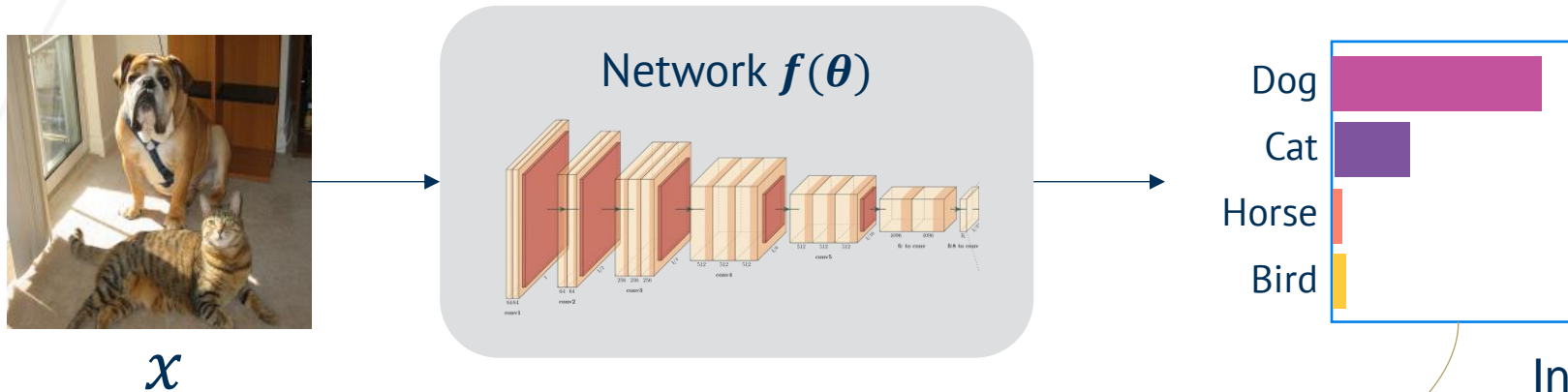
$U_{\theta} = \nabla_{\theta} l(\theta|x)$ , Gradients w.r.t. the sample

**Hence, gradients draw information from the underlying distribution as learned by the network weights!**



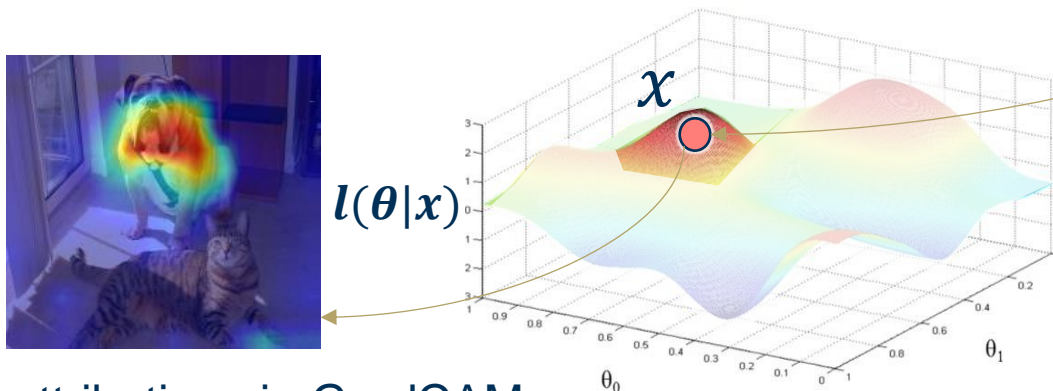
## Case Study: Gradients as Fisher Information in Explainability

## Gradients infer information about the statistics of underlying manifolds



Local information (specific to  $x$ ) is sufficient!

In this case, the image and its prediction extracts nose, mouth and jowl features.



**Hence, gradients draw information from the underlying distribution as learned by the network weights!**

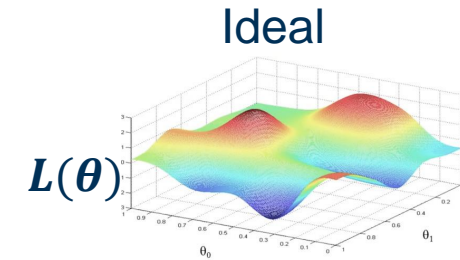
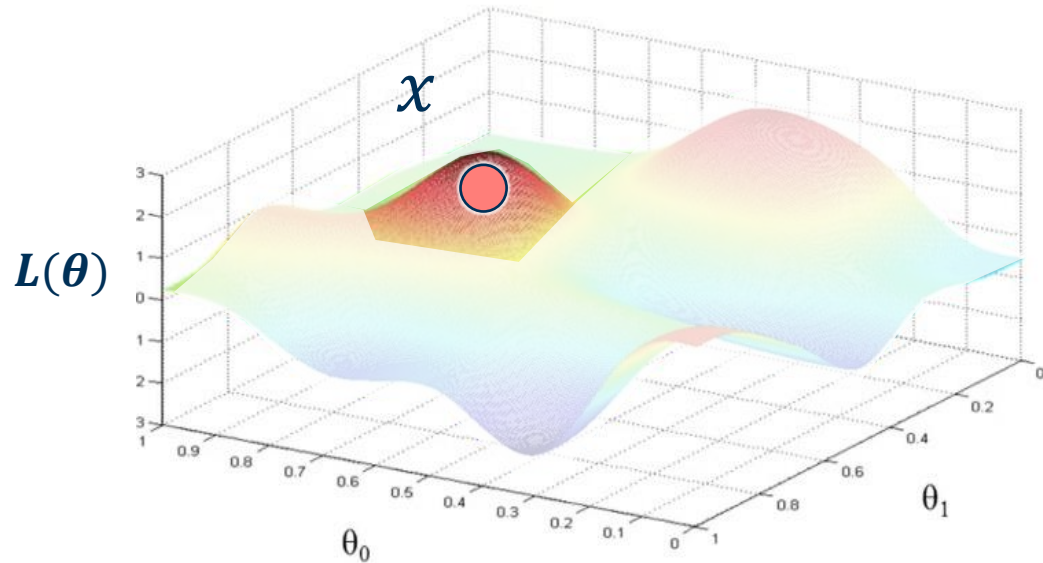
## Feature attribution via GradCAM



# Gradients at Inference

## Local Information

Gradients provide local information around the vicinity of  $x$ , even if  $x$  is novel. This is because  $x$  projects on the learned knowledge



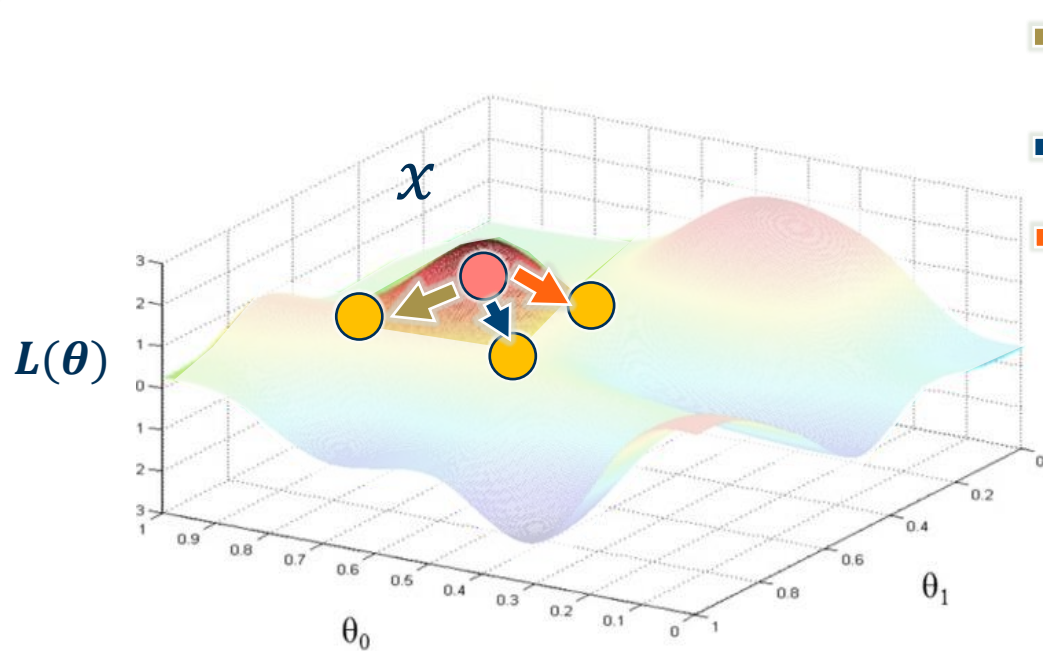
$\alpha \nabla_{\theta} L(\theta)$  provides local information up to a small distance  $\alpha$  away from  $x$



# Gradients at Inference

## Direction of Steepest Descent

Gradients allow choosing the fastest direction of descent given a loss function  $L(\theta)$



Path 1?



Path 2?



Path 3?

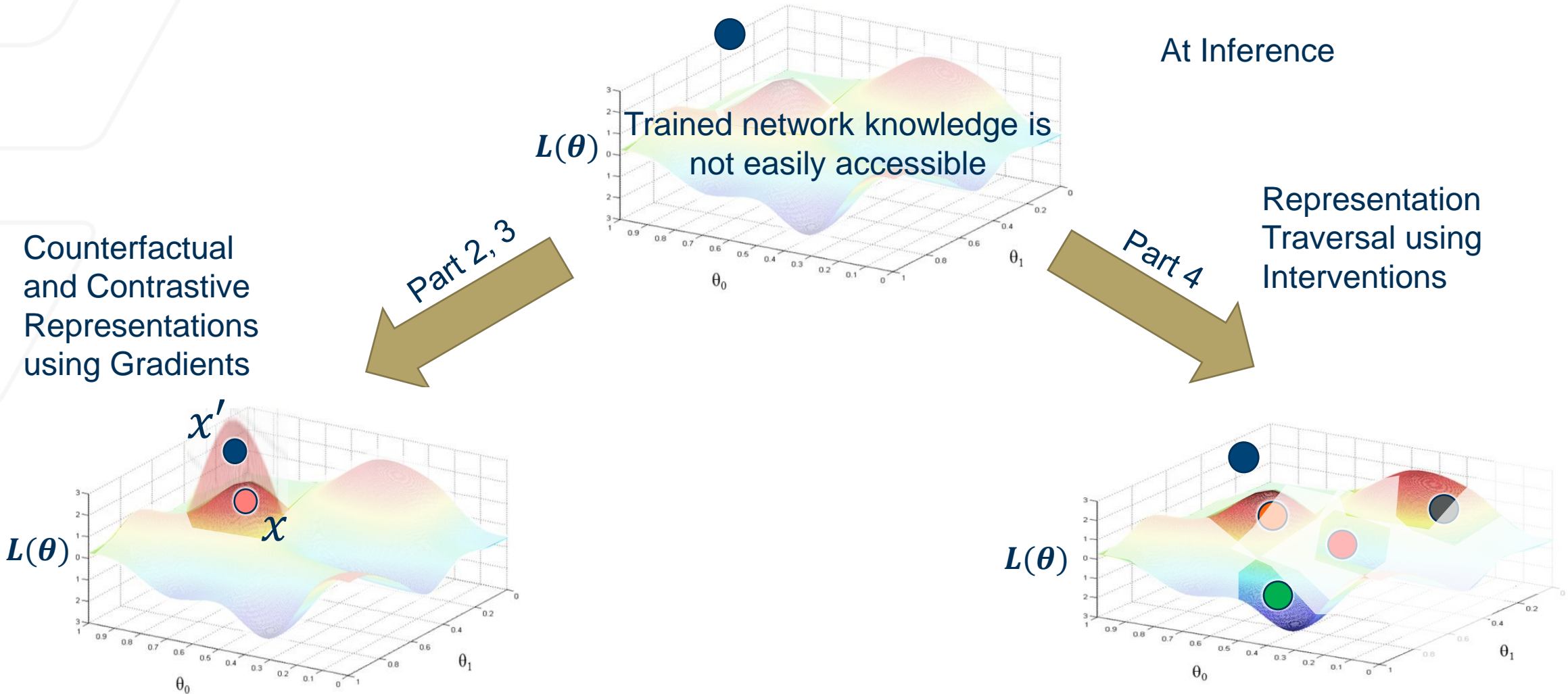
Which direction should we optimize towards (knowing only the local information)?

**Negative of the gradient** provides the **descent direction** towards the local minima, as measured by  $L(\theta)$



# Gradients at Inference

To Characterize the Novel Data at Inference





# Inferential Machine Learning

## Part 2: Explainability at Inference



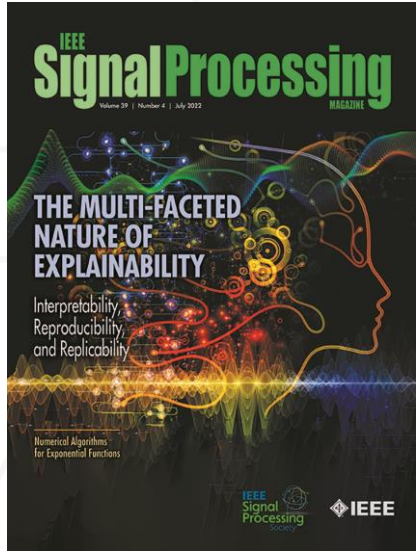
# Objective

## Objective of the Tutorial

**To discuss methodologies that promote robust and fair inference in neural networks**

- Part 1: Inference in Neural Networks
- **Part 2: Explainability at Inference**
  - Visual Explanations
  - Gradient-based Explanations
  - GradCAM
  - CounterfactualCAM
  - ContrastCAM
  - Case Study: Introspective Learning
- Part 3: Uncertainty and Intervenability at Inference
- Part 4: Intervenability at Inference
- Part 5: Conclusions and Future Directions





# Explanatory Paradigms in Neural Networks: Towards Relevant and Contextual Explanations



Mohit Prabhushankar, PhD  
Postdoc



Ghassan AlRegib, PhD  
Professor





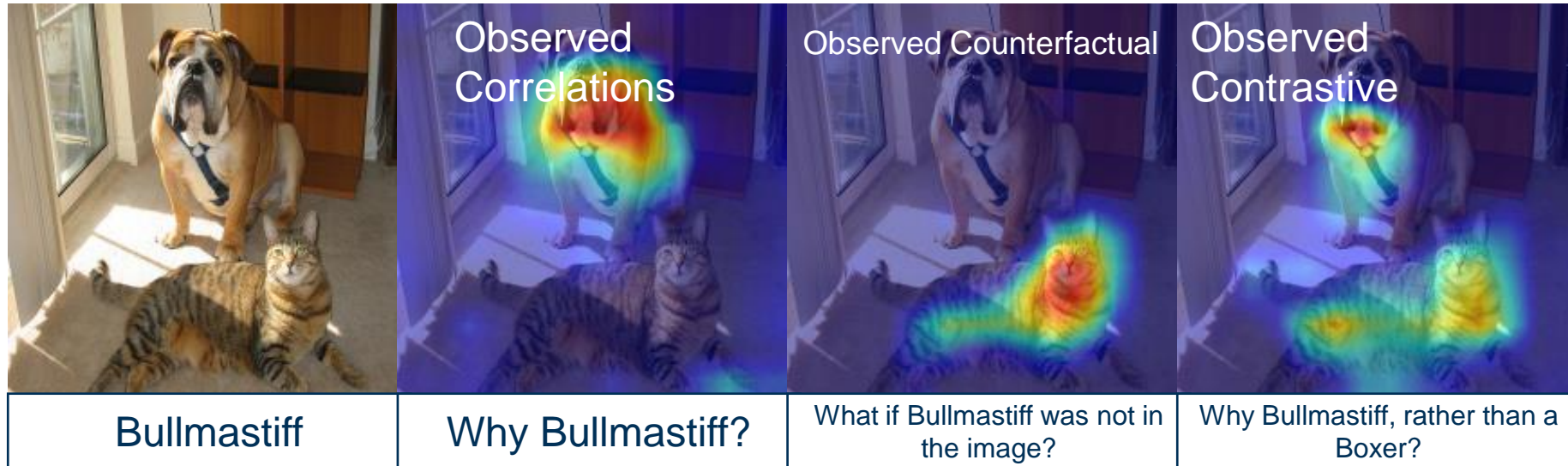
# Explanations

## Visual Explanations



Explanatory Paradigms in Neural Networks: Towards Relevant and Contextual Explanations

- Explanations are defined as a set of rationales used to understand the reasons behind a decision
- If the decision is based on visual characteristics within the data, the decision-making reasons are visual explanations



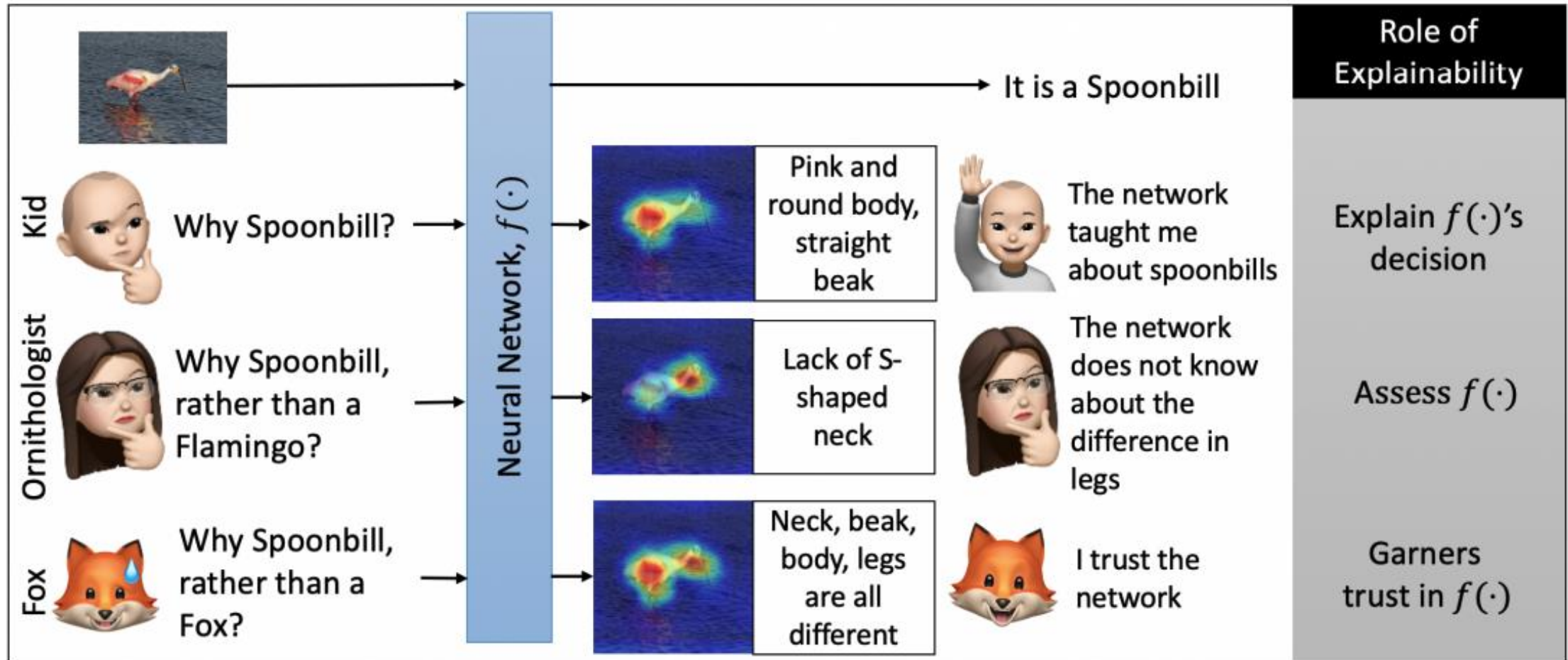


# Explanations

## Role of Explanations – context and relevance



Explanatory Paradigms in Neural Networks: Towards Relevant and Contextual Explanations





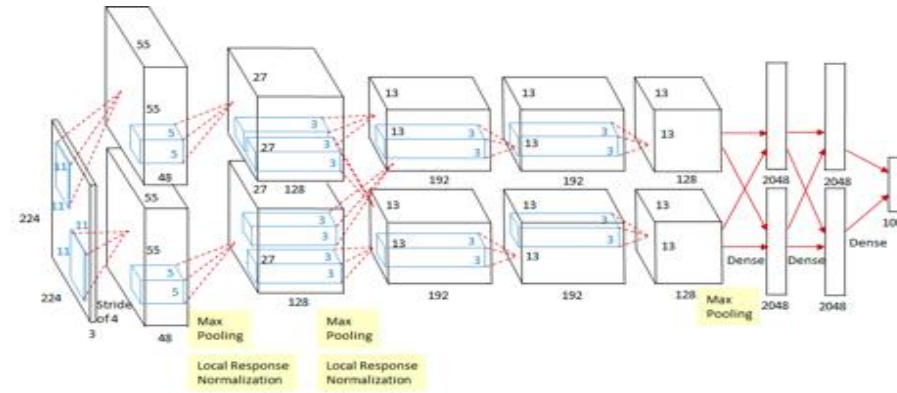
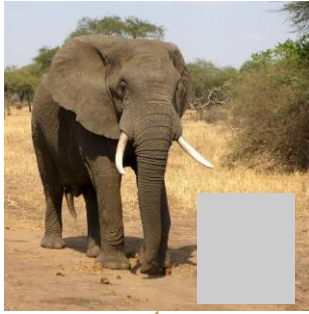
# Explanations

## Input Saliency via Occlusions



Explanatory Paradigms in Neural Networks: Towards Relevant and Contextual Explanations

**Intervention: Mask part of the image before feeding to CNN, check how much predicted probabilities change**



$$P(\text{elephant}) = 0.95$$

A gray patch or patch of average pixel value of the dataset

Note: not a black patch because the input images are centered to zero in the preprocessing.



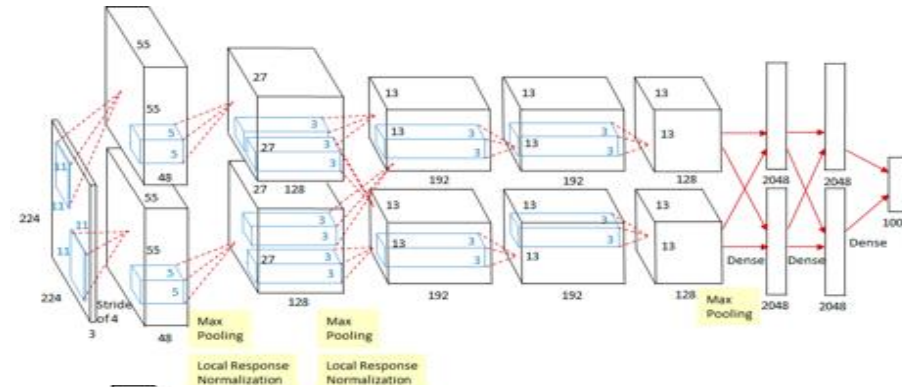
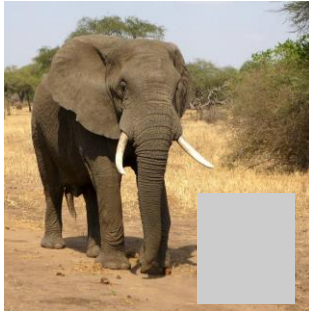
# Explanations

## Input Saliency via Occlusions

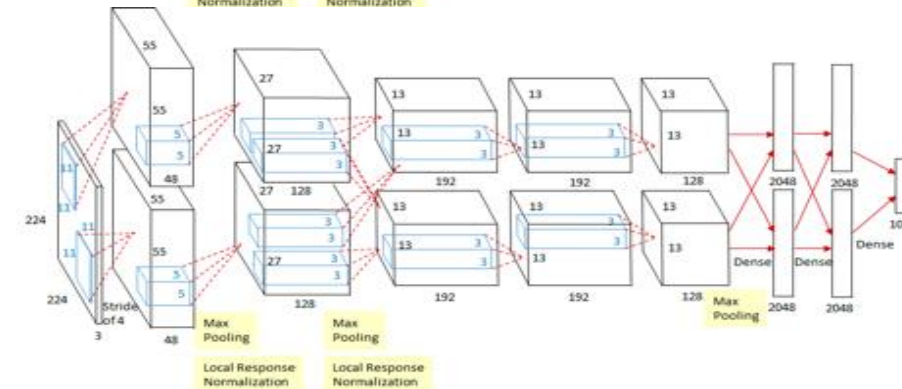
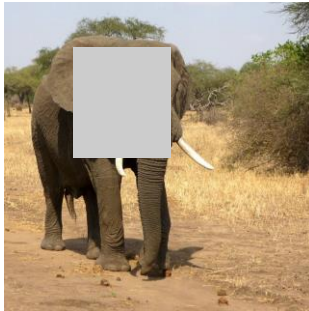


Explanatory Paradigms in Neural Networks: Towards Relevant and Contextual Explanations

**Intervention: Mask part of the image before feeding to CNN, check how much predicted probabilities change**



$$P(\text{elephant}) = 0.95$$



$$P(\text{elephant}) = 0.75$$

These pixels affect decisions more

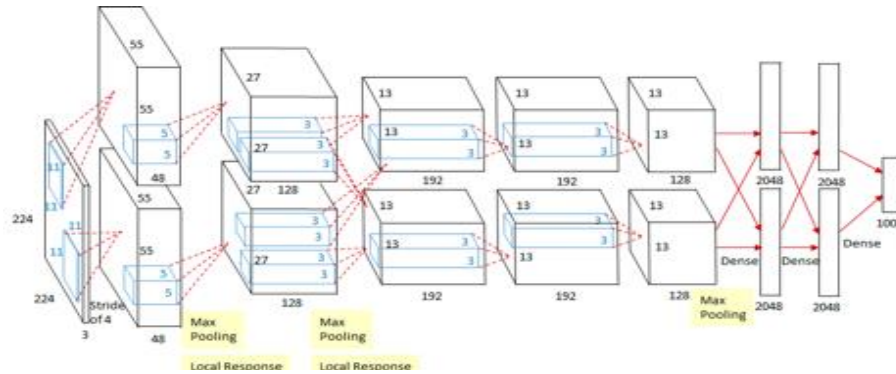
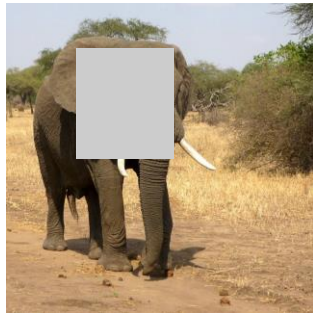


## Input Saliency via Occlusions

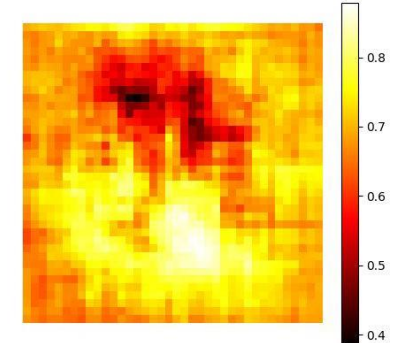


## Explanatory Paradigms in Neural Networks: Towards Relevant and Contextual Explanations

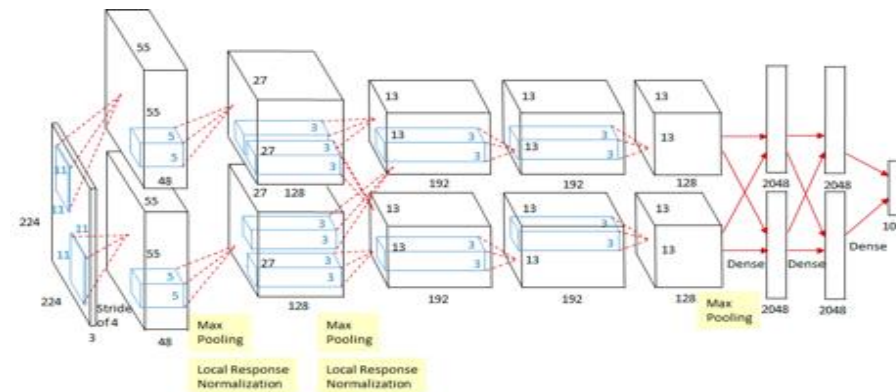
**The network is trained with image- labels, but it is sensitive to the common visual regions in images**



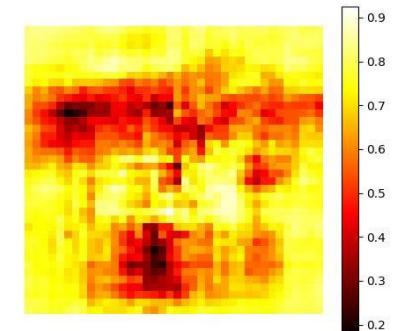
African elephant, *Loxodonta africana*



go-kart



go-kart





# Explanations

## Gradient-based Explanations



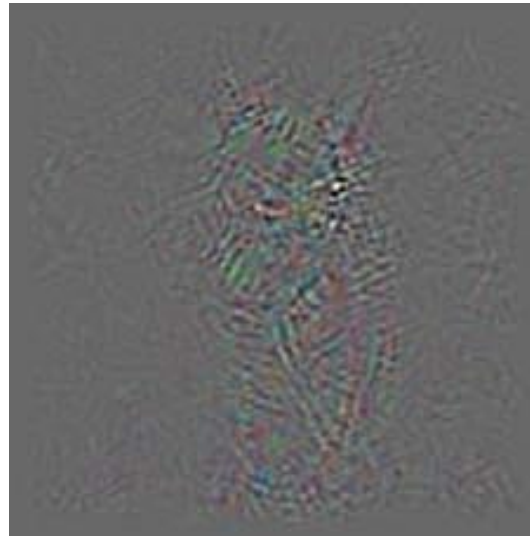
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**Gradients provide a one-shot means of perturbing the input that changes the output; They provide pixel-level importance scores**

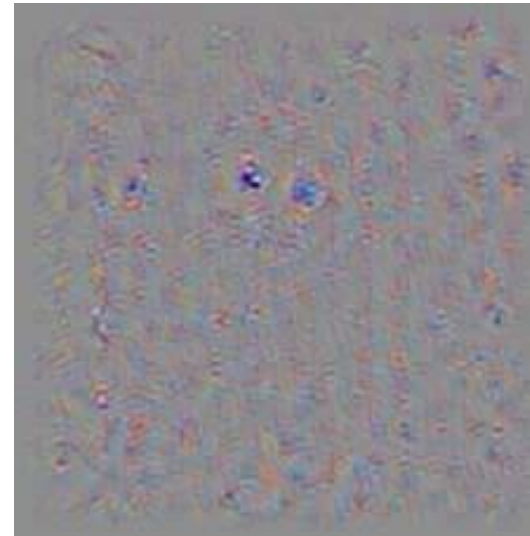
Input



Vanilla Gradients



Deconvolution Gradients



Guided Backpropagation



**However, localization remains an issue**



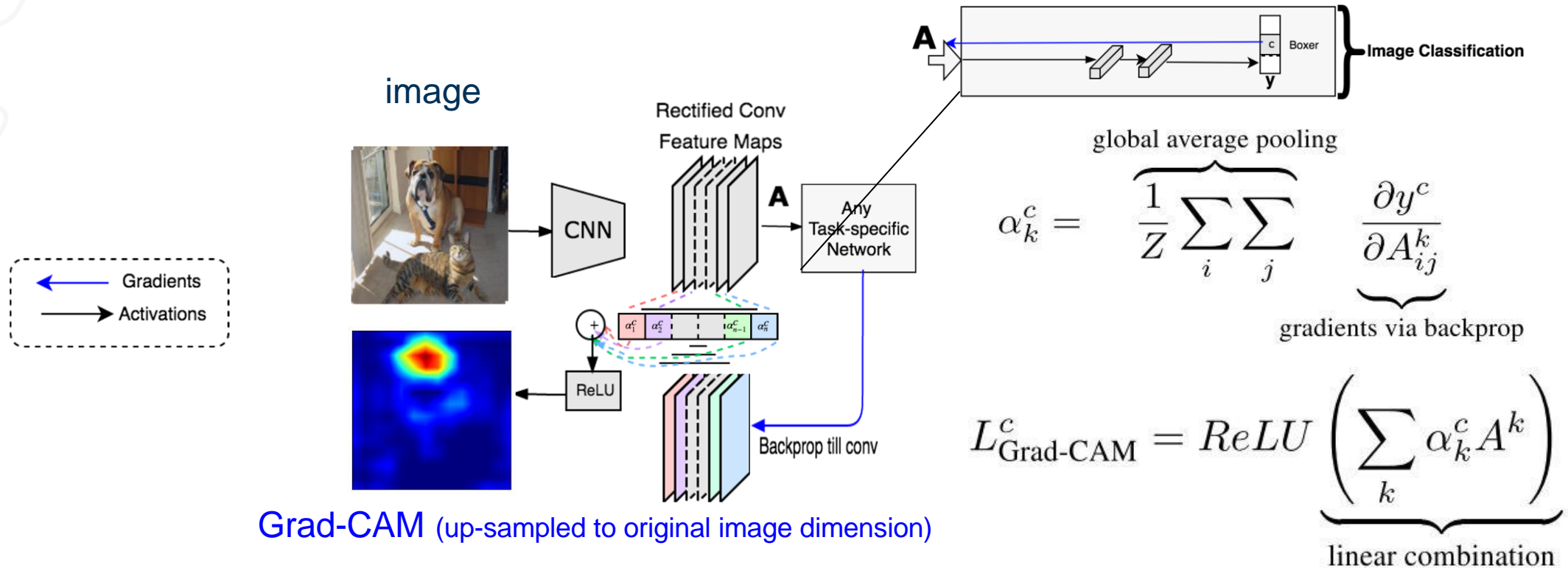
# Gradient and Activation-based Explanations

## GradCAM



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**Grad-CAM uses the gradient information flowing into the last convolutional layer of the CNN to assign importance values to each activation for a particular decision of interest.**





# Gradient and Activation-based Explanations

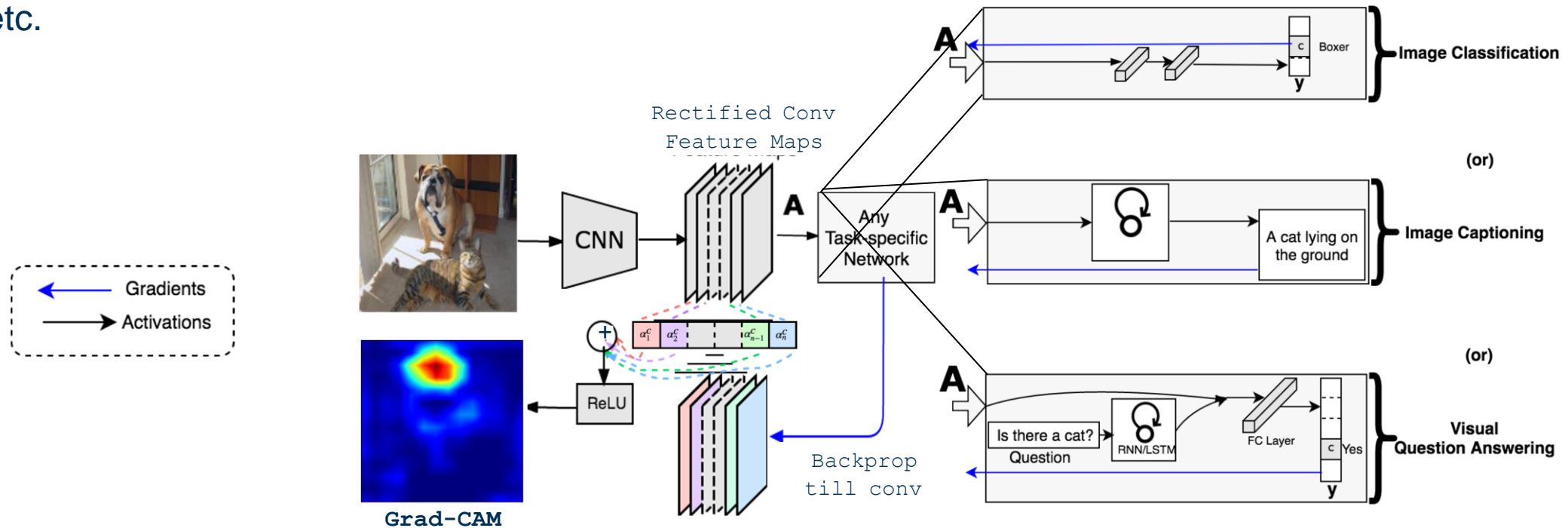
## GradCAM

Grad-CAM generalizes to any task:

- Image classification
- Image captioning
- Visual question answering
- etc.



Explanatory Paradigms in Neural Networks: Towards Relevant and Contextual Explanations





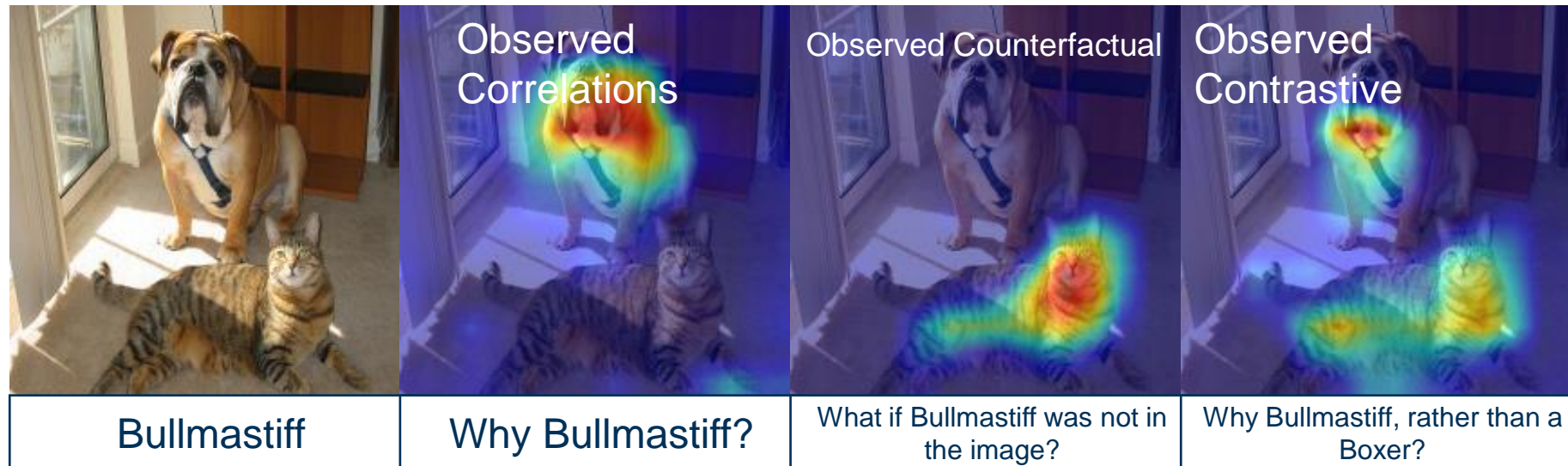
# Gradient and Activation-based Explanations

## Explanatory Paradigms



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**GradCAM provides answers to ‘*Why P?*’ questions. But different stakeholders require relevant and contextual explanations**





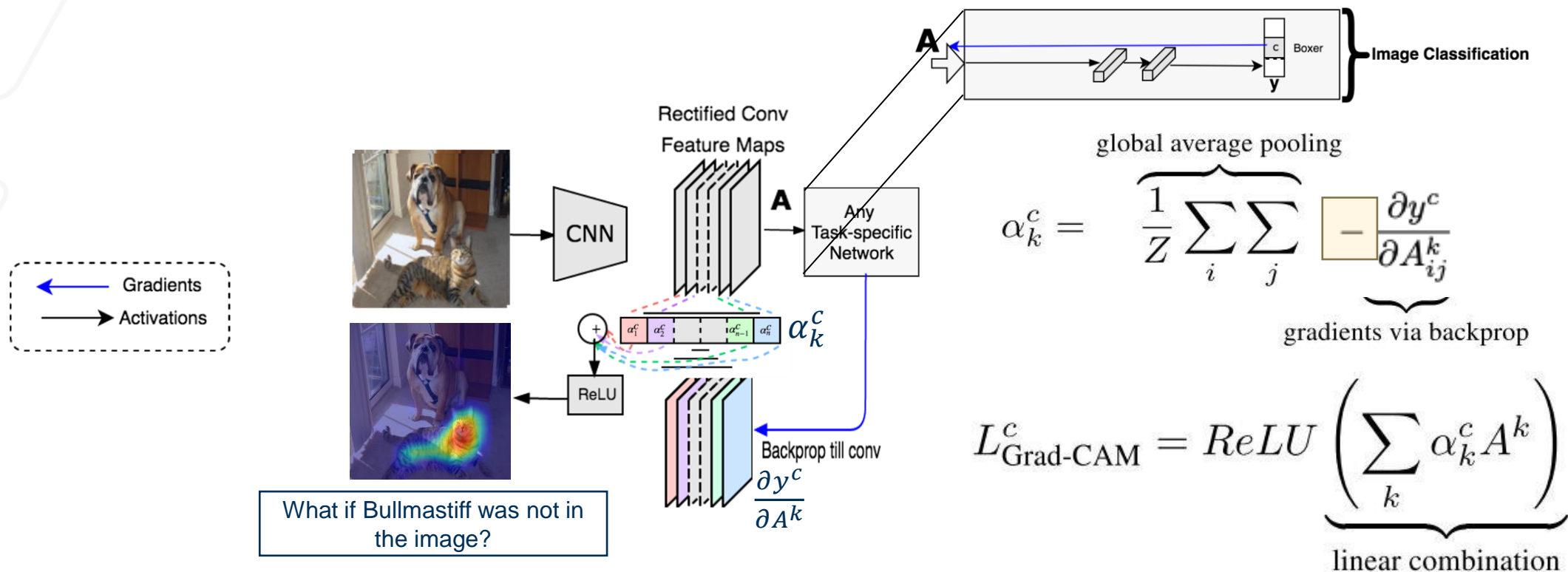
# Gradient and Activation-based Explanations

CounterfactualCAM: What if this region were absent in the image?



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In GradCAM, global average pool the negative of gradients to obtain  $\alpha^c$  for each kernel  $k$



Negating the gradients effectively removes these regions from analysis



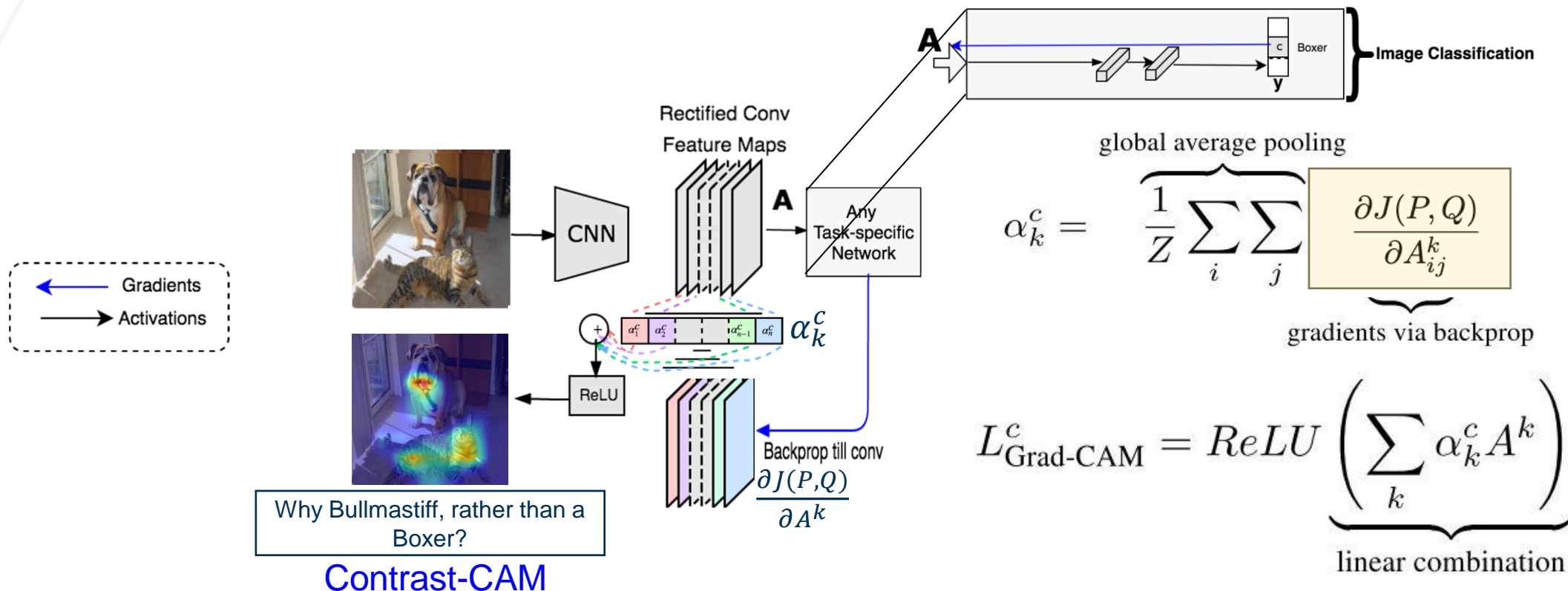
# Gradient and Activation-based Explanations

ContrastCAM: Why P, rather than Q?



Explanatory Paradigms in Neural Networks: Towards Relevant and Contextual Explanations

In GradCAM, backward pass the **loss between predicted class P and some contrast class Q** to last conv layer



Backpropagating the loss highlights the differences between classes P and Q.



# Gradient and Activation-based Explanations

## Results from GradCAM, CounterfactualCAM, and ContrastCAM



Explanatory Paradigms in Neural Networks: Towards Relevant and Contextual Explanations

Input Image	Grad-CAM	Contrast 1	Contrastive Explanation 1	Contrast 2	Contrastive Explanation 2
ImageNet dataset : Spoonbill	Grad-CAM : Why Spoonbill?	Representative Flamingo image	Why Spoonbill, rather than Flamingo?	Representative Pig image	Why Spoonbill, rather than Pig? Why not Spoonbill, with 100% confidence?
ImageNet dataset : Bull Mastiff	Grad-CAM : Why : Bull Mastiff?	Representative Boxer image	Why Bull Mastiff, rather than Boxer?	Representative Blue jay image	Why Bull Mastiff, rather than Blue jay? Why not Bull Mastiff, with 100% confidence?
CURE-TSR dataset : No-Left Image	Grad-CAM : Why No-Left?	Representative No-Right image	Why No-Left, rather than No-Right?	Representative Stop Sign	Why No-Left, rather than Stop? Why not No-Left with 100% confidence?
Stanford Cars Dataset: Bugatti Convertible	Grad-CAM: Why Bugatti Convertible?	Representative Bugatti Coupe image	Why Convertible, rather than Coupe?	Representative Audi A6 image	Why Bugatti, rather than Audi A6? Why not Bugatti with 100% confidence?



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Human Interpretable



# Gradient and Activation-based Explanations

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Human Interpretable

Same as Grad-CAM



# Gradient and Activation-based Explanations

## Results from GradCAM, CounterfactualCAM, and ContrastCAM



Explanatory Paradigms in Neural Networks: Towards Relevant and Contextual Explanations

SCAN ME

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Human Interpretable

Same as Grad-CAM

Not Human Interpretable



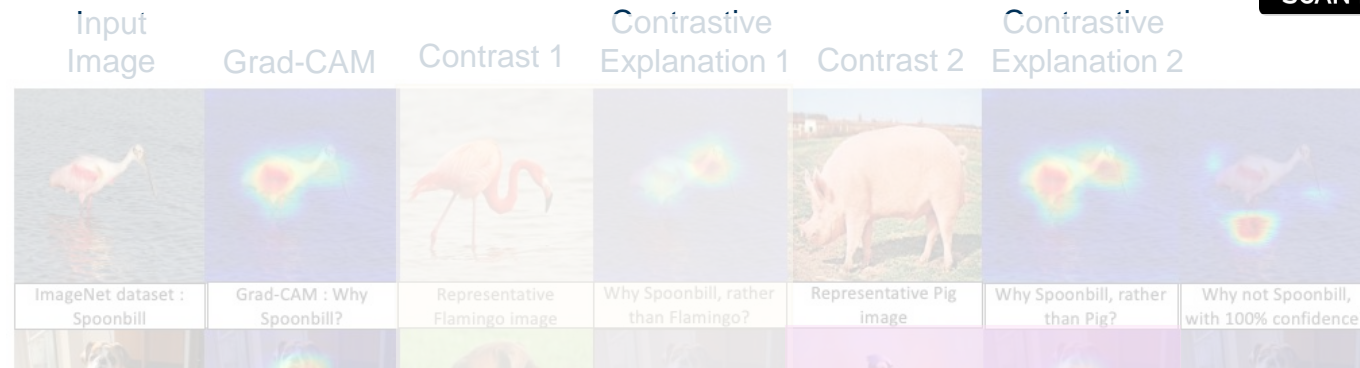
# Gradient and Activation-based Explanations

## Results from GradCAM, CounterfactualCAM, and ContrastCAM



Explanatory Paradigms in Neural Networks: Towards Relevant and Contextual Explanations

SCAN ME



Human Interpretable

Same as Grad-CAM





# Gradient and Activation-based Explanations

Results from GradCAM, CounterfactualCAM, and ContrastCAM



Explanatory Paradigms in Neural Networks: Towards Relevant and Contextual Explanations

SCAN ME

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Only traffic sign with a straight bottom-left edge – enough to say 'Not STOP Sign'

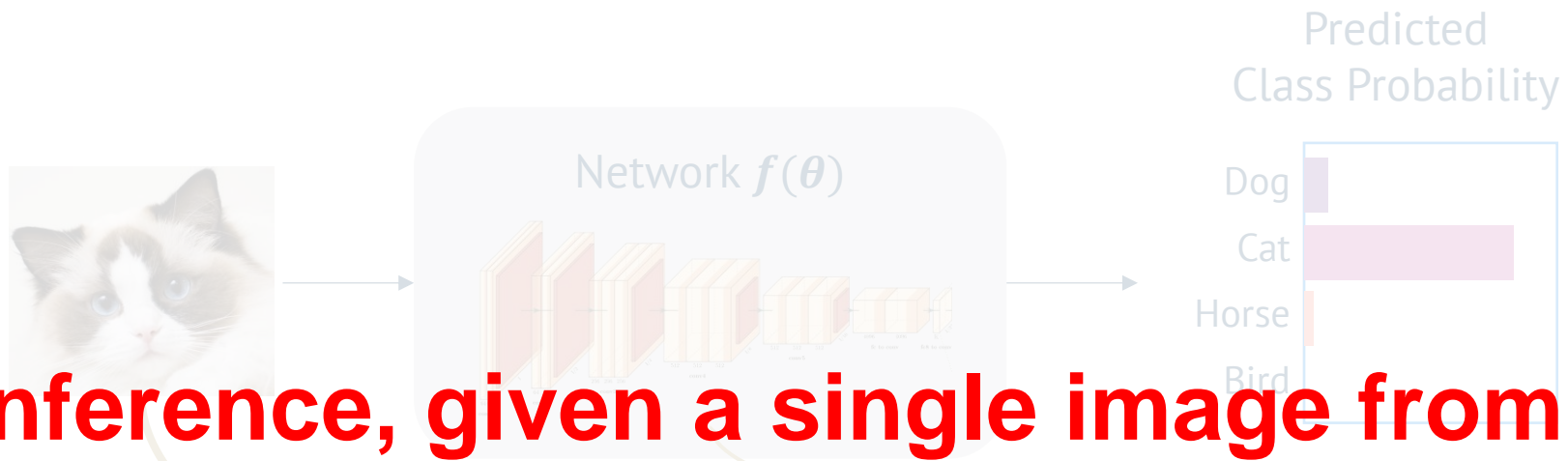


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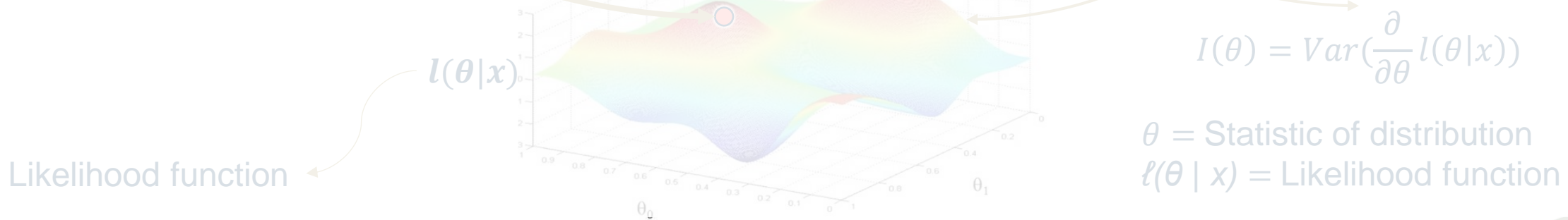


## A Callback...

Information at Inference



**At inference, given a single image from a single class, we can extract information about other classes**

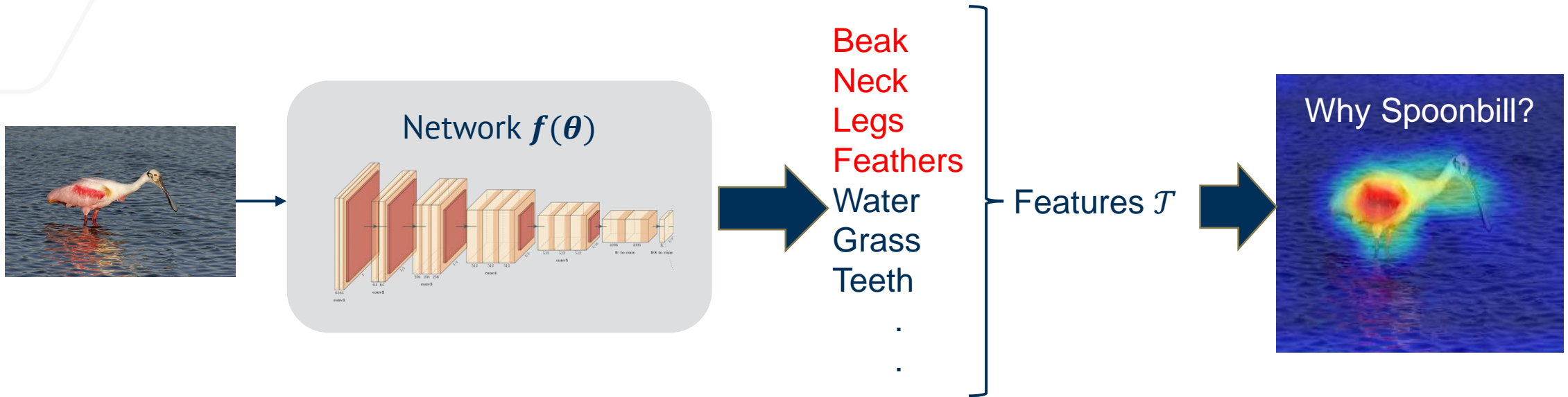




# Information at Inference

## Case Study: Explainability

$\mathcal{T}$  is the set of all features learned by a trained network

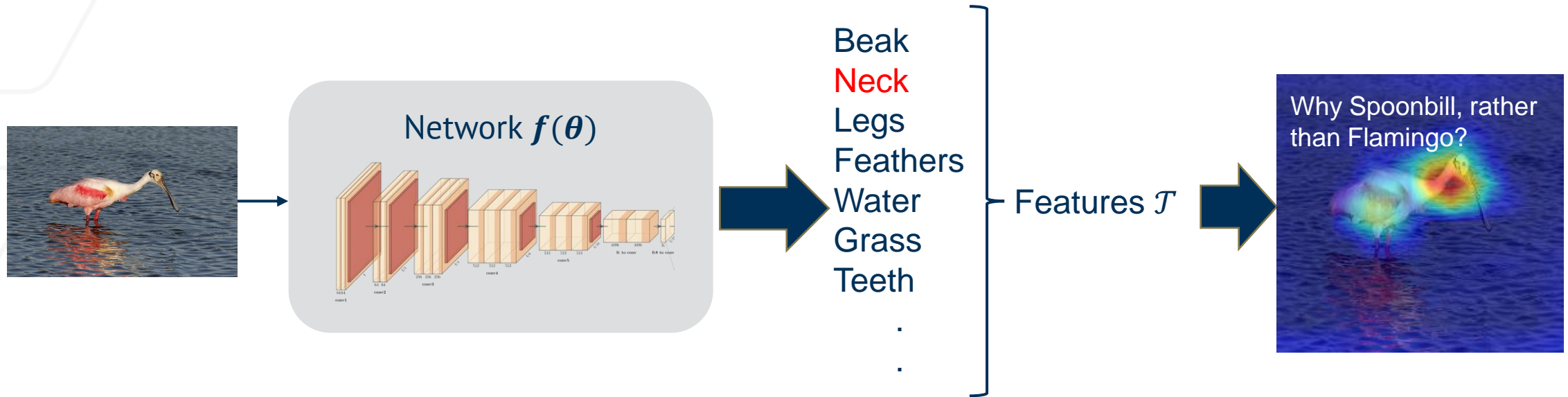




# Information at Inference

## Case Study: Explainability

Given only an image of a spoonbill, we can extract information about a Flamingo



All the requisite Information is stored within  $f(\theta)$

Goal: To extract and utilize this information – Introspective Learning!



## Case Study:

# Introspective Learning: A Two-Stage Approach for Inference in Neural Networks



Mohit Prabhushankar, PhD  
Postdoc



Ghassan AlRegib, PhD  
Professor





# Robustness in Neural Networks

## Why Robustness?



Introspective Learning: A Two-stage Approach for Inference in Neural Networks

How would humans resolve this challenge?

We Introspect!

- Why am I being shown this slide?
- Why images of muffins rather than pastries?
- What if the dog was a bullmastiff?





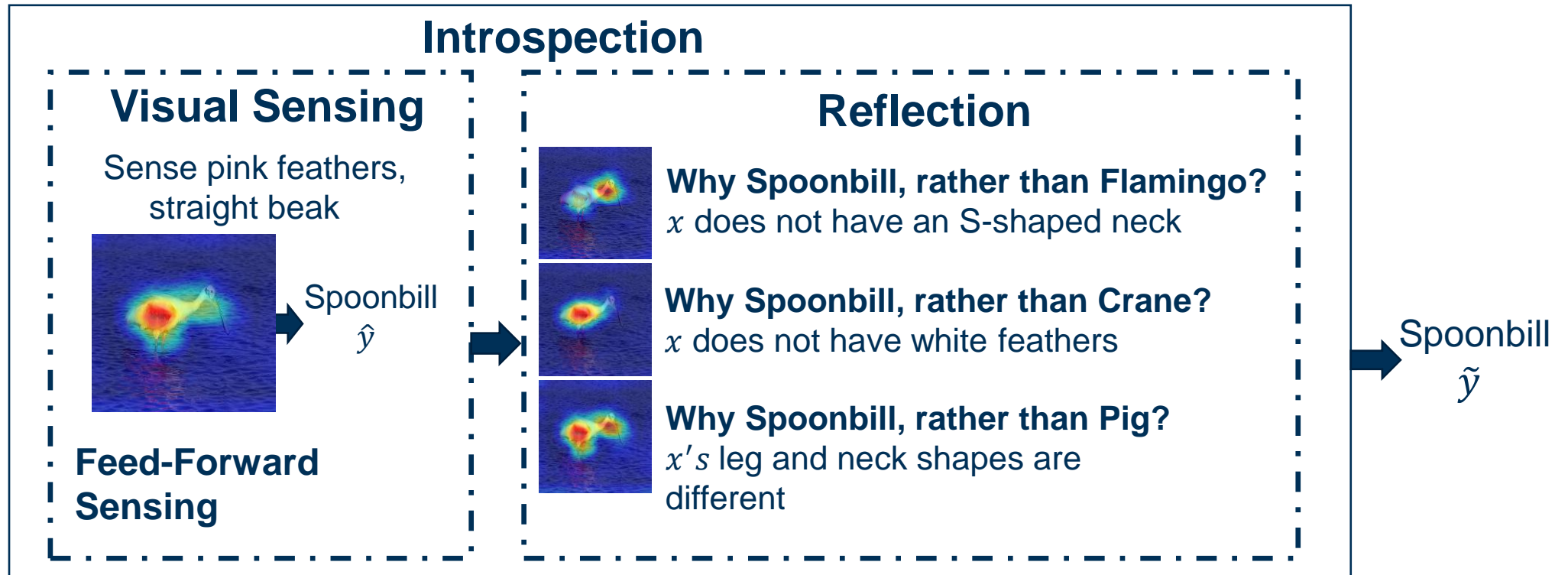
# Introspection

What is Introspection?



Introspective Learning: A Two-stage Approach for Inference in Neural Networks

Introspection Learning is a two-stage approach for Inference that combines visual sensing and reflection





# Introspection

## Introspection in Neural Networks



Introspective Learning: A Two-stage Approach for Inference in Neural Networks

**Introspection Learning is a two-stage approach for Inference that combines visual sensing and reflection**

**Goal : To simulate Introspection in Neural Networks**

***Definition :** We define introspections as answers to logical and targeted questions.*

**What are the possible targeted questions?**



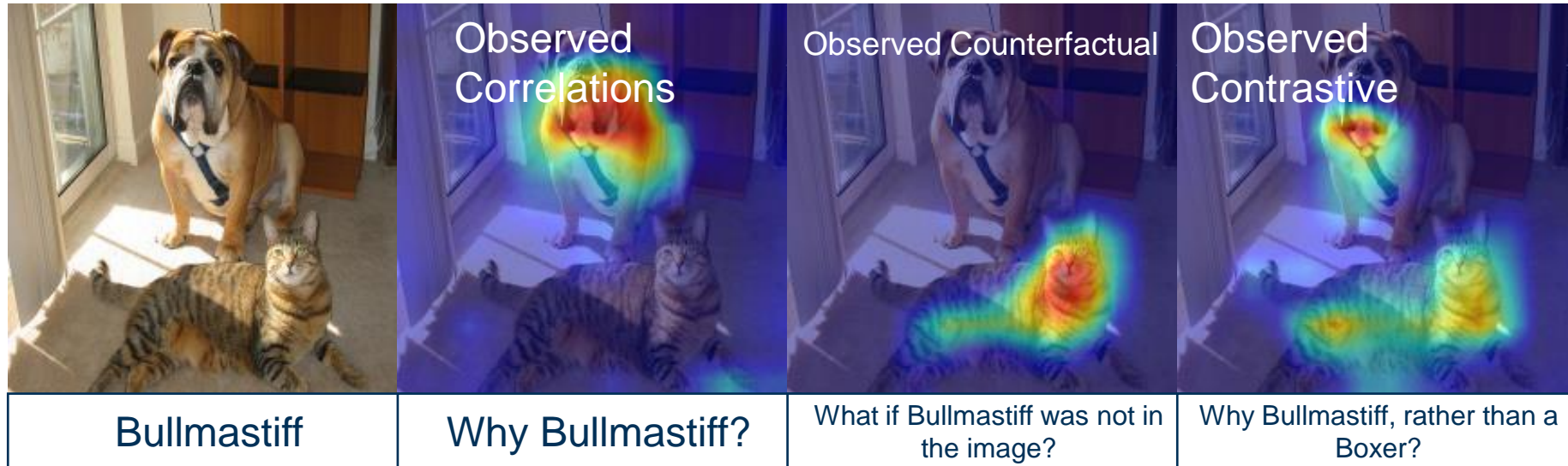
# Introspection

## Introspection in Neural Networks



Introspective Learning: A Two-stage Approach for Inference in Neural Networks

**Introspection Learning is a two-stage approach for Inference that combines visual sensing and reflection**



**What are the possible targeted questions?**





**Introspection Learning is a two-stage approach for Inference that combines visual sensing and reflection**

**Goal :** To simulate Introspection in Neural Networks

***Contrastive Definition :*** *Introspection answers questions of the form 'Why  $P$ , rather than  $Q$ ?' where  $P$  is a network prediction and  $Q$  is the introspective class.*

***Technical Definition :*** *Given a network  $f(x)$ , a datum  $x$ , and the network's prediction  $f(x) = \hat{y}$ , introspection in  $f(\cdot)$  is the measurement of change induced in the network parameters when a label  $Q$  is introduced as the label for  $x$ .*



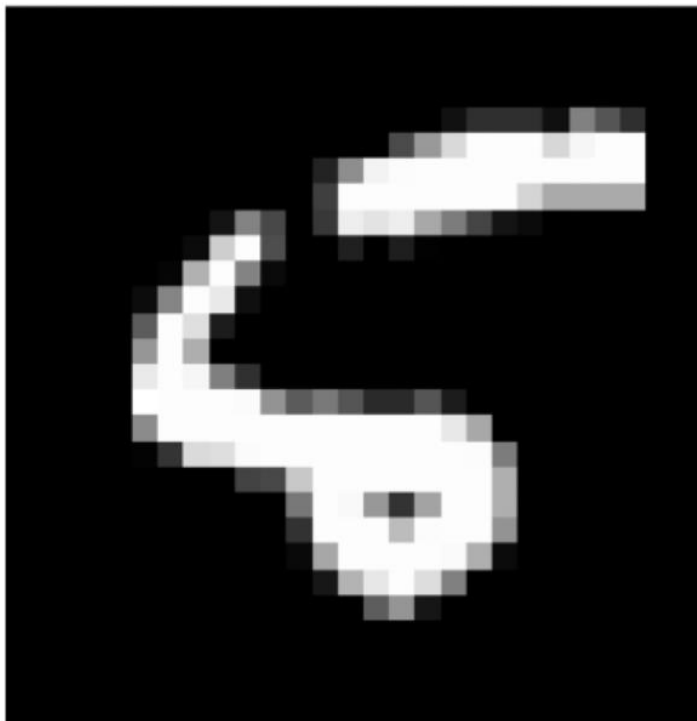
# Introspection

## Gradients as Features



Introspective Learning: A Two-stage Approach for Inference in Neural Networks

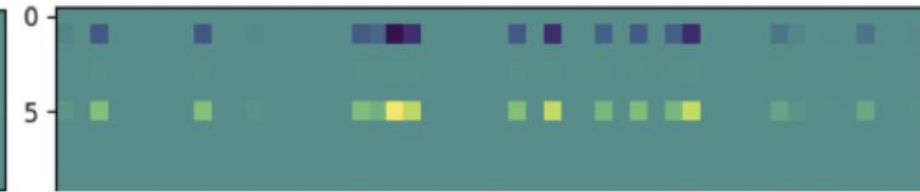
For a well-trained network, the gradients are sparse and informative



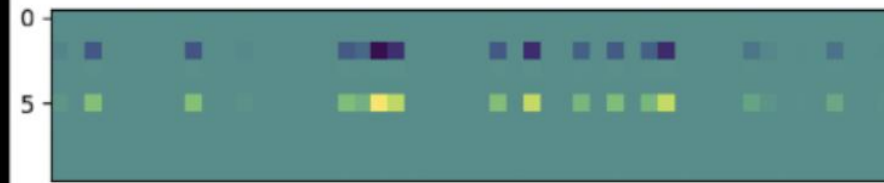
Input Image  $x$



Why 5, rather than 0?



Why 5, rather than 1?



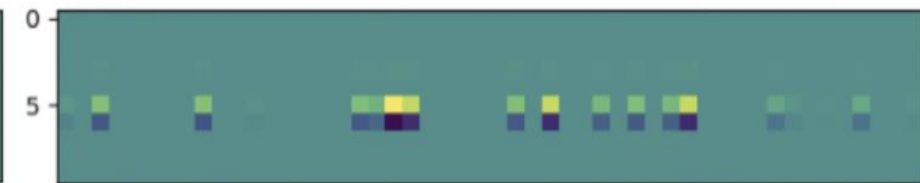
Why 5, rather than 2?



Why 5, rather than 4?



Why 5, rather than 5?



Why 5, rather than 6?



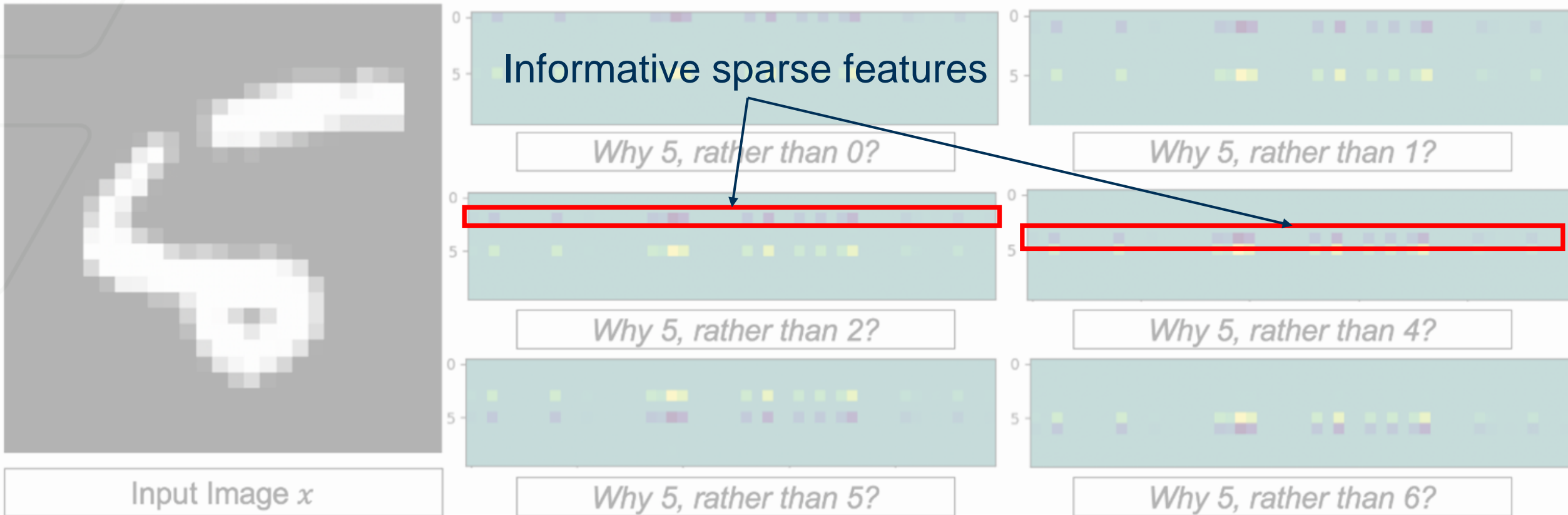
# Introspection

## Gradients as Features



Introspective Learning: A Two-stage Approach for Inference in Neural Networks

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# Introspection

## Gradients as Features



Introspective Learning: A Two-stage Approach for Inference in Neural Networks

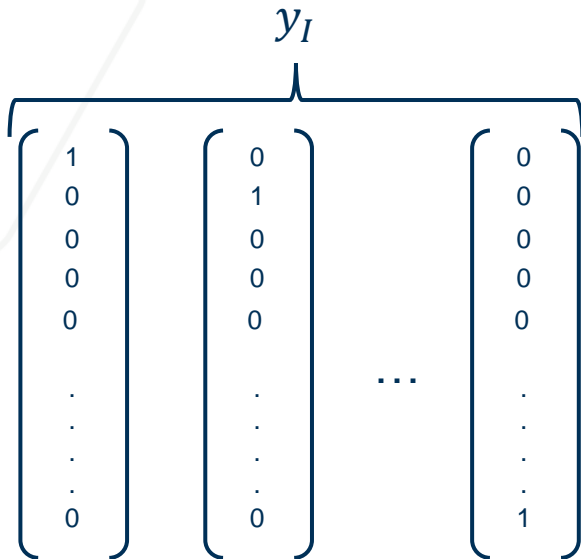
**For a well-trained network, the gradients are robust**

$\nabla_W$  = Gradients w.r.t. weights

$J$  = Loss function

$\hat{y}$  = Prediction

$$\text{Lemma 1: } \nabla_W J(y_I, \hat{y}) = -\nabla_W y_I + \nabla_W \log \left( 1 + \frac{y_{\hat{y}}}{2} \right).$$



Any change in class requires change in relationship between  $y_I$  and  $\hat{y}$



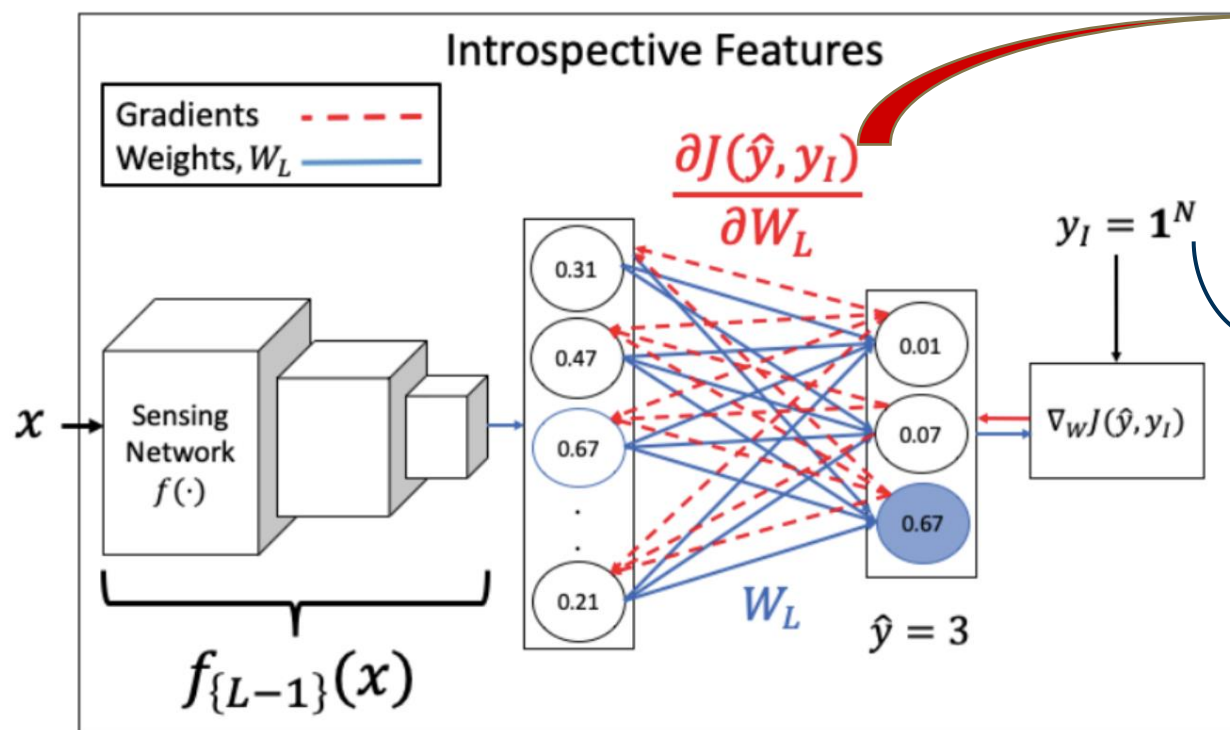
# Introspection

## Deriving Gradient Features



Introspective Learning: A Two-stage Approach for Inference in Neural Networks

Measure the loss between the prediction  $\hat{P}$  and a vector of all ones and backpropagate to obtain the introspective features



Normalized and vectorized gradients are introspective features

**Vector of all ones: A confounding label!**

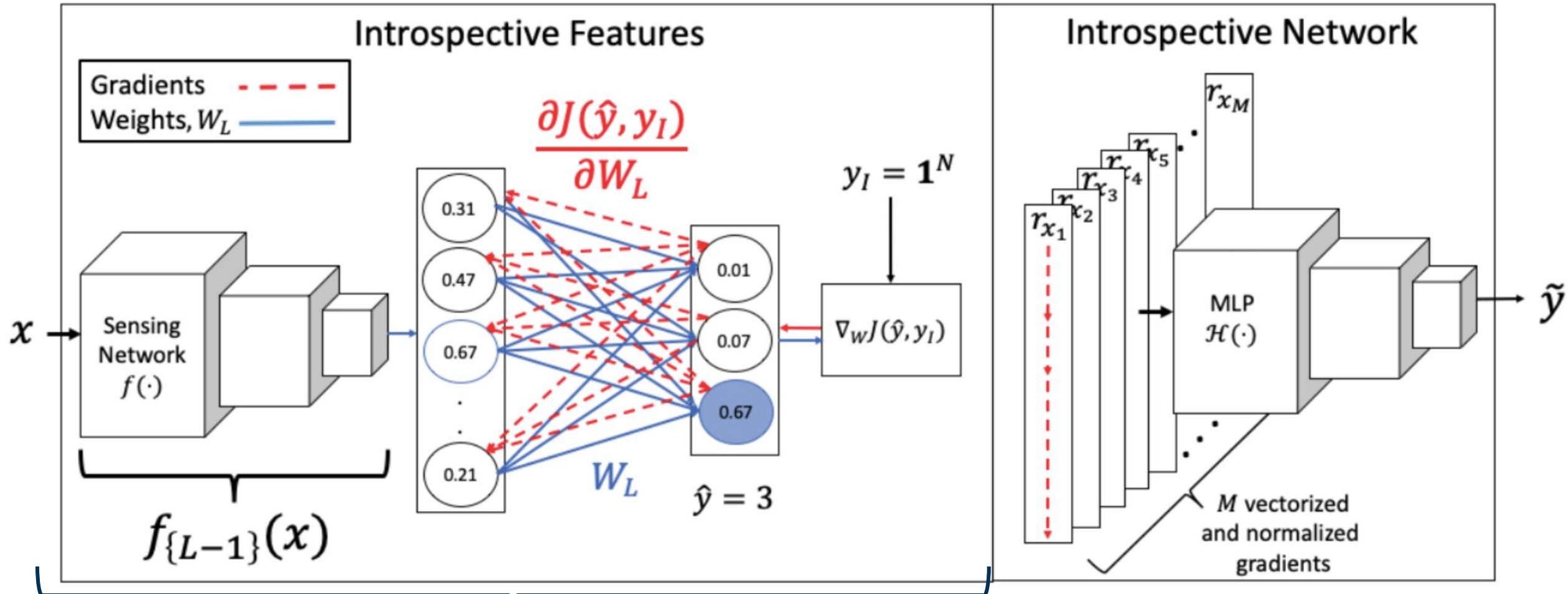


# Introspection

## Utilizing Gradient Features



Introspective Learning: A Two-stage Approach for Inference in Neural Networks



## Introspective Features

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[Tutorial@WACV'25] | [Ghassan AlRegib and Mohit Prabhushankar] | [Feb 28, 2025]

M. Prabhushankar, and G. AlRegib, "Introspective Learning: A Two-Stage Approach for Inference in Neural Networks," in *Advances in Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS)*, New Orleans, LA, Nov. 29 - Dec. 1 2022.





# Introspection

When is Introspection Useful?



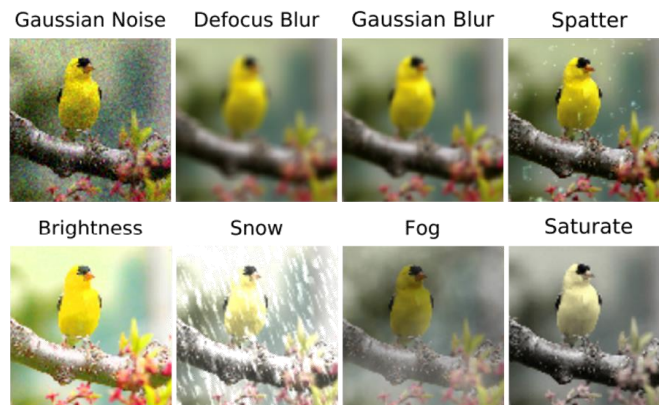
Introspective Learning: A Two-stage Approach for Inference in Neural Networks

**Introspection provides robustness when the train and test distributions are different**

We define robustness as being generalizable and calibrated to new testing data

Generalizable: Increased accuracy on OOD data

Calibrated: Reduces the difference between prediction accuracy and confidence





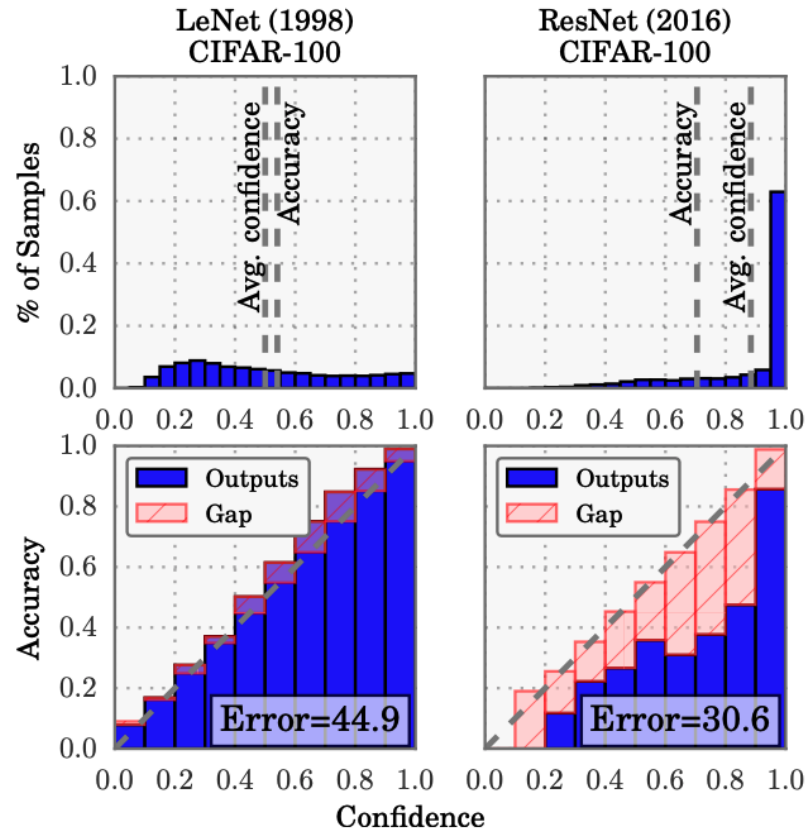
# Calibration

## A note on Calibration..



Introspective Learning: A Two-stage Approach for Inference in Neural Networks

**Calibration occurs when there is mismatch between a network's confidence and its accuracy**



- Larger the model, more misplaced is a network's confidence
- On ResNet, the gap between prediction accuracy and its corresponding confidence is significantly high



# Introspection in Neural Networks

## Generalization and Calibration results

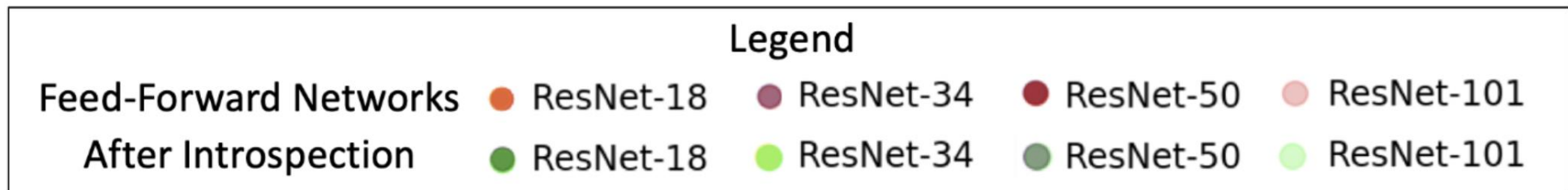
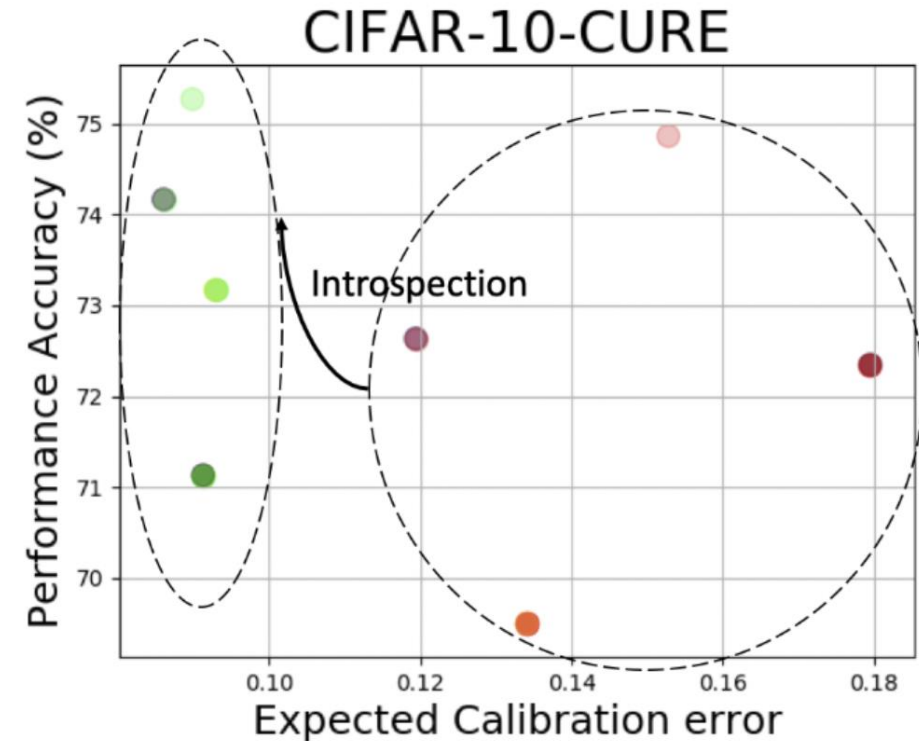
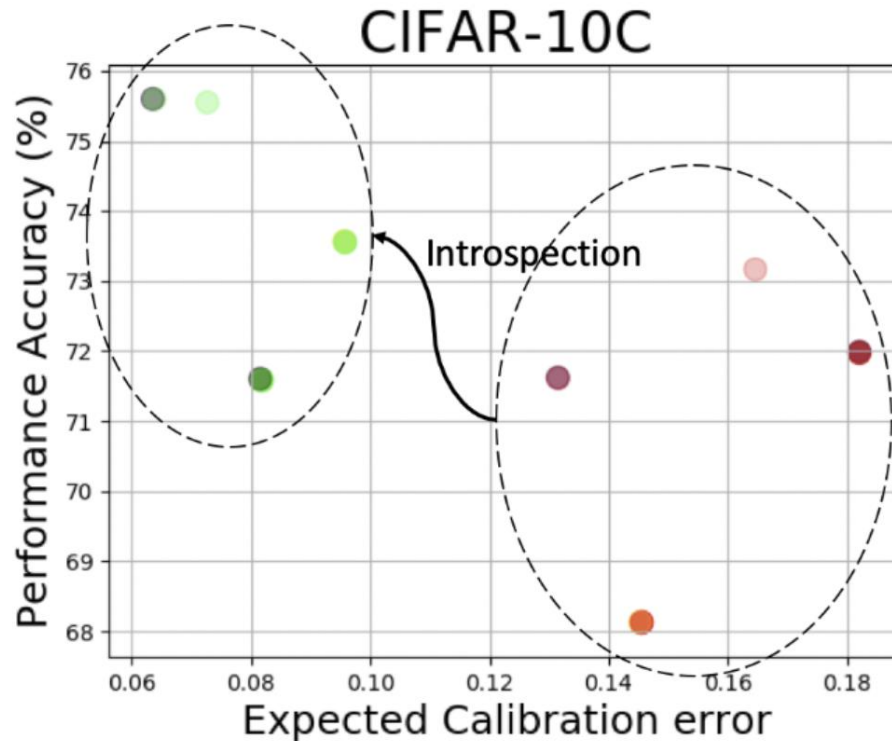


Introspective Learning: A Two-stage Approach for Inference in Neural Networks

Ideal: Top-left corner

Y-Axis: Generalization

X-Axis: Calibration





# Introspection in Neural Networks

## Plug-in nature of Introspection



Introspective Learning: A Two-stage Approach for Inference in Neural Networks

**Introspection is a light-weight option to resolve robustness issues**

Table 1: Introspecting on top of existing robustness techniques.

METHODS		ACCURACY
RESNET-18	FEED-FORWARD	67.89%
	INTROSPECTIVE	<b>71.4%</b>
DENOISING	FEED-FORWARD	65.02%
	INTROSPECTIVE	<b>68.86%</b>
ADVERSARIAL TRAIN (27)	FEED-FORWARD	68.02%
	INTROSPECTIVE	<b>70.86%</b>
SIMCLR (19)	FEED-FORWARD	70.28%
	INTROSPECTIVE	<b>73.32%</b>
AUGMENT NOISE (23)	FEED-FORWARD	76.86%
	INTROSPECTIVE	<b>77.98%</b>
AUGMIX (24)	FEED-FORWARD	89.85%
	INTROSPECTIVE	<b>89.89%</b>

Introspection is a **plug-in approach** that works on all networks and on any downstream task!



# Introspection in Neural Networks

## Plug-in nature of Introspection



Introspective Learning: A Two-stage Approach for Inference in Neural Networks

## Plug-in nature of Introspection benefits downstream tasks like OOD detection, Active Learning, and Image Quality Assessment!

Table 13: Performance of Contrastive Features against Feed-Forward Features and other Image Quality Estimators. Top 2 results in each row are highlighted.

Database	PSNR HA	IW SSIM	SR SIM	FSIMc	Per SIM	CSV	SUM MER	Feed-Forward UNIQUE	Introspective UNIQUE
Outlier Ratio (OR, ↓)									
MULTI	0.013	0.013	<b>0.000</b>	0.016	0.004	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>
TID13	<b>0.615</b>	0.701	0.632	0.728	0.655	0.687	<b>0.620</b>	0.640	<b>0.620</b>
Root Mean Square Error (RMSE, ↓)									
MULTI	11.320	10.049	8.686	10.794	9.898	9.895	<b>8.212</b>	9.258	<b>7.943</b>
TID13	0.652	0.688	0.619	0.687	0.643	0.647	0.630	<b>0.615</b>	<b>0.596</b>
Pearson Linear Correlation Coefficient (PLCC, ↑)									
MULTI	0.801	0.847	0.888	0.821	0.852	0.852	<b>0.901</b>	0.872	<b>0.908</b>
	-1	-1	0	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	
TID13	0.851	0.832	0.866	0.832	0.855	0.853	0.861	<b>0.869</b>	<b>0.877</b>
	-1	-1	0	-1	-1	-1	0	0	
Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient (SRCC, ↑)									
MULTI	0.715	<b>0.884</b>	0.867	0.867	0.818	0.849	<b>0.884</b>	0.867	<b>0.887</b>
	-1	0	0	0	-1	-1	0	0	
TID13	0.847	0.778	0.807	0.851	0.854	0.846	0.856	<b>0.860</b>	<b>0.865</b>
	-1	-1	-1	-1	0	-1	0	0	
Kendall's Rank Correlation Coefficient (KRCC)									
MULTI	0.532	<b>0.702</b>	0.678	0.677	0.624	0.655	0.698	0.679	<b>0.702</b>
	-1	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	
TID13	0.666	0.598	0.641	0.667	<b>0.678</b>	0.654	0.667	0.667	<b>0.677</b>
	0	-1	-1	0	0	0	0	0	

Table 2: Recognition accuracy of Active Learning strategies.

Methods	Architecture	Original Testset		Gaussian Noise	
		R-18	R-34	R-18	R-34
Entropy (31)	Feed-Forward	0.365	0.358	0.244	0.249
	Introspective	0.365	0.359	<b>0.258</b>	<b>0.255</b>
Least (31)	Feed-Forward	0.371	0.359	0.252	0.25
	Introspective	0.373	0.362	<b>0.264</b>	<b>0.26</b>
Margin (32)	Feed-Forward	0.38	0.369	0.251	0.253
	Introspective	0.381	0.373	<b>0.265</b>	<b>0.263</b>
BALD (34)	Feed-Forward	0.393	0.368	0.26	0.253
	Introspective	0.396	0.375	<b>0.273</b>	<b>0.263</b>
BADGE (33)	Feed-Forward	0.388	0.37	0.25	0.247
	Introspective	0.39	0.37	<b>0.265</b>	<b>0.260</b>

Table 3: Out-of-distribution Detection of existing techniques compared between feed-forward and introspective networks.

Methods	OOD Datasets	FPR (95% at TPR) ↓	Detection Error ↓	AUROC ↑
Feed-Forward/Introspective				
MSP (35)	Textures	58.74/19.66	18.04/7.49	88.56/97.79
	SVHN	61.41/51.27	16.92/15.67	89.39/91.2
	Places365	58.04/54.43	17.01/15.07	89.39/91.3
	LSUN-C	27.95/27.5	9.42/10.29	96.07/95.73
ODIN (36)	Textures	52.3/9.31	22.17/6.12	84.91/91.9
	SVHN	66.81/48.52	23.51/15.86	83.52/91.07
	Places365	42.21/51.87	16.23/15.71	91.06/90.95
	LSUN-C	6.59/23.66	5.54/10.2	98.74/95.87

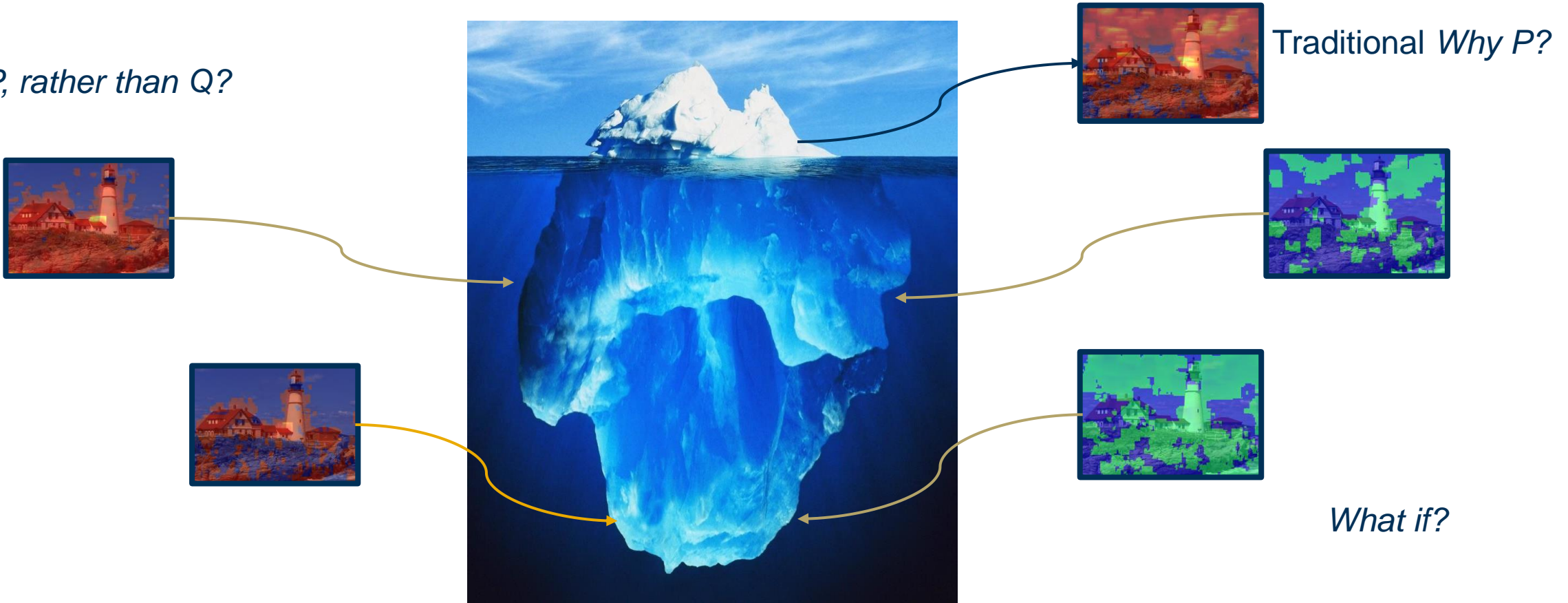


# Information at Inference

## Implicit Knowledge in Neural Networks – Inferential Machine Learning

**Trained Neural Networks have a wealth of implicit stored knowledge. Inferential Machine Learning aims to ‘transmute’ this knowledge for other tasks**

*Why P, rather than Q?*





# Inferential Machine Learning

## Part 3: Uncertainty and Intervenableity at Inference



# Objective

## Objective of the Tutorial

**To discuss methodologies that promote robust and fair inference in neural networks**

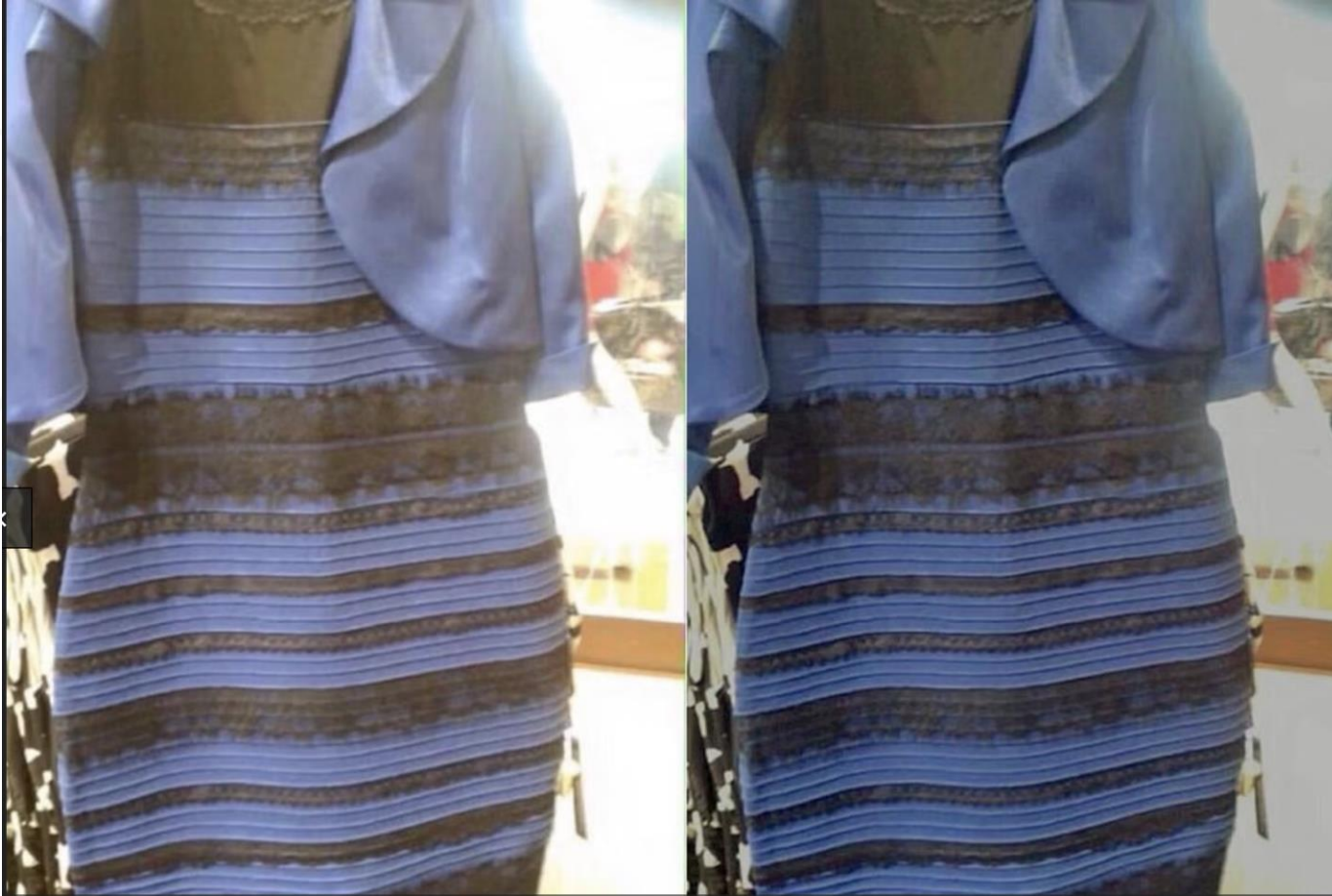
- Part 1: Inference in Neural Networks
- Part 2: Explainability at Inference
- **Part 3: Uncertainty and Intervenability at Inference**
  - Uncertainty Basics
  - Uncertainty Quantification (UQ) in Classification
  - UQ Methods
  - Case Study 1: Gradient-based UQ
  - Case Study 2: Uncertainty in Explainability
  - Inferential Machine Learning
- Part 4: Interventions at Inference
- Part 5: Conclusions and Future Directions



# Uncertainty

What is Uncertainty?

**Uncertainty is a model knowing that it does not know**



White and Gold  
Or  
Blue and Black?

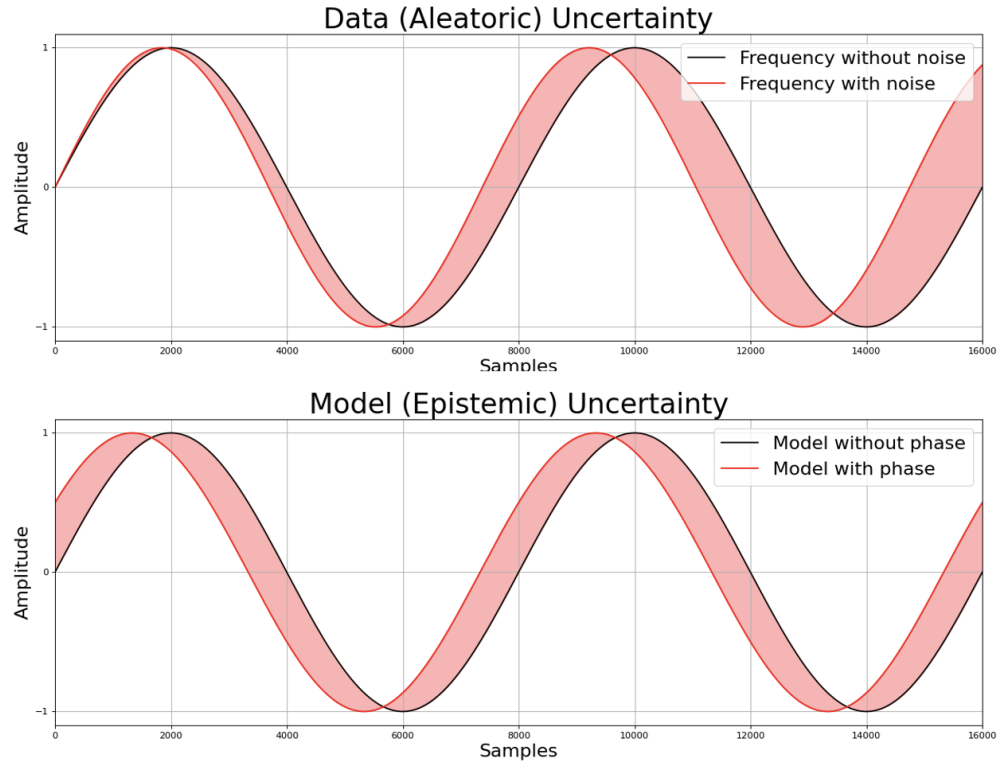




# Uncertainty

## What is Uncertainty?

**Uncertainty is a model knowing that it does not know**



A slightly more complex example:

- **Data (Aleatoric) Uncertainty:** When there is inherent noise in available data or in measurement of data
- **Model (Epistemic) Uncertainty:** When our chosen model (network) is incapable of modeling the data



# Uncertainty

What is Uncertainty?

**Uncertainty is a model knowing that it does not know**

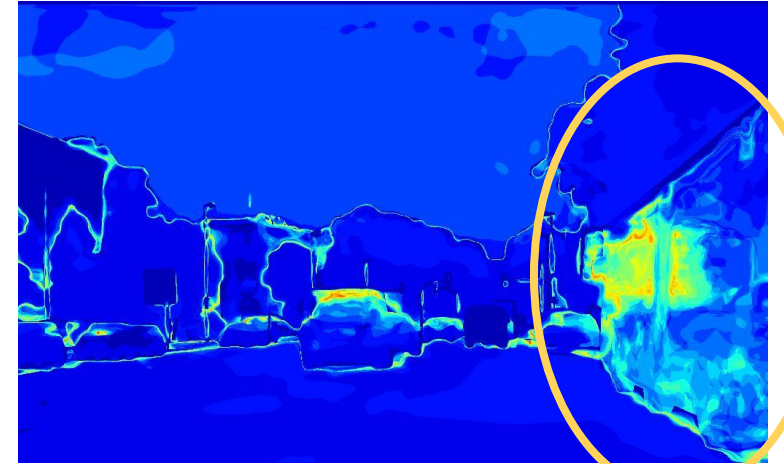
**Input Image**



**Neural Network Output**



**Uncertainty Heatmap**





# Uncertainty

## Uncertainty Basics

In classification, Uncertainty Quantification (UQ) implies providing a classification label and its associated uncertainty

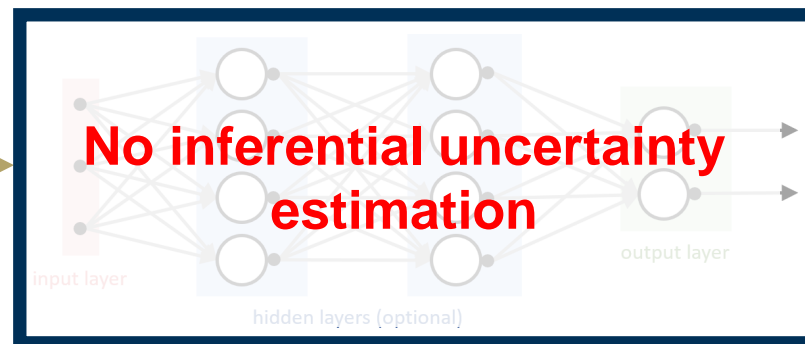
Identify STOP as the only sign with bottom-left corner

Consider a network trained on 14 signs from CURE-TSR



**Class: Stop Sign**  
**Confidence: 98%**  
**Uncertainty: 0.1%**

Network has not seen GO sign but is shown at inference



**Class: Stop Sign**  
**Confidence: 98%**  
**Uncertainty: 0.1%**

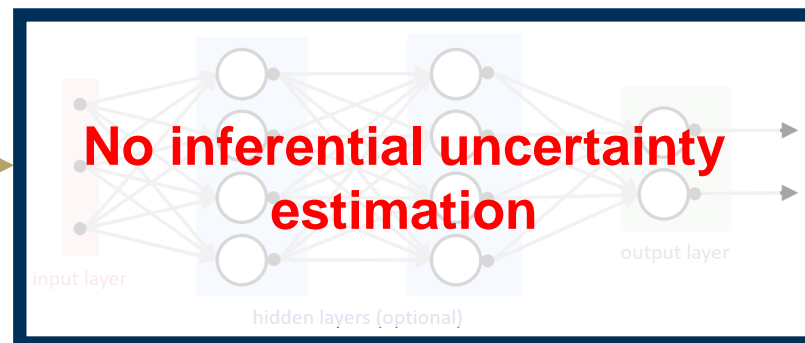


# Uncertainty

## Uncertainty Basics

In classification, Uncertainty Quantification (UQ) implies providing a classification label and its associated uncertainty

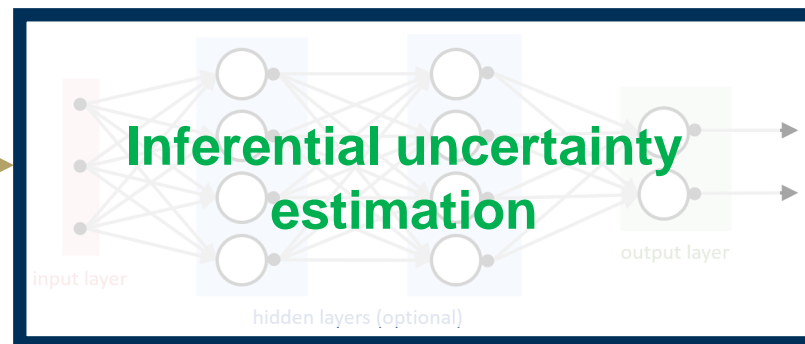
Network has not seen GO sign but is shown at inference



**Class: Stop Sign**  
**Confidence: 98%**  
**Uncertainty: 0.1%**

Identify that the letters and color are different

Network has not seen GO sign but is shown at inference



**Class: Stop Sign**  
**Confidence: 98%**  
**Uncertainty: 98%**



# Uncertainty

## Uncertainty Basics: Informal Definitions

### Probability vs Confidence vs Likelihood vs Uncertainty vs Calibration

- **Probability:** Transform logits (final layer outputs) between 0 and 1, Ex: Softmax probability. The input has some probability of belonging to all the trained classes
- **Confidence:** In non-conformal settings, confidence is a point estimate, Ex: the argmax of probabilities of softmax confidences. In the conformal setting (which we do not cover in this tutorial), confidence is an interval
- **Likelihood:** In Bayesian settings, likelihood refers to how likely the model fits the data or the 'goodness-of-fit' of the model. It is related to probability via bayes theorem
- **Uncertainty:** A probability distribution, (ideally) formed from feature outputs that showcase 'non-goodness' of fit of the underlying model or 'non-goodness' of training distribution compared to test distribution
- **Calibration:** A dataset estimate that shows the disparity between confidence of all point estimates in the dataset against their accuracy



# Uncertainty

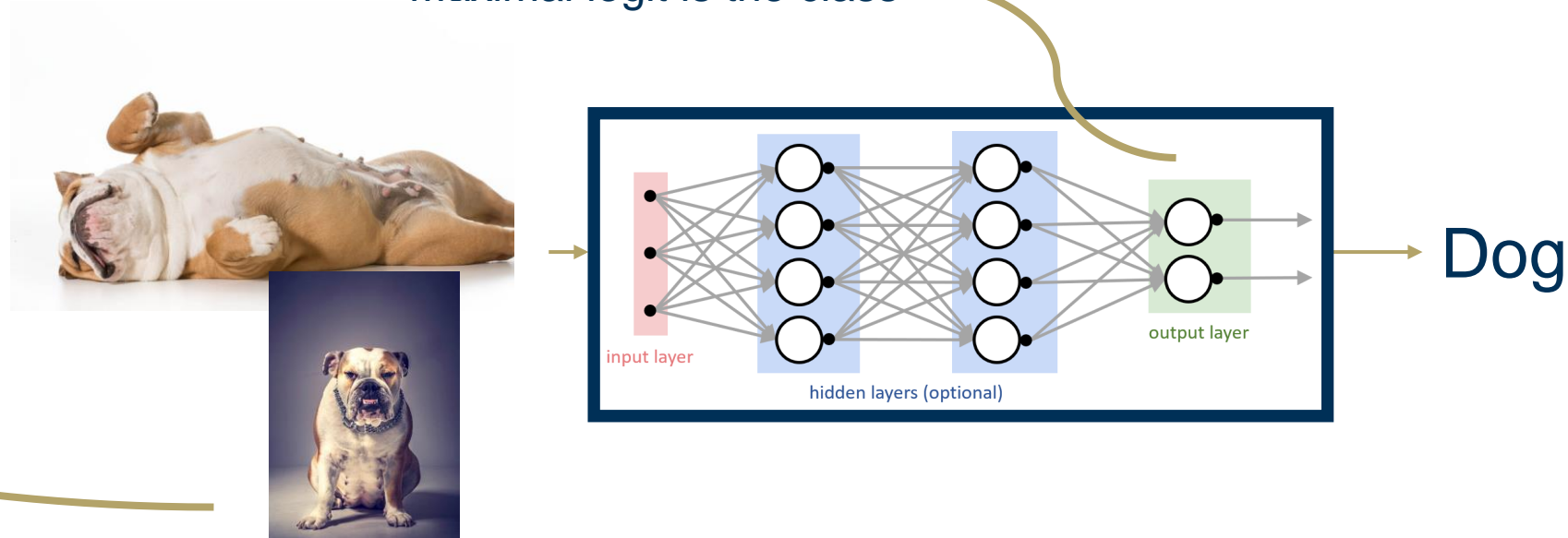
## Challenge in Uncertainty Quantification

**Primary purpose of neural networks (ex: classification) and Uncertainty Quantification do not always go hand-in-hand!**

**Required** information is task dependent! A well-trained classification network ignores the attributes of the dog

Dog asking for belly rub = Angry dog!

All **required** information is passed to last layer  
Maximal logit is the class





# Uncertainty

## Simple Uncertainty Quantification 1: Negative Log Likelihood

**In Bayesian settings, uncertainty is treated as inverse likelihood; consequently, lower the negative of likelihood, lower the uncertainty**

- Recall that '*In Bayesian settings, **likelihood** refers to how likely the model fits the data or the 'goodness-of-fit' of the model*
- **Central Thesis:** Negative log-likelihood measures the 'fit' of a model by looking at all output logits
- **Cons: Requires ground truth at inference to measure likelihood.** Generally substituted with the prediction



# Uncertainty

## Simple Uncertainty Quantification 2: Hypothesis Margin

Difference between probability (or logits) of the predicted class and next most-likely class<sup>1</sup>

Simple => No changes in network architecture while training

- Commonly used to **rank the difficulty** of unlabeled samples in Active Learning
- **Central thesis:** During training, networks implicitly learn the difference between classes and find features that maximize the difference (similar to contrastive explanations)
- **Pros:** No need for ground truth at inference
- **Cons:** Requires a complex network that can learn implicit differences

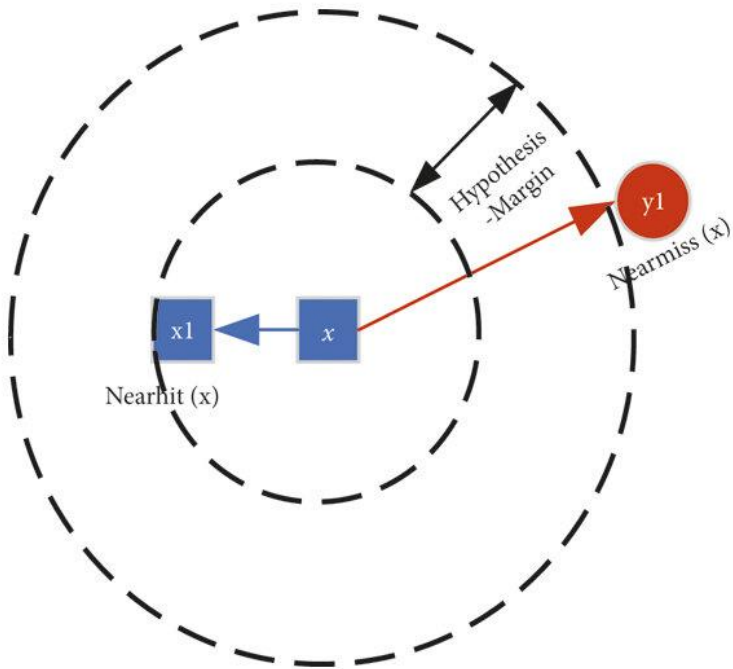


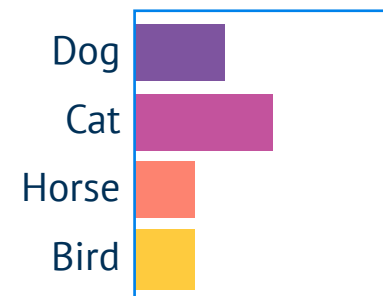
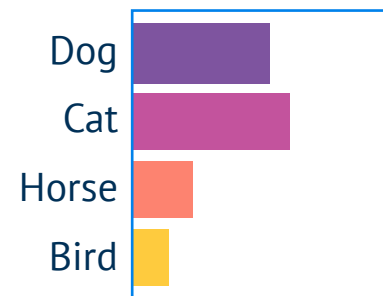
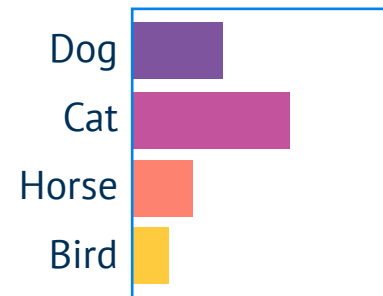
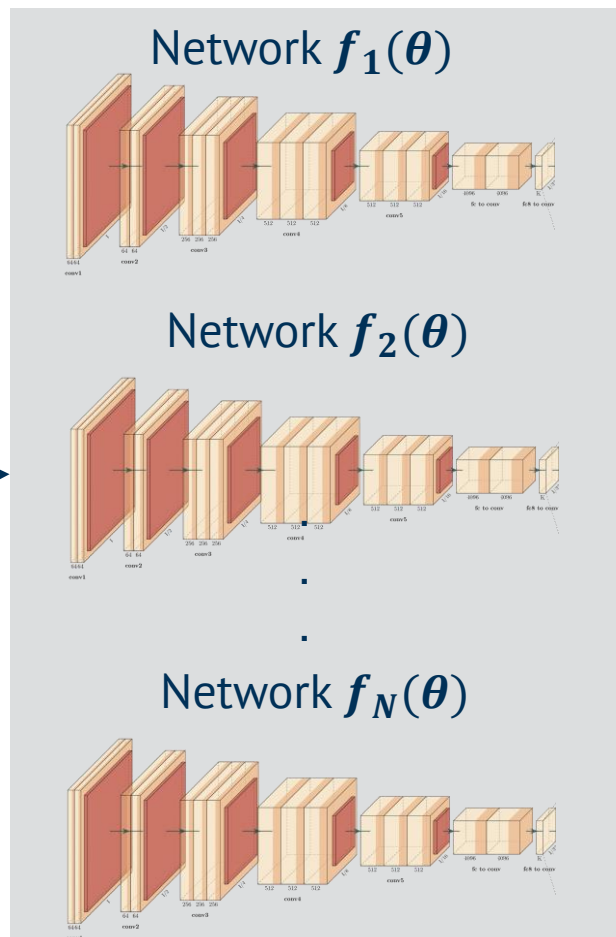
Fig. from Tian, Yanjia, and Xiang Feng. "Large Margin Graph Embedding-Based Discriminant Dimensionality Reduction." *Scientific Programming* 2021.1 (2021): 2934362.



# Uncertainty

## Uncertainty Quantification in Neural Networks

### Via Ensembles<sup>1</sup>



Variation within outputs is the uncertainty.

Commonly referred to as **Prediction Uncertainty**.

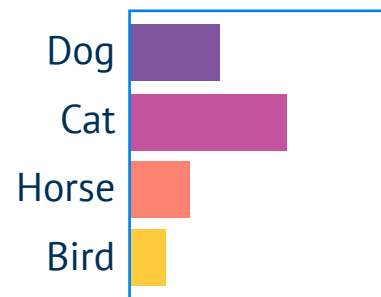
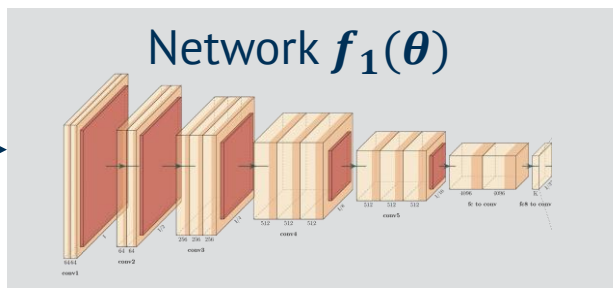
**Requires multiple trained models – not exactly an inferential method**



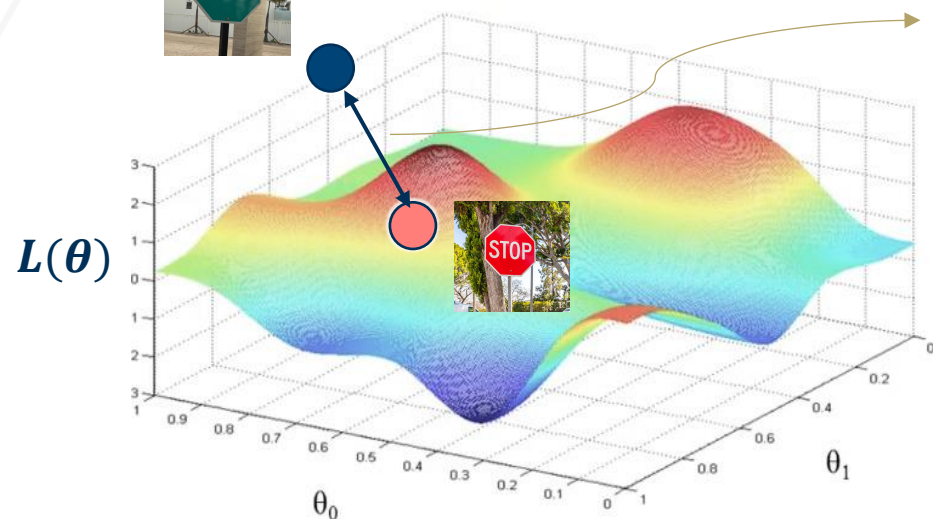
# Uncertainty

## Uncertainty Quantification in Neural Networks

### Via Single pass methods<sup>1</sup>



Uncertainty quantification using a single network and a single pass



Calculate distance from some trained clusters

**Does not require multiple networks!**

**However, requires training data/validation set/addition models at inference**



# Uncertainty

## Iterative Uncertainty Quantification

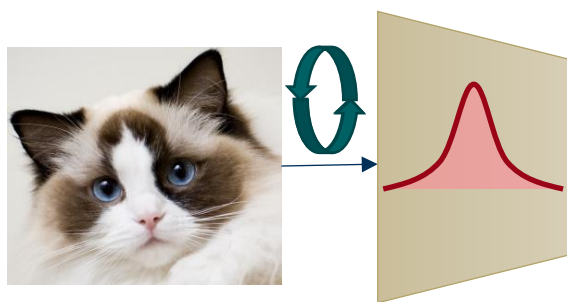
**Via Monte-Carlo Dropout<sup>1</sup>: During inference repeated evaluations with the same input give different results**

Different forward passes with dropout simulate  $f_1(\cdot), f_2(\cdot), f_3(\cdot)$ .

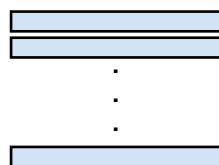
Challenge: intractable denominator

$$p(W|x) = \frac{p(x|W)p(W)}{\int p(x|W)p(W)dW}$$

$N$  forward passes



$N$  Logits



Uncertainty  
Score

Final prediction is the mean of the outputs

Variation or entropy of logits is the uncertainty

$$q(W_N) \approx p(W_N|x)$$



# Uncertainty

## Iterative Uncertainty Quantification

**Via Monte-Carlo Dropout<sup>1</sup>: During inference repeated evaluations with the same input give different results**

$$U_{epistemic} = H \left( \underbrace{\frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \text{Softmax} \left( f_{\widehat{w}_t}(x) \right)}_{U_{Predictive}} \right) - \underbrace{\frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T H \left( \text{Softmax} \left( f_{\widehat{w}_t}(x) \right) \right)}_{U_{aleatoric}}$$

$U_{Predictive}$

$U_{aleatoric}$

Entropy of expectation of predictions

Expectation of individual entropy of predictions



# Uncertainty

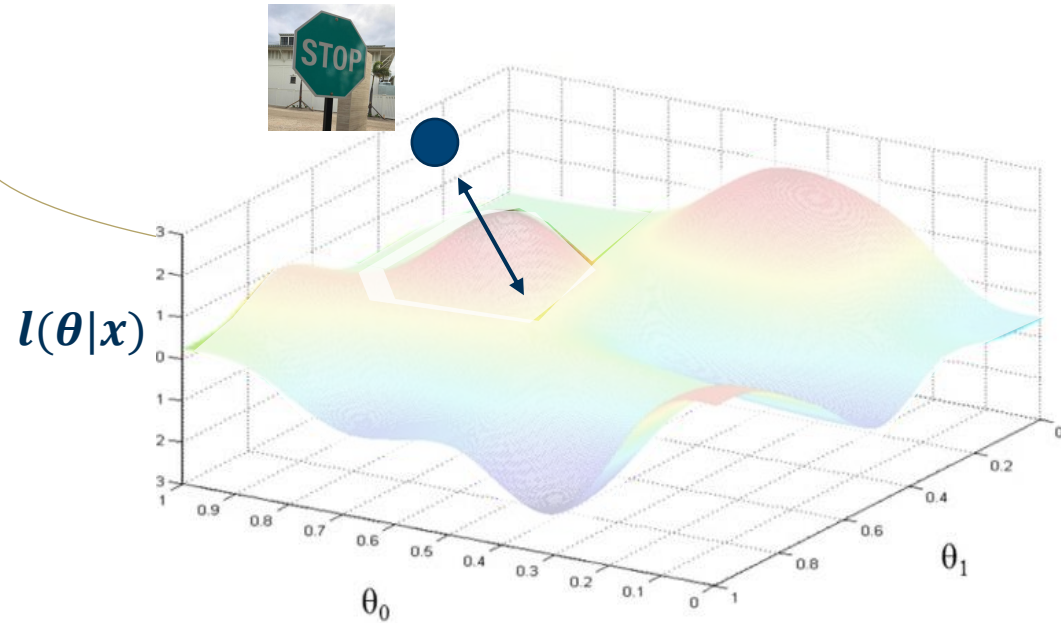
## Gradients as Single pass Uncertainty Quantification

Use gradients to characterize the novel data at Inference, without global information

Distance from unknown cluster

Method:

**Extracting Gradient Information!**





# Uncertainty

## Uncertainty and Inferential Machine Learning

**Uncertainty is a ‘catch-all’ term, used in multiple applications**

- Explainability
- Out-of-distribution Detection
- Adversarial Detection
- Anomaly Detection
- Corruption Detection
- Misprediction Detection
- Causal Analysis
- Open-set Recognition
- Noise Robustness
- Uncertainty Visualization
- Image Quality Assessment
- Saliency Detection

Applications  
relevant during  
model inference

### Relevant at Deployment:

Provide a specific ‘uncertainty measure’ that objectively allows users to trust neural network predictions

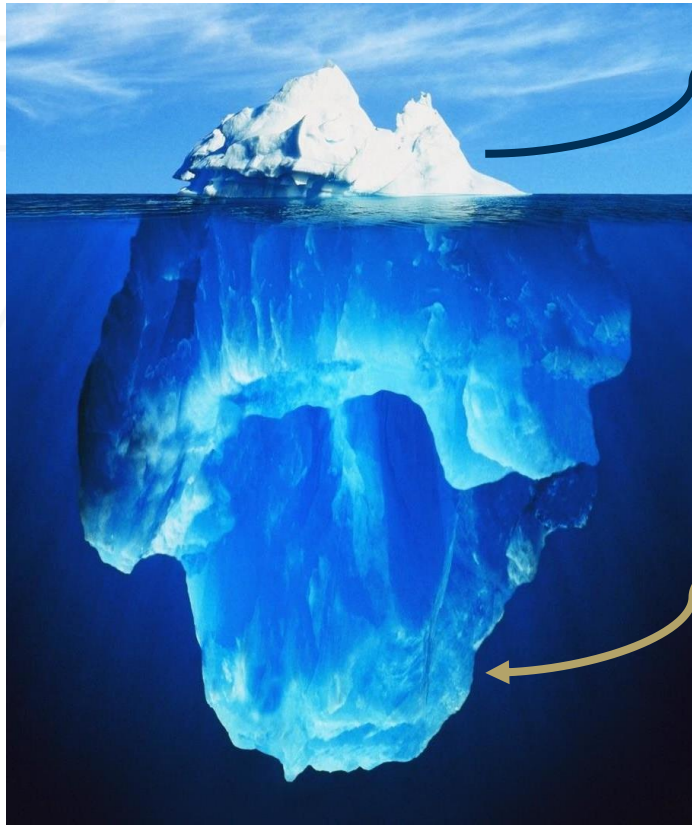
**Unfortunately, each application has its own uncertainty quantification**



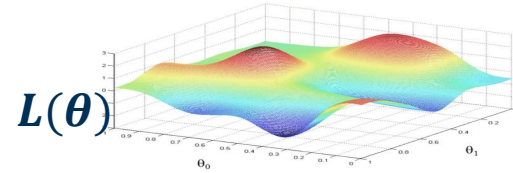
# Uncertainty

## Uncertainty and Inferential Machine Learning

Uncertainty is a 'catch-all' term, used in multiple applications



Learned Knowledge



Transmuted Knowledge

Part 2

- Explainability
- Out-of-distribution Detection
- Adversarial Detection
- Anomaly Detection
- Corruption Detection
- Case Study 1
  - **Misprediction Detection**
- Causal Analysis
- Open-set Recognition
- Noise Robustness
- Case Study 3
  - Case Study 2
    - Uncertainty Visualization
    - Image Quality Assessment
    - Saliency Detection



## Case Study 1:

# Counterfactual Gradients-based Quantification of Prediction Trust in Neural Networks



Mohit Prabhushankar, PhD  
Postdoc



Ghassan AlRegib, PhD  
Professor



SCAN ME



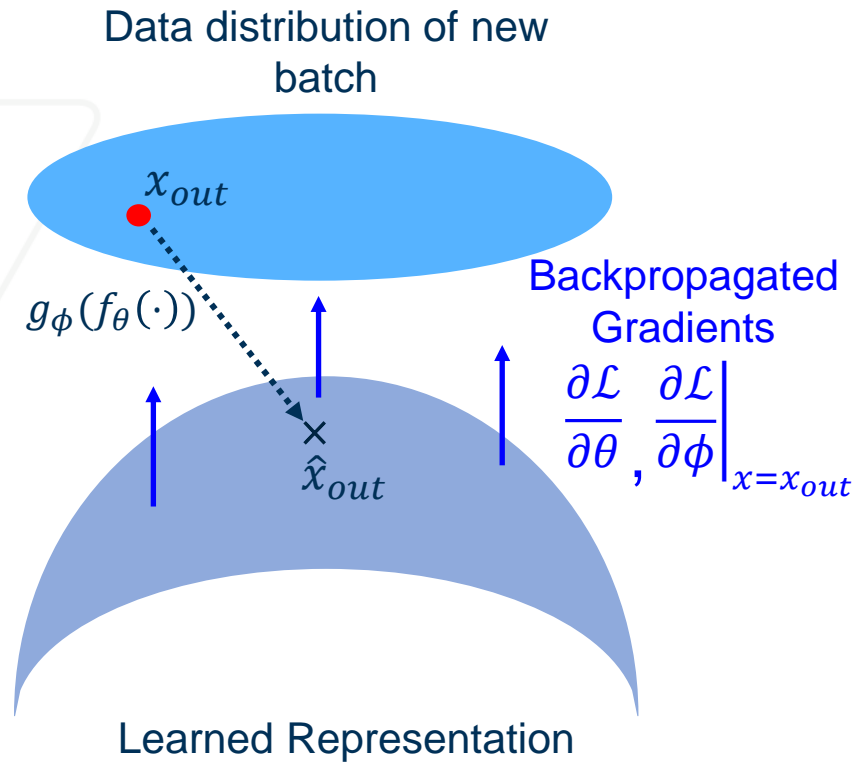
# Case Study 1: Misprediction Detection

## Principle



Probing the Purview of Neural Networks  
via Gradient Analysis

**Principle: Gradients provide a 'distance measure' between the learned representations space and its prediction (for discriminative tasks) or some new data (for generative tasks)**



During training, a loss function  $\mathcal{L}$  is used to quantify this measure.

However, what is  $\mathcal{L}$  at inference?



# Case Study 1: Misprediction Detection

## Principle



Probing the Purview of Neural Networks  
via Gradient Analysis

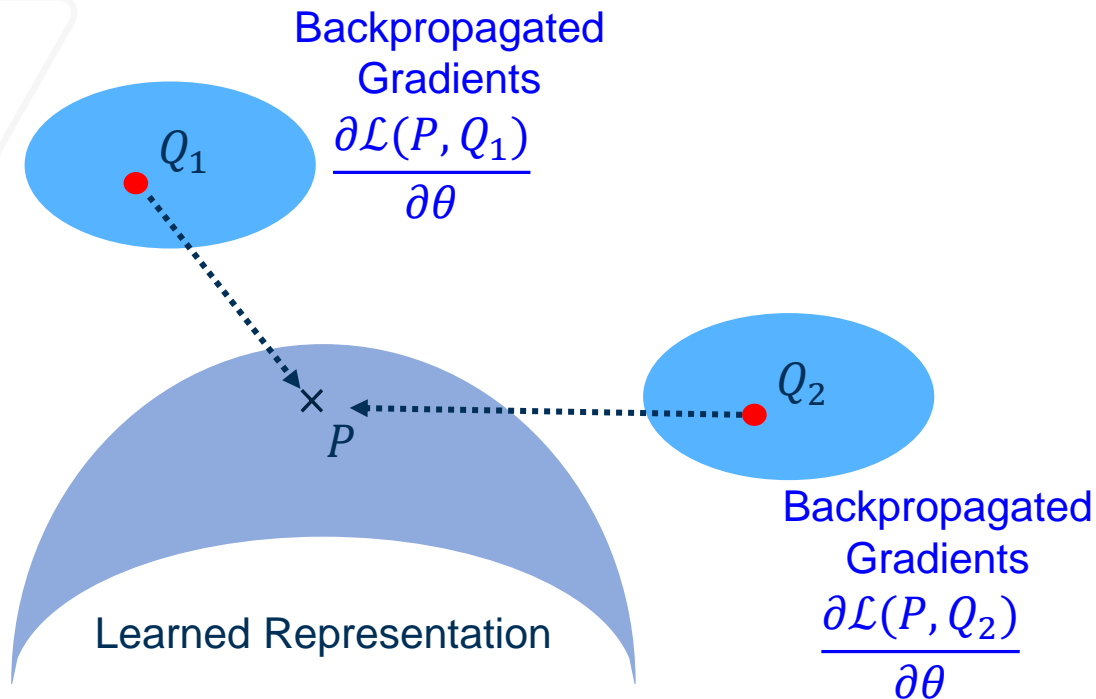
**Principle: Gradients provide an **uncertainty measure** between the learned representations space and novel data**

$P$  = Predicted class

$Q_1$  = Contrast class 1

$Q_2$  = Contrast class 2

However, what is  $\mathcal{L}$  at inference?



- **We backpropagate all contrast classes -  $Q_1, Q_2 \dots Q_N$  by backpropagating N one-hot vectors**
- Higher the distance, higher the uncertainty score



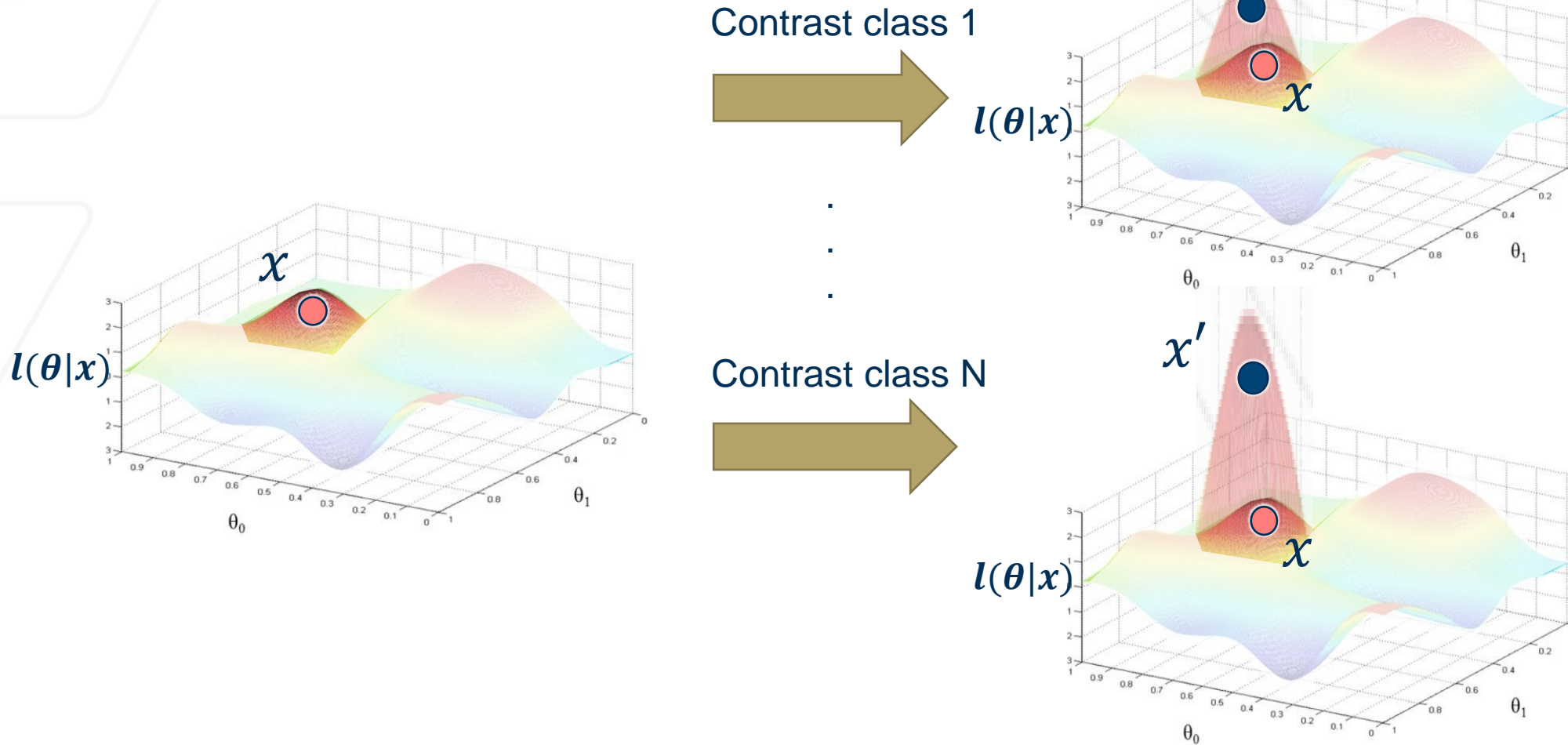
# Toy Manifold Example

Why uncertainty?



Probing the Purview of Neural Networks  
via Gradient Analysis

Gradients represent the local required change in manifold



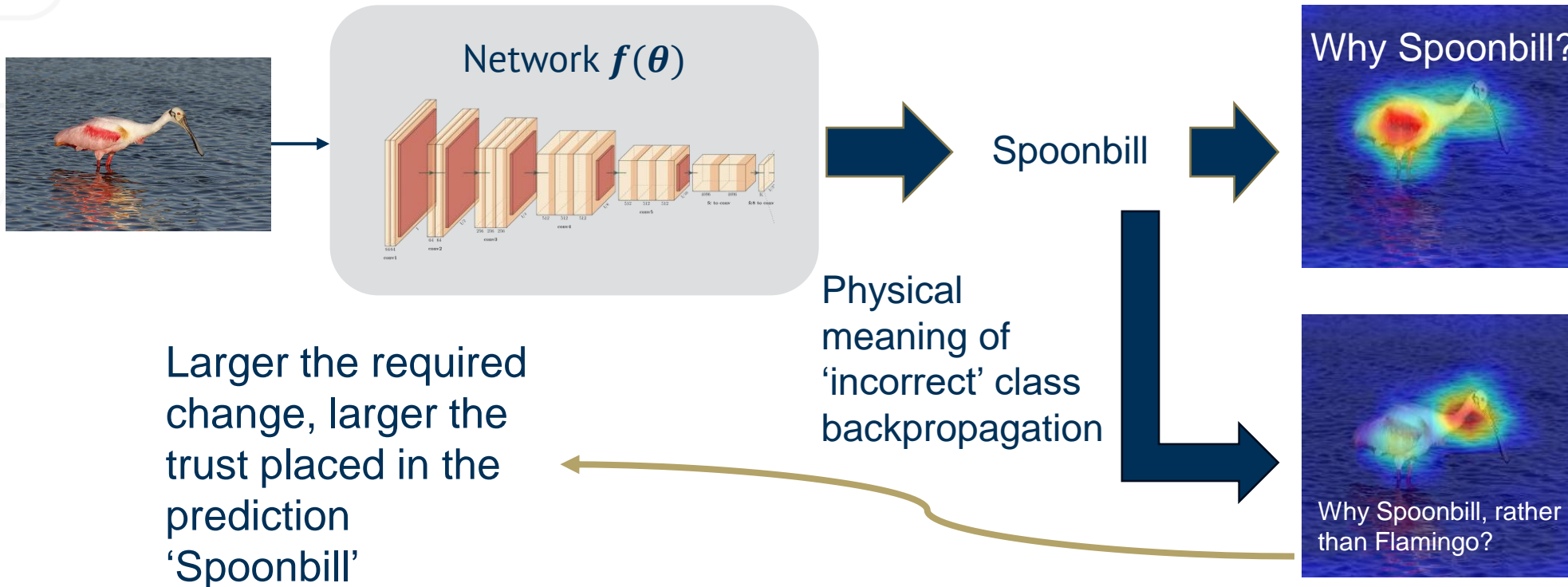
- Gradients provide the necessary change in manifold that would predict the novel data 'correctly'.
- Correctly means contrastively (or incorrectly)!
- Less data in the new region, higher is the fisher information and uncertainty



# Case Study 1: Misprediction Detection

## Intuition for counterfactual gradients-based Trust

**How much change is required within the data to predict an incorrect class? Larger the required change, larger the trust**





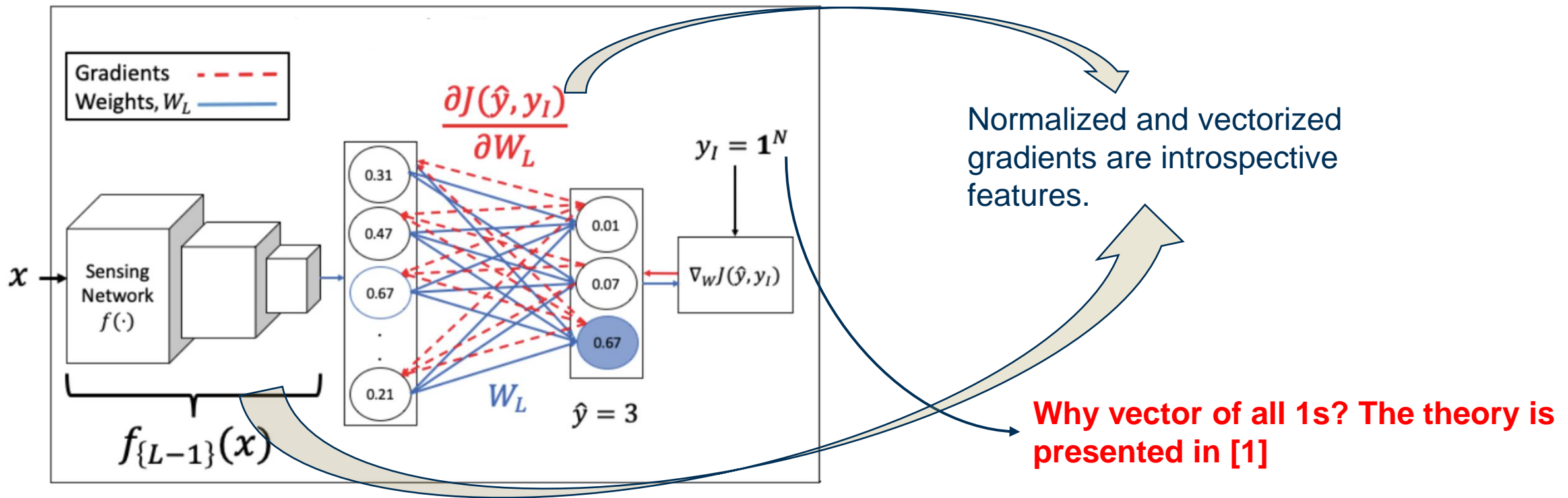
# Case Study 1: Misprediction Detection

## Deriving Gradient Features



Probing the Purview of Neural Networks  
via Gradient Analysis

**Step 1: Measure the loss between the prediction  $\hat{y}$  and a vector of all ones and backpropagate to obtain the introspective features**





# Case Study 1: Misprediction Detection

## Intuition for gradients-based Trust

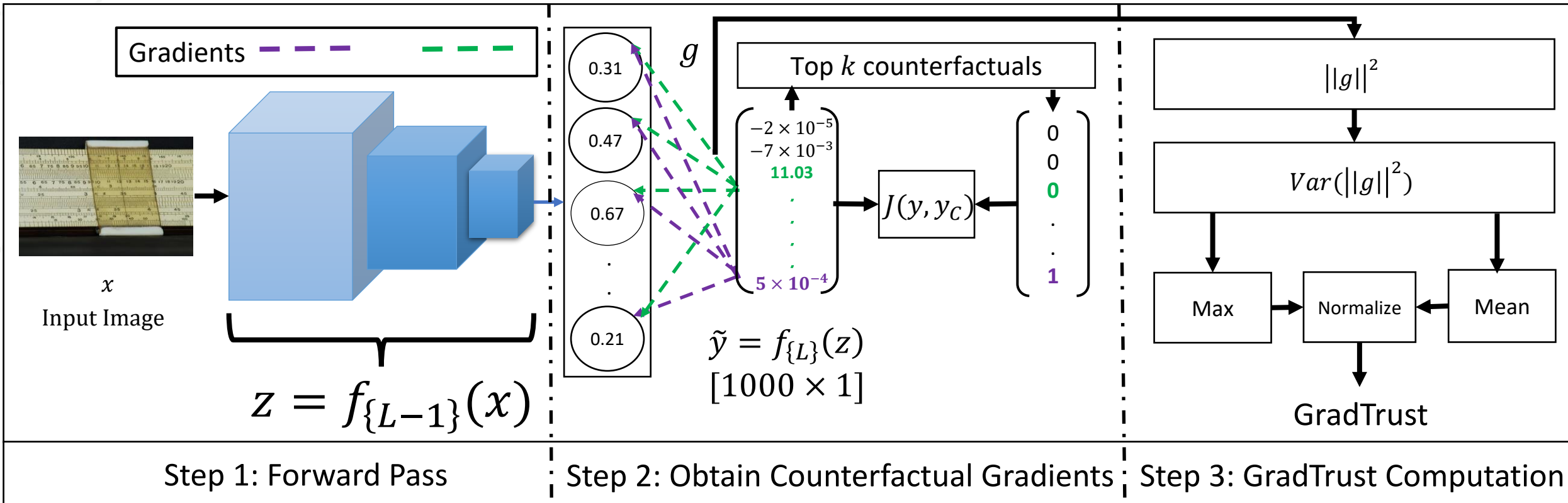
### Step 2: Quantify the variance of network parameters (of the last layer) when backpropagating contrast classes

$$\text{GradTrust} = \frac{\text{Variance of Gradients of Predicted Class}}{\text{Mean of Variance of Gradients of top - k Counterfactual Classes}}$$

- Top-k counterfactuals are based on predictions
- For image classification, top-k contrast classes are top-k predictions
- Gradients are obtained by backpropagating loss between the predicted class and itself in the numerator and between the predicted class and contrast classes in denominator



How do we measure required change? Quantify the variance of network parameters when backpropagating counterfactual classes





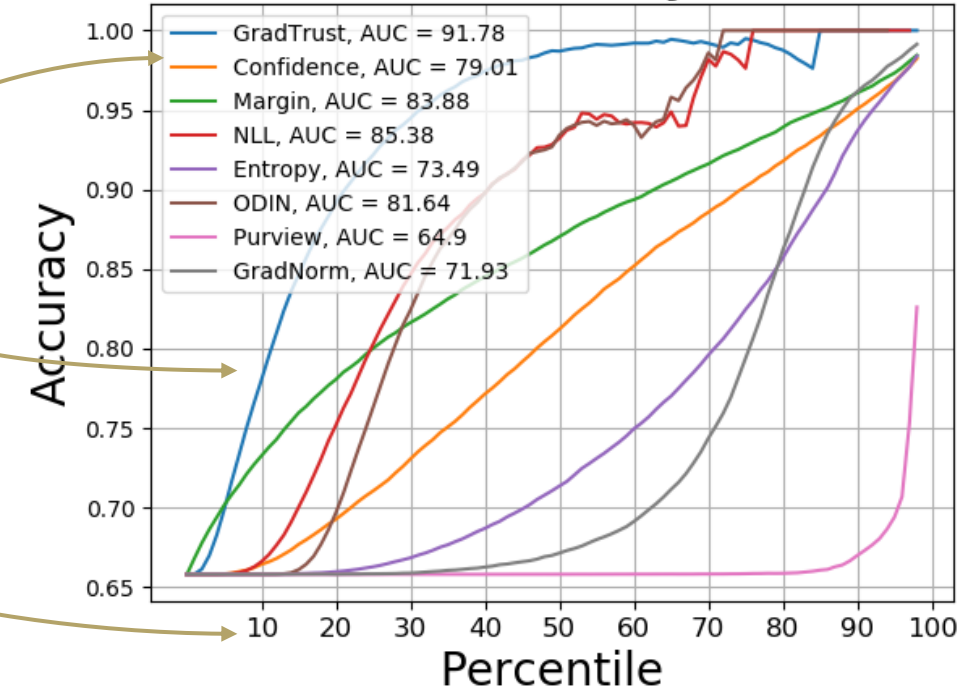
# Evaluation

## Methodology

For **ImageNet dataset** (with 50,000 validation set images):

1. **Run inference on all 50,000 images** and obtain GradTrust along with comparison trust scores
  - We compare against 8 other methods
2. **For each TrustScore**, order images in **ascending order**
3. For a given  $x$  **percentile**, calculate the **Accuracy** and F1 scores of all images above that percentile
4. Plot Area Under Accuracy Curve (AUAC) and Area Under F1 Curve (AUFC)
5. Repeat for multiple networks
  - We perform analysis on 14 ImageNet trained Classification networks and 5 Video Classification networks

ResNet-18, Accuracy = 65.81%





# Evaluation

## Quantitative Results for Image Classification

### GradTrust is in Top 2 performing metrics in all but 1 network

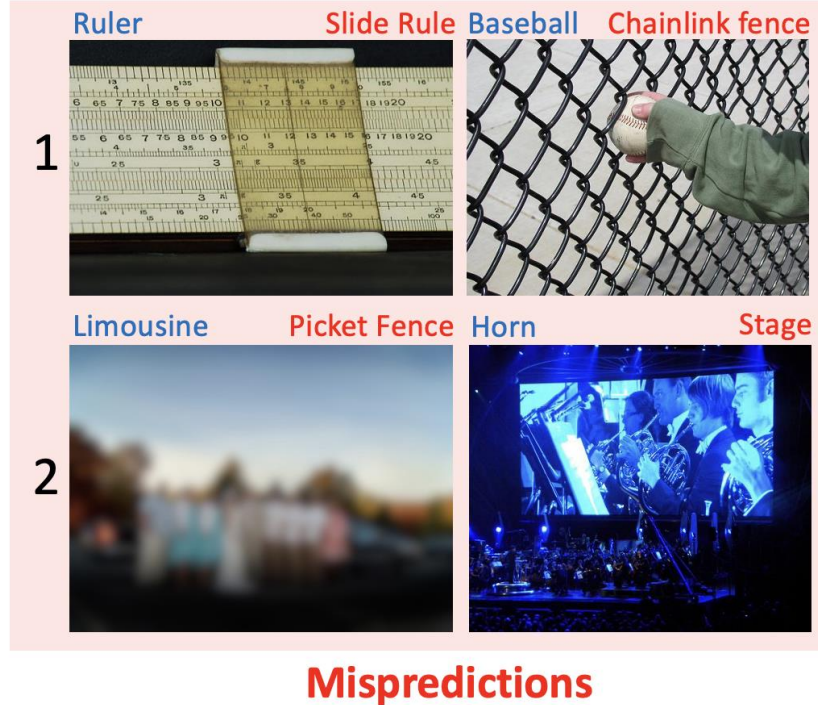
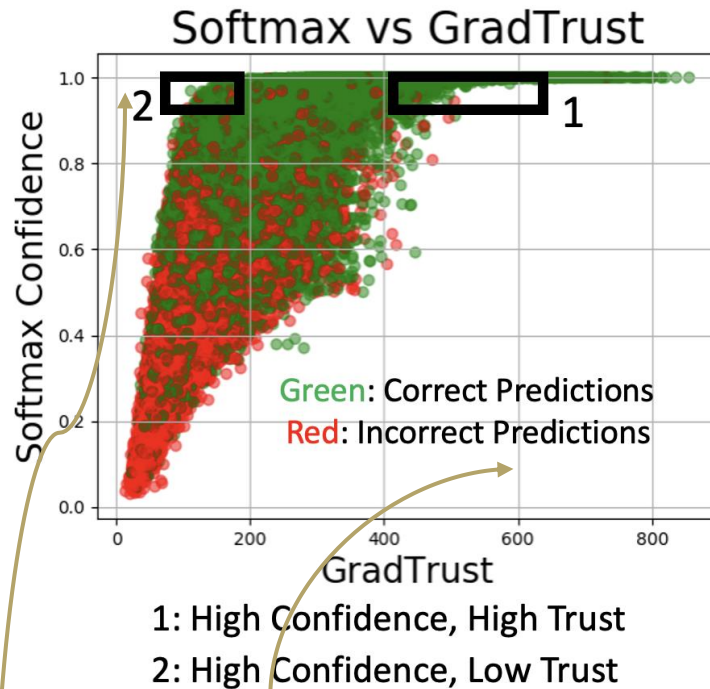
Architecture	AUAC / AUFC								
	Softmax	Entropy	NLL	Margin [27]	ODIN [28]	MCD [12]	GradNorm [5]	Purview [4]	GradTrust
AlexNet [29]	72.86/68.43	65.02/62.14	<b>83.21/79.37</b>	79.04/73.3	79.22/75.89	54.2/51.59	58.85/55.28	50.14/48.92	<b>92.09/89.5</b>
MobileNet [30]	77.91/74.96	71.72/69.9	<b>84.02/81.37</b>	83.13/79.1	75.95/72.81	61.1/59.46	70.3/67.28	61.85/61.32	<b>93.37/90.58</b>
ResNet-18 [17]	79.01/76.13	73.49/71.71	<b>85.38/82.73</b>	83.88/79.87	81.64/79.26	62.91/61.4	71.93/69.29	64.9/64.01	<b>91.78/88.65</b>
VGG-11 [31]	79.95/77.02	74.33/72.52	<b>90.55/88.42</b>	84.85/80.77	85.08/83.33	63.19/61.62	73.16/70.06	65/63.84	<b>91.79/89.18</b>
ResNet-50 [17]	81.63/79.69	77.47/76.32	<b>89.23/86.47</b>	85.7/82.83	84.13/82.21	66.35/65.37	77.37/75.64	71.68/71.01	<b>92.24/90.09</b>
ResNeXt-32 [32]	81.56/79.97	78.11/77.15	<b>89.83/87.37</b>	85.16/82.81	82.77/80.43	66.9/66.09	78.61/77.28	74.06/73.05	<b>91.55/89.18</b>
WideResNet [33]	82.25/80.79	78.96/78.1	<b>90.84/88.42</b>	85.76/83.57	84.5/82.26	67.72/66.89	78.62/77.5	74.55/73.85	<b>91.36/89.12</b>
Efficient-v2 [34]	<b>91.49/87.84</b>	80.12/76.69	71.44/66.03	85.13/81.59	54.16/51.53	81.8/79.38	61.43/57.53	77.79/77.48	<b>93.57/89.61</b>
ConvNeXt-t [35]	88.17/86.21	85.56/83.88	79.19/76.85	<b>90.68/88.26</b>	62.51/60.74	85.43/83.82	70.86/66.25	79.16/78.91	<b>89.08/87.23</b>
ResNeXt-64 [32]	88.95/84.69	85.9/80.71	<b>90.04/87.06</b>	91/86.62	76.61/72.94	75.3/70.86	73.5/71.64	80.2/79.96	<b>89.15/87.41</b>
Swin-v2-t [36]	86.05/84.27	83.79/82.43	86.33/83.14	<b>88.75/86.29</b>	79.85/77.09	84.64/83.17	82.23/80.29	77.76/77.39	<b>87.45/85.23</b>
VIT-b-16 [37]	85.97/84.38	84.5/82.9	82.94/80.3	<b>88.67/86.5</b>	62.74/61.03	84.33/82.81	78.53/74.6	78.02/77.73	<b>87.77/85.85</b>
Swin-b [38]	86.18/84.49	84.77/83.14	79.18/75.52	<b>88.5/86.21</b>	68.07/64.59	84.69/83.17	83.09/81.52	80.71/80.45	<b>88.44/86.51</b>
MaxViT-t [39]	84.08/82.66	79.23/78.21	80.6/78.85	<b>85.84/84.02</b>	47.6/46.27	80.07/79.08	70.35/68.12	80.99/80.7	<b>90.19/88.48</b>

- **Negative Log Likelihood (NLL)** works well on smaller networks with **less accuracy** while **Margin classifier** works better with **high accuracy** networks
- **GradTrust performs well on all networks**



# Evaluation

## Qualitative Results for Image Classification



- Results on ResNet-18. **Each point is an image** from ImageNet validation set
- Each image is plot based on its GradTrust on x-axis and Softmax Confidence on y-axis. **Green** color indicates image is **correctly predicted** while **red** color indicates **incorrect prediction**
- **Several incorrect** predictions exist having **low GradTrust** but **high softmax** confidence (top-left quadrant)
- In contrast, **no incorrect** predictions, with **low Softmax confidence** and **High GradTrust** (bottom-right quadrant)



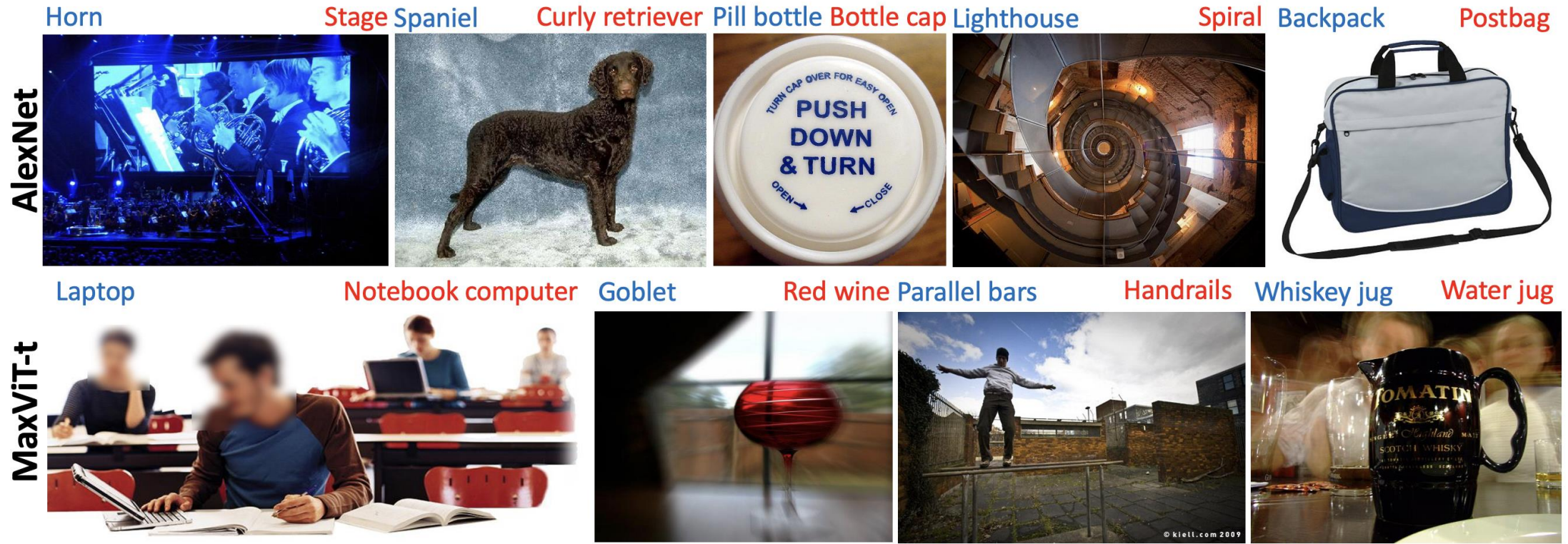
# Evaluation

## Qualitative Results for Image Classification

On AlexNet: Low GradTrust is due to co-occurring classes

On MaxViT: Low GradTrust is due to ambiguity in class resolution

Mispredictions: High SoftMax Confidence, Low GradTrust





# Evaluation

## Qualitative Results for Image Classification under Corruption

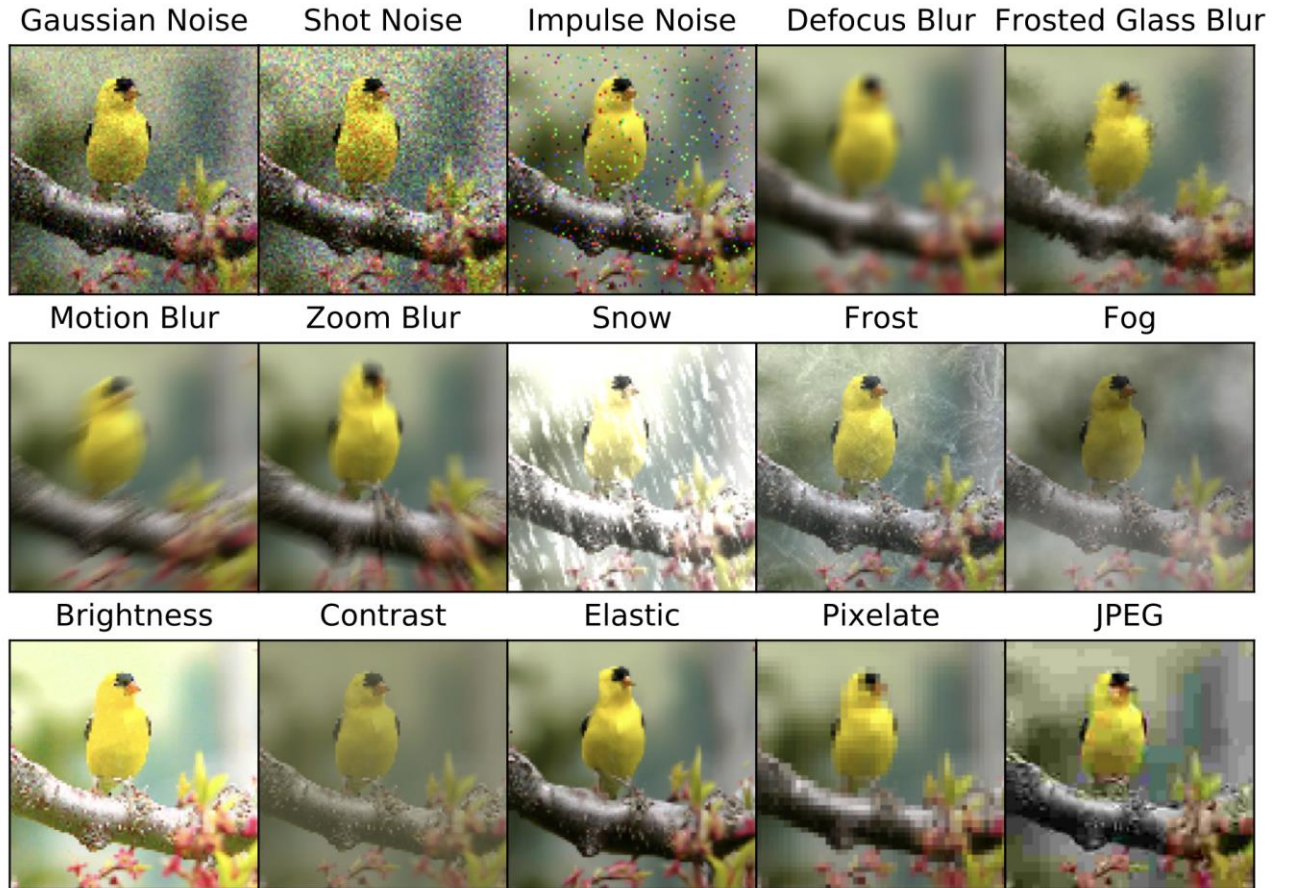


Probing the Purview of Neural Networks  
via Gradient Analysis

Same evaluation setup as before, with inputs being corrupted by noise

### Data Characteristics:

- 3.75 million images
- 15 different challenges including decolorization, codec error, lens blur etc. for testing
- 4 different challenges for validation and training
- 5 progressively increasingly levels in each challenge
- **Goal:** Recognize 1000 classes from ImageNet using pretrained networks





# Evaluation

## Qualitative Results for Image Classification under Corruption

**GradTrust is the Top performing metric in all but two setups (in red)**

AUAC for MSP / NLL / Margin / ODIN / <b>GradTrust</b>					
Level	Brightness	Snow	Fog	Frost	Defocus Blur
1	80.36/85.72/85.1/82.5/ <b>91.75</b>	69.44/78.13/75.49/74.47/ <b>88.35</b>	73.62/78.13/79.66/66.86/ <b>89.89</b>	73.97/77.93/79.87/77.56/ <b>90.04</b>	73.41/78.56/79.44/67.96/ <b>89.25</b>
2	79.52/85.41/84.5/81.25/ <b>91.62</b>	52.48/62.7/58.67/55.37/ <b>82.91</b>	69.97/76.65/76.32/63.63/ <b>88.71</b>	63.56/70.72/70.32/59.69/ <b>86.4</b>	69.98/76.37/76.41/65.76/ <b>87.66</b>
3	78.32/84.45/83.51/76.76/ <b>91.37</b>	54.35/66.66/60.09/51.92/ <b>82.53</b>	63.07/73.9/69.63/59.1/ <b>85.63</b>	54.05/63.19/60.08/56.15/ <b>81.73</b>	62.96/67.12/69.64/58.12/ <b>84.52</b>
4	76.26/81.76/81.86/73.55/ <b>90.81</b>	44.38/51.84/49.45/43.17/ <b>77.13</b>	55.28/70.07/61.66/65.2/ <b>80.45</b>	51.46/63.2/57.97/54.94/ <b>80.61</b>	56.38/55.17/62.99/44.59/ <b>79.66</b>
5	73.34/79.49/79.32/68.06/ <b>89.81</b>	18.02/35.1/18.71/22.74/ <b>40.09</b>	34.25/55.59/39.19/42.26/ <b>63.68</b>	44.42/52.69/50.43/44.46/ <b>76.76</b>	45.4/43.53/50.98/31.59/ <b>72.26</b>
Level	Glass Blur	Motion Blur	Zoom Blur	Contrast	Elastic Transform
1	72.14/79.43/78.33/71.32/ <b>89.41</b>	76.57/82.4/82.21/71.96/ <b>90.73</b>	69.74/79.26/76.25/66.08/ <b>88.55</b>	76.25/78.98/81.9/68.19/ <b>90.44</b>	77.99/82.6/83.4/76.4/ <b>91.11</b>
2	65.83/73.39/72.55/62.13/ <b>87.17</b>	71.53/79.02/77.87/63.53/ <b>88.58</b>	62.51/75.37/69.37/62.87/ <b>85.84</b>	73.17/78.8/79.3/66.03/ <b>89.47</b>	66.76/72.86/73.34/62.6/ <b>86.8</b>
3	46.36/52.7/52.14/44.67/ <b>77.74</b>	62.6/69.49/69.39/61.78/ <b>84.2</b>	56.6/75.33/63.07/62.23/ <b>83.35</b>	66.27/74.74/72.8/63.34/ <b>86.39</b>	73.88/81.63/79.78/68.5/ <b>89.38</b>
4	42.12/43.71/47.4/38.97/ <b>74.65</b>	51.57/56.64/58.02/50.17/ <b>76.15</b>	50.61/72.16/56.69/57.59/ <b>80.46</b>	45.65/63.9/50.33/55.1/ <b>72</b>	65.91/70.85/72.4/62.77/ <b>85.75</b>
5	38.26/45.59/42.91/38.95/ <b>67.47</b>	44.36/48.6/50.25/36.59/ <b>64.47</b>	44.85/70.93/50.38/57.18/ <b>77.35</b>	28.07/ <b>39.05</b> /30.26/30.56/ <b>25.49</b>	32.84/53.11/36.47/43.75/ <b>65.95</b>
Level	JPEG Compression	Pixelate	Gaussian Noise	Shot Noise	Impulse Noise
1	76.2/78.96/81.7/67.99/ <b>90.67</b>	76.18/79.23/81.65/78.09/ <b>90.36</b>	71.38/78.02/77.42/76.54/ <b>89.48</b>	69.49/80.14/75.57/79.93/ <b>88.68</b>	62.43/72.55/68.64/59.08/ <b>85.21</b>
2	74.5/78.07/80.25/78.13/ <b>89.94</b>	76.16/79.97/81.7/80.79/ <b>90.64</b>	64.03/71.02/70.28/58.82/ <b>86.17</b>	60.17/72.03/66.28/62/ <b>85.46</b>	52.87/67.81/58.25/61.6/ <b>52.87</b>
3	73.12/79.59/79.09/69.9/ <b>89.64</b>	66.02/75.91/72.48/67.55/ <b>86.9</b>	47.57/61.95/52.71/51.33/ <b>75.67</b>	45.47/63.62/50.55/55.54/ <b>76.18</b>	42.23/55.17/46.42/47.92/ <b>71.8</b>
4	68.4/77.46/74.86/67.72/ <b>88.06</b>	55.44/66.16/61.74/51.81/ <b>82.66</b>	22.74/51.28/25.16/39.85/ <b>56.15</b>	21.23/35.34/23.61/26.87/ <b>54.01</b>	16.82/44.52/18.05/43.63/ <b>46.08</b>
5	60.38/75.37/66.91/71.8/ <b>85.55</b>	52.45/66.11/58.4/52.56/ <b>79.22</b>	5.8/25.39/6.31/20.17/ <b>25.93</b>	9.71/41.42/10.69/37.7/ <b>51.15</b>	3.86/ <b>31.79</b> /4.05/26.57/ <b>27.11</b>



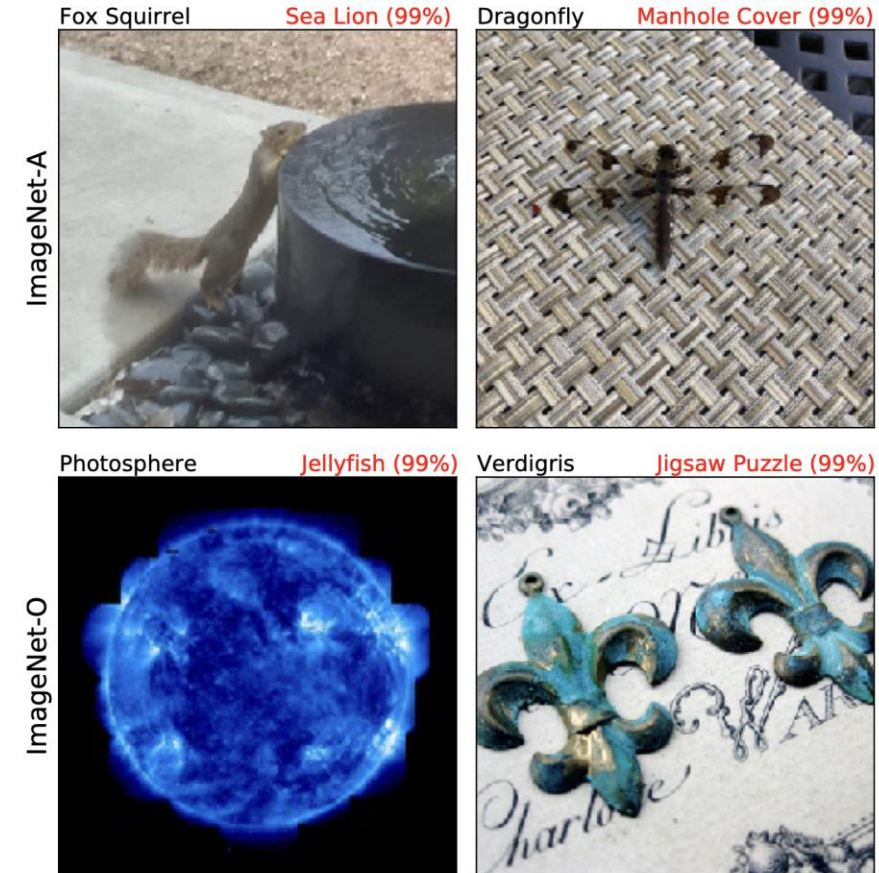
# Evaluation

## Qualitative Results for Image Classification under Natural Adversaries

**OOD evaluation setup, with inputs being either natural adversaries or validation images**

### Data Characteristics:

- Curated set of 7500 natural adversarial images
  - ‘Natural’ly occurring images as opposed to artificially generated adversarial images
- Experimental setup similar to OOD detection; given a total of 15,000 images (7500 from ImageNet-A and 7500 randomly chosen from ImageNet validation set), we find AUDC (Area under Detection curve)





# Evaluation

## Qualitative Results for Image Classification under Natural Adversaries

**GradTrust is the top performing metric**

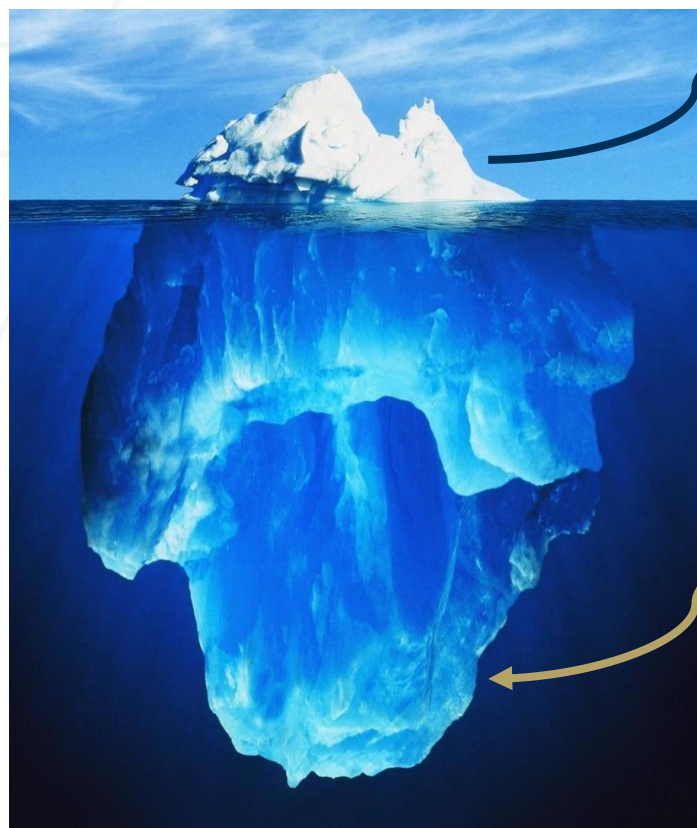
Architecture	MSP [48]	NLL	Margin [8]	ODIN [49]	GradTrust
AlexNet [51]	55.9	76.24	62.68	70.43	<b>86.06</b>
MobileNet-v3 [52]	57.54	73.87	64.28	62.81	<b>85.9</b>
ResNet-18 [53]	57.56	75.22	64.01	70.54	<b>84.4</b>
VIT-b-32 [60]	61.96	58.18	67.03	40.11	<b>69.0</b>
ResNet-101 [53]	55.35	75.99	61.09	73.21	<b>82.12</b>
ResNeXt-32 [55]	54.26	78.98	59.73	77.14	<b>81.44</b>
VIT-b-16 [60]	59.75	50.44	64.84	31.32	<b>68.14</b>
ResNeXt-64 [55]	53.02	36.2	56.67	27.9	<b>67.53</b>
MaxViT-t [62]	54.2	41.42	59.3	22.26	<b>70.55</b>



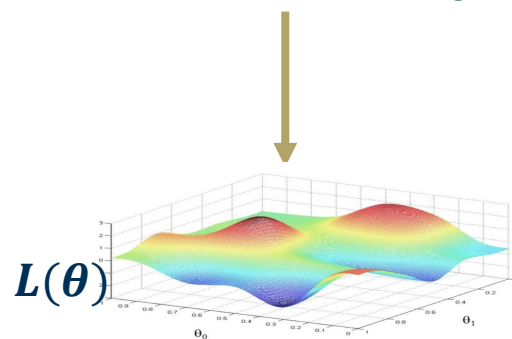
# Uncertainty

## Uncertainty and Inferential Machine Learning

Uncertainty is a 'catch-all' term, used in multiple applications



Learned Knowledge



Transmuted Knowledge

Part 2

- Explainability
- Out-of-distribution Detection
- Adversarial Detection
- Anomaly Detection
- Corruption Detection
- Case Study 1: Misprediction Detection
- Causal Analysis
- Open-set Recognition
- Case Study 3: Noise Robustness
- Case Study 2: **Uncertainty Visualization**
- Image Quality Assessment
- Saliency Detection



## Case Study 2:

# VOICE: Variance of Induced Contrastive Explanations for Quantifying Uncertainty in Interpretability



Mohit Prabhushankar, PhD  
Postdoc



Ghassan AlRegib, PhD  
Professor





# Uncertainty in Explainability

## Predictive Uncertainty in Explanations



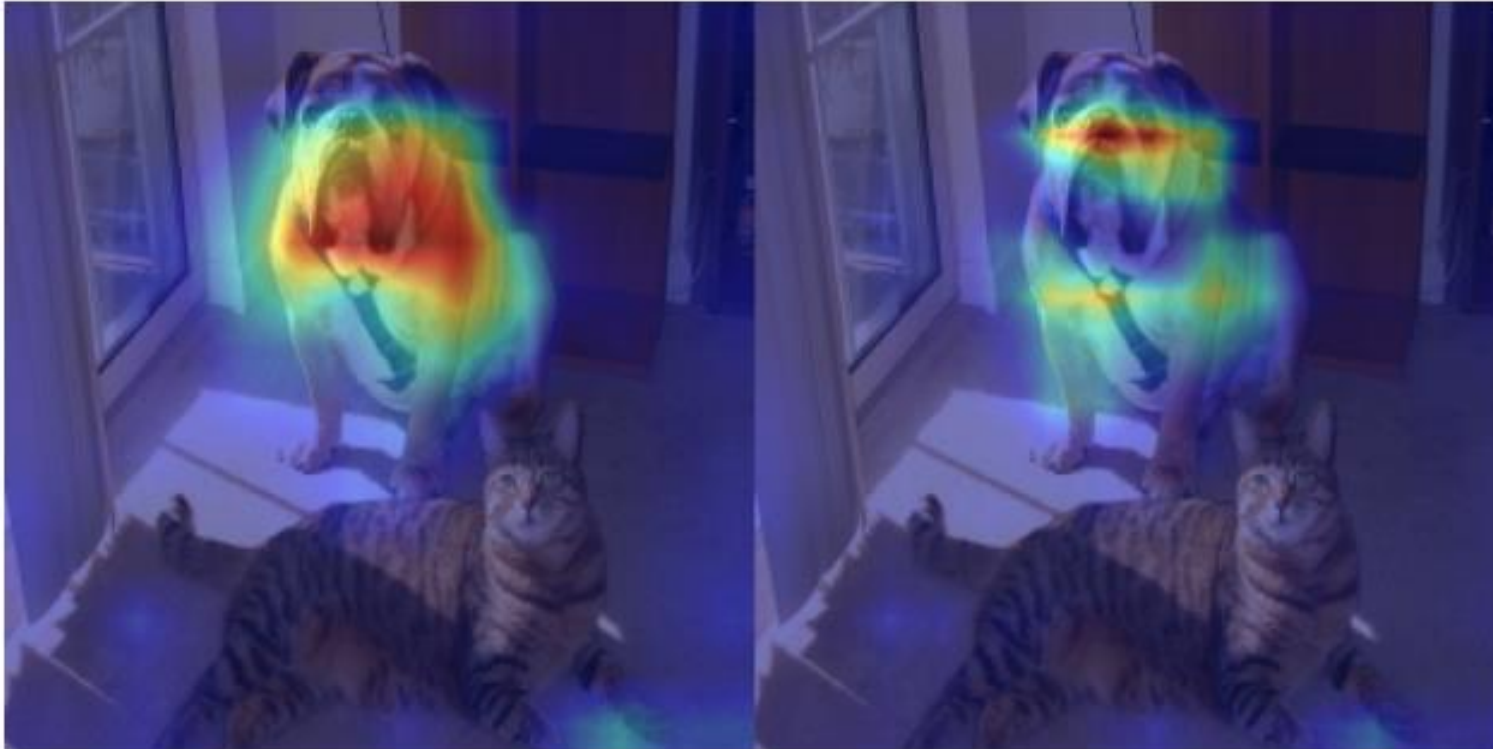
VOICE: Variance of Contrastive Explanations for Quantifying Uncertainty in Interpretability

### Explanatory techniques have predictive uncertainty

Explanation of Prediction

Uncertainty of Explanation

Why Bullmastiff?



Uncertainty in answering  
Why Bullmastiff?



# Uncertainty in Explainability

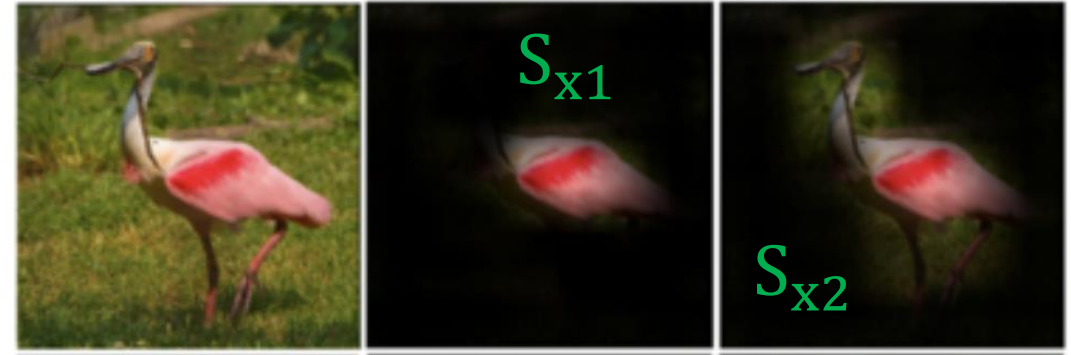
## Explanation Evaluation via Masking

Common evaluation technique is masking the image and checking for prediction correctness

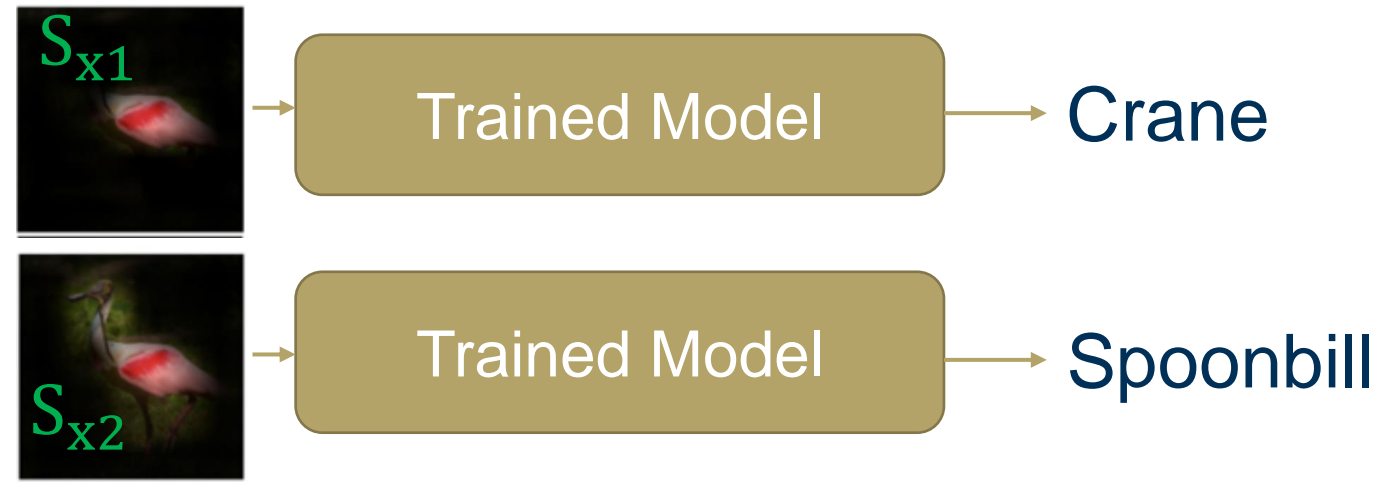
$y$  = Prediction

$S_x$  = Explanation masked data

$E(Y|S_x)$  = Expectation of class given  $S_x$



If across  $N$  images,  
 $E(Y|S_{x2}) > E(Y|S_{x1})$ ,  
explanation technique 2  
is better than explanation  
technique 1





# Uncertainty in Explainability

## Predictive Uncertainty



VOICE: Variance of Contrastive Explanations for Quantifying Uncertainty in Interpretability

Uncertainty due to variance in prediction when model is kept constant



$$V[y|S_x] = V[E(y|S_x)] + E(V[y|S_x])$$

$y$  = Prediction

$V[y]$  = Variance of prediction (Predictive Uncertainty)

$S_x$  = Subset of data (Some intervention)

$E(Y|S_x)$  = Expectation of class given a subset

$V(Y|S_x)$  = Variance of class given all other residuals



# Uncertainty in Explainability

Visual Explanations (partially) reduce Predictive Uncertainty



VOICE: Variance of Contrastive Explanations for Quantifying Uncertainty in Interpretability

A 'good' explanatory technique is evaluated to have zero  $V[E(y|S_x)]$



zero

$$V[y|S_x] = V[E(y|S_x)] + E(V[y|S_x])$$

$y$  = Prediction

$V[y]$  = Variance of prediction (Predictive Uncertainty)

$S_x$  = Subset of data (Some intervention)

$E(Y|S_x)$  = Expectation of class given a subset

$V(Y|S_x)$  = Variance of class given all other residuals

**Key Observation 1:** Visual Explanations are evaluated to partially reduce the predictive uncertainty in a neural network

Network evaluations have nothing to do with human Explainability!



# Uncertainty in Explainability

Predictive Uncertainty in Explanations is the Residual



VOICE: Variance of Contrastive Explanations for Quantifying Uncertainty in Interpretability

**All other subsets 'not' chosen by the explanatory technique contributes to uncertainty**



$$V[y|S_x] = V[E(y|S_x)] + E(V[y|S_x])$$

$y$  = Prediction

$V[y]$  = Variance of prediction (Predictive Uncertainty)

$S_x$  = Subset of data (Some intervention)

$E(Y|S_x)$  = Expectation of class given a subset

$V(Y|S_x)$  = Variance of class given all other residuals

**Key Observation 2: Uncertainty in Explainability occurs due to all combinations of features that the explanation did not attribute to the network's decision**



# Uncertainty in Explainability

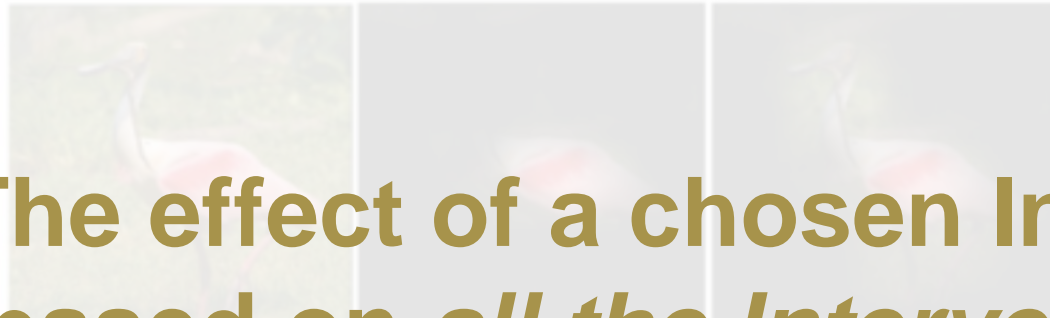
Predictive Uncertainty in Explanations is the Residual



VOICE: Variance of Contrastive Explanations for Quantifying Uncertainty in Interpretability

**All other subsets 'not' chosen by the explanatory technique contributes to uncertainty**

$x$   $S_{x_1}$   $S_{x_2}$



**The effect of a chosen Intervention can be measured based on *all the Interventions that were not chosen***

$$V[y|S_x] = V[E(y|S_x)] + E(V[y|S_x])$$

$V[y]$  = Variance of prediction (Predictive Uncertainty)

$S_x$  = Subset of data (Some intervention)

$E(y|S_x)$  = Expectation of class given a subset

$V(y|S_x)$  = Variance of class given all other residuals

**Interventions = explanations in this context. However, they can also refer to human prompting at inference**

**Key Observation 2:** Uncertainty in Explainability occurs due to all combinations of features that the explanation did not attribute to the network's decision



# Uncertainty in Explainability

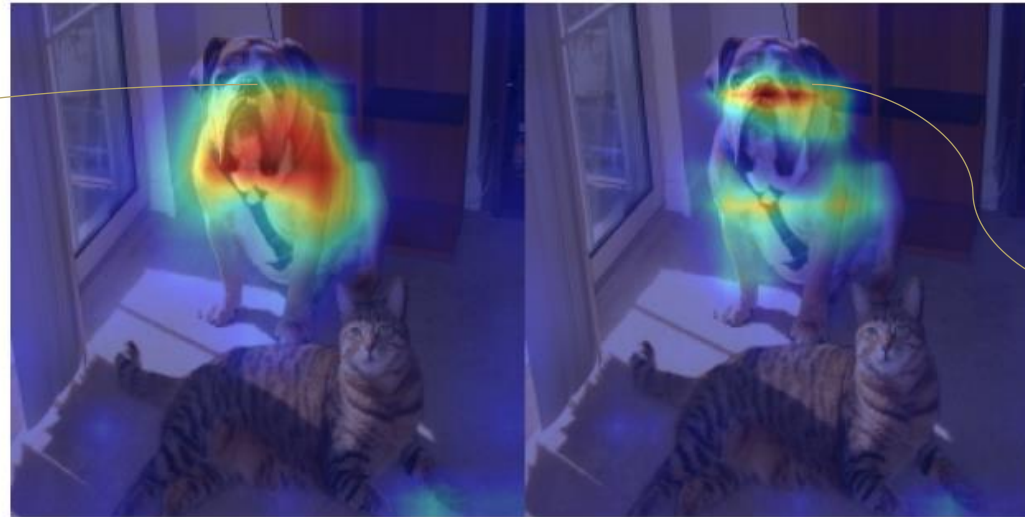
Predictive Uncertainty in Explanations is the Residual



VOICE: Variance of Contrastive Explanations for Quantifying Uncertainty in Interpretability

**All other subsets ‘not’ chosen by the explanatory technique contribute to uncertainty**

Explanation of Prediction      Uncertainty of Explanation



Snout is not as highlighted as the jowls in explanation (not as important for decision)

However, snout is an important characteristic that is used to differentiate against other dogs. Hence, there is uncertainty on why this feature is not included in the attribution

**Key Observation 2:** Uncertainty in Explainability occurs due to all combinations of features that the explanation did not attribute to the network's decision



# Uncertainty in Explainability

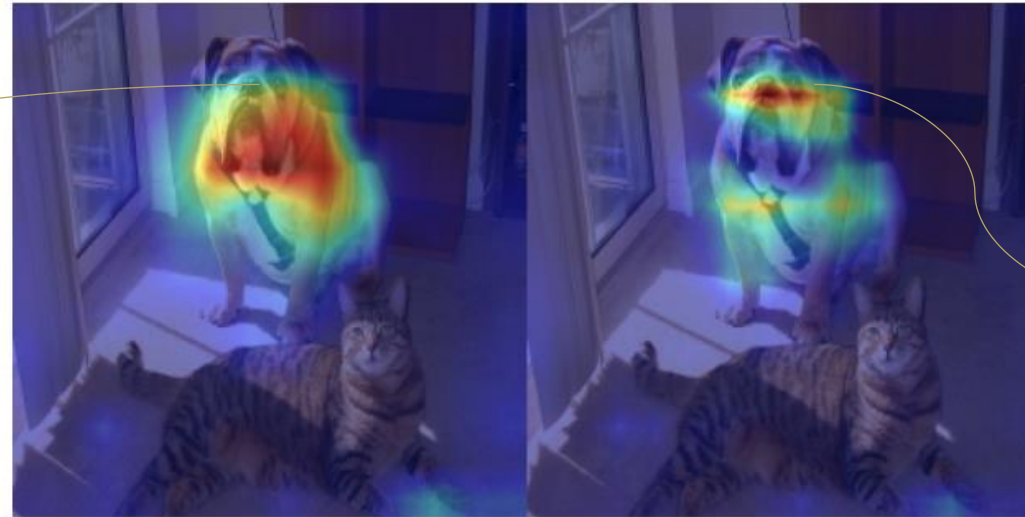
Predictive Uncertainty in Explanations is the Residual



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Snout is not as highlighted as the jowls in explanation (not as important for decision)

However, snout is an important characteristic that is used to differentiate against other dogs. Hence, there is uncertainty on why this feature is not included in the attribution

**Not chosen features are intractable!**



# Uncertainty in Explainability

## Quantifying Interventions in Explainability



VOICE: Variance of Contrastive Explanations for Quantifying Uncertainty in Interpretability

Contrastive explanations are an intelligent way of obtaining other subsets



$$V[y|S_x] = V[E(y|S_x)] + E(V[y|S_x])$$

Make it finite by only considering the subsets that change  $y$

$$\left. \begin{array}{l} Y_1|S_{x1} \\ Y_2|S_{x2} \\ Y_3|S_{x3} \\ Y_4|S_{x4} \\ Y_5|S_{x5} \\ \vdots \\ Y_N|S_{xN} \end{array} \right\} \text{Variance}$$



# Uncertainty in Explainability

## VGG vs Swin Transformer



VOICE: Variance of Contrastive Explanations for Quantifying Uncertainty in Interpretability

**Uncertainty in explainability exists in all architectures, including latest transformers**

VGG-16

Explanation of Prediction

Uncertainty of Explanation



Swin Transformer

Explanation of Prediction

Uncertainty of Explanation





# Inferential Machine Learning

Our View: Goal is tied to Uncertainty Quantification

**At Inference, the goal of human interventions is to reduce uncertainty**



**Inexplicable performance deterioration!**

Dark blue regions: Low uncertainty  
Green/Yellow regions: High Uncertainty

**The uncertainty visualization is (variance) of (gradients-based visual explanations) – Part 3**



# Case Study: Intervenability in Interpretability

Quantifying Interventions in Explainability



VOICE: Variance of Contrastive Explanations for Quantifying Uncertainty in Interpretability

**Uncertainty in Explainability can be used to analyze Explanatory methods and Networks**

- Is GradCAM better than GradCAM++?
- Is a SWIN transformer more reliable than VGG-16?

**Need objective quantification of Intervention Residuals**



# Case Study: Intervenability in Interpretability

## Quantifying Interventions in Explainability: mIOU



VOICE: Variance of Contrastive Explanations for Quantifying Uncertainty in Interpretability

On incorrect predictions, the overlap of explanations and uncertainty is higher

	Image	GradCAM		GradCAM++		Guided Backpropagation		SmoothGrad	
		Explanation of Prediction	Uncertainty of Explanation	Explanation of Prediction	Uncertainty of Explanation	Explanation of Prediction	Uncertainty of Explanation	Explanation of Prediction	Uncertainty of Explanation
(a)									
(b)									
(c)									
Correct Predictions									
(d)									
(e)									
Incorrect Predictions									

Objective Metric 1:  
Intersection over Union (IoU)  
between  
explanation and  
Uncertainty

Higher the IoU, higher the  
uncertainty in explanation (or  
less trustworthy is the  
prediction)



# Case Study: Intervenability in Interpretability

Quantifying Interventions in Explainability: mIOU



VOICE: Variance of Contrastive Explanations for Quantifying Uncertainty in Interpretability

On incorrect predictions, the overlap of explanations and uncertainty is higher

	Image	GradCAM		GradCAM++		Guided Backpropagation		SmoothGrad	
		Explanation of Prediction	Uncertainty of Explanation	Explanation of Prediction	Uncertainty of Explanation	Explanation of Prediction	Uncertainty of Explanation	Explanation of Prediction	Uncertainty of Explanation
(a)									
(b)									
(c)									
Correct Predictions									
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# Case Study: Intervenability in Interpretability

Quantifying Interventions in Explainability: mIOU



VOICE: Variance of Contrastive Explanations for Quantifying Uncertainty in Interpretability

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		Explanation of Prediction	Uncertainty of Explanation	Explanation of Prediction	Uncertainty of Explanation	Explanation of Prediction	Uncertainty of Explanation	Explanation of Prediction	Uncertainty of Explanation
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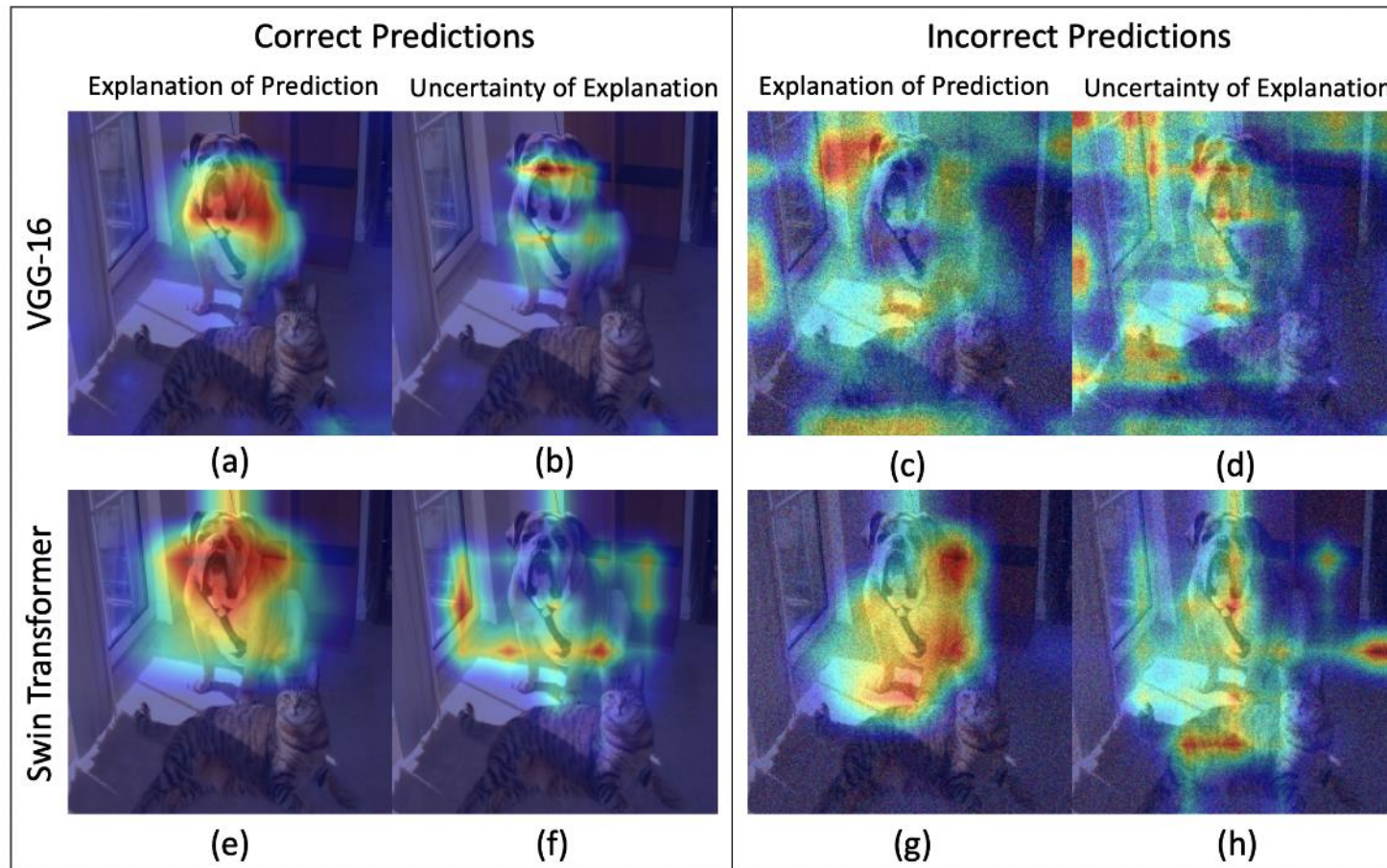
# Case Study: Intervenability in Interpretability

Quantifying Interventions in Explainability: SNR



VOICE: Variance of Contrastive Explanations for Quantifying Uncertainty in Interpretability

**Explanation and uncertainty are dispersed under noise (under low prediction confidence)**



**Objective Metric 2:  
Signal to Noise  
Ratio of the  
Uncertainty map**

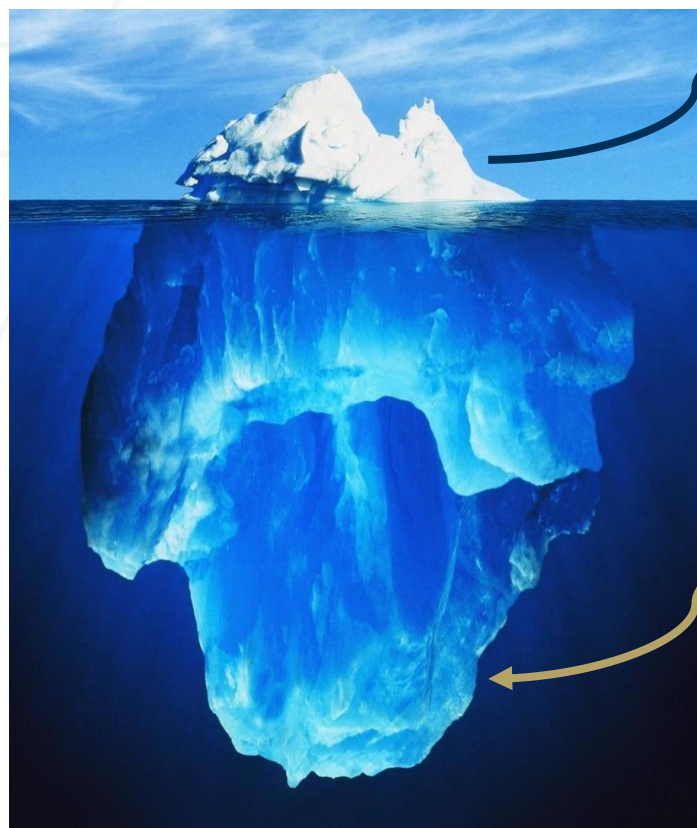
Higher the SNR of uncertainty, more is the dispersal (or less trustworthy is the prediction)



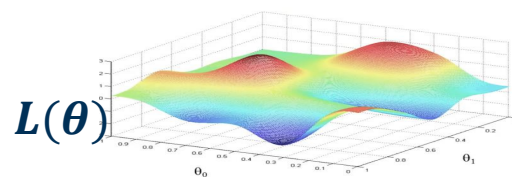
# Uncertainty

## Uncertainty and Inferential Machine Learning

Uncertainty is a 'catch-all' term, used in multiple applications



Learned Knowledge



Transmuted Knowledge

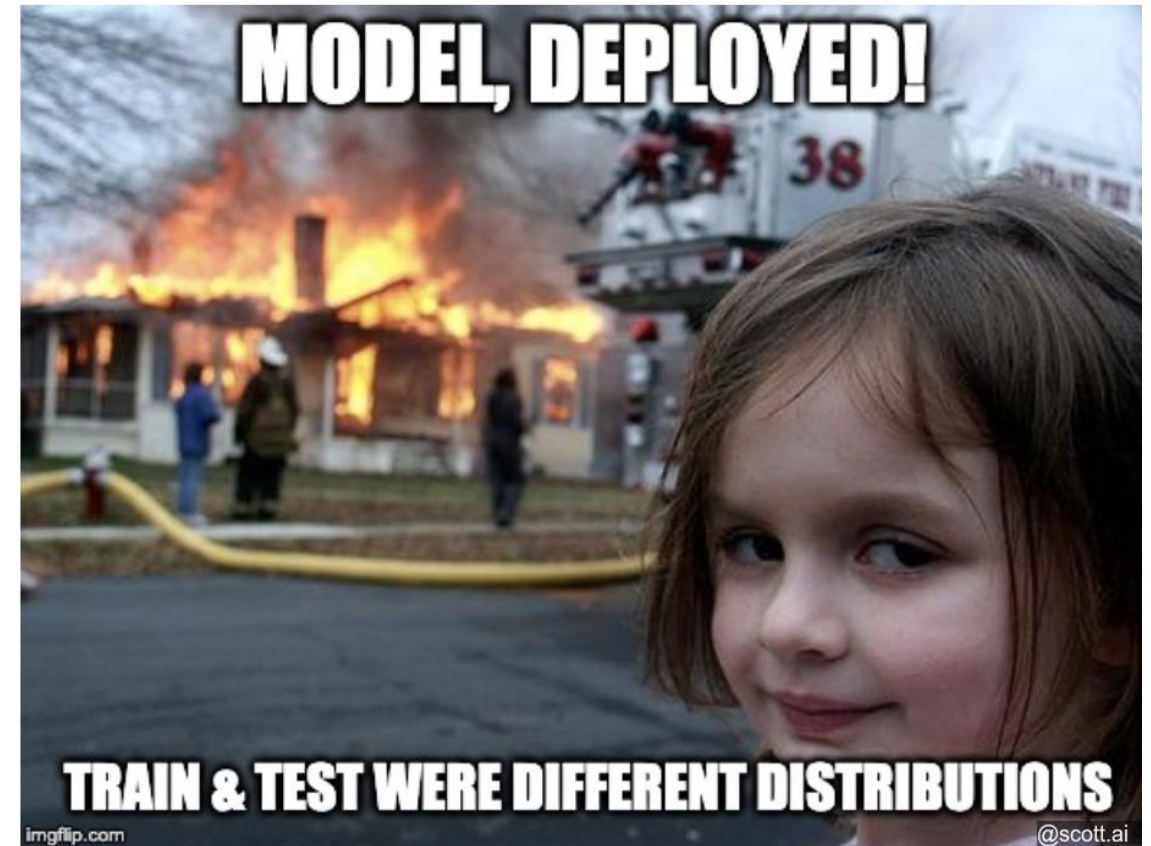
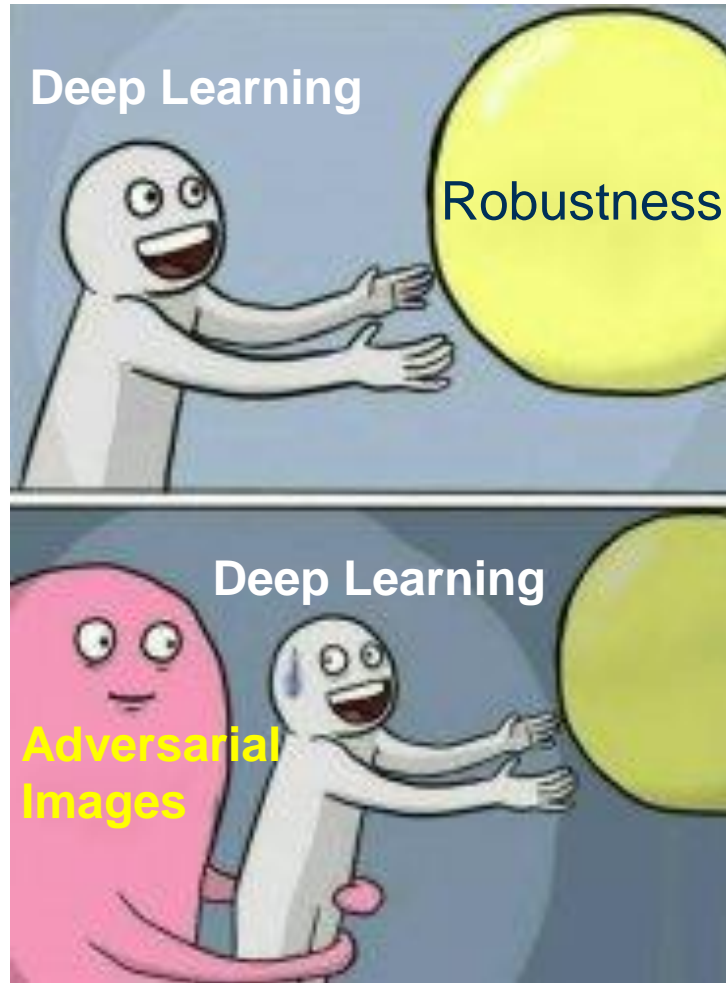
Part 2

- Explainability
- Out-of-distribution Detection
- Adversarial Detection
- Anomaly Detection
- Corruption Detection
- Case Study 1
- Case Study 3
- Case Study 2
- Misprediction Detection
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- Image Quality Assessment
- Saliency Detection



# Mememes to Wrap Up Part 3

## Robustness at Inference



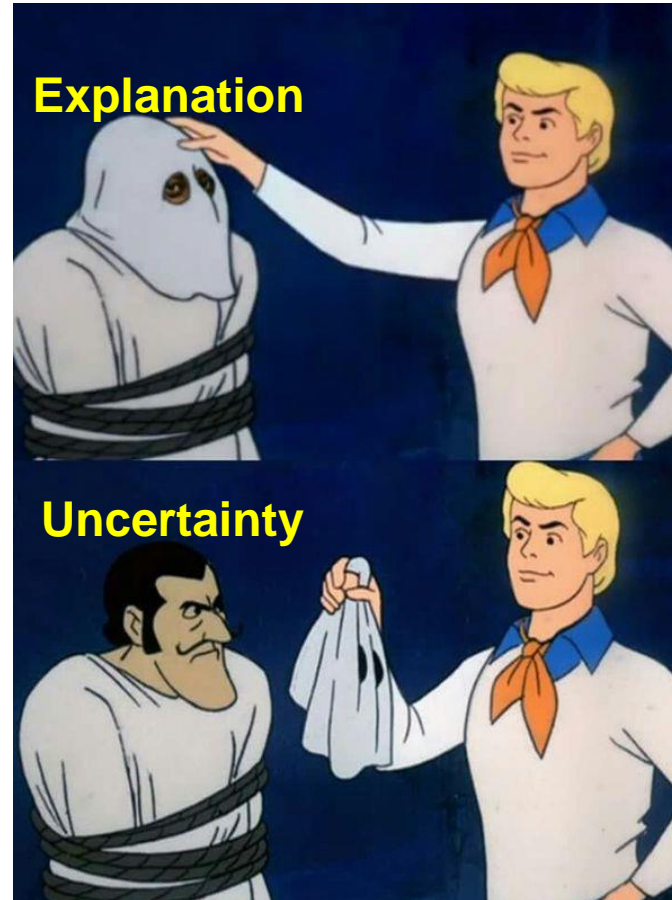
**Cannot depend on training to construct robust models**



# Mememes to Wrap Up Part 3

## Explainability Research is Just Uncertainty Research

### Explanatory Evaluation reduces Uncertainty





# Inferential Machine Learning

## Part 4: Intervenability at Inference



# Objective

## Objective of the Tutorial

**To discuss methodologies that promote robustness in neural networks at inference**

- Part 1: Inference in Neural Networks
- Part 2: Explainability at Inference
- Part 3: Uncertainty at Inference
- **Part 4: Intervenability at Inference**
  - Definitions of Intervenability
    - Causality
    - Privacy
    - Interpretability
    - Prompting
    - Benchmarking
    - Case study: Negative Interventions
  - Mathematical frameworks to study intervenability
  - Case Study: Intervenability in Interpretability
- Part 5: Conclusions and Future Directions



# Intervenability

## Through the Causal Glass

**Assess:** The amenability of neural network decisions to human interventions



*“Interventions in data are manipulations that are designed to test for causal factors”*



# Intervenability

## Through the Privacy Glass

**Assure:** The amenability of neural network decisions to human interventions



*“Intervenability aims at the possibility for parties involved in any **privacy-relevant** data processing to interfere with the ongoing or planned data processing”*



# Intervenability

## Through the Interpretability Glass

**Interpret:** The amenability of neural network decisions to human interventions



*“The **post-hoc** field of explainability, that previously only justified decisions, becomes **active** by being involved in the decision making process and **providing limited, but relevant and contextual interventions**”*



# Intervenability

## Through the Prompting Glass

**Actuate:** The amenability of neural network decisions to human interventions



*“The interaction between foundation models and users via the prompting interface introduces an element of uncertainty, as the **precise response** of these models to user prompts can be **unpredictable.**”*



# Intervenability

## Through the Benchmarking Glass

**Verify:** The amenability of neural network decisions to human interventions



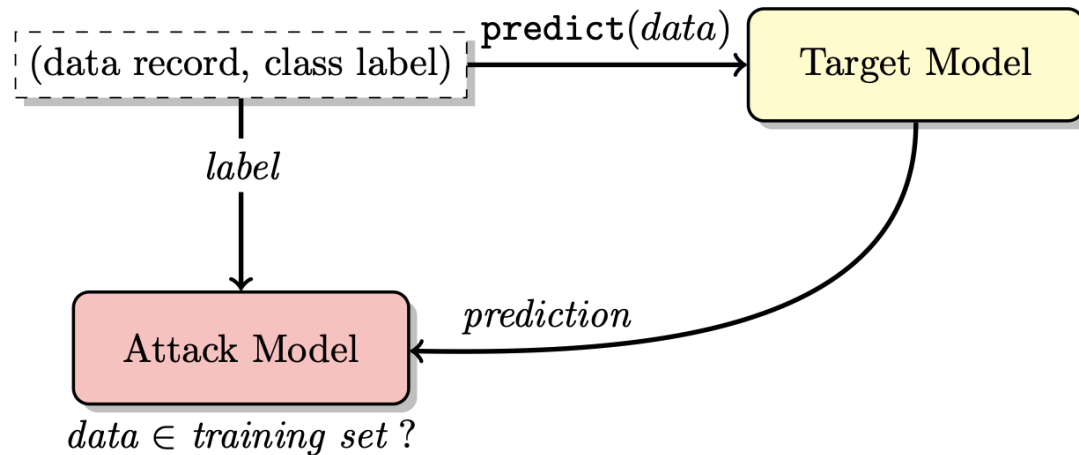
*“... new **benchmarks** were proposed to specifically test generalization of classification and detection methods with respect to **simple** algorithmically generated **interventions** like spatial shifts, blur, changes in brightness or contrast...”*



# Case Study: Negative Interventions

## Repeated Interventions: Membership Inference Attacks (MIAs)

**Goal:** Given data and black-box model, infer if the data was part of the model's training set



Attack model is the binary classifier

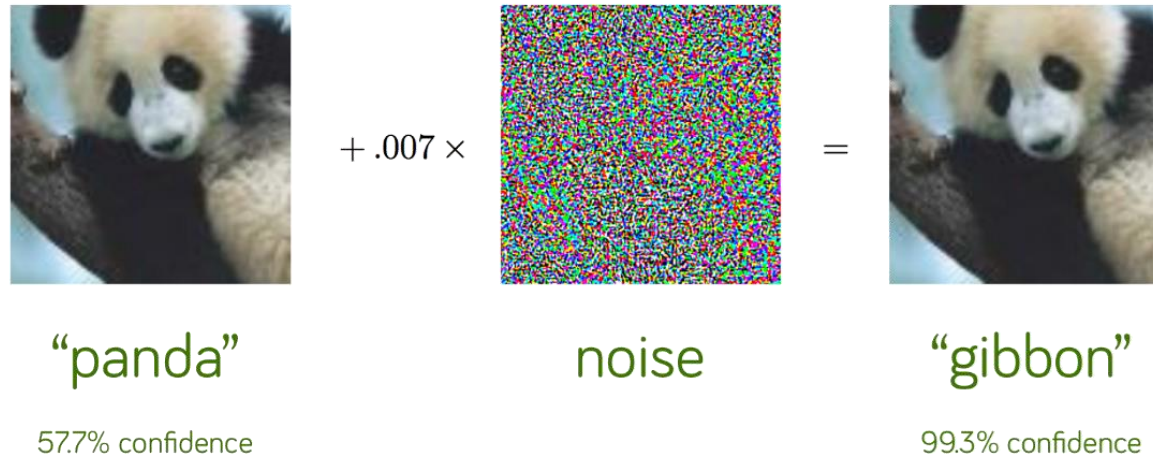
- If data is part of Electronic Health Records, then privacy of patients can be leaked
- Train a binary classifier that takes in the target model outputs and classifies whether the initial data is part of the training set
- **Prevention** is seen as a **robustness** issue while **training**: regularization, adversarial training etc.



# Case Study: Negative Interventions

## Engineered Interventions: Adversarial Attacks

**Goal:** Given a trained model, engineer imperceptible noise to ‘confuse’ the neural network



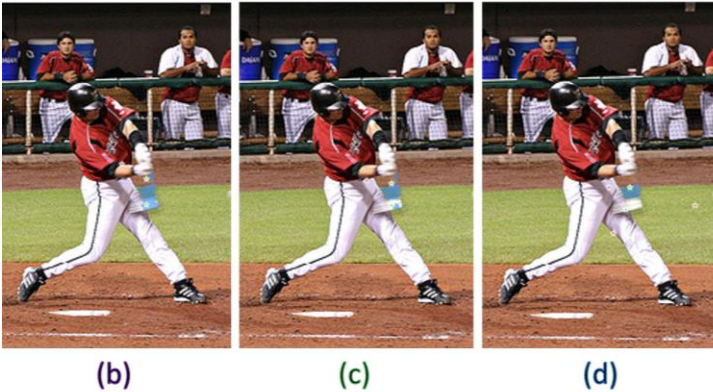
- **Gradients** (or some statistics of gradients) are used in several adversarial image generation techniques
- **Prevention** is seen as a robustness issue **both during inference and training** – adversarial training, image compression etc.



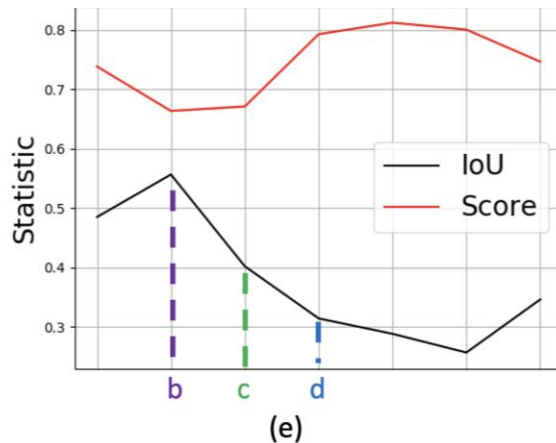
# Case Study: Negative Interventions

## 'Trial and Error' Interventions: Visual Prompting

**Goal:** Given a promptable model with no operational knowledge, users overprompt and use a 'trial and error' strategy



- Annotators are asked to segment objects (classes) using Segment Anything Model (SAM) and point prompts
- After prompting, annotators are shown the Intersection Over Union and provided the opportunity to add/subtract their prompt points
- The general conclusion from [1] is that annotators overprompt and utilize strategies that lead to worse performance



- Dataset: <https://zenodo.org/records/10975868>
- ~200,000 prompts on 6000 images





# Objective

## Objective of the Tutorial

**To discuss methodologies that promote robustness in neural networks at inference**

- Part 1: Inference in Neural Networks
- Part 2: Explainability at Inference
- Part 3: Uncertainty at Inference
- **Part 4: Intervenability at Inference**
  - Definitions of Intervenability
  - Mathematical frameworks to study intervenability
    - Causal analysis via interventions
    - Dangers of incomplete interventions
  - Case Study: Intervenability in Interpretability
- Part 5: Conclusions and Future Directions



# Intervenability Frameworks

## Framework 1: Causal Assessment via Interventions

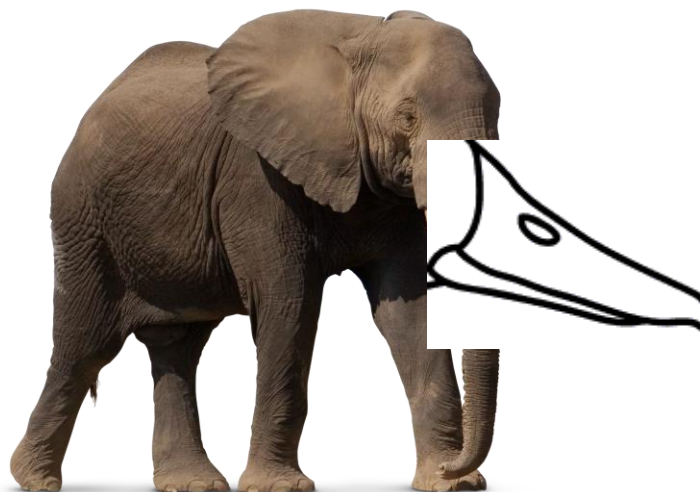
### 3 Rules of Causal Inference

**Rule 1** (Insertion/deletion of observations):

$$P(y|do(x), z, w) = P(y|do(x), w)$$



### Insertion



- Fix a causal feature (or a feature that is being tested for causality) in the data

### Key Differences:

- There are **no causal features**; approximate using pixels/structures
- The underlying network is **not a structured causal model**



# Intervenability Frameworks

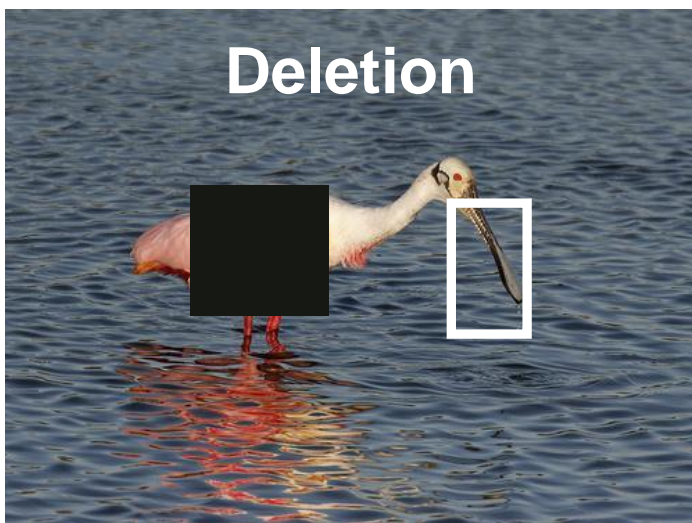
## Framework 1: Causal Assessment via Interventions

### Rule 2: Intervene on all other factors keeping the causal factor constant

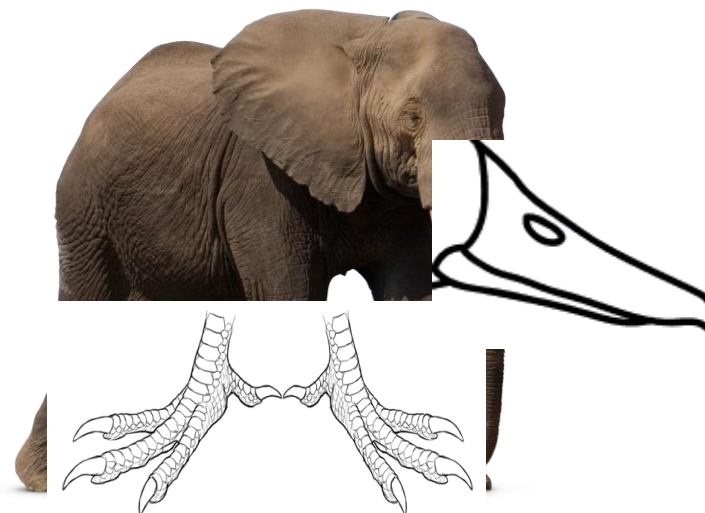
**Rule 2** (Action/observation exchange):

$$P(y|do(x), do(z), w) = P(y|do(x), z, w)$$

- Keeping the causal factor constant from rule 1, change all available factors



### Insertion



### Key Differences:

- There are **no causal features**; approximate using pixels/structures
- The underlying network is **not a structured causal model**
- **Impossible** to intervene on all pixels



# Intervenability Frameworks

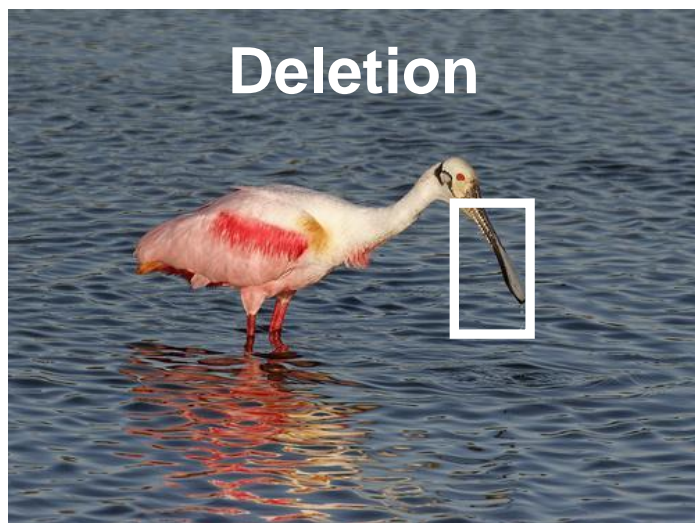
## Framework 1: Causal Assessment via Interventions

### Rule 3: Insertion/Deletion of interventional actions

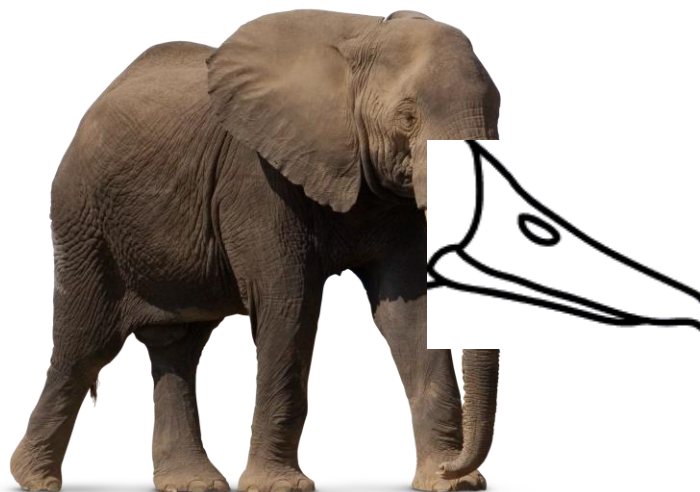
**Rule 3** (Insertion/deletion of actions):

$$P(y|do(x), do(z), w) = P(y|do(x), w)$$

Once causal factors are determined, the interventions from rule 2 are reverted and the causal attribution is noted



### Insertion



### Key Differences:

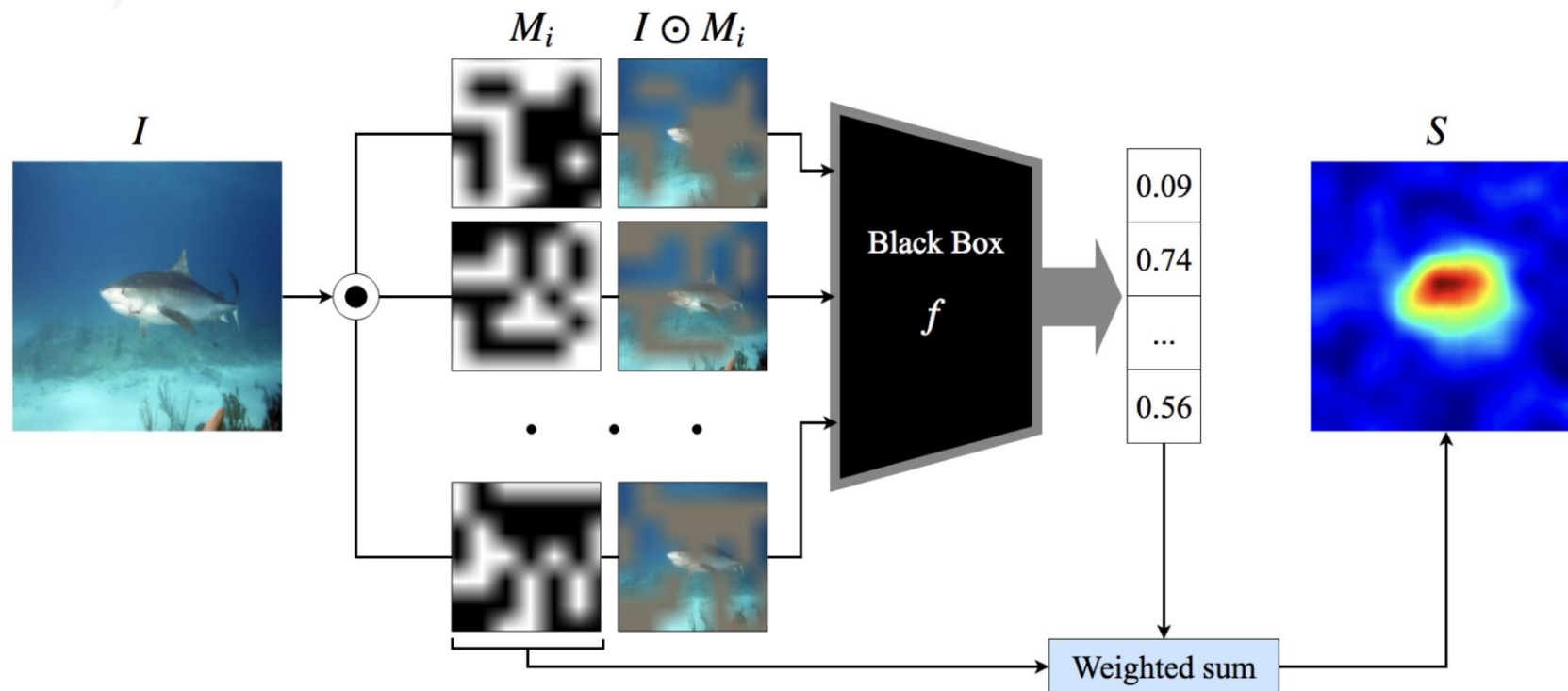
- There are **no causal features**; approximate using pixels/structures
- The underlying network is **not a structured causal model**
- **Impossible** to intervene on all pixels



# Intervenability Frameworks

## Dangers of Incomplete Interventions: RISE Explanations

Unknown interventions based on insertion/deletion can yield unexpected results



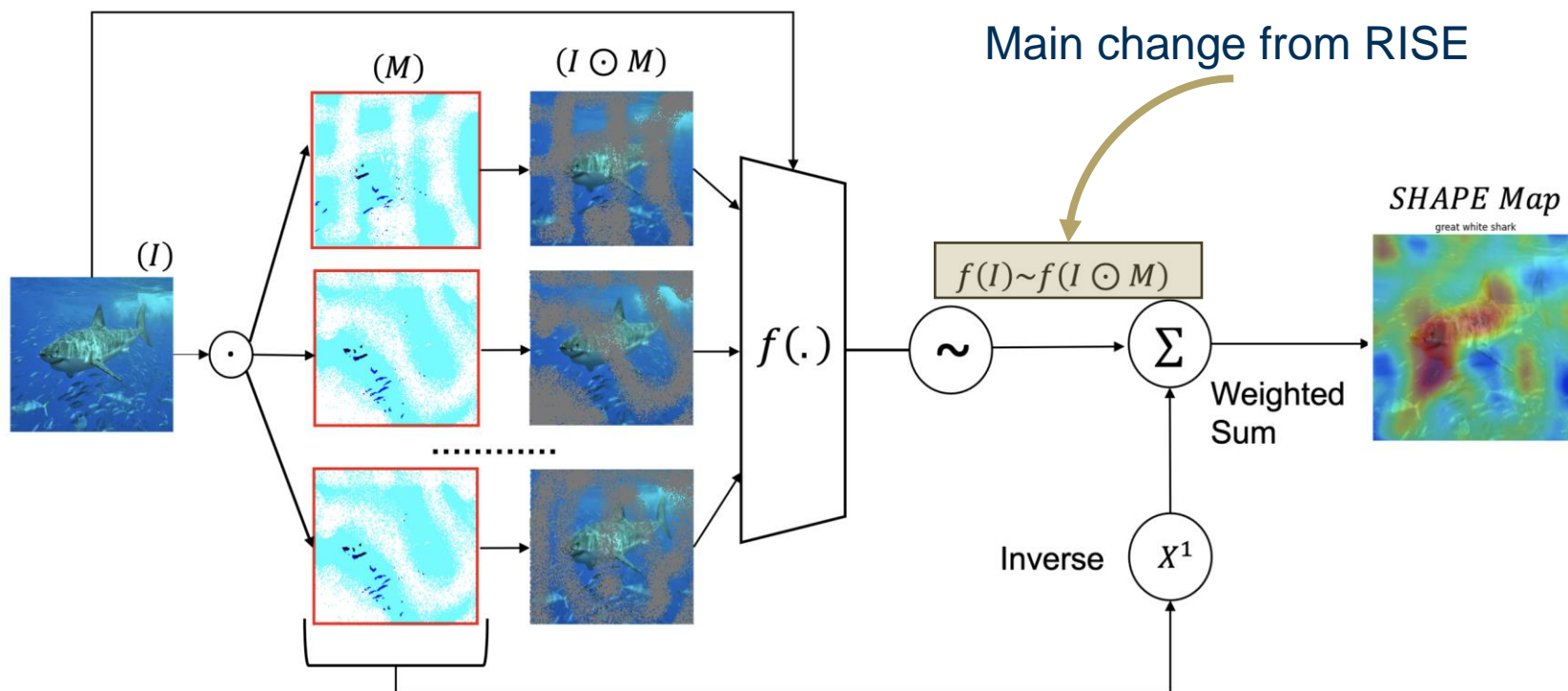
- **RISE** explainability technique creates **6000 random masks** for an image and passes it through a network
- The weighted sum of the **mask** and its **probability score** is the explanation
- Instead of causal deletion, RISE deletes randomly



# Intervenability Frameworks

## Dangers of Incomplete Interventions: SHAPE Explanations

Unknown interventions based on insertion/deletion can yield unexpected results



- **SHAPE** explanation is almost identical to RISE except:
  - Weighted sum is **NOT** between probability and mask but between **change in probability score** and inverse mask
- Results are human un-interpretable
- **However, existing objective evaluation metrics give better scores to SHAPE than RISE**



# Intervenability Frameworks

## Framework 2: Predictive Uncertainty in Interventions

**Accept that all interventions are impossible and calculate the uncertainty of ‘residual’ interventions**

Explanation of Prediction    Uncertainty of Explanation



Snout is not as highlighted as the jowls in explanation (not as important for decision)

However, snout is an important characteristic that is used to differentiate against other dogs. Hence, there is uncertainty on why this feature is not included in the attribution



# Objective

## Objective of the Tutorial

**To discuss methodologies that promote robustness in neural networks at inference**

- Part 1: Inference in Neural Networks
- Part 2: Explainability at Inference
- Part 3: Uncertainty at Inference
- **Part 4: Intervenability at Inference**
  - Definitions of Intervenability
  - Mathematical frameworks to study intervenability
  - Case Study: Intervenability in Interpretability
    - Explanatory evaluation
- Part 5: Conclusions and Future Directions



# Case Study: Intervenability in Interpretability

## Challenges in Intervenability

**Our Goal: To show that there is no one-size-fits all when choosing interventions**



**We specifically study this for the case of Explanatory Evaluation**



# Case Study: Intervenability in Interpretability

## Evaluation 1: Explanation Evaluation via Masking

Visual explanations are evaluated via masking the important regions in the image and passing it through the network

Three types of Masking:

1. **Masking using explanation heatmap**
2. Pixel-wise masking using explanation as importance
3. Structure-wise masking using information encoded in explanation



**Masking = Intelligent Intervention**



# Case Study: Intervenability in Interpretability

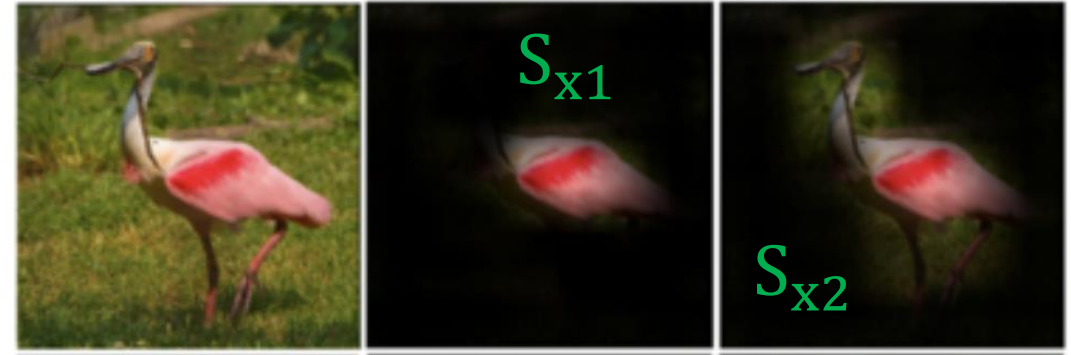
## Evaluation 1: Explanation Evaluation via Masking

Common evaluation technique is masking the image and checking for prediction correctness

$y$  = Prediction

$S_x$  = Explanation masked data

$E(Y|S_x)$  = Expectation of class given  $S_x$



If across  $N$  images,  
 $E(Y|S_{x2}) > E(Y|S_{x1})$ ,  
explanation technique 2  
is better than explanation  
technique 1



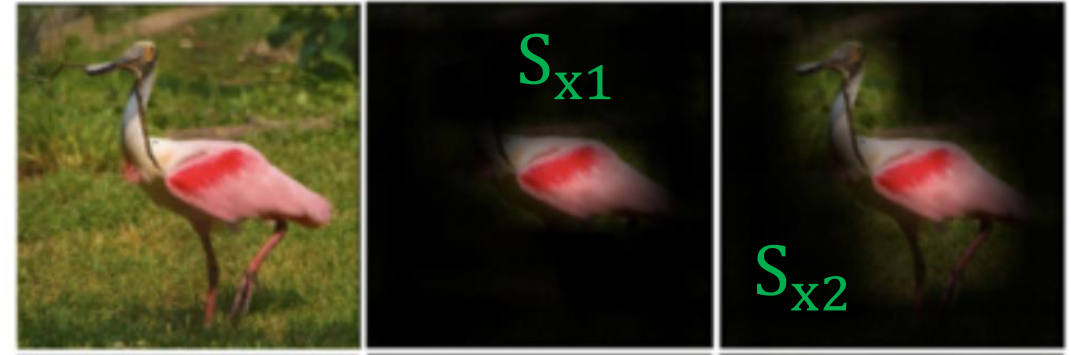


# Case Study: Intervenability in Interpretability

## Evaluation 1: Explanation Evaluation via Masking

However, explanation masking encourages 'larger' explanations

- Larger explanations imply more features in masked images are intact (unmasked)
- This increases likelihood of a correct prediction
- 'Fine-grained' explanations are not promoted





# Case Study: Intervenability in Interpretability

## Explanation Evaluation

**Common evaluation technique is masking the image and checking for prediction correctness**

Three types of Masking:

1. Masking using explanation heatmap
2. **Pixel-wise masking using explanation as importance**
3. Structure-wise masking using information encoded in explanation

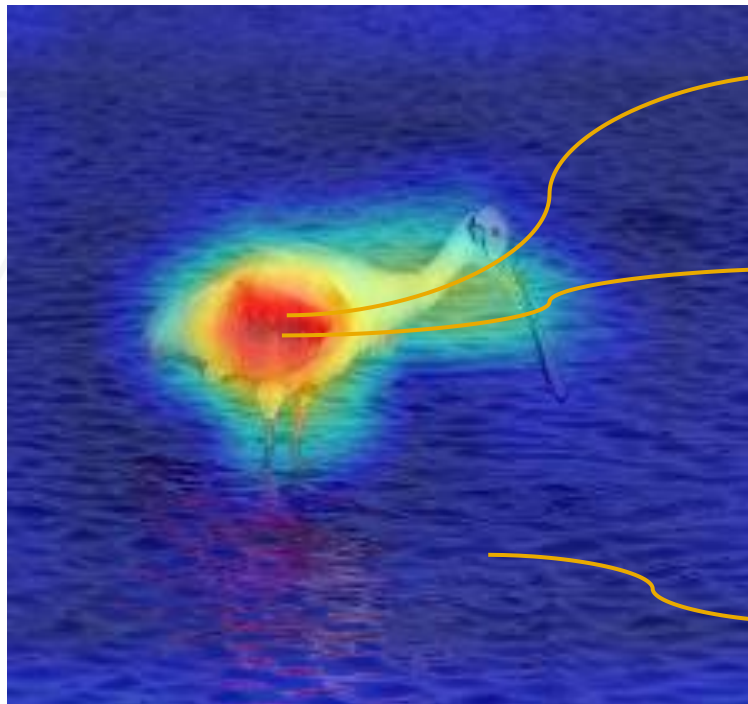




# Case Study: Intervenability in Interpretability

## Evaluation 2: Progressive Pixel-wise Insertion and Deletion

**Pixel-wise Deletion: Sequentially delete (mask) pixels in an image based on their explanation assigned importance scores**



Highest importance

Second Highest importance

.

Least importance

**Step 1:** Mask highest importance pixel and pass the image through the network. Note the probability of spoonbill.

**Step 2:** Mask the second highest importance pixel from the image in Step 1 and pass the image through the network. Note the probability of spoonbill.

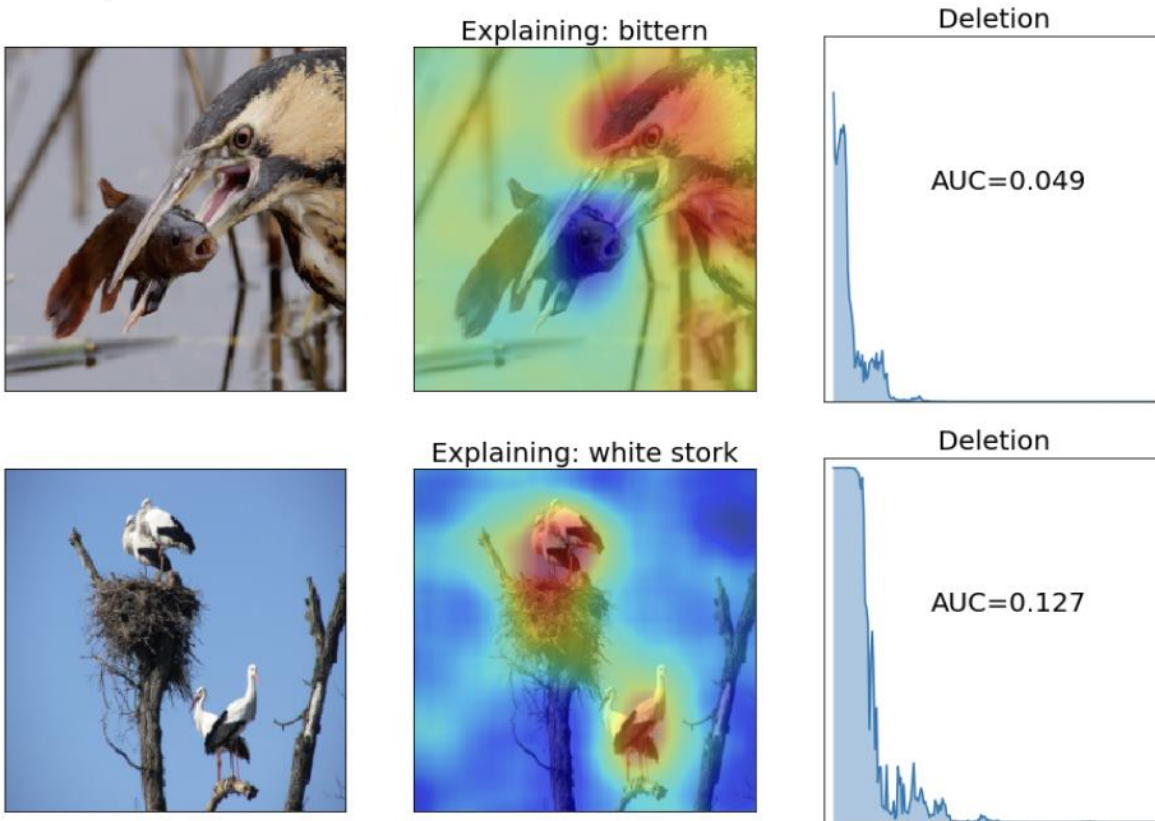
**Step 3:** Repeat until all pixels are deleted (masked)



# Case Study: Intervenability in Interpretability

## Evaluation 2: Progressive Pixel-wise Insertion and Deletion

The removal of the "cause" (important pixels) will force the base model to change its decision.



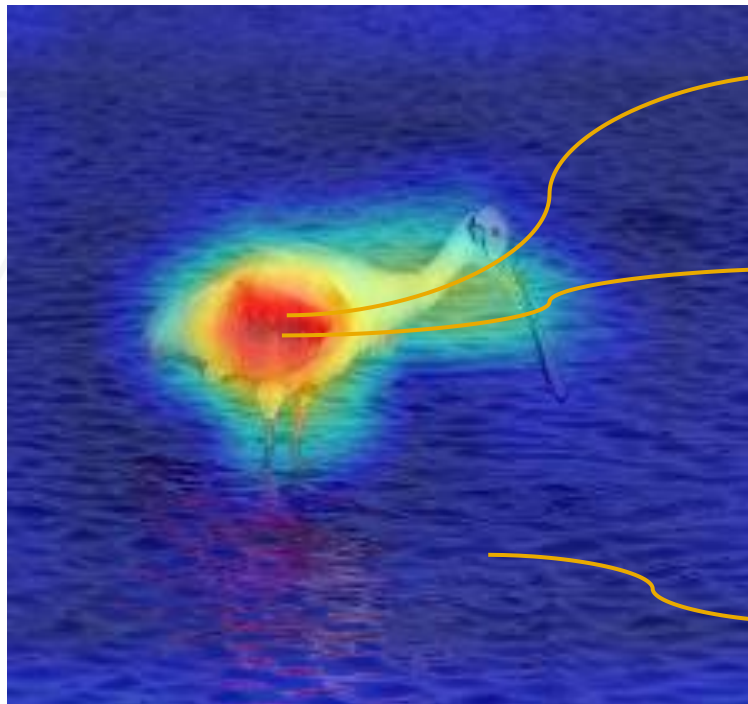
- **Deletion approximates Necessity** criterion of a “good” explanation
- **AUC** for a good explanation will be **low**
- **Deletion** encourages **fine-grained explanations** by choosing those heatmaps that select the most relevant pixels



# Case Study: Intervenability in Interpretability

## Evaluation 2: Progressive Pixel-wise Insertion and Deletion

**Pixel-wise Insertion: Sequentially add pixels to a mean image based on their explanation assigned importance scores**



Highest importance

Second Highest importance

.

Least importance

**Take a mean (grayscale) image**

**Step 1:** Add the highest importance pixel to the mean image and pass it through the network. Note the probability of spoonbill.

**Step 2:** Add the second highest importance pixel to the image in Step 1 and pass the image through the network. Note the probability of spoonbill.

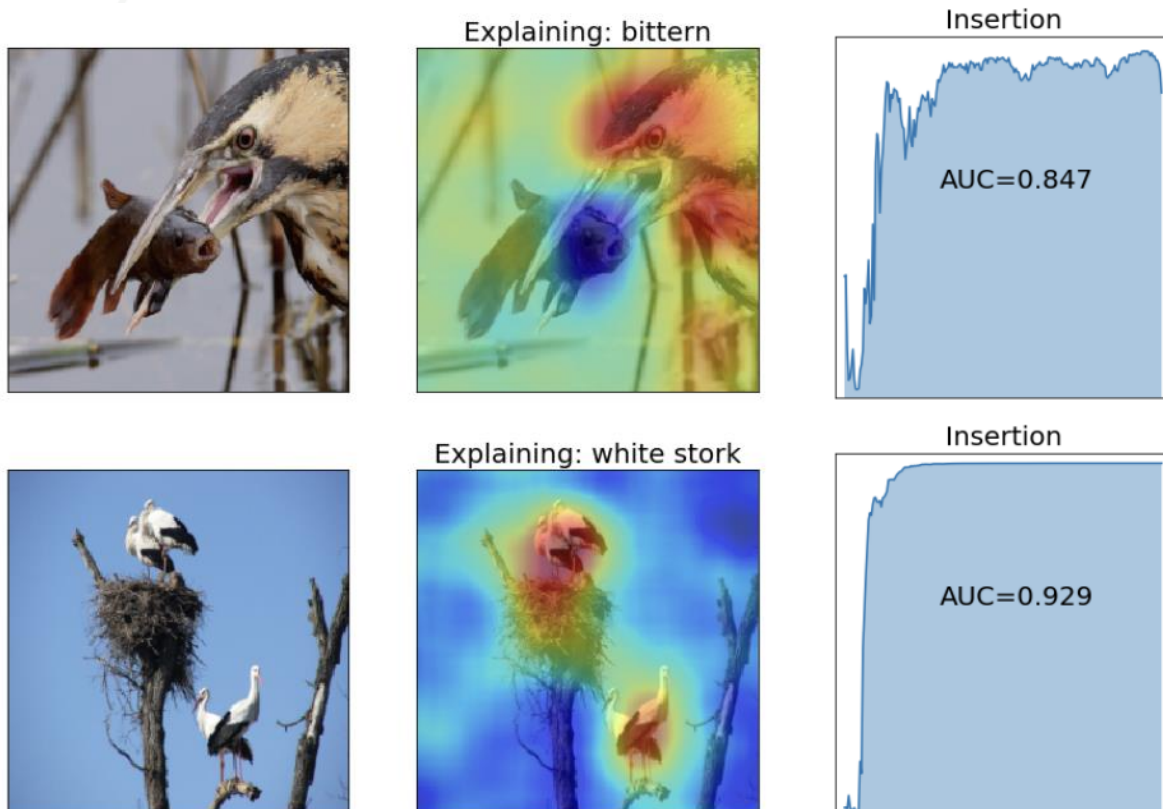
**Step 3:** Repeat until all pixels are inserted



# Case Study: Intervenability in Interpretability

## Evaluation 2: Progressive Pixel-wise Insertion and Deletion

The addition of the "cause" (important pixels) will force the base model to change its decision.



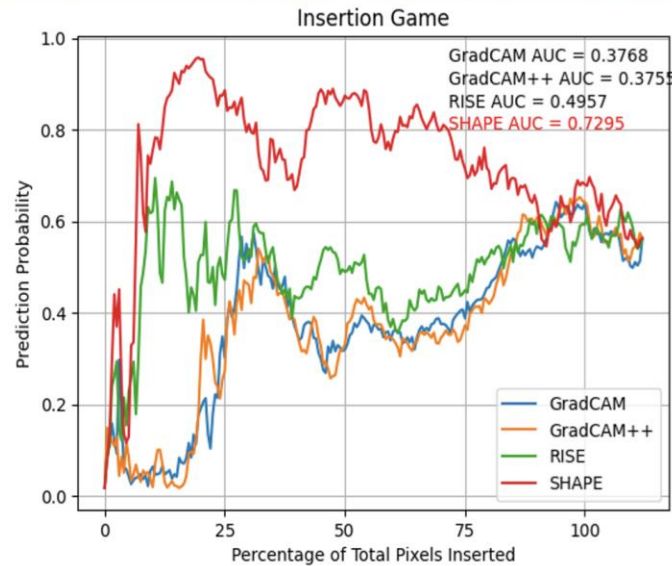
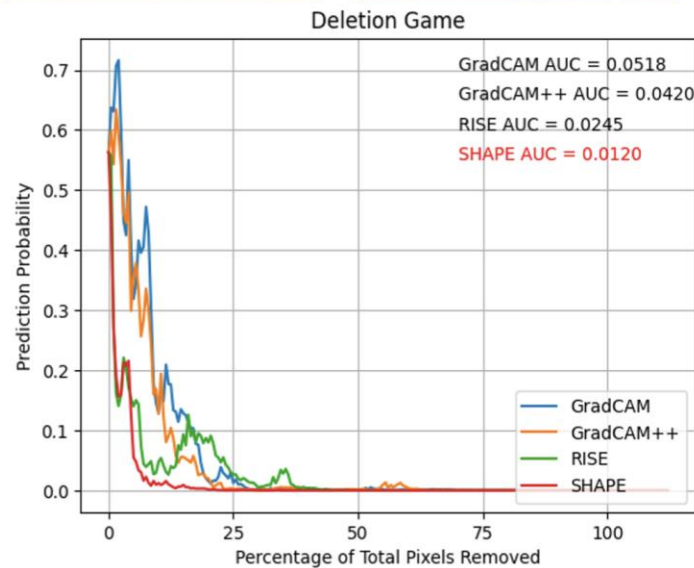
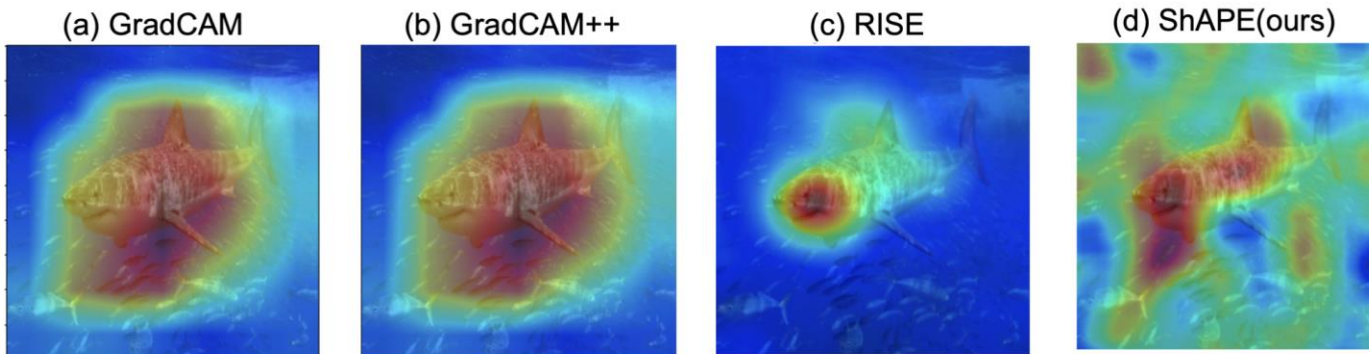
- **Insertion approximates Sufficiency** criterion of a “good” explanation
- **AUC** for a good explanation will be **high**
- **Insertion** encourages **fine-grained explanations** by choosing those heatmaps that select the most relevant pixels



# Case Study: Intervenable in Interpretability

## Evaluation 2: Progressive Pixel-wise Insertion and Deletion

### Insertion and Deletion evaluation metrics encourage pixel-wise analysis of explanations



- However, humans do not “see” in pixels
- Rather they view scenes in a “**structure-wise**” fashion
- While **heatmap masking** encourages **large explanations**, **pixel-wise masking** encourages **unrealistic and non-human like** explanations



# Case Study: Intervenability in Interpretability

## Explanation Evaluation

**Common evaluation technique is masking the image and checking for prediction correctness**

Three types of Masking:

1. Masking using explanation heatmap
2. Pixel-wise masking using explanation as importance
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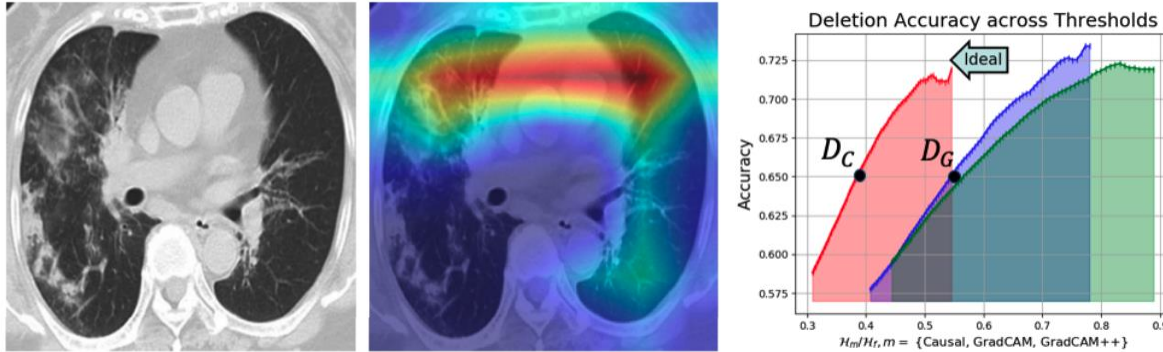




# Case Study: Intervenable in Interpretability

## Evaluation 3: Progressive Structure-wise Insertion and Deletion

**Structure-wise Deletion: Sequentially delete (mask) pixels in an image based on the number of bits used to represent the region**



**Ideal scenario: The explanation encodes the most important information in the least possible bits**

CausalCAM in Red<sup>1</sup>  
GradCAM in Purple  
GradCAM++ in Green

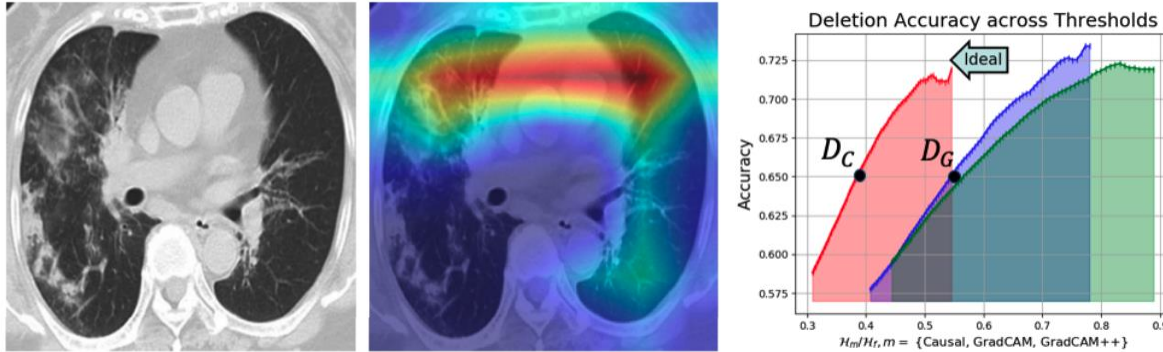
- $D_C$  and  $D_G$  represent 65% accuracy for CausalCAM and GradCAM respectively
- **CausalCAM encodes dense structure-rich features in lesser bits, that aid accuracy**



# Case Study: Intervenability in Interpretability

## Evaluation 3: Progressive Structure-wise Insertion and Deletion

**Structure-wise Deletion: Sequentially delete (mask) pixels in an image based on the number of bits used to represent the region**



**Ideal scenario: The explanation encodes the most important information in the least possible bits**

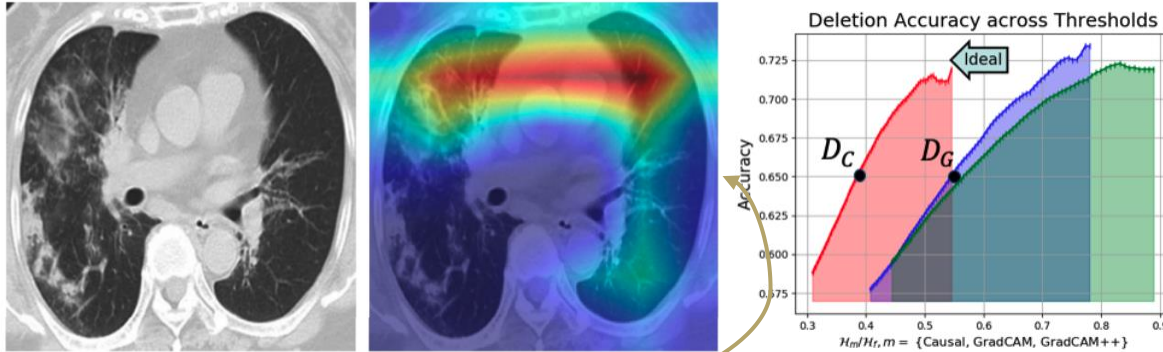
**Step 1:** Choose a threshold in the explanation (say 0.1) and delete (mask) all the pixels in the original image below the threshold. Pass the masked image through the network and note the change in prediction (if any)



# Case Study: Intervenable in Interpretability

## Evaluation 3: Progressive Structure-wise Insertion and Deletion

**Structure-wise Deletion: Sequentially delete (mask) pixels in an image based on the number of bits used to represent the region**



Y-axis: Performance accuracy across all ratios

X-axis: Ratio of Huffman encoded masked and original images for all explanations. Smaller the ratio, less is the number of bits encoding the masked image

**Ideal scenario: The explanation encodes the most important information in the least possible bits**

**Step 1:** Choose a threshold in the explanation (say 0.1) and delete (mask) all the pixels in the original image below the threshold. Pass the masked image through the network and note the change in prediction (if any)

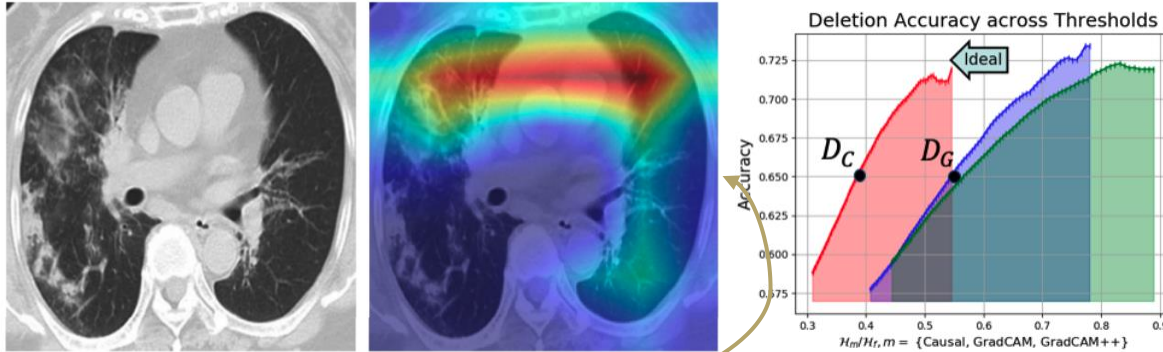
**Step 2:** Calculate the Huffman code for the original and the masked image. The ratio between the codes of masked and original image is taken on the x-axis and the corresponding accuracy across all images is shown on the y-axis



# Case Study: Intervenable in Interpretability

## Evaluation 3: Progressive Structure-wise Insertion and Deletion

**Structure-wise Deletion: Sequentially delete (mask) pixels in an image based on the number of bits used to represent the region**



Y-axis: Performance accuracy across all ratios

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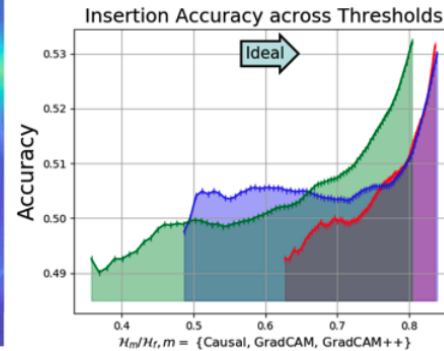
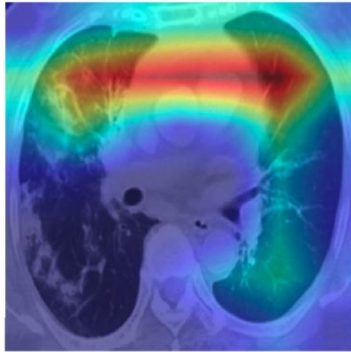
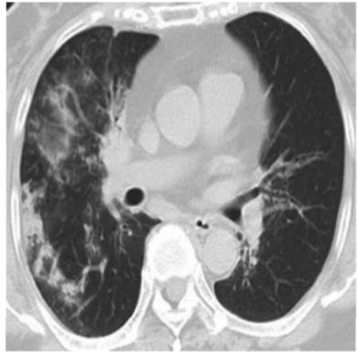
**Step 3:** Repeat across thresholds



# Case Study: Intervenability in Interpretability

## Evaluation 3: Progressive Structure-wise Insertion and Deletion

**Structure-wise Insertion: Sequentially add (insert) pixels in an image based on the number of bits used to represent the region**



**Ideal scenario: The explanation encodes the most important information in the least possible bits**

CausalCAM in Red<sup>1</sup>  
GradCAM in Purple  
GradCAM++ in Green

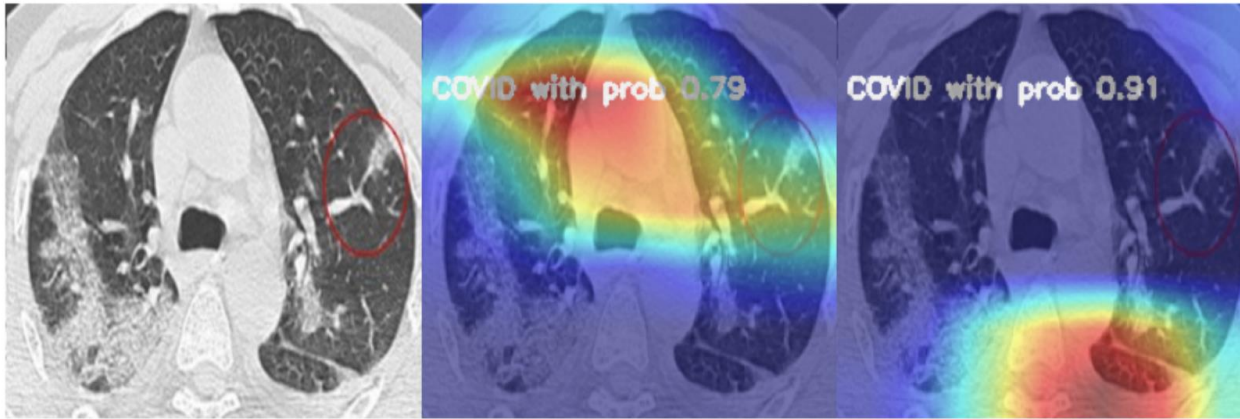
- **CausalCAM encodes dense structure-rich features in at the lowest threshold, that aid accuracy**



# Case Study: Intervenable in Interpretability

## Evaluation 3: Progressive Structure-wise Insertion and Deletion

**Structure-wise insertion and deletion can sometimes promote adversarial explanations**



(a)

- Best explanations according to structure-wise insertion and deletion.
- Corroborated by high probabilities



# Case Study: Intervenability in Interpretability

## Pros and Cons

### Evaluation 1: Explanation heatmap masking

- **Pro:** Structures are visible in the explanations
- **Con:** Encourages large non-fine grained explanations

### Evaluation 2: Pixel-wise insertion and deletion

- **Pro:** Progressively assigns importance to pixels
- **Con:** Encourages unrealistic and dispersed explanations

### Evaluation 3: Structure-wise insertion and deletion

- **Pro:** Encourages structures while progressively assigning importance to structures based on information bits
- **Pro:** Other human-centric measures including SSIM, saliency etc. can be used on x-axis
- **Con:** Encourages causal (and sometimes adversarial) explanations without considering context information



# Inferential Machine Learning

## Part 5: Conclusions and Future Directions

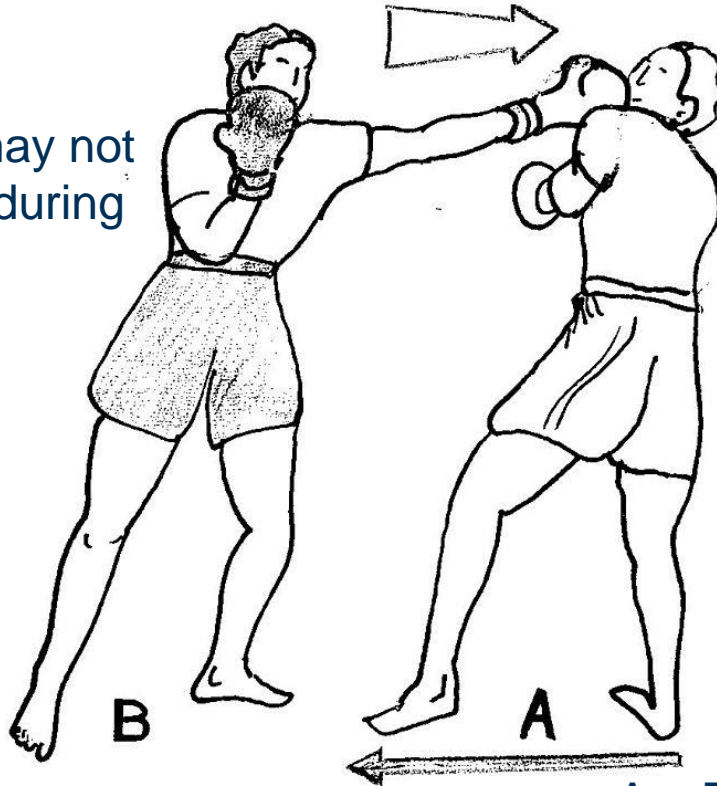


# Mememes to Wrap it Up

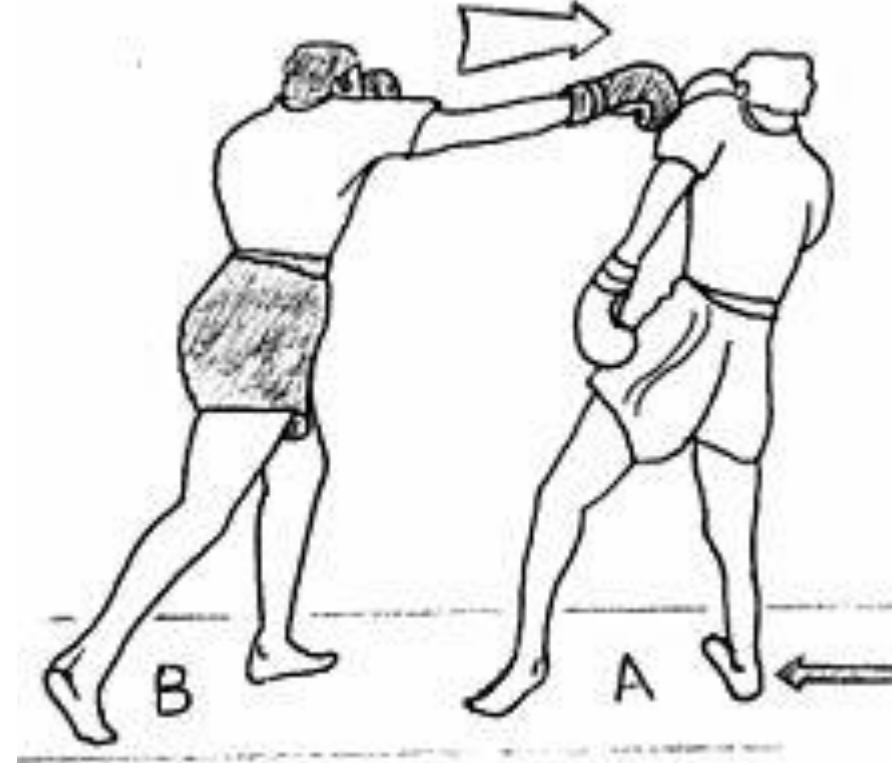
## Overcoming Challenges at Training

**Novel data packs a 1-2 punch!**

Novel data may not be available during training



A = Deep Neural Networks  
B = Novel data

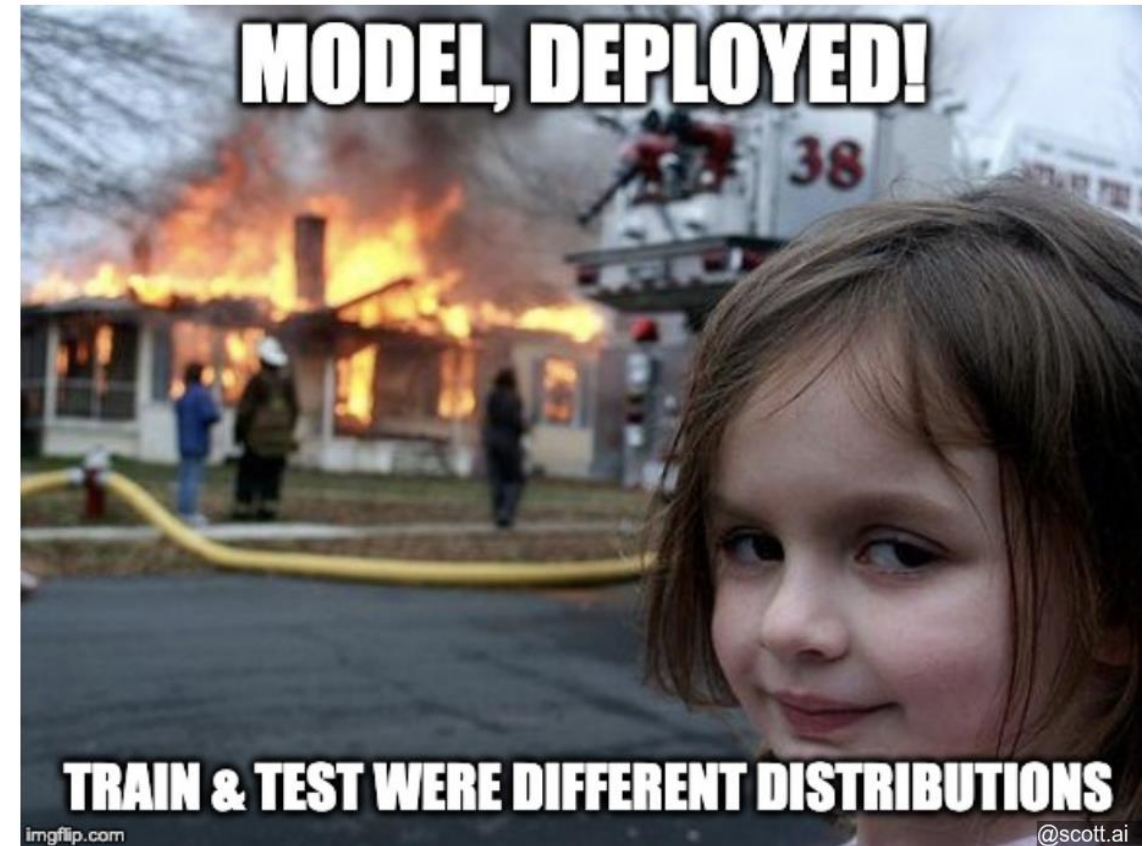
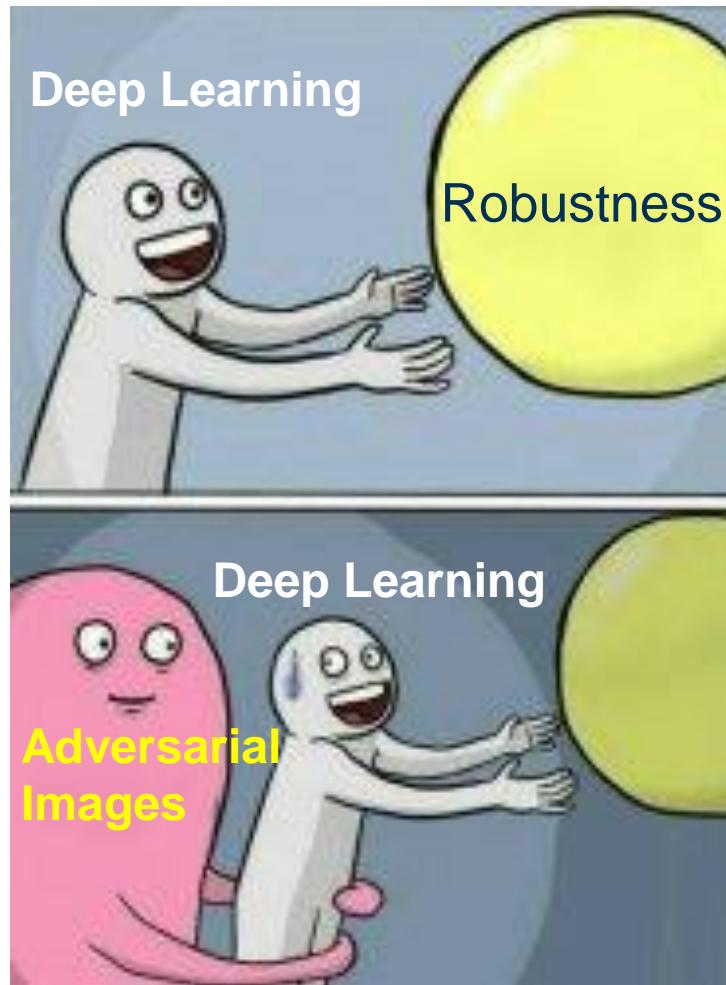


Even if available, novel data does not easily fit into either the earlier or later stages of training



# Mememes to Wrap it Up

## Robustness at Inference



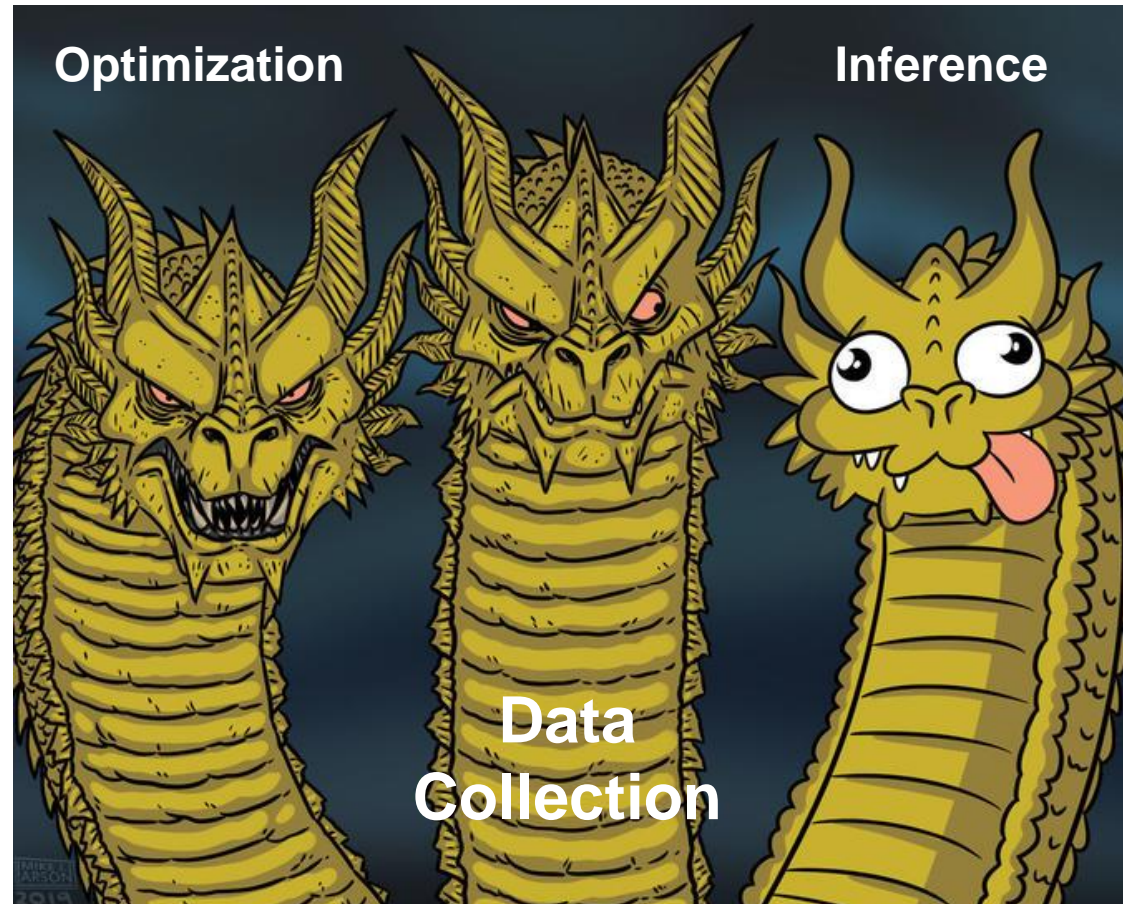
**Cannot depend on training to construct robust models**



# Mememes to Wrap it Up

## Research in the Inferential Stage of Neural Networks

**Existing research on robustness focuses on data collection and optimization**



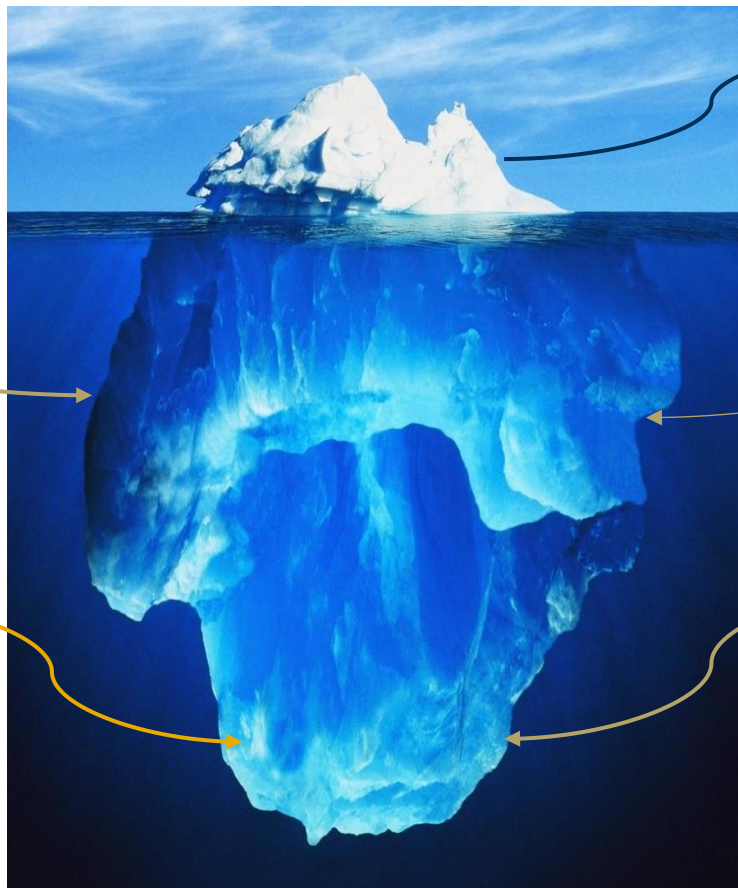


# Memes to Wrap it Up

## Implicit Knowledge in Neural Networks

**Trained Neural Networks have a wealth of implicit stored knowledge, waiting to be extracted at inference**

*Why P, rather than Q?*



Traditional *Why P?*



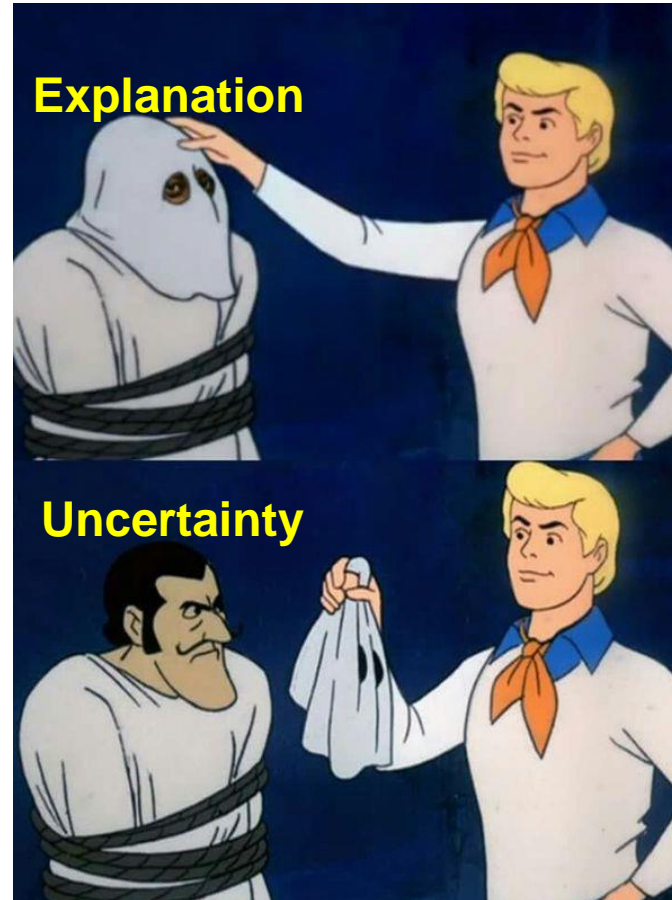
*What if?*



# Memes to Wrap it Up

Explainability Research is Just Uncertainty Research

**Explanatory Evaluation reduces Uncertainty**





# Key Takeaways

## Role of Gradients

- **Robustness** under distributional shift in domains, environments, and adversaries are **challenges** for neural networks
  - **Gradients at Inference** provide a **holistic solution** to the above challenges
- **Gradients** can help **traverse** through a trained and unknown **manifold**
  - They approximate **Fisher Information** on the projection
  - They can be **manipulated** by providing **contrast** classes
  - They can be used to construct **localized contrastive** manifolds
  - They provide **implicit knowledge** about **all classes**, when only **one data** point is available at inference
- Gradients are useful in a number of **Image Understanding** applications
  - Highlighting features of the current prediction as well as **counterfactual** data and **contrastive** classes
  - Providing **directional information** in anomaly detection
  - **Quantifying uncertainty** for out-of-distribution, corruption, and adversarial detection
  - Providing **expectancy mismatch** for human vision related applications



# Future Directions

## Research at Inference Stage

- **Test Time Augmentation (TTA) Research**
  - Multiple augmentations of data are passed through the network at inference
  - Research is in designing the best augmentations
- **Active Inference**
  - Utilize the knowledge in Neural Networks to ***ask it to ask us***
  - Neural networks ask for the best augmentation of the data point given that one data point at inference
- **Uncertainty in Explainability, Label Interpretation, and Trust quantification**
  - Uncertainty research has to expand beyond model and data uncertainty
  - In some applications within medical and seismic communities, there is no agreed upon label for data. Uncertainty in label interpretation is its own research
- **Test-time Interventions for AI alignment**
  - Human interventions at test time to alter the decision-making process is essential trustworthy AI
  - Further research in intelligently involving experts in a non end-to-end framework is required



# References

## Gradient-based Works

- Explainability [1, 2]
- Out-of-distribution Detection [3]
- Adversarial Detection [4]
- Anomaly Detection [5]
- Corruption Detection [3]
- Misprediction Detection [6]
- Causal Analysis [7]
- Open-set Recognition [8]
- Noise Robustness [9]
- Uncertainty Visualization [10]
- Image Quality Assessment [11, 12]
- Saliency Detection [13]
- Novelty Detection [14]
- Disease Severity Detection [15]

- [1] AlRegib, G., & Prabhushankar, M. (2022). Explanatory Paradigms in Neural Networks: Towards relevant and contextual explanations. *IEEE Signal Processing Magazine*, 39(4), 59-72.
- [2] Prabhushankar, M., Kwon, G., Temel, D., & AlRegib, G. (2020, October). Contrastive explanations in neural networks. In *2020 IEEE International Conference on Image Processing (ICIP)* (pp. 3289-3293). IEEE.
- [3] J. Lee, C. Lehman, M. Prabhushankar, and G. AlRegib, "Probing the Purview of Neural Networks via Gradient Analysis," in IEEE Access, Mar. 21 2023.
- [4] J. Lee, M. Prabhushankar, and G. AlRegib, "Gradient-Based Adversarial and Out-of-Distribution Detection," in *International Conference on Machine Learning (ICML) Workshop on New Frontiers in Adversarial Machine Learning*, Baltimore, MD, Jul. 2022.
- [5] Kwon, G., Prabhushankar, M., Temel, D., & AlRegib, G. (2020, August). Backpropagated gradient representations for anomaly detection. In *European Conference on Computer Vision* (pp. 206-226). Springer, Cham.
- [6] Prabhushankar, M., & AlRegib, G. (2024, August). Counterfactual Gradients-based Quantification of Prediction Trust in Neural Networks. In *2024 IEEE 7th International Conference on Multimedia Information Processing and Retrieval (MIPR)* (pp. 529-535). IEEE.
- [7] M. Prabhushankar, and G. AlRegib, "Extracting Causal Visual Features for Limited Label Classification," in IEEE International Conference on Image Processing (ICIP), Sept. 2021.
- [8] Lee, Jinsol, and Ghassan AlRegib. "Open-Set Recognition With Gradient-Based Representations." *2021 IEEE International Conference on Image Processing (ICIP)*. IEEE, 2021.
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