Perspective on Ethics

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Do you want (try) to be a good person?

Why?

Why we should study Ethics?

Scenario 1: Algorithmic Bias

A machine learning specialist develops an AI algorithm for a job application screening tool. During testing, it is discovered that the AI favors certain demographics over others due to biased training data.

Ethical Question: Is it ethical to deploy the AI as is, or should the algorithm be refined, even if it delays the project and increases costs?

Scenario 2: Data Breach Responsibility

An IT administrator discovers a data breach in their company's system that exposed sensitive customer information. Management advises the administrator to downplay the breach and delay informing customers to avoid reputational damage.

Ethical Question: Should the administrator follow management's directive or notify customers immediately?

Scenario 3: Intellectual Property Theft

A developer is offered a lucrative job at a competitor company and is asked to bring proprietary code from their current employer to "jumpstart" the new company's projects.

Ethical Question: Should the developer accept the offer and share the code?

Scenario 3: Fake News Amplification

A team of engineers develops an algorithm for a news aggregation website. They discover that the algorithm prioritizes sensationalist and fake news stories because they generate higher engagement and revenue.

Ethical Question: Should they adjust the algorithm to prioritize accuracy, even if it reduces profits?

Scenario 4: Manipulative Design

A UX designer is tasked with creating a subscription cancellation process for a streaming service. The company insists on making the process intentionally difficult to retain customers.

Ethical Question: Should the designer implement these "dark patterns" or push back against the request?

Scenario 5: Workplace Monitoring

A company installs software on employees' computers to monitor productivity, including tracking keystrokes, browsing history, and time spent on tasks. Employees are not informed about the monitoring.

Ethical Question: Is it ethical for the company to monitor employees without their knowledge?

What is Ethics?

Study of **moral choices** made by people

Morals: Conforming to accepted ideas of right and wrong

Personal Ethics

How do ethics develop?

- Family
- Cultural Bias
- Religious Affiliation
- Life experiences

Does Everyone Have the Same Ethical Values?

Relativism
- No universal moral truth
- Dictated by cultural tastes and customs

Divine Command Theory
- Conforming to God's law is good; breaking it is wrong

Your Choice

You only have one pill that could save one life…

Do you save one young child or one brilliant scientist?

Does Everyone Have the Same Ethical Values?

- **Utilitarianism**
   - greater happiness is better
   - individual happiness is not as important

   E.g. using weapons of mass destruction ends a war sooner and therefore saves lives otherwise destroyed by conventional fighting.

- **Virtue Ethics**
   - morals are internal

   E.g. Cleaning a street because you want to and not because the court has ordered community service

Does Everyone Have the Same Ethics?

- Laws are formal, written standards
  - Designed to apply to everyone
  - Enforced by government agencies

- Ethics is needed to provide a general set of unwritten guidelines

Ethics

- "a branch of philosophy that involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong conduct." [Wikipedia]

- Broadly speaking, there are three areas of study in ethics

  - Meta-ethics

  - Normative Ethics

  - Applied Ethics

Meta-ethics

- Meta-ethics questions how we think about ethics (hence meta)

  - "Is it okay to buy bread then throw it away when there are people who are starving?": a question of ethics

  - "Is it ever possible to obtain true knowledge of what is good and what is bad?": a question of meta-ethics

Pyrrhonism (Epicurean) (BC 4)

- Pyrrhonism is Epicurean: the state of mind not disturbed by anything, as it avoids pain and only accepts pleasure (note that the real Epicurean pleasure is one of mind, not the physical pleasure)

- The mind reaches this peaceful state by suspending beliefs about anything that is *not evident.*
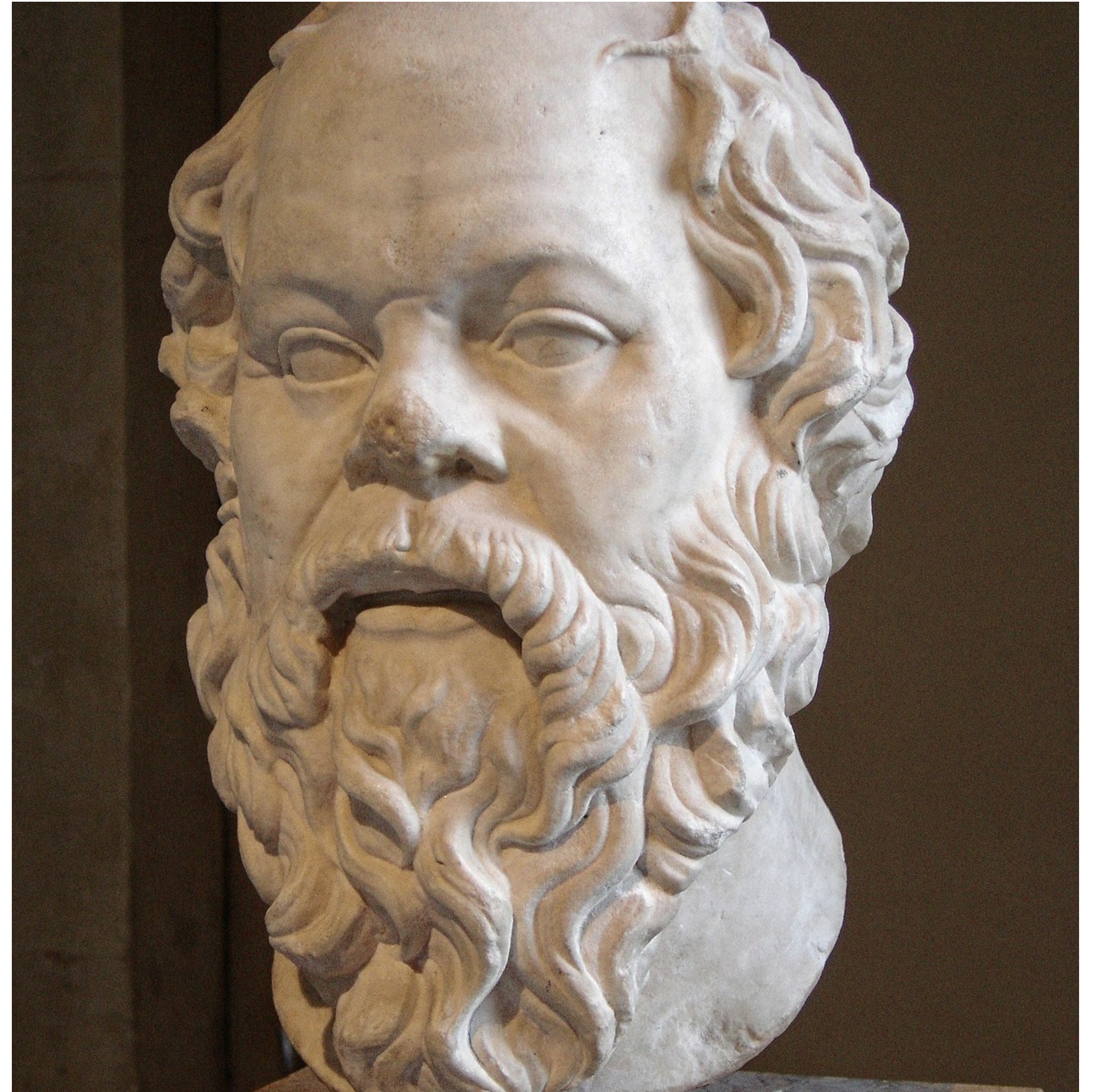
Normative Ethics

- norm: n. *a standard or pattern, especially in social behaviour, that is typical or expected. a required standard.*

- normative: *adj. relating to, or derived from a standard or norm*

- Normative ethics: the branch of ethics that studies what the expected behaviour should be, how, and why

Virtue as Ethics (Socrates)

- The importance of self-knowledge: knowing oneself means knowing every fact and context that is relevant to one's existence.

  - Someone knowing all consequences of one's action cannot commit a crime: evil actions simply mean that the actor is ignorant.

  - A wise man knows what is right, does what is good, and therefore becomes happy :)

Three Major Views

- There are many, many branches in ethics, here are some of them :

  - Hedonism

  - Consequentialism (utilitarianism)
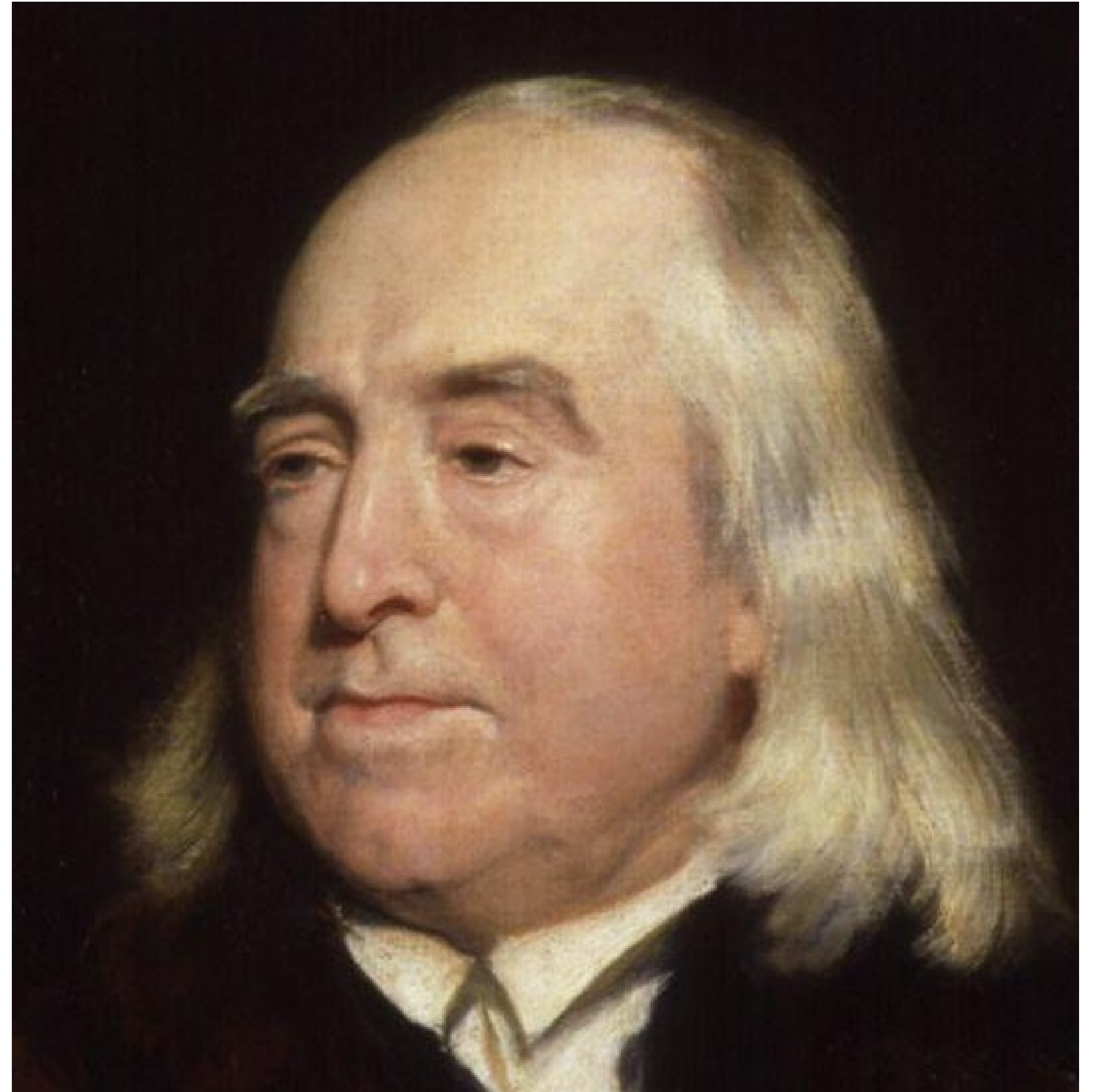
  - Deontological Ethics

Hedonism

- An individual should act in the way that **maximises one's pleasure and minimises one's pain**

- Sidgwick argues that pleasure cannot guide one's action because:

    - empirically you cannot compare pleasure and pain on a single dimension

    - "common sense" rules about general pleasure may not apply to everyone and every case

    - there are no scientific study of pleasure and pain

Consequentialism

- Any moral judgement against a particular action should be based on the *consequence* of that action

  - "All's well that ends well" - Shakespeare

  - "The end justifies the means"
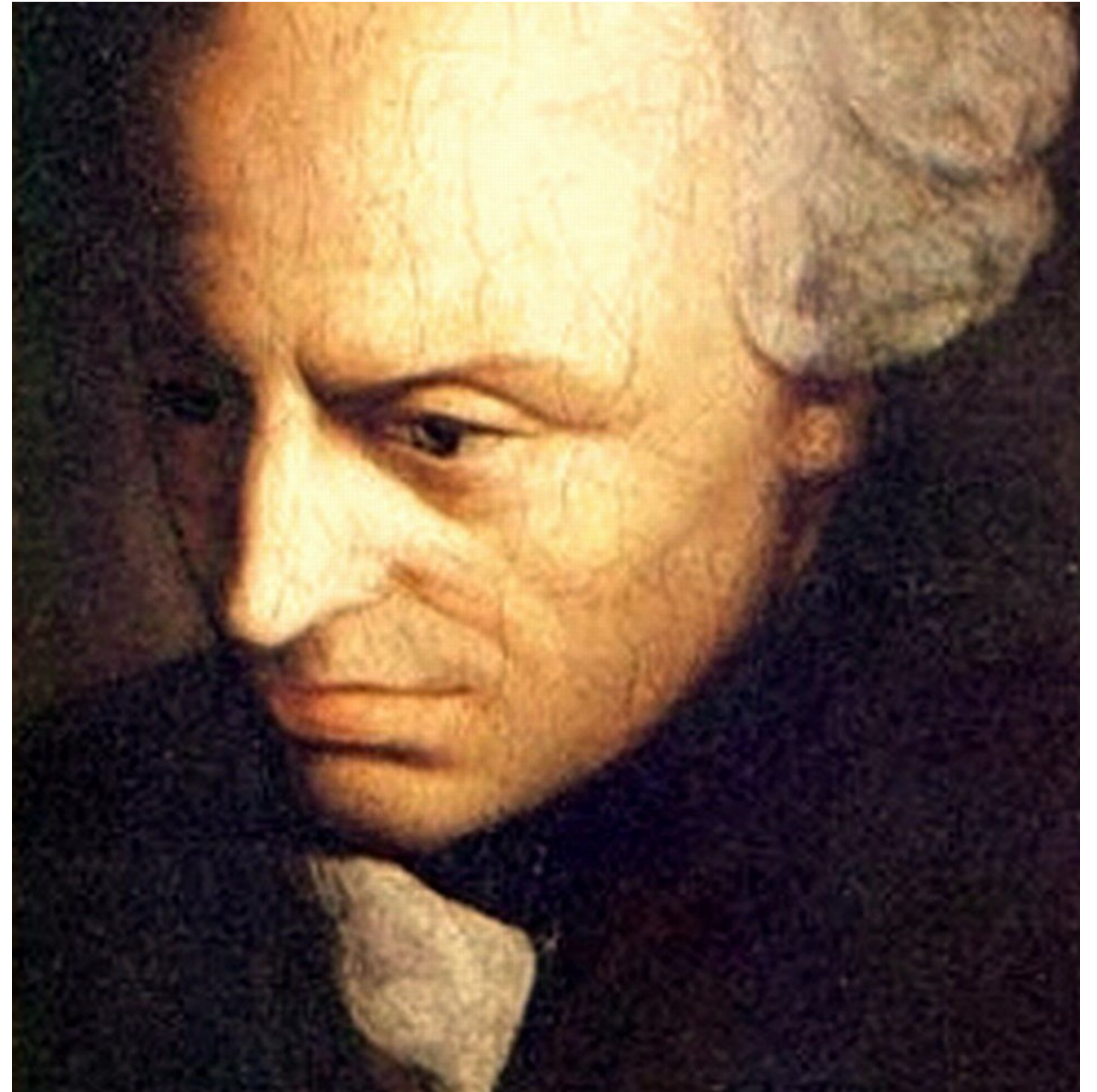
Utilitarianism

- Utilitarianism argues that the morally correct action is the one that **maximises the welfare/ happiness in those who are affected by the action**

- "The greatest happiness of the greatest number" - Jeremy Bentham

Deontological Ethics

- Deontology is the study of **duty and obligations.**

- Deontological ethics considers **actions and rules** to determine value, rather than the final consequence.

- An action can be good only if the principle behind it is the duty to the moral law.

- Consequence can be measured afterwards: where do we get the moral law?

Divine Command Theory

- Some deontologists naturally depend on *religion* as the basis of their guidelines.

- God's command becomes a duty, hence moral obligations arise.

Theories of Ethics

- We have no unified theory; some of you may think that it is simply impossible to have such a thing.

- Nonetheless, knowing a bit of history and theory gives you building blocks for your own attitude.

- A same event can be interpreted differently, perhaps even using the same viewpoint.

An Example

- While driving to work, Bo feels very hungry. Spotting a McDonald's, he parks the car on the street, goes in, and eats something. He comes out and drives away.

- Is anything wrong?

…

- An Epicurean: one person was hungry, now he is not - nothing is wrong here.

- Consequentialist: in the end, the illegal parking did not obstruct anyone - McDonald's is richer by the price of one burger, Bo is not hungry anymore, so all is good.

- Deontologist: he knowingly parked the car on the street, violating the traffic regulations, a rule is a rule, and a rational man will live by what is agreed upon as a rule, there is nothing intrinsically good about having to fix his hunger immediately, the meat industry is immoral after all…

Personal Ethics and your Work Life

Do your ethics change when you go to work?

- Employers expect you to follow ethics and rules of conduct
- Do not blindly follow unethical practices
  - Whistle Blowers – reporting your employer
  - Paid cash and collect unemployment

- Control character outside work
  - Posting Facebook comments

Technology and Ethics: How One Affects the Other

- Technology moves faster than rules can be formulated

- Use of technology is often left up to the individual

- Ethical considerations are never clear-cut

Technology and Ethics: How One Affects the Other

•**Data Privacy.** With vast amounts of personal data being collected and stored, questions of who has access to this information, how it's being used, or who it's being sold to become critical.

• **Social Media Ethics.** The role of social media platforms, including issues surrounding freedom of speech, hate speech, misinformation, and political manipulation, carries significant ethical concerns.

• **Algorithmic Bias:** Algorithms, which have important consequences on people's lives, can unwittingly perpetuate, or even amplify, bias and discrimination.

• **Artificial Intelligence Ethics.** The ethical implications of AI, including its impact on jobs and concerns about autonomous weapon systems, are hotly debated topics.

• **Responsibility in Software Development.** The issue of who bears the responsibility when software fails is both complex and significant.
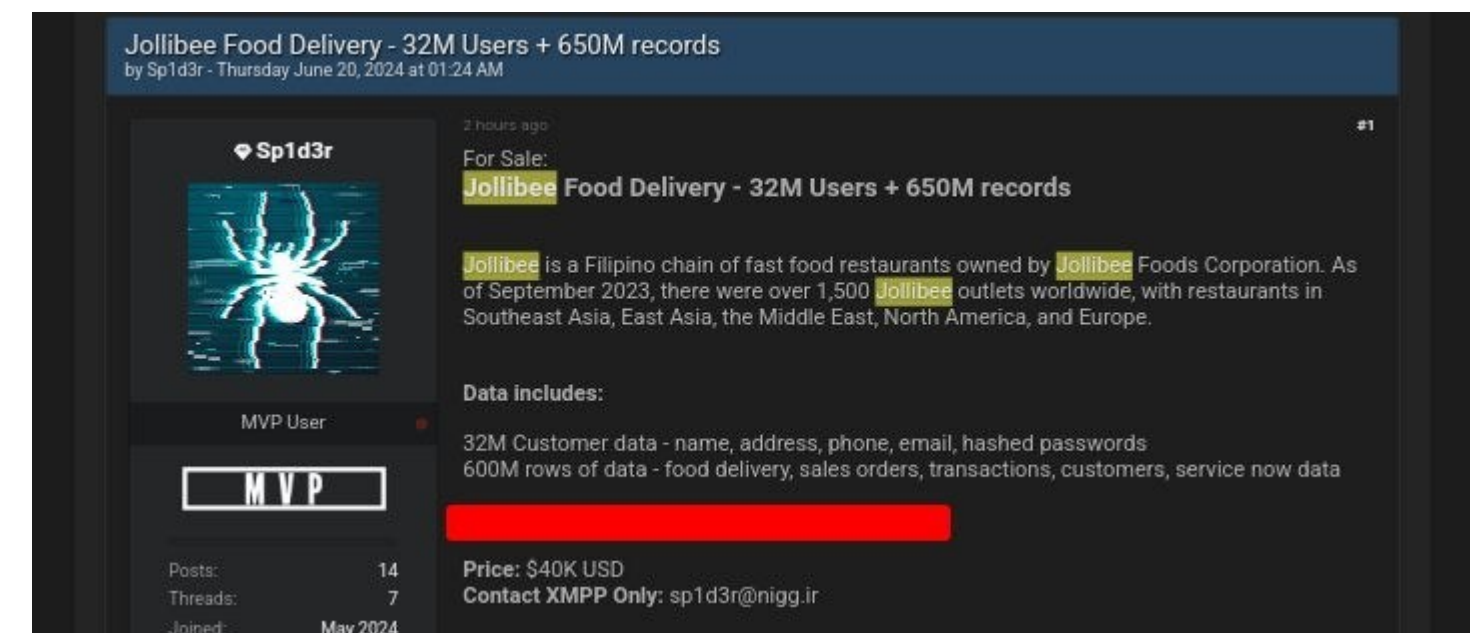
Privacy Ethics : Philippines

Cybersecurity firm Surfshark placed the Philippines **fifth** in **the most number of data breaches in Asia** since 2004 and **17th globally**.

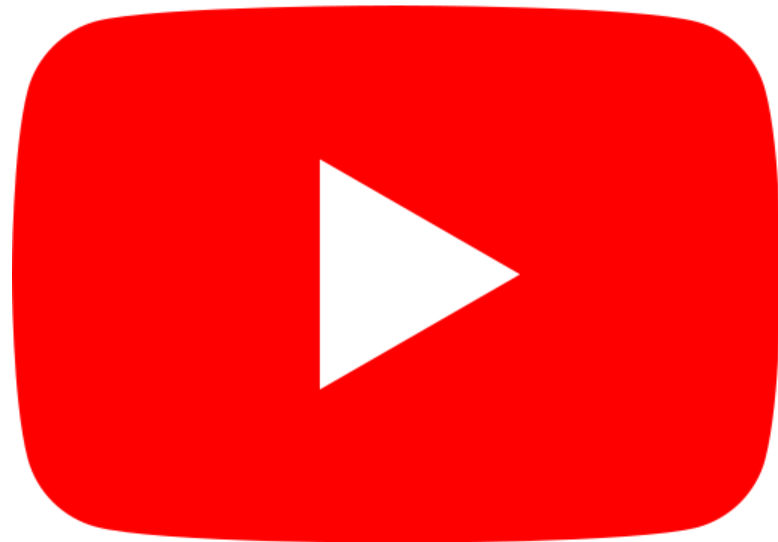124 million accounts have been breached in the Philippines (Surfshark, 2023)

In June 2023, fast food giant Jollibee Foods Corp. (JFC) admitted that it had been the victim of a data breach that could **affect around 11 million customers and its connected companies**. (reported to NPC)

The exposed data included dates of birth and senior citizen identification numbers.

Jollibee Food Delivery - 32M Users + 650M records
by Sp1d3r - Thursday June 20, 2024 at 01:24 AM

2 hours ago   #1

Sp1d3r

For Sale:
Jollibee Food Delivery - 32M Users + 650M records

Jollibee is a Filipino chain of fast food restaurants owned by Jollibee Foods Corporation. As of September 2023, there were over 1,500 Jollibee outlets worldwide, with restaurants in Southeast Asia, East Asia, the Middle East, North America, and Europe.

Data includes:

32M Customer data - name, address, phone, email, hashed passwords
600M rows of data - food delivery, sales orders, transactions, customers, service now data

MVP User

MVP

Posts: 14   Price: $40K USD
Threads: 7   Contact XMPP Only: sp1d3r@nigg.ir
Joined: May 2024

Social Media Influence

There are also 73 million internet users in the country. The Philippines has one of the highest rates of social media and internet usage in the world, with 73% of the population using social media and spending 10 hours and 56 minutes online daily on average, further demonstrating the efficacy of this technique.
(https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2023/05/15/media-manipulation-and-the-marcos-dynasty/)

social media content has taken hold across the country that "**whitewashes**" former president Ferdinand Marcos' record, including patently false claims such as that no arrests were made under the martial law order of 1972. (International Republican Institute, 2022)

Through social media, they could highlight Marcos' achievements, future goals, and personality. Additionally, they used social media to counter any negative press that Marcos might have gotten.

Using Computers to Support Ethical Conduct

Technology can be used to support ethical conduct

- Charitable organizations use the Internet for fundraising

- The web is a tool for organizing aid to areas in crisis

- Websites and Facebook can locate friends and family members after disaster