

JJC Smart (Book notes)

- morality (doing the right thing) and justice (doing the fair thing) sometimes aren't the same
- The McCloskey case explains why utilitarianism doesn't go along w/ justice
 - ↳ J.J. Smart says both options are bad, but the "lesser of two evils" would be to hang the innocent man

J.J.C. Smart

- Methodological Backdrop
 - moral consensus (common moral consciousness)
 - ↳ Prevailing beliefs about what is morally right/wrong
 - Ethical theory
 - ↳ principles that determine which actions are morally correct
- ↳ Testing an Ethical Theory
 - Does an ethical theory align with the moral consensus?
 - To what extent should a theory fit with the moral consensus
 - Dis-alignment is inevitable
 - Should guide us to truth, correct our mistakes
 - * sometimes moral consensus can challenge the theory itself
- McCloskey's Case
 - ↳ testing utilitarianism against moral consensus
 - testing the principle of utility

- what does the principle tell us to do in dire "trade-off" circumstances (kill an innocent person to save many others)
- does the principle provide a plausible explanation of correct action? → if not we have to reject the theory entirely
- What does the dire conclusion say about utilitarianism?
 - What utilitarianism tells us to do (kill the man) is unjust, so therefore, utilitarianism (and the principle of utility) is false
 - Smart's response: a utilitarian should accept the consequences of the view, that it is morally correct to be unjust in some cases → Choosing between "the lesser of two evils" → not focusing on producing the most pleasure, but preventing the greatest pain