

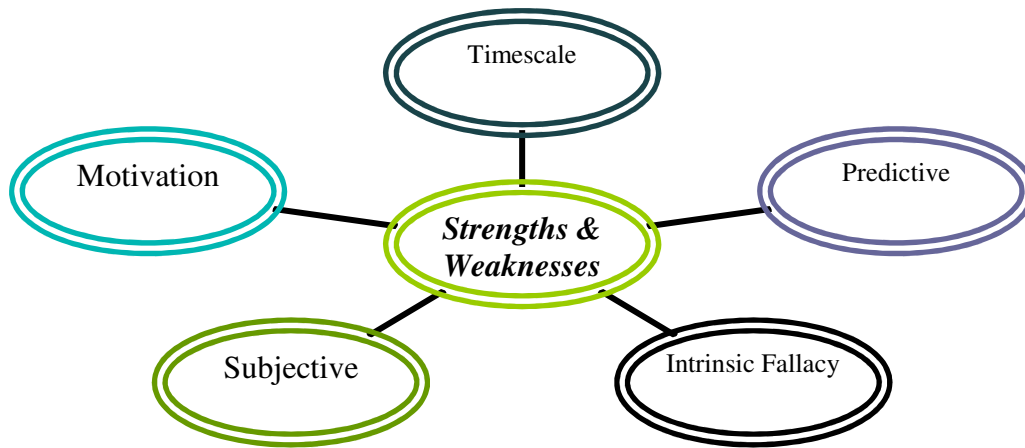
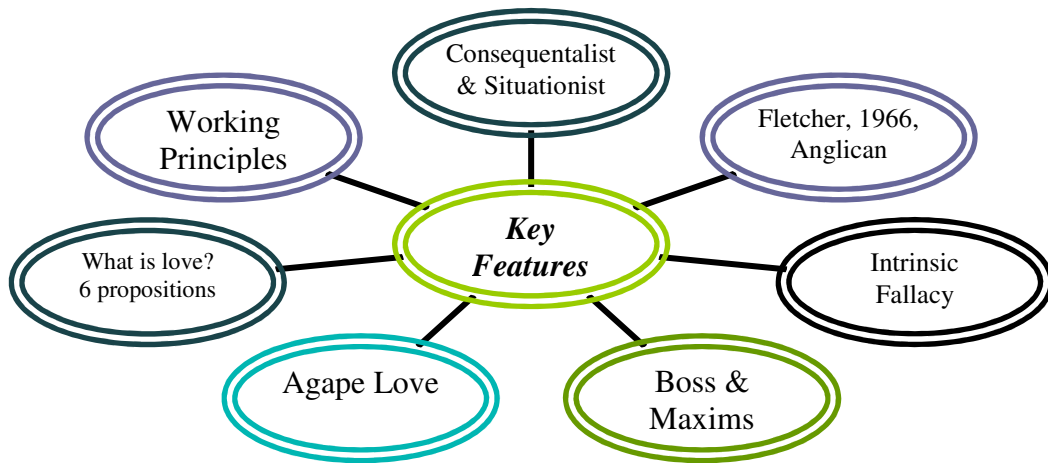
Situation Ethics

Key Features

- Situation Ethics is
 - Consequentialist
 - Situationalist
 - Subjective
 - A response to the unsuitable extremes of legalism and antinomianism
- Established by the Anglican Theologian Joseph Fletcher in his 1966 book
- Actions have no intrinsic value, this is teleological (rather than deontological).
- Simple basic principle on which decisions are based, then guiding maxims
 - As a Christian, this principle was that of *love*.
- However, what is love? Fletcher gives us 6 propositions of what love is, they very much echo 1 Corinthians “*love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude it is not self seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes and always perseveres*” This is love in its *agape* sense.
- Fletcher justifies S/E with four working principles
 - Personalism, S/E puts people first – not abstract laws
 - Pragmatism, S/E **works**, and therefore is good. “*The good is what works*”(Fletcher)
 - Relativism, S/E allows for all situations by not having absolutes,
 - Positivism, we do it because we *know* it to be the best course of action, after all “God is Good” is a priori? If God is Good, God is Love.

Strengths & Weaknesses

- Timescale. We don't know how far ahead to plan, and our actions are based on predicted value. “*We don't know if our actions will lead to heartache or joy*”
- Intrinsic Fallacy, it makes sense for objects to have no intrinsic value, however “*an evil like death should never be called moral*” (Hoose) → For example proportionalism accepts that things are “bad” or “good” acts, but if done for the right reason they are *less* “bad” than the alternative. I.e. stealing to feed is better than starving – but still morally wrong.
- Its subjective, it would be nice if (like Kant said) we could make moral decisions objectively however we don't. People's priorities will affect their decisions. I.e. Nazi's believed Holocaust was justified....
- Motivation. Why be good? If we *make* people be good we are defeating situationalism with legalism – if we *let* them be bad we are being antinomian. There is no way of enforcing people being *loving*.



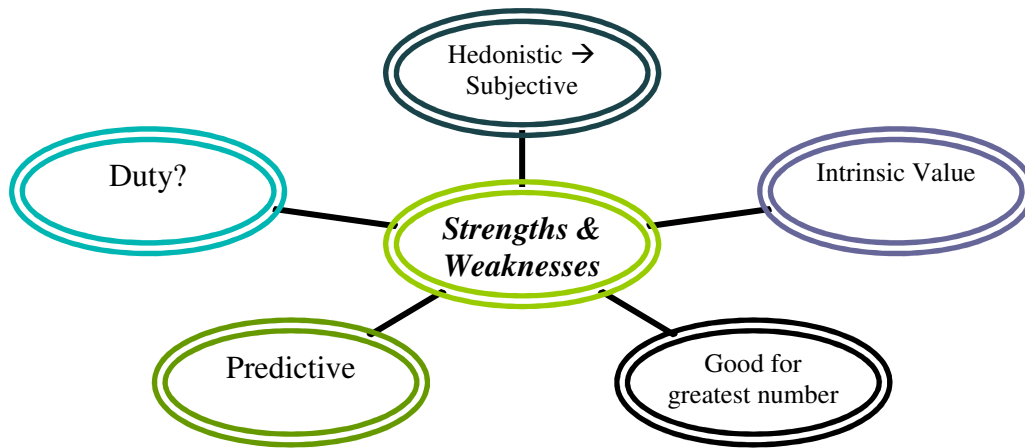
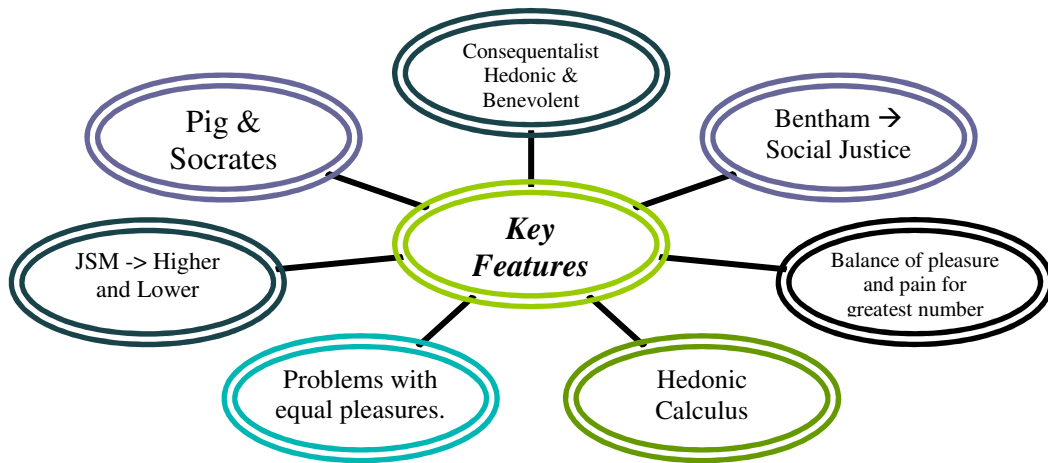
Utilitarianism

Key Features

- Theory of usefulness
- It is consequentialist, hedonic and benevolent
- Bentham (18thC), concerned with society's wellbeing → greatest good for the greatest number.
- *“the greatest balance of pleasure over pain for the greatest number of people”*
- He devised the hedonic calculus, which bases how “good” something is on its intensity, duration, certainty, propinquity, fecundity, purity and extent.
- Bentham's method had problems; it for example allowed for sadistic torture if the guards received pleasure, it also left “pleasure” highly subjective.
- John Stuart Mill ... dealt with Bentham's problems by distinguishing between higher and lower pleasures. *“the higher pleasures of the mind are to be preferred to the lower pleasures of the body”*. ... *“it is better to be Socrates dis-satisfied than a fool satisfied”*.
- It is therefore the quality, not quantity which counts.

Strengths and Weaknesses

- Hedonism – it's natural to want what's pleasurable → Things are of equal pleasure ... so how do we decide (Sidgwick) ? Also we may want things which are bad (Naturalistic Fallacy).
- Things don't have intrinsic value..... or do they? Are certain acts *ever* justified? Is one man's torture worth two men's pleasure? It just doesn't seem *right*.
- Being good for the majority is “fair”... however it can isolate the minority, and also be seen as ageist (the old won't get as much pleasure as the young)
- We are predicting pleasure; we don't *know* what's going to happen.
- Duty → We simply wouldn't do as Utilitarianism says in some situations because it wouldn't be *right*. WD Ross. Linked to nobility etc. → *“So much for the common moral consciousness” JJC Smart*. I.e. what we think we would do is simply **wrong** which is why we need a new system of ethics.



Decision Making re: Sexual Ethics

The Bible

- Lesbian Gay Christian Movement... works on Bible misinterpretations.
- Homosexuality
 - It appears to be sex rather than love which is condemned (“Do not lie with”, “inflamed in lust” etc).
 - It may be the submissive nature of homosexuality that is being objected to → making a man like a woman.

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
The bible is the word of God, for a “believer” it offers strict guidance of how to live according to that faith.	The bible can be taken out of context, much of it is <i>Jewish</i> law for the time the bible was written – and not intended for us now. I.e. much of Leviticus is not upheld by <i>any</i> Christians any more.
	The bible is contradictory.
	Translation issue, i.e. with Homosexuality exactly what “act” is “detested” is unclear.
	Many authors are simply expressing their own cultural viewpoint – not an ulterior absolute view of God.

Conscience

- Conscience may be seen as
 - “The Voice of God”
 - “*my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit*” (*Romans*)
 - The Holy Spirit, God’s Will
 - Requires faith(?)
 - To be taken above scripture
 - Do we trust God?
 - Humanistic
 - About human emotion
 - Guilt
 - Authoritarian
 - It’s about the legal and social climate.
 - The (unspoken) laws of society
 - What’s “acceptable”
 - Varies, what’s acceptable here may not be somewhere else.

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
We ultimately have to live with our conscience, and that’s the most important thing.	Where does Conscience come from?
The conscience can be seen as the Holy Spirit → God expressing <i>His</i> opinion.	Its subjective

