**Util Negates**

Consequentialism means you negate. : Merriam-Webster**[[1]](#footnote-1)** defines prioritize as “**to** list or **rate** (as projects or **goals**) **in order of priority”** so if consequentialism is incapable of giving lexical priority to actions or fails to guide actions, then environmental protection ought not be prioritized over resource extraction.

1. The none-such problem: each type of pleasure—the pleasure of sleeping, the pleasure of eating ice cream—is qualitatively different, so we can’t quantify and compare pleasures under consequentialism.

2. An infinite world contains an infinite amount of value, so consequentialism fails to prescribe action. Bostrom[[2]](#footnote-2):

The infinite case is fundamentally different. Suppose the world contains an infinite number of people and a corresponding infinity of joys and sorrows, preference satisfactions and frustrations, instances of virtue and depravation, and other such local phenomena at least some of which have positive or negative value. More precisely, suppose that there is some finite value ε such that there exists an infinite number of local phenomena (this could be a subset of e.g. persons, experiences, characters, virtuous acts, lives, relationships, civilizations, or ecosystems) each of which has a value ≥ ε and also an infinite number of local phenomena each of which has a value ≤ (‒ ε). Call such a world canonically infinite. Ethical theories that hold that value is aggregative imply that **a[n]** canonically **infinite world contains** an **[both] infinite** quantity of **positive** value **and** an infinite quantity of **negative value.** This gives rise to a peculiar predicament. **We can do only a finite amount of good or bad. Yet** in cardinal arithmetic, **adding or subtracting a finite quantity does not change an infinite quantity. Every** possible **act** of ours **therefore has the same net effect on the total amount of good and bad** in a canonically infinite world**: none whatsoever.** Aggregative **consequentialist theories are threatened by infinitarian paralysis: they seem to imply that** if the world is canonically infinite then **it is always ethically indifferent what we do**. In particular, they would imply that it is ethically indifferent whether we cause another holocaust or prevent one from occurring. If any non‐contradictory normative implication is a reductio ad absurdum, this one is.

The universe is infinite. Bostrom[[3]](#footnote-3) 2:

In the standard Big Bang model, assuming the simplest topology (i.e., that space is singly connected), there are three basic possibilities: the universe can be open, flat, or closed. **Current data suggests a flat** or open **universe**, although the final verdict is pending. If the universe is either open or flat, then it [that] is **spatially infinite at every point in time and** the model entails that it **contains an infinite number of galaxies**, stars, and planets**.** There exists **a common misconception** which **confuses the universe with the** (finite) **‘observable universe’.** But **the observable part**—the part that coulsd causally affect us—**would be** just **an infinitesimal fraction** of the whole**.** Statements about the “mass of the universe” or the “number of protons in the universe” generally refer to the content of this observable part; see e.g. [1]. Many **cosmologists** [also] **believe** that **our universe is** just **one in an infinite** ensemble of universes (a **multiverse),** and **this adds** to the **probability that the world is** canonically **infinite**; for a popular review, see

3. There is no intrinsically valuable state of affairs, so utility halts action because states can never know what its citizens’ “interests” really are. Citizens have different values based on unique experiences and psychological makeup. Even if populations can agree, they’d never reach consensus on relative worth of policy values in a timely manner. This would also require constant reconfirmation, else the system would fail when people’s values changed.

This means negate- the aff must prove environmental protection should be prioritized over resource extraction

4. Each action produces consequences and further consequnces, so on to infinity. Dorsey[[4]](#footnote-4):

First, virtually anything we do, as Lenman notes, is likely to have [has] consequences that are identity-affecting, altering facts about who exists or will exist.7 But [such] the consequences of identity affecting actions, or most of them anyway, are invisible. As an illustration, Lenman considers the act of “Richard,” an early German conquerer, in sparing [a person] “Angie”—whose far distant ancestor turned out to be Adolf Hitler: The decision to spare Angie is an event with massive causal ramiﬁcations. It is highly plausible that almost all killings and engenderings and refrainings from these have similarly massive causal ramiﬁcations. These actions ramify in massive ways most obviously because they are, let us say, ‘identity-affecting’. These are actions that make a difference to the identities of future persons and these differences are apt to amplify exponentially down the generations. A very high proportion of identity-affecting actions are, it is enormously plausible, reliably subject to such massive causal ramiﬁcation.8 Given that any particular action—especially actions that are in some way or other identity-affecting—will have massive causal ramiﬁcations, we surely have no good evidence in the ex ante or ex post about the axiological quality of the consequences of our actions. That Richard’s sparing of Angie eventually resulted in the holocaust is certainly unknowable to Richard, Angie, or, indeed, anyone else. Second, some of the consequences of our actions are the result of that action playing a role in a causal system that is extremely sensitive to small changes. Lenman writes: “Indeed, it is arguably a very real possibility that very many actions that seem very insigniﬁcant are subject to massive causal ramiﬁcation. For some causal systems are known to be extremely sensitive to very small and localized variations or changes in their initial conditions.”9 Lenman cites the weather and ﬁnancial markets, systems that can alter signiﬁcantly with very small perturbations. These consequences are barred to even the most epistemically responsible agent. Hence a gigantic proportion of the consequences of our actions are invisible, and hence the moral valence of our actions is invisible as well. Furthermore, it would appear that this argument could go further. It needn’t be the case that any particular action actually had massive, unknowable causal ramiﬁcations for the moral valence of that action to be unknowable. Because we know that any action can have such causal ramiﬁcation, we are unjustiﬁed in maintaining any conﬁdence [in] that the visible consequences of any particular action are the only consequences (even if, in fact, they are).

1. “Prioritize.” Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/prioritize> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Bostrom, Nick [Professor at University of Oxford, director of Oxford’s Future of Humanity Institute, PhD from London School of Economics]. *The Infinitarian Challenge to Aggregative Ethics*. 2008. <http://www.nickbostrom.com/ethics/infinite.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [Dale Dorsey](http://philpapers.org/s/Dale%20Dorsey), "[Consequentialism, Metaphysical Realism and the Argument from Cluelessness](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9213.2011.713.x/abstract%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank),” [*Philosophical Quarterly*](http://philpapers.org/asearch.pl?pubn=Philosophical%20Quarterly) 62 (246): 48-70 (2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)